

PART IV.

BRITISH POSSESSIONS IN THE EAST INDIAN ISLANDS.

BRITISH NORTH BORNEO ; SARAWAK ; LABUAN ; BRITISH NEW GUINEA.

The British Possessions in the East Indian Islands consist of the territory of British North Borneo, administered by a chartered company, the territory of Sarawak on the north-west Coast of Borneo, governed by a British Rajah, the Island of Labuan and part of the Island of New Guinea, both of the latter being Crown Colonies.

British North Borneo.

Borneo lies between Java and the Philippine Islands, and forms the South-Eastern border of the China Sea. The territory under the jurisdiction of the British North Borneo Company comprises the whole of the northern part of the island of Borneo together with all the islands within a distance of three leagues, including those of Banguey and Balambangan. The area is about 40,000 square miles, with a coast-line of 1,000 miles. The form of Government is practically the same as in a British Crown colony, with local enactments to meet local requirements. The population, estimated at 170,000, is made up of Malays, Bajans, Sulus, Filipinos, various tribes of Dusuns of the interior, and about 12,000 Chinese, some on the coast and some planting estates.

The trade and commerce of North Borneo is of considerable importance, as seen from the following table, which gives the value of the imports into, and exports from, the territory for the years 1896, 1897, 1898, 1899.

Trade of British North Borneo (including Treasure).

				1896.	1897.	1898.	1899.*
				\$		\$	\$
Imports	...	...	...	1,882,000	1,887,000	2,419,000	2,457,000
Exports	...	...	...	2,474,000	2,942,000	2,886,000	3,440,000
Total Trade	...			4,356,000	4,829,000	5,305,000	5,897,000

NOTE.—The currency is the Mexican dollar = about 2s.

The report by the British Acting Consular Agent at Sandakan for the year 1898 states that the decrease in the value of the exports for 1898 as compared with 1897 was due entirely to a decrease in tobacco ; if that be omitted the figures would show an increase of 267,064 dols. The increase in trade has been steady for years past, and it may be noted that in 1891 the total trade

* See note on page 80.