

THE PROTECTED STATES OF THE MALAY PENINSULA.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

It is now 15 years, almost to a day, since the then Governor of the Straits Settlements, the present General Sir Andrew Clarke, took seriously into consideration the condition of the native States of the Malay Peninsula, adjoining the British settlements, and laid before the Home Government a policy to be pursued in the future in regard to them. It will be remembered that the Malay Peninsula on both the west and east coasts is split up into a number of States or kingdoms ruled over by Sultans, Maharajahs, Rajahs, and smaller chieftains. Sometimes, as in the case of Johore, Perak, and Pahang, these States cover considerable areas, and are powerful compared with their neighbours; sometimes they are the mere fragments, the wreckage, of mightier principalities which have been destroyed by internal disturbance or external attack, or both. Such are, for example, the States bordering upon our settlement of Malacca, which are remnants of the Negri Sembilan, and which now include Klang, Rambow, Johol, Jelebu, Muar, and several others even smaller. From the Siamese frontier on the north, or rather from the Kraw isthmus, down to the island of Singapore, we find a succession of these States—on the east Patani, Kelantan, Tringann, Pahang, Johore; on the west Kedah, Perak, Selangore, Sungei Ujong, Rambow, Muar, &c.—all with undefined and, in the present state of knowledge of the interior of the Malay Peninsula, indefinable boundaries, with all manner of political and personal differences, quarrels about the particular situation of valuable mines, about tribute, precedence, and the thousand and one things which set Oriental and even Western States by the ears. These States were all Malay; rulers and people were of this race, the aborigines having long ago been driven from the coasts to the mountains and forests of the interior. British possessions in the peninsula consisted of Singapore, at the extreme south, which was ceded to Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819 by the predecessors in title of the present Sultan of Johore; Malacca, a strip of coast about 100 miles north of Singapore, which was an ancient Dutch settlement, and was ceded to us in 1824; still farther north another strip of coast known as the Dindings; and, finally, the island of Penang, and a considerable piece of the opposite coast, now known as Province Wellesley. Penang was ceded to us in return for a small annual payment in 1786, and 13 years later, in order to stop piracy, we got Province Wellesley, in which every acre is now planted with sugar, rice, or coconuts. Through these settlements pass all our trade to the far East, and part of that to Australia, as well as a large part of the trade between Australia on the one hand and India and China on the other. Moreover, the native States were known to possess valuable tin deposits, while the land was eminently fitted for the planting of tea, coffee, cinchona, and other tropical produce. But all this natural wealth was rendered useless, or nearly so, and the peace and prosperity of the British settlements were imperilled by the disturbances and anarchy which prevailed perpetually in the native States, more particularly in 1871-4 in Perak. The ambitions of individual States, or of individual chiefs within a particular State, kept the whole country in a state of turmoil. The Malay Peninsula was like England under the Heptarchy, only in place of seven States there were about 20.

It was to remedy this state of things that Sir Andrew Clarke addressed himself early in 1874, and the policy which he then laid down, which received the approval of Lord Carnarvon, and which has been steadily pursued ever since by his successors, Sir William Jervois, Sir Frederick Weld, and Sir Cecil Smith, has been crowned with a moral and material success, which

the most sanguine would have regarded as incredible. It is a policy which has cost this country nothing, for the salaries of the few British officials employed in carrying it out are paid by the native States themselves, and which has increased largely the trade of this country and our colonies with the Malay Peninsula, while the native States are in a condition of peace, order, and good government. Wars and warlike expeditions are unheard of, and instead we have roads, a railway, telegraphs, the mines being worked, rivers rendered navigable, ports making or about to be made, industrial settlements formed, the forests cleared for plantations of cinchona, pepper, gambier, tea, coffee, paddy, &c.—in short, all the signs of enterprising and rising communities. It is not suggested that Sir Andrew Clarke and his successors have altered the indolent, pleasure-loving Malay; he is not fonder of work than he was before; but he has been prevented from rendering it impossible for the Briton or the Chinese to work. These two—the latter even more than the former—are developing the Malay Peninsula under favourable conditions wholly secured by the new policy. It seems almost inconceivable that such results could be obtained by a policy so modest and simple in appearance as that of Sir Andrew Clarke. He stationed British residents at the Courts of the rulers of Perak, Selangore, and Sungei Ujong to advise them on revenue matters and general administration. *Voilà tout.* These Residents were appointed in consequence of treaties between the respective native States and the Straits Government. At first, no doubt, a little gentle pressure had to be used to induce the native chiefs to receive the Residents. In the case of Perak, the Resident, Mr. Birch, was assassinated in 1875 with the connivance of some of the leading men of the State, and a military expedition for the punishment of the murderers became necessary. In the other States there were also appearances of trouble, and one Residency was menaced by a large force of Malays. But General Colborne's forces suppressed the resistance at Perak, occupied the capital, and captured those concerned in Mr. Birch's murder. Some of the leading culprits are even now expiating their crime by exile in the Seychelles. From that time the chiefs have heartily received and co-operated with successive Residents. The system has been extended, so that now every State on the west coast is administered under the advice of a British official, and other States, seeing how these are prospering, come forward and offer to come under a similar system. For example, the large State of Pahang, on the east coast, which is somewhat outside the area of the influence of the Straits Government, was the last to enter the Protectorate, and the treaty which it made will be found in *The Times* of May 3 last. In every case the charge of foreign relations is given to the British Government, and the chiefs agree to act by the advice of the Resident. One important inducement to the Malay chiefs to enter voluntarily into arrangements of this description is that they usually receive a higher title from the Queen, or rather Her Majesty promises to address them by a higher title in future. The rajah becomes a maharajah, and the maharajah a Sultan. Thus the chief who was Maharajah of Pahang before the treaty is now the proud possessor of the title of Sultan of Pahang, and cannot be exceeded in rank by any chief in the Malay Peninsula. No one would consent to give him the new title unless the Governor of the Straits used it, and when the latter does this no one else will refuse it. It was only after a journey to London in the Colonial and Indian Exhibition year that our good friend and ancient ally, the Maharajah of Johore, got the more elevated title of Sultan, a fact which was solemnly announced in the *London Gazette*, and which was productive of much rejoicing and festivity in Singapore and Johore, where His Highness is most popular. The large State of Johore, in fact, is on a different footing from any of the other States. Possibly because of its proximity to Singapore, it has always been well governed, and no Resident has ever been placed at the Sultan's capital, for it has never been necessary. But of his own free will the Sultan has placed his foreign relations in the hands of the Straits Government, and has agreed to receive a Consul at his capital, Johore. It will thus be perceived that what has, in fact, been created is a confederation of Malay States, which, by the natural force of circumstances, must soon embrace the whole Malay Peninsula, under the protection of Great Britain, in which, for the first time in Malay history, mea-

may labour and enjoy the fruits of their labour in peace.

A somewhat bulky Blue-book which has just been laid before Parliament enables us to understand the change which Sir Andrew Clarke's policy has brought over the face of the Malay Peninsula. It contains the Residents' reports for the years 1886 and 1887 from all the Protected States, except Pahang, which did not come under the system in these years, and Johore, which, as has just been explained, stands on a different footing from all the others. The material progress here recorded is little short of phenomenal. Taking Perak, as the most important, first, we find in 1886 a large increase of revenue under every head—it is unnecessary to burden this article with statistics, save in one or two instances. The increase in the land revenue shows increasing devotion to agriculture, and consequently an increasing stationary population. The production of tin is largely on the increase, road-making, the most urgent work all over the peninsula, is progressing and has given a great impetus to agriculture, Sir Hugh Low reporting that "many new settlers have come in, and much land has been taken up." Coincident with the increase in revenue is a still greater decrease in expenditure; and the only possible sources of trouble are the secret societies among the Chinese, which are perpetually quarrelling and threatening riots. In 1887, again, there was a great increase in the revenue of the State, which amounted to \$1,827,476, while the expenditure was \$1,550,489, thus leaving a very substantial balance to the good. The short line of railway, the first in the Malay Peninsula, paid over 5½ per cent. dividend, and the total assets of the State were \$897,926 over the liabilities. The trade amounted to \$19,201,296, over three millions sterling, of which the exports took \$12,249,334, and the imports \$6,951,962. The total was more than five million dollars over that for 1886. Tin was the chief article of export, 12,923 tons being sent abroad in the course of the year. Again, the Chinese secret societies caused serious uneasiness, but even from this cause the revenue gained, because the various Chinese companies concerned were fined about £3,000. Wherever there is prosperity in these regions there the Chinese are gathered together; and accordingly we find that there were 52,788 Chinese immigrants to Perak, giving a total increase of about 23,000 to the population of the State. So much for Perak. In Selangore the progress is even more astonishing. Here again there is increased demand for land, increased agriculture, increased revenue, increased trade. In 1887 the revenue was about 50 per cent. more than in 1886. The total revenue last year was \$1,153,896, and the expenditure \$885,931. In referring to the statistics, Sir Cecil Smith, the Governor of the Straits Settlements, remarks that the significance of the figures will be understood when it is borne in mind that the increase in the revenue for 1887 over that of 1886 is greater than the whole revenue of the country five years ago. Very little reflection on the following figures will show what British guidance in administration will do for a Malay State. In 1877 the present system of Residents was applied to Selangore, and here are the figures for the revenue of that State at quinquennial periods since then:—

	1877.	1882.	1887.
Revenue	\$226,853	\$300,423	\$1,153,896
Exports			\$5,501,766
Imports			5,652,113
			\$10,953,879

The assets of the State are \$304,996, the liabilities \$385,772, but of the latter amount \$200,000 is due on a railway loan, which is being rapidly paid off. The trade of Selangore in 1887 was three million dollars more than in 1886. Here are the figures for last year:—

Coffee planting has proved a financial success; pepper, gambier, and tea are being more and more cultivated; and the natives are settling down and extending the cultivation of rice. "Crime of a serious nature," says the superintendent of police, "is almost unknown." In the little State of Sungei Ujong the tale is much the same. The trade here is about two millions of dollars, and is increasing rapidly; a railway is being constructed from the coast to the capital, more mines were opened, and the area under agriculture is extending. Adjoining Sungei Ujong is the tiny state of Jelebu, the connexion of which with the Straits Government is typical. In 1883 the chiefs found that for one reason or another they could not govern it properly. No doubt the neighbouring States afforded them a high standard of what admini-

stration should be. Finding they were unable themselves to attain this, they went down to Singapore to Sir Frederick Weld, and begged him to help them to govern their State. He organized an administration, in which, it appears, there is only one European—a collector at the town of Jelebu. It may be interesting to add that in Perak there are 11 Europeans in the upper ranks of the service of the State in connexion with the Residency, the police, and the revenue; in Selangore there are only five; and in Sungei Ujong but one—the Resident himself. The civil lists of the Sultans and Rajahs are fixed. It is unnecessary to refer in detail to the group of Negri Sembilan States. Some of these joined the confederation—i.e., came under British protection—at one time, some at another, as they thought fit themselves. Thus it was not until 1887 that Rambow joined. The ruler of the Sri Menanti States, which form part of the Negri Sembilan, with his chiefs visited Singapore to be present at the Queen's jubilee, and apparently knowing the views of the British on the subject, voluntarily undertook to abolish debt slavery in his country, and began by freeing his own slave debtors. His successor is honestly carrying out his promise.

Enough has been said to show that an era which so far has been one of rapid and unbroken peace and prosperity has opened in the Malay Peninsula. The simplicity and economy of the machinery employed to produce in a few years the amazing results here referred to seem almost ridiculously out of proportion to the results themselves. Sir Cecil Smith, who, as Colonial Secretary and Governor of the Straits, has had as excellent an opportunity as any living Englishman for understanding what has been done, says in his last report:—

I cannot close this summary of the annual reports of the protected native States without drawing attention to the admirable work of the British Residents and of the other officers in these States. The extraordinary progress that has been made is mainly due to the untiring energy, zeal, and ability with which the affairs of the respective States have been administered by the Residents. The rapid development that has taken place in the past few years is, so far as human foresight can go, likely to continue, though the strong guiding hand of my distinguished predecessor, Sir F. Weld, will, I fear, be sadly missed. His intimate knowledge of the native States and very special aptitude for dealing with native affairs enabled him to confer lasting benefits on the people, by causing the principles of the administration of the country to be laid on broad lines, which will not, so far as I am concerned, be disturbed. His memory will remain very dear to numerous chiefs and other natives with whom he was in contact, for he devoted himself to the best interests of their country, and his work generally in the Malay Peninsula will certainly occupy a most important and valuable part in its history.

And Lord Knutsford acknowledges that "it would be difficult to find a parallel to the development of these States under British guidance." Perhaps the sum and substance of the whole matter is that we have succeeded, by moral influence alone, in establishing the *pax Britannica* in one of the most fertile regions on the earth's surface, and have left man and nature free to do the rest.