

An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore 1819-1867
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1835.

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In October the *Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* issued its first number. It was started by Mr. William Napier, the lawyer, Mr. Lorrain, Mr. Boustead and Mr. Coleman. Mr. Boustead, in addition to his mercantile work, had been helping to edit the *Singapore Chronicle* for some time, and when Mr. Carnegy came from Penang and purchased the paper, it was agreed to start the new paper to advance the interests of the place. It was a weekly paper of four pages, published on Thursdays, the last page containing a price current, shipping reports, and mercantile information. The first number contained a curious advertisement by a priest of the Portuguese Mission in Malacca, protesting against certain acts of the Vicar of St. Peter's Church in Malacca for having rashly arrogated to himself an unlimited power in selling a garden (which cost \$200) and a gold crown (which cost \$80) the property of the Church; contrary to the laws, statutes, and determinations of the Holy Canons and the Sacred Council, and to the injury of the rights of the Bishop of Goa. It also contained the prospectus of a work to be called "Notices of the Indian Archipelago," afterwards published by Mr. Moor. The first numbers contained a series of letters on the subject of the cultivation of land in Singapore, which the writer considered would be fertile if a few of the largest trees were left to prevent the soil being parched up by the sun and to attract moisture from the clouds. He recommended sugar-cane as likely to yield an abundant crop, but it was tried on a large scale afterwards at Balestier Plain, and resulted in great loss.

On St. Andrew's day, a large dinner was given by the Scotchmen of Singapore; Dr. Montgomerie and Mr. William Napier presided, and Messrs. Spottiswoode, Lorrain, Carnie and Stephen were stewards. It was given in the upper rooms of the Court House, and the hour was half-past six. The Malacca Band had been learning some appropriate airs for the respective toasts, which the *Straits Chronicle* said were an ineffable treat to all admirers of music! There were about seventy subscribers. On the following evening a ball was given by them, and the ladies wore tartan scarves, and several gentlemen appeared in the garb of old Gaul, and the party did not break up till daylight. This (said the paper) was the first celebration of the Feast of St. Andrew at Singapore.

In November the Canton authorities affected to be alarmed at the appearance of the first steamer, the *Jardine*, in China, and the Hoppo issued orders to her to *spread her sails* and return to her own country, which however, was not complied with, but in the following January the owners were obliged to send her away, and she came down to Singapore. The following is the concluding passage in the edict issued at Canton on the 7th January, 1836:—"Further, the Acting Governor and myself have corresponded (on the subject); and if the said foreigner's *smoke-ship* arrives (at the Bogue) immediately open and attack her hull with a thundering fire, and those who succeed in knocking her to pieces shall certainly be promoted (over others). If the orders are disobeyed and she enters, the least guilty shall be reported to the Emperor, degraded from office and wear the wooden collar; the most guilty shall be punished according to military law (*i.e.*, exiled to the frontiers as slaves to the army). No indulgence will be shown to

pipe, which were made of spelter or lead. Tin was then worth \$20, and lead \$6. Another lot in another boat was found by the purchasers of it to be just the same, and it was taken to the Police Office and melted down to get the tin separated.

There were very many complaints about the defective state of the regulations regarding the disposal of Government land, and the Agricultural Society drew up a petition to the Governor-General, which was brought forward by Mr. Balestier and Mr. Boustead, and was sent to Calcutta through the local authorities. It was as follows:—"That your Petitioners lately formed themselves into a Society for the purpose of promoting and encouraging undertakings of an Agricultural and Horticultural nature generally in this Island.

"That your Petitioners humbly represent that their efforts in the above object are checked by reason that waste and vacant lands on this Island cannot be obtained either by purchase or on long leases.

"That your Petitioners are satisfied, from recent experiments, that the soil of this Island is generally adequate to the successful cultivation of cotton, sugar, pepper, nutmegs, the finer spices, and other articles of tropical produce, of which the increased production would eminently contribute to the general interest of the Settlement.

"That your Petitioners beg to represent that a great portion of the Island is likely to remain, as at present, an impervious jungle, unless a more liberal system as respects the sale or leasing of lands be adopted, which, in the opinion of your Petitioners, is essentially necessary, if the operations of agriculture are ever to be considered as of any importance in promoting its general welfare.

"Your Petitioners, therefore, humbly pray that your Lordship in Council will be pleased to take the premises into consideration, and to authorize the sale or leasing of lands at this Settlement or the leasing thereof for a term not less than ninety-nine years."

On St. Andrew's Day a public dinner was given, and the company finally broke up at sunrise after having partaken of a third supper.

It was towards the end of this year that the new Recorder, Sir William Norris, came into the Straits, and in his first charge to the Grand Jury, he took the opportunity of expressing his preference for the system of a public prosecutor instead of a Grand Jury, as was the case in the Colonies which had formerly been in the possession of the Dutch or French. There was no regular Bar in those days, none of the law agents having been professionally educated, and the Magistrates did all manner of work besides their own. The Recorder said that no permanent good could be expected until the interests of the stipendiary Magistrates were limited to, and their energies concentrated on, the discharge of their duties. The usual sitting Magistrate was a civil servant, who by the occasional absence of his superiors, acted sometimes as Judge, and always as Commissioner of the Court of Requests; and the remaining Justices of the Peace were mercantile men, who attended occasionally when the presence of two Justices was required by law. The Prisoner's Counsel was not allowed to speak on behalf of his client, nor was the prisoner allowed even to have copies of the depositions made by the witnesses against him; he had to rely upon his own memory.

It was at this time that gambier and pepper plantations began to be of importance in Singapore, the yearly production of gambier being about 22,000 piculs, and of pepper about 10,000. The largest gardens producing about 200 piculs of gambier, and 100 of pepper. On a plantation producing from 100 to 110 piculs, the average size of the gardens, six coolies were employed, at wages of \$4 to \$4.50 each. The price of gambier was then about \$3 a picul. Complaint was already being made about the jungle being all cut down for firewood, and about plantations being deserted and allowed to run to lalang grass, while a fresh plantation was made in the nearest favourable site, and further devastation commenced.

Mr. John Palmer who was called "The Father of the Indian Mercantile Community," and whose name has been mentioned in the earliest days of the Settlement, died at Calcutta in 1836, seventy years old.

On the 17th November, Mr. Murchison, Governor of the Incorporated Settlements, left Penang for Calcutta on his final departure for England. Mr. Bonham acted in his stead, and Mr. Wingrove was sworn in as Resident Councillor of Singapore.

On 22nd November Captain John Poynton, the Harbour Master, died, aged 35 years. He had been in the Navy, and then joined the East India Company's service, and served with distinction. In 1822 he was Deputy Harbour Master in Penang, and was in the war at Rangoon in 1824, when Captain Marryat (the novel writer) of H. M. S. *Larne* gave him great credit. In 1832 he was appointed Harbour Master of Malacca, when William Scott was the same in Singapore, and being friends, as everyone was with William Scott, they exchanged places with each other. He left a widow and several children, and W. S. Lorrain and James Stephen settled up his affairs.

On New Year's Day in this year, at Canton, a party of gentlemen had made an attempt to proceed to Whampoa in the steamer *Jardine*, ostensibly for the purpose of having her measured and examined by the Chinese. The whole of the Europeans had tried to obtain permission from the Chinese authorities for the steamer to ply with passengers between Canton, Whampoa, Macao and Lintin. They went up the entrance of the Canton River, and one of the forts at the Bogue commenced firing upon her, but it was supposed the guns were not shotted. Three of the gentlemen got into a boat with four lascars and pulled to the fort, where there was a formidable turnout of the war-boats and junks. They were taken to the Admiral, and asked him to send up for orders that the steamer might be examined there, instead of at Whampoa, but he said his orders were express and he could not do it. He was invited on board, and came with about one hundred attendants, and the curiosity of all was unbounded. He was towed to and fro in his own vessel in the presence of thousands of spectators, and said he was quite satisfied it was only a passenger vessel, and unarmed, but he could not disregard his orders. As soon as the Chinese had left the vessel, she returned to Lintin, and the passengers proceeded to Canton in sailing boats. At night the forts at the Bogue were still firing, and the war junks exchanging signals and rockets and making much ado about nothing.

that after the first year, the increased number of passengers would enable it to pay pretty well. It is hoped that the Government of India will pass an Act limiting the liability of the subscribers to the amount of the sum subscribed, as is to be done for the Association in Calcutta for building the Bonded Warehouses. If such an Act cannot be obtained, it is proposed to make it one of the fundamental rules of the Association, that should the debts ever exceed a certain portion of the Joint-Stock funds, the Association should be at once dissolved, and its affairs wound up. It would be made incumbent on the directors to publish quarterly a statement of the accounts. The amount of the shares is fixed at 600 Rupees each, and would be called for in three or four instalments, with intervals of two or three months between the payment of each instalment."

This was followed in March, 1838, by Messrs. Syme & Co., being appointed Agents of the New Bengal Steam Fund, and up to that time 2,475 shares had been subscribed for in England and India by 706 individuals and firms, and it was proposed to put on a small steamer between Bombay and Socotra to complete a regular mail every fortnight between England and India. The end of this was that, in 1841, the Committee of the New Bengal Steam Fund made an agreement with the East India and Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Companies, and the Shareholders took a transfer of their shares to the P. & O. Company, and that important undertaking arrived at a definite point, and held its first half-yearly meeting in that year.

A buffalo started off in a furious state one Saturday evening, and after injuring a number of persons and tossing Mr. Catchick, the Armenian Priest, and goring him severely, it attacked a pony and gharry in St. Andrew's Church compound and killed the pony, and was shot by the police the next day in the jungle, a mile from the town. On St. Andrew's Day, Dr. Montgomerie was Chairman of the Scotch dinner, the Stewards being Messrs. Carnie, Fraser, Charles Spottiswoode (partner in John Purvis & Co.) and Davidson.

Up to this time, no Chinese woman had ever come to Singapore from China, and the newspapers said that, in fact, only two genuine Chinese women were, or at any time had been, in the place, and they were two small-footed ladies who had been, some years before, exhibited in England. The Bugis trade in the season for this year, which lasted from July to November, was 169 boats from Bali and the Celebes, in equal proportion; the total tonnage was nearly 5,000 tons, and the number of men 5,038.

Mr. Thomas Scott and Mr. Charles Spottiswoode joined Mr. John Purvis in December and the firm was then called John Purvis & Co.

In this year Mrs. Whittle had a Boarding and Day School in North Bridge Road, the charges for Boarders were \$12 and for day Scholars \$5 a month.

In this year Mr. Benjamin Peach Keasberry came to Singapore. He was the youngest of the three sons of Colonel Keasberry, who was appointed Resident of Tegal, in Java, during the British occupation. Mr. Keasberry was born at Hyderabad in India 1811. His father died when he was a few years old, and the widow married a merchant in

CHAPTER XXVI.

1838—1839

1838.

IN January a number of small lots of ground on the northern side of Brass Bassa Road were sold by the Government at auction under the New Land Regulations, the term of 999 years having been abandoned. The longest term for any of these leases was 99 years, with a proviso that substantial buildings should be erected; or for 60 years when the nature of the building was left to the option of the purchaser. The result of reducing the term was that only one-third was realized of the price for which such land had been sold six or seven years before under a system of permanent leases, as they were called, for 999 years. In consequence of the defective state of the communication between the locality of the lots that were sold and the mercantile part of the town, the newspaper urged that the money received from the sale should be applied to local improvement.

This change in the regulations had been made by Mr. W. R. Young, the Land Commissioner who was sent from India. There were many complaints about the great expense to the Settlement, Mr. Young's salary alone being Rs. 3,000 a month; and about the futile result of his proceedings. The Bengal Government had been asked to allow waste jungle land to be cleared and planted, and at a great expense sent the Commissioner to say that it would be allowed on payment of an annual quit-rent for 20 years, and the land would then be resumed by Government, which created much dissatisfaction. Mr. John Crawford wrote a very long letter on the subject to the East India and China Association which was reprinted in the *Free Press* on 11th October.

The old question of a gambling farm was raised again in this year and was advocated by the press, one of the principal grounds being the connivance of the police; for the paper said that if it was otherwise the whole force must have been blind, as a short walk in town would show twenty shops where gambling was carried on almost openly every night.

Small-pox was very bad in the middle of the year, over three hundred persons dying within three months, and it was proposed to establish a Vaccination Society, which the Recorder suggested in his charge to the Grand Jury, referring to the benefit vaccination had conferred on the population of Ceylon.

In June, the Chamber of Commerce petitioned the House of Parliament against the heavy duty on tin imported into Great Britain from the Straits. The quantity of tin exported to London and Liverpool in 1837, had been 10,688 cwt.

In July, the steamer *Diana* left for Malacca and Penang, and it is a curious sign of the times that complaints were made by some of

the merchants that they had not heard of her intended departure and had missed the opportunity to write. So it was suggested that it would be a good plan to circulate a notice among the merchants when a steamer was intended to leave. The *Diana* was the first steamer employed in the Straits; and besides going after pirates, for which Captain Congalton became very famous, she took the Recorder on circuit; so the views of Singapore became quite changed about the utility of steam-vessels, the paper remarking that "the use of the *Diana* afforded signal example of the advantageous and useful purposes for which steam-vessels could be employed in the Straits and that it was desirous that it should be extended and its powers more variously employed in every direction round Singapore. By means of steam-vessels the influence round the Peninsula might be strengthened, so as to be used at all times with benefit and effect; while commerce would increase under the security which it would afford; and steam navigation appeared to the writer to open up prospects, both political and commercial, embracing the most happy results."

In August the Government authorised the building of a new bridge to supersede the old bridge which had been so troublesome; it was to be placed further up the river, near where the Powder Magazine was then standing, the road at the foot of Government Hill (now called Hill Street) being intended to lead across it. It was expected to be completed in eighteen months.

In September the Chamber of Commerce succeeded after some delay in getting the Government to allow letters for England to be received at the Post Office for transmission by the overland Mails *via* India. The postage through India was paid here and the steam postage was collected in England.

The following are some passages from a letter written by Mr. Waghorn to the merchants here and in China about his proposed scheme for the overland route and mails to China:—"The time then is come for you to establish a chain of steam communication between Canton and Galle, and thus identify and connect China with the Calcutta line at that place. There are many advantages attendant upon such an establishment, not only to your own commercial pursuits but also to every other relation connected between Europe and China, all so evident to the politician, merchant, and individual, that it would be loss of time my dilating or dwelling upon them. I therefore will at once go to the outline of a plan, in my opinion, best adapted for the outset of steam navigation between China and England. One vessel is sufficient to begin with, making quarterly trips between Galle and Canton, in dates suited to meet the Calcutta steamer at Galle. Such a vessel should be about 800 tons, with engines of 220 horse power, and space for 100 tons of valuable freight, touching both ways at Singapore for fuel, letters, passengers, &c., &c. Raise £50,000 in shares, to pay for this first vessel, and for a year's coal at Galle, Singapore and Canton. Let this vessel be built by first rate builders and fitted by a first rate engineer; let any future vessels that you may be disposed to put upon the line be exactly upon the same principal and size, &c., &c., so that what is serviceable for one of your steam-vessels may always be applied to the others.

"Of course, the Calcutta line cannot long remain with one solitary steam-vessel between there and Suez. Another and another will soon be put on, and after they are, it will be for yourselves to put on a second vessel, and have more frequent trips between you and Galle. Java, as a matter of course, will connect herself with your line at Singapore, so will New Holland, and by-and-bye Australia, and many other places in the East. Steam navigation has already added as much, perhaps more, to England's greatness, than any other science, except education, that God has given to man. Its advantages to our Chinese connections are yet to be practically developed; in my opinion the sociality it will bring about, will, ere some thirty years hence, induce a British Viceroy of India to pay a visit of friendship by steam to His Celestial Majesty in China.

"When the writer began his advocacy of steam navigation between England and India, he found the Directors of the East India Company opposed to anything of that nature with India. He found Her Majesty's Postal Department averse to steam-vessels as packets. He found the Admiralty of opinion that the Government thought of doing away with theirs, because they were not safe in bad weather. He found himself deemed a visionary, nay, a madman, by the Government Officials, for maintaining that steamers could go easily in 50 days between India and England, *via* the Red Sea. It must not be surprising if some little egotism has crept into his own opinions, now that he has lived to see the matter compassed with ease in 40 days, and speedily it will be reduced three days more in Egypt, when the Government and Company do the needful in that Country.

"The above statement is made to give you an earnest of his future labours, to assist and devote himself to such an object with China, as in like manner he devoted himself to get it to India. Having seen it done to India, he now looks onwards to China, and hopes to see you all "doing" towards its being done, between Canton and London in 55 days, *via* Galle. My wish is to be entrusted with placing a first steam-vessel between Galle and Canton (as I would call at Galle on the way out) to bring you the first mail by the Red Sea. All this would be gratifying to me, and I particularly wish to be instrumental in doing it."

The Singapore Community continued to bestir themselves on the subject of steam communication, and the following is a report of a public meeting that was held on the subject:—"At a public meeting of the inhabitants of Singapore held at the Reading Room on Monday, the 17th December, 1838, for the purpose of taking into consideration the suggestion of the Madras Committee for establishing a steamer between Ceylon, the Straits, and China, in connection with steamers to be established between India and Suez, in the event of the comprehensive scheme not being carried into effect, Mr. W. D. Shaw having been called to the Chair, the following Resolutions were unanimously carried:—

First.—That this meeting views with feelings of satisfaction the disposition on the part of the Bengal and Madras Committees to cooperate cordially on the subject of steam communication between India and England.

Second.—That in the event of the comprehensive scheme (namely, an unbroken communication by steam between Calcutta and London, *via* Suez) not being carried into effect, the Madras plan for forming a Company to perfect the communication on this side of the Isthmus, is the best that could, under the circumstances, be adopted.

Third.—That this meeting, from such a view of existing circumstances as they are enabled to take, are of opinion that the establishment of a branch steamer between Galle, the Straits, and China, would eventually succeed.

Fourth.—That a Committee be formed for the purpose of procuring every information relative to the establishment of steam communication between Point de Galle, the Straits, and China, with a view to ascertain how far the undertaking would be likely to succeed with reference to the outlay and probable returns, and for the purpose of corresponding generally with the Committees of Bengal and Madras.

Fifth.—That the said Committee consist of the following seven gentlemen, three to form a quorum:—

Dr. Montgomerie, Messrs. Balestier, Napier, Connolly, Boustead, Brennan and MacDonald.

In August a waterspout passed over the harbour and town, dismasting one ship and sinking another and carrying off the corner of the roof of a house in its passage landward. It is referred to in 3 Logan's Journal, page 628.

1839.

In this year, we find the first account of the complete New Year's Day Sports on shore and on the water, which did not differ much from those of the present day, except that it was then a day set apart by the mercantile community to amuse the natives only.

The following was the account of the Sports in the *Free Press*. "The European Gentlemen of the Settlement have for some time back observed the laudable practice of ushering in the New Year with sports and pastimes among the native population, in which suitable rewards are appropriated to those who compete. Boat-racing is the most favourite and most attractive of these diversions. Indeed it is remarked how very few games or exercises of an active and athletic nature the Malays have; even boat-racing, as a sport, is an exotic; and the only games peculiar to them appear to be a sort of foot-ball and kite-flying, the latter being an exercise practised in various ways in many parts of the civilized world, in a manner of which the poor Malays have not the smallest idea. In their sampans, however, whether pulling or sailing, they beat in their own waters every competitor. The first race was a pulling match, the reward for the winner was \$15. The next was a sailing match between Malay sampans, about ten of them mustering for the race. They made a beautiful start of it: their long light, sharp hulls, cutting through the water under a fresh breeze in the best style—

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Or the swan through the summer sea.'

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of a hundred dollars, besides having sold the flesh of the animal itself to the Chinese, Klings, &c., (among whom its virtues are much celebrated) for six fanams a catty, by which they realised about seventy dollars more."

In June new regulations were issued as to the occupation of Agricultural land. Leases were offered for twenty years, renewable for thirty years at the option of the lessee, but free for two years, then three years at four annas an acre, five years at eight annas, and afterwards at one rupee an acre a year. It was said that such short leases did not give any encouragement to agricultural undertakings.

Mr. Balestier's godown on the river bank was robbed by a sailor, presumably an American, who secreted himself in the godown after he had been shipped before the Consul in the office on that day by the Master of an American Vessel in the Roads. He robbed a drawer of about \$100, and was trying to open the iron chest (primitive safe) when he was heard. It was about nine o'clock and bright moonlight. He made his escape over the roof and dropped into the mangroves on the river side, when all trace of him was lost. Two days afterwards his corpse, fully dressed except his shoes, which he had left on the roof, was found among the piles of the new bridge which was being built. He proved to be a notorious fellow who had been discharged from jail some time before.

On the 30th October, the H. C. S. vessel *Nemesis* arrived, being the first steamer round the Cape. She was 168 feet long, 29 feet beam, 650 tons and 120 horse power. She carried two 32 pdr. guns, and a crew of fifty seamen. She was nearly flat bottomed, and could be lightened to four feet, but had two wooden false keels of six feet depth, one aft and one forward, which could be let down through the bottom of the vessel. The paddle floats could be unshipped for sailing. She had left Portsmouth on 8th March, and was a show vessel at the ports she had called at, the Governor of the Cape and a large party having visited her there. She was the first of her construction which had rounded the Cape, being of iron, and greatly astonished the natives of Singapore. She was a famous vessel against the pirates in Singapore afterwards.

In December in this year, cholera broke out in Malacca, and soon reached Singapore. At Malacca, the Revd. Josiah Hughes, the Residency Chaplain, and the Revd. John Evans, the Principal of the Anglo-Chinese College, died of it within three days of each other.

There was no jollification at all on St. Andrew's Day this year, which caused some remarks in the newspaper. There is an advertisement in the paper, in December, by Boustead, Schwabe & Co., that the letter bag of a sailing vessel for London was to be closed at their office at 4 p.m. on a Saturday afternoon, and another that the books of the Singapore Reading Room were to be sold by auction. But it was proposed to start it again subsequently. The paper for this year contains many references to the advances of Russia towards India, and to their proposed expedition to Khiva.

In December, 1840, the total population of the Island and its dependencies amounted to 39,681, including both the floating population and the military force of the Station, and the body of Convicts

"The town is so placed that no amount of expenditure would make it even tolerably secure, much less afford any shelter or protection to the shipping. A single ship of war could with ease and safety lay the town in ruins, and no fortifications can be constructed so as to completely prevent this. The only effectual method of preserving the town of Singapore in the event of its being threatened by a hostile force would be by stationing a sufficient number of men-of-war for its protection. We sincerely hope, however, that no occasion may ever arise to make it necessary to take any such precautions, but that Singapore may continue to be, as heretofore, a place devoted to commerce and the medium of diffusing the manufactures of civilised and peaceful Europe amongst the surrounding nations, and that, as she has hitherto been only the scene of peaceable and unwarlike commerce, so she may long remain unvisited by the horrors and miseries of wars."

The bridges and roads were in very bad condition at this time, and the paper was full of complaints, so the Sheriff called a public meeting of the inhabitants to express a general opinion upon the subject and to memorialize the Government.

The paper spoke of the state of affairs as follows:—"The roads are daily becoming more impassable, so that in the course of another fortnight, especially if the present rainy weather continues they will be quite useless. Bridges are giving way in all directions, and on several roads all passage is prevented. Meanwhile the Superintendent of Roads pursues his operations on the Government hill heedless alike of the complaints and sufferings of the public, and regardless of all suggestions that he should mend his ways. It would seem, too, as if the works on the hill were destined to be of some duration, as we observed on Sunday that the mound, on the construction of which the convicts have been employed for several weeks past, had given way in one place, and they have ever since been employed in filling up the gap. If the country roads are not repaired speedily we would advise the assessment payers to stop the supplies, as really we cannot suppose that Government would attempt to enforce the collection of funds for a purpose to which they are not applied."

In November, Messrs. Boustead, Schwabe & Co. issued a notice that they had opened a house in China in connection with Messrs. Butler, Sykes & Co., in Manila, and Messrs. Sykes, Schwabe & Co., in Liverpool. The partners in their several establishments continuing as before.—Mr. Edward Boustead, managing in China, Mr. Benjamin Butler at Manila, Mr. Gustav Christian Schwabe at Liverpool, and Mr. Adam Sykes at Singapore.

St. Andrew's Day was celebrated by a dinner, of which the following was an account:—"On Thursday, the 30th November, the sons of St. Andrew assembled in great force at Dutronquoy's to drink punch in honour of their patron Saint. We counted some 75 gentlemen at table, which is not so bad for Singapore, and we should decidedly say from the circumstance that old 'Andrew' was *looking up*.—Dr. Montgomerie was in the chair, and Mr. William Napier, Croupier. Dr. Montgomerie in his usual able manner proposed the following toasts:—The Queen, the Pious Memory of St. Andrew, the

Navy (acknowledged by the Hon'ble Captain Hastings), the Governor and the land we live in, our guests, the President of the United States (acknowledged by Mr. Balestier). Mr. William Napier, with an appropriate speech—the "Land o' Cakes," the Army (acknowledged by Captain Philpot), Memory of Burns and Scott, King of the French (acknowledged by Mr. Chaigneau). Memory of Raffles, &c. Mr. M. F. Davidson,—Memory of Wallace and Bruce. Mr. G. G. Nicol,—The Kirk of Scotland. Mr. Charles Dyce,—Mrs. Butterworth and the ladies. Many excellent songs were sung. We left the company busy brewing the mountain dew into punch, and listening to the enlivening strains of the beautiful band of the 4th Regiment which was kindly allowed to attend the party."

The following curious account of a discovery of old cannon balls in Johore appeared in the newspaper:—

"A number of iron and stone cannon balls to the amount of 240 were, a few days since, discovered at Johore buried about eight feet in the ground. We have seen two of these balls, and to judge from the appearance of the iron one, it must have been laid a long time in the ground, being much corroded; this ball is about 13½ inches or thereby in circumference, the stone one about 16½ inches. How these balls found their way to Johore is a matter of considerable uncertainty, but the most probable conjecture seems to be that they had been brought there by some foreign invader. We find that in 1608 the town of Johore was attacked and burnt by the Portuguese, who indeed had long before visited Johore in a hostile manner, as about the year 1538, Paul de Gama attacked it but was defeated and slain by the Lacsamana, and shortly afterwards Don Estevan de Gama took and plundered the town. Between the years 1588 and 1606, the Dutch visited Johore, and entered into a friendly treaty with the Rajah. It is very likely that the Dutch on this occasion presented the Malays with cannons and ammunition, which the latter no doubt would be eager to acquire, considering that they were in a constant state of warfare with the Portuguese, who had driven them from Malacca. An old iron cannon which, we believe, has long been an object of great reverence amongst the Malays, and which was lying on a hill near the former capital of Johore, has been within these few days sent by his Highness the Tomungong to the authorities here. It is of very ancient appearance and much broken at the mouth, so that it may have very likely burst at some period in its history. On it are the letters E. R. with a large rose between them. This would seem to prove that it was of English manufacture, probably of the time of Queen Elizabeth, but how it found its way to Johore, unless through the agency of the Portuguese or Dutch, we cannot conjecture. The iron ball above alluded to fits this gun, and they may have both been brought at the same time."

Bukit Timah was first made accessible at the end of this year, and the following was written about it at the time:—"The other day we paid a visit to Bukit Timah, which, thanks to the labours of the Superintendent of Roads, is now accessible by a good carriage-way reaching to the top of the hill, where Captain Stevenson has likewise constructed a small hut, provided with table and benches for the accommodation of visitors. We were quite delighted with the view

spirit of genuine liberality. It has made, indeed, a European reputation—among all, I mean, who turn their attention to the politics, commerce, or social progress of the British Settlements in that remote quarter of the world.” Another writer said in that year:—“The *Singapore Free Press* is the most noted paper in the East. The central position from which it is published enables it to command the best intelligence from China, Australia and the Islands, for which reason a collection of the late numbers is the most acceptable present in an Indian port. Its liberal and rational views, just and moderate arguments, and the total absence of any little party spirit or prejudice, give it higher claims on our esteem, and render it decidedly one of the first British Colonial Journals.”

On the 15th July, appeared the first number of the *Straits Times*. It had been advertised as a new Journal to be issued on the morning of Tuesday, the 15th July, and to be continued weekly. The printing material had been ordered from England by Mr. Marterius Thaddeus Apcar, of Apcar and Stephens, of Singapore, with the intention of starting a newspaper with Mr. Edwards as Editor; but he had died, and then the firm of Apcar and Stephens suspended payment, and Mr. Gilbert McMicking was the Assignee of their estate. Mr. Catchick Moses, to oblige Mr. Apcar, took over the printing material, and Mr. R. C. Woods came from Bombay looking for employment, having been obliged to leave there, and started the paper as Editor. It was not a financial success at first, and Mr. Moses, after a year or so gave up his connection with it, letting the price he had paid to Mr. Apcar go against the deficiency, and Mr. Woods carried it on. It consisted of eight folio pages, the subscription was \$1.75 a month, or \$16 a year. The following is the commencement and some passages from the opening article:—

“Good morning to you, kind reader! So you expect from us some declaration of our ‘intentions,’ and the course we intend pursuing in the management of the *Straits Times*? Like a candidate for other honours than those we now seek, we proceed to declare our sentiments, whilst we aver the honourableness of our intentions. We have mounted our *Pegasus*, which is a quiet and well-disposed animal, such indeed as a gentleman of a certain age (like ourselves) ought to ride. We desire to travel smoothly along, and therefore pray the ‘powers that be,’ to keep the road of public economy in an efficient state; never allowing the ruts to get too deep, nor placing obstructions in the middle of the way, because our *Pegasus* is apt to shy, it might kick, or do even greater violence. We have said our quadruped possesses a good disposition, may it not be *crabbed*. What Tristram Shandy said of his *Neddy*, so say we of ours:—‘It is, if you recollect, a quiet beast, he has scarce a hair or lineament of the *ass* about him.’ We have gone astride on him frequently ‘to canter it away from the cares and solitudes of life’—now jogging, trotting, galloping; now ‘going it’ with the fleetness of an Arab. The *beau ideal* of a good-tempered animal, our *Pegasus* will be found to prick his ears and laugh or neigh as modestly as Aunt Cleary—but no more. We promise that its past training will not altogether be lost upon it, and, in the disinterested sympathy of our hearts, wish ourselves a pleasant ride of it.”

In the middle of November, it turned into an issue twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays, of four folio pages; but in January, 1849, it returned to its former mode of publication and appeared once a week only, on Wednesdays.

There was some correspondence in the newspaper about the keeping of St. Andrew’s Day, which led to a Ball and Supper at the New Public Rooms (no doubt, including the new theatre) at which Messrs. Charles Carnie, C. A. Dyce, Lewis Fraser, Alexander Guthrie, Dr. Robert Little, R. McEwen, William Napier, Archibald and Charles Spottiswoode, and J. Stephen were the Stewards. The paper remarked that the Raffles Club, which had existed in the early days from 1825 to 1835, ought to be revived, as they used to have very animated festivities on the anniversary of the Settlement and other annual celebrations.

On the 25th November the Theatre which had been built by Subscription at the Assembly Rooms at the foot of Fort Canning, was opened with a comedy and a farce. The prices were \$2 and \$1, and the performance began at 8 o’clock. There is no description of the building, but the paper said that the stage was larger than that at the old theatre, which was in Dutrenquoy’s Hotel, the Drop Scene, painted by one of the Amateurs, most likely Mr. Charles Dyce, was a view of Singapore from Sandy Point. There was an Amateur Orchestra, which was highly praised.

The following passages are part of an account of the progress of Singapore in the year 1845, which was written at the close of the year:—

“A new importance has been attached to Singapore during the past year from its having become the focus where steamers from different places periodically congregate with news from Europe and various quarters of the Far East. During the present year, these ramifications are likely to be increased by lines to Australasia and Manila. The Calcutta line, though for the present apparently suspended, will not, in all probability, be long unoccupied either by the Peninsular and Oriental Navigation Company or some other association, who will not fail to derive a handsome profit from it. The discovery of extensive beds of good coal in Borneo, adapted for the use of steamers, is of much importance, and will greatly facilitate the perfecting of the arrangements for steam navigation in this quarter of the world. Though nothing definite has transpired as to the results of Capt. Bethune’s recent mission to Borneo, there is every reason to believe that during the present year a British Settlement will be formed in Borneo.

It is a subject of much congratulation to find, on casting a glance over our columns for the past year, that there exists almost no record of any cases of piracy in our harbour similar to those which, a year or two ago, were so frequent in occurrence and so detrimental to our native trade. This change has been brought about by the activity of Her Majesty’s and the East India Company’s vessels of war, which have always been on the alert, and is, no doubt, also greatly due to the terrible lessons read to the pirates of Borneo during the past and the preceding years by

Wharves on the main island, but a wiseacre of a Naval Officer who came a few years after him managed to persuade the Admiralty to put their wharf on Pulo Brani, on the opposite island, where there are cross tides, and dangerous mooring. Perhaps it was as well for the trade of the place, and the great steam traffic that has grown up since, that Captain Keppel's advice was disregarded by the Admiralty, or a few men of war would have occupied the ground that is now invaluable for shipping. The Navy never use the site on Pulo Brani, but go to the Dock Company's Wharves on the site which Captain Keppel originally advised. The *Meander* was in Singapore for several months in both 1848 and 1849, and the Admiral's book contains many references to what he did, and to former residents.

The following appeared in the *Free Press* on 4th September, it seems to have been somewhat prophetic of after times: "At various times we have had occasion to find fault with the Peninsular and Oriental Company and their behaviour towards the public, and, from all we can learn, the monopoly which they have acquired between England and her Eastern possessions has not in any way quickened their desire to meet the public convenience. On the contrary it has the usual effect of monopoly, an exclusive concern for their own interests, and a complete disregard for that of others. The passengers from China and the Straits especially suffer from the conduct of the Company, which having secured their money, gives itself no further trouble about them. There is no accommodation reserved for passengers from the East in the Red Sea steamers, so that if the steamer from Calcutta and Madras is full, the unlucky Far Easterns must wait in Ceylon for a month before they can have the chance of going on; and for this heavy expense the Company, as far as we are aware, make no allowance. Further, a person taking a first class passage is only entitled to a cabin on the orlop deck lighted by a scuttle, which in general is only opened in the Red Sea, and if there is an empty cabin on the main deck, £50 in addition is charged, or the cabin is locked up and kept empty. These facts may serve as illustration of the way in which the Company do business, and of the care they bestow upon the comfort of those who pay them all they choose to ask for passage."

A few weeks afterwards a correspondent asked the Editor why the P. and O. charged \$25 passage money from Penang to Singapore, and \$50 from Singapore to Penang; and the Editor gave it up.

The *Free Press* contained the following account of the celebration of St. Andrew's day, and of an exhibition of fireworks at New Harbour in the same week:—

"St. Andrew's day was celebrated on Thursday last by the patriotic sons of Scotia in Singapore with an enthusiasm and devotion which proved that they were scions of no degenerate race. A number met at dinner in the public rooms in the evening, where they gave a free round to their feelings of nationality, and the song and pledge went round to a late hour. A number of eloquent and inspiring addresses were delivered by different gentlemen during the evening and the whole passed off with that cordiality and unanimity of sentiment and feeling which give the chief charm to such festive meetings."

"The Tumonggong received the company in a rustic pavilion which had been erected at Pantei Chermin, on a rising ground overlooking the New

Harbour, and it was decorated with much taste. The building was soon filled by such an assemblage of the 'beauty and fashion' of the station, as we never remember to have witnessed before. The arrival of the Governor and Mrs. Butterworth, announced by the firing of a salute, was the signal for the commencement of the exhibition, and then firework succeeded firework in rapid succession, rockets, blue-lights, flower-pots, wheels, ducks, and last, though not least, the Chinese drums with their minute population, who spend their brief existence in public in the uncomfortable position of suspension by the pigtail surrounded by an atmosphere of squibs and crackers that would choke even a Salamander.

"The views interiorly and exteriorly were most striking, comprising as they did every degree of civilization from the wild *orang laut*, the excited Malay, the solemn Arab, and the grinning celestial, to the pale European beauty. A supper was provided for those who wished to partake of it, and was done due credit to, and about ten o'clock the whole party betook themselves to their carriages, and then came the tug of war. Many were the mishaps which ensued. The road, previously not in a very first-rate condition, had got dreadfully cut up by the passage of the numerous vehicles going to the village, and in returning many carriages fairly stuck fast, including, we have heard, those of high functionaries, who were thus, for once in their lives, practically convinced of the inconveniences which the public suffer when the roads get out of order. The only material injury we have heard of as resulting from this state of the roads, besides broken harness, strained vehicles and jaded horses, was that inflicted on the company by being deprived of the pleasure of listening to the music of the band of the twenty-first Regiment, it having been found impossible to get the instruments through. Notwithstanding these little drawbacks, however, those present were much delighted with the night's exhibition, and grateful to His Highness for the trouble he took in thus providing for their amusement."

The paper remarked on the improvements that had been made at New Harbour by the Tumonggong, as follows:—"The great changes, and in most instances improvements, which have taken place of late years in Singapore, both as regards the architecture of the town, and the cultivation of the country, are nowhere so strikingly manifested as at Teluk Blangah, the residence of His Highness the Tumonggong. There, within a few years past, but especially in more recent times, the whole aspect of things has been changed, and everywhere improved. A few years ago, Teluk Blangah only presented the appearance of a very dirty Malay village, the royal residence being merely distinguished from its neighbours by being of brick, and if possible dingier and dirtier than the rest. Now everything has put on a new face. The money, which has flowed so copiously into the Teluk Blangah coffers, through the successful dealings of His Highness and his followers in the gutta trade, has been more judiciously applied than is generally the case when Malays become possessed of a little cash, and instead of being expended on evanescent shows and spectacles, or squandered at the gambling-table and cock-pit, it has been laid out in improving the outward appearance of Teluk Blangah. His Highness has built for himself several extremely neat houses and *baleis* in the European style, which are gay with green and white paint, and many of his followers have done the same, their smart, green venetianed, tile-