

CIVILIZING MALAYA.

THERE is a most gratifying consensus of opinion on the part of those who know anything about the subject in favour of annexing the southern extremity of the Malay Peninsula, which has acquired so melancholy a notoriety by the murder of Mr. BIRCH. One who knows the Peninsula well declares that Mr. Birch would have gladly met his death if he could have foreseen that, by the sacrifice of his life, Malaya would be saved, for its annexation by Great Britain would be nothing short of its temporal salvation. The ridiculous hubbub made over the rising in Perak—a hubbub due almost entirely to an ignorance of the facts which we laid before our readers immediately the news of Mr. Birch's fate reached us by telegram—is not entirely to be lamented, if it leads—as it appears likely to lead—to the extension of our sovereignty over the whole of the disturbed districts. A good deal of unnecessary expense has, however, been incurred in the way of sending troops to suppress a mere local outbreak. Of course, it is well to be safe; but it is rather over-doing the thing to despatch as many troops to Perak as we sent to Ashantou. This excessive reliance upon Imperial aid is natural but pernicious. If Sir W. JERVOIS had been left to his own resources, he would have been able to suppress the outbreak of the Malay Rajahs in Perak by the proffered aid of the Chinese. By this antagonism of race, it is no difficult matter for an English governor to maintain his authority in these regions, and so long as we have the Chinese on our side we have nothing to fear. Whatever the Malays think of annexation, the Chinese have declared before this that there is not a Chinaman in Perak who would not go down on his knees and bless God when the British flag was hoisted on the capital. Nor are the Malays themselves opposed to our rule. It is not the people, it is their Rajahs; and we could not do a greater service to the Malay race than by extinguishing at once and for ever the pestilent tribe of piratical chiefs who have so often turned Malaya into a cockpit. Besides the

Malays and the Chinese, there are the original inhabitants of the Peninsula—the Jackoons, or Ourang Outangs, or men of the forest, who would as soon think of protesting against annexation as the monkeys who chatter around them in the trees. Not a voice would be raised against an act which would turn Perak and its neighbourhood into a paradise of peace and prosperity, save those of the pirate chieftains whose reign of plunder and bloodshed our advent would summarily terminate.

If we wanted to convince a stubborn Englishman that it is not the people but their rulers who are to blame for the confusion which has so long desolated some of the fairest portions of the Malay peninsula, we should ask him to pay a visit to the independent Malay State of Johore, which is divided from the island of Singapore by straits a little more than a mile in width. Johore has received from Nature fewer advantages than either Perak or Salangore. Naturally, it is one of the poorest of the Malay States. Its population is much the same as that of Perak, being composed of Malays, Chinese, and the aboriginal Jackoons. Possessing all the disadvantages and few of the advantages of its northern neighbours, it has nevertheless acquired the enviable reputation of being the most prosperous and peaceful State in the Peninsula. The cause is to be found solely in the character of its ruler and in the nature of its Government. Unlike Sultan ABDULLA of Perak, the Maharajah of JOHORE is looked down upon as a parvenu by the haughty blue-blooded Rajahs of the Peninsula. Nevertheless, parvenu though he is, he has shown more governing ability than all the rest of the ancient Malay aristocracy put together. When the present MAHARAJAH was a boy, he and his brother received a good English education. To that circumstance alone can be attributed the marvellous transformation which he has wrought in the Principality, to the throne of which he succeeded on the death of his father. In addition to receiving a good English education, he travelled through Great Britain, visiting among other places the city of Edinburgh. On his accession to the throne, he at once set about governing in accordance with English principles. He made the Governor of SINGAPORE his chief counsellor, and he set himself to work to convert Johore into another Singapore on the mainland. Opposite the British settlement, at the extremity of the Penin-

sula, there stood, ten years ago, a few miserable fishing huts between the sea and a jungly swamp surrounded by hills. Now the fisher huts have disappeared, and in their stead stands a neat, trim little town, with a population of 30,000. Middlesbrough itself has not grown faster than Johore. The MAHARAJAH's palace, standing in its spacious gardens, laid out by a Scotch gardener, is the most prominent object in the town; but on the green hills which slope downwards to the placid water stand a pretty little Christian Church, a Mahomedan Mosque, and several Chinese joss-houses. Not so prominent to the eye is the great sawmill established by the MAHARAJAH, which is to Johore what the blast furnace is to Middlesbrough. His Highness, discerning clearly enough that the chief wealth of his kingdom consisted in its teak forests, built at Johore what has long been noted as the largest sawmill in all Asia. There, under the supervision of a Scotch engineer, three million feet of teak timber are cut up every year prior to being shipped to Singapore for distribution to the uttermost parts of the earth. To feed this mammoth sawmill, the MAHARAJAH has constructed a railway into the interior. This railway is made entirely, not of iron, but of ironwood, at one-fifteenth the price of iron, and it answers well. As the teak forests lie behind Johore as the Cleveland iron mines lie behind Middlesbrough, so, like Middlesbrough, Johore has its Saltburn. Twenty-five miles inland stands the mountain of Goonung Poulai, which raises its azure crest two thousand feet above the tranquil waters which roll between Johore and Singapore. On this mountain local tradition affirms that the first ancestors of our race were placed by the CREATOR. It is the Eden of Johore, and it is now being converted, under the auspices of the MAHARAJAH into the sanitarium of Singapore. The railway is being pushed forward to its base, and, when that is accomplished, His Highness proposes to carry the line 100 miles further, until it connects New Johore with the British province of Malacca. As fast as the railway is constructed, the industrious Chinese turn the country on either side into a luxuriant market garden. They are secure of a market in Singapore, and they are protected from all molestation by the rule of the Maharajah of JOHORE. Everywhere throughout the Principality which covers 10,000 square miles, there is

peace, plenty, and prosperity. The resources of the country are being rapidly developed, the revenues of the State are increasing, and Johore is as peaceful and prosperous as Ceylon.

Why is this? Solely and simply because the people—the much-abused Malays, the remorseless Chinese, and the innocent aborigines—have had a fair chance of behaving themselves by being decently governed. The English belong to one of the most orderly races in the world, and Darlington is one of the most peaceful towns in England; but if the Duke of CLEVELAND and Earl FEVERSHAM were perpetually fighting with each other, and if they asserted their rival rights over Darlington by burning it over the heads of its inhabitants, and plundering them of all they possessed, it would not be long before the staunchest Quaker in the town was as lawless and as desperate as the poor Malays of Perak. This kind of thing has gone on in Malaya for centuries, and it will go on until the Rajahs are put out of the way. We cannot lay hands on a Maharajah of JOHORE every day; but we have plenty of Colonial Governors, and it will be a blessed day for the Malays when Great Britain extends her civilising sovereignty over Malaya.