

"Ours is an Empire on which the sun never sets."

Very well expressed.

The Development of the British Empire in Malaya

The connection of the British with Malaya may be said to date from 1600. In that year, a charter was granted for fifteen years to the newly-formed East India Company. Their first expedition was sent out under Captain Sir James Lancaster who established some trading posts in Sumatra. As subsequent expeditions proved successful, James I made the charter permanent. In the year 1615 the Dutch East India Company broke the power of the Portuguese in that district, and, thereby, the monopoly was in the hands of the Dutch and British. The Dutch proposed an amalgamation in the following year, but, after much debating, Britain refused the offer. As a result of this, we were ousted from the archipelago, but made our position more secure on the mainland.

It can easily be seen that the motive which took our ancestors to Malaya was trade, and not the desire for a great empire.

The power of the Dutch was first seriously threatened in 1785 when Captain Francis Light founded Penang. He was given the district as a dowry from the Sultan of Kedah when he married that ruler's daughter. In return for this, he had to protect the Sultan against his foes. The town was presented to the East India Company on condition that they paid the

2.

Sultan the sum of 6000 dollars per annum. Shortly afterwards, Kedah was further reduced by the cession of Province Wellesley for the additional sum of 4000 dollars yearly. Customs duties were abolished in 1827 at Penang and that year marks the ascendancy of British power.

? what trade

The English took over Malacca from the Dutch in 1795. Nine years later the Dutch fort was destroyed and in 1811 the town was used by Lord Minto as his base in his successful expedition against Java. Shortly after, it was returned to Holland in accordance with the Treaty of Vienna, but in 1824 it again changed hands and the Dutch were given Bencoolen, an old English trading post in Sumatra. At first, Malacca was ~~the~~ the chief port for the peninsula but it has now been superseded by Penang and Singapore.

Singapore was founded by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819, and the new town was very successful. Malacca was at that time in the hands of the Dutch, and our great rivals, realising how great a blow this would strike at their trade, protested. However they had given the British an effective counter argument by occupying our trading post of Riau, and as the Temenggong of Johore, on whose territory Singapore stood, supported the British, nothing came of the Dutch arguments.

No description of the developement of British power in those regions would be

3.

complete without reference to Sir James Stamford Raffles, mentioned previously. He was born at sea off Port Morant in Jamaica, and at an early age entered East India House, in London, as a clerk. The company were pleased with his work and he was promoted to the secretaryship at Penang. After Lord Minto had conquered Java, he was given the position of Lieutenant-Governor of that island. When Java was returned to the Dutch, he came back to England for the sake of his health. He stayed for two years during which time he was knighted and wrote his interesting 'History of Java'. When he returned to the East Indies he was placed in command of Bencoolen, and later when Singapore was bought by the British at his instigation, he was sent there to direct operations. He returned home again, but while on the voyage, a ^{fire} ~~storm~~ broke out on board ship and all his effects including his splendid natural history collected and notes for 'The History of Borneo and Sumatra'. He died at the age of forty-five probably owing to the ravages of the Tropics upon his constitution. Singapore has justified his expectations and its strategic position will be even further enhanced if the proposed Naval Base is built.

Why Strategic?

A great deal of native states and outlying islands were added to our possessions in the nineteenth century. Sabuan was ceded by the Sultan of

4.

Borneo and Christmas Island and the Coco Islands came under our protection^{ion}. The two islands of Pangkor and Sembilan were taken over to be used as a base against the Malay pirates that lurked among the small islands and plundered merchant-ships passing through the Straits of Malacca. The expedition was expensive and only partly successful, but it helped in adding more possessions to the British Empire. In the last thirty years of the century most of the Federated States were placed under British protection, and in 1874 the Territory of the Dindings was acquired but this is the most backward district of the whole peninsula. The so-called "native states" were ceded by Siam in 1909. Before that, they had given the Bunga Mas' or golden flower to that country every year. This is not so much a mark of vassaldom as a sign of suzerainty.

The Federated States were amalgamated for the following reason. Perak and Selangor became very prosperous but the other states did not. The extent of this can be seen from the trade ~~re~~turns for 1894. In that year, the two states had trade amounting to over fifty million dollars whereas the rest together did not exceed ten million dollars. The result of this was that the two prosperous states could not ^{only} pay the expenses of administration but could build roads, railways, hospitals and public buildings and still ^{have} a large surplus which was

invested in safe Indian securities. Meanwhile their weaker neighbours could barely pay for their expenses. It was evident that this system should be stopped and therefore the states were federated with the result that all are in a good financial condition.

At first, the British policy was one of non-intervention in the native government, but it became necessary to join in when a war broke out in Perak between two rival Chinese mining factions. This was put down with aid from the British. Later, a civil war broke out in Selangor, but when the Sultan placed himself under British protection, the rebels fled to Sungai Ujong. The ruler of this state received a warning from the British and expelled the refugees. However, they were warmly received by a native ruler named the Dato' Bandan. In 1894, a rebellion broke out in Trengganu, which was put down by Sir Hugh Clifford.

Nowadays, a native state is nominally ruled by the Sultan and his council, but the real government lies with the Resident who receives his orders from the High Commissioner for the Malay States at Singapore.

The original people of the peninsula are the Sakai. About five hundred years ago, the Malays came to the land from Sumatra and drove these aborigines to the mountain forests. The Malays are believed to be a Mongolian race, they are a maritime race and have never

6.

penetrated far inland except in Sumatra, which is considered to be their home-land. Their language is very much like the dialects of the Southern Seas and it has therefore become the "lingua franca" of that part. The Malays are a venturesome race and have traded with China and India from very early times. Since the British have taken over the government in Malaya there has been a great influx of Chinese.

Rice is the great food crop and is eaten in all parts of Malaya. A crop is grown once a year in the lowlands, where water is obtainable easily, once in three years higher up and for a season or two in the forest clearings. A very large proportion of the rice grown is eaten in the mining centres and large towns and therefore the rice has often to be transported from one state to another. The irrigation of the Krian has proved a great boon to the natives of Perak as water is supplied for a hundred square miles. Rubber is produced in large quantities and a great number of natives are engaged in the various processes of tapping, coagulating, gridding and many others. A great amount of copra is also made. Spices are grown on the hillsides, the chief being nutmeg and pepper.

Tin is by far the greatest mineral of Malaya and the mines are worked by Chinese coolies usually. The two greatest difficulties are the supply of labour and alluvial mining. The Malay Peninsula

7.

exports more than half the world's output. There is no other very important metal but gold and wolfram are mined in small quantities.

It is noticeable that the states with the best communications are those which are federated. Johore is the best native state in which to travel probably owing to its proximity to Singapore. The chief railways are from Singapore to Penang and Penang to the French frontier, which enables one to make the journey from Penang to Bangkok in forty hours. The line to Singapore has several branches to Malacca and the various states. There is also a small railway in Kelantan but this is not very important.

Thus has a very valuable asset to the Empire been built up by men who have the good of their country at heart and by trade and treaties.

No Commerce