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# PREFACE.

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THE literature that deals fully with the Early History of Penang is out of print, and such works that are still extant are unfortunately not accessible to the general public.

We have strung together innumerable notes and have endeavoured to make them into a more or less continuous history.

We have, wherever possible, made use of the original wording and phrases with all the peculiarities of language of the various personages that made history.

We wish to take this opportunity of acknowledging and expressing our thanks for the information we found in the publications of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, the *Life of Sir Stamford Raffles* by D. C. Boulger, *The Law Reports of the Supreme Court of the Straits Settlements* by J. W. Norton-Kyshe, (late Deputy Registrar of the Supreme Court. S.S.) Registrar of the Supreme Court, Hongkong and *The Founders of Penang and Adelaide* by A. Francis Steuart.

We also wish to thank Mr. A. H. Lemon, Acting Collector of Land Revenue, Penang, Mr. E. Keilch, then Acting Curator to the Museum, Taiping, Perak, and to Mr. Fred. Aeria, Financial Assistant of Police, Penang, for their kind assistance in placing at our disposal various books and official publications.

To a generous public we give our history trusting that, in spite of shortcomings, they will discern an earnest desire to encourage and stimulate the study of local history.

THE AUTHORS.

Penang and Durban, 1905.

# THE EARLY HISTORY OF PENANG.

## CHAPTER I.

### Early Voyages.

**T**HE first mention of Penang in the history of Malaya is in the year 1591. We find after searching the records at the India Office that Captain Lancaster, afterwards Sir James Lancaster, was one of the first English voyagers in these waters, in his ship the *Edward Bonaventure*, having come for purposes of trade. But to Francis Drake belonged the honour of being the first Englishman to bring his ship to the East Indies, for he made his memorable trip round the world twelve years previously.

The *Edward Bonaventure* was one of three ships sent out from England in 1591 to the East to trade with the natives for pepper and other spices, in which Malaya abounded. The expedition reached Zanzibar at the close of 1592, and leaving it in February of the following year did not cast anchor again till June, when the commander found a harbour off Pulau Rimau to the south of the Island of Penang, or Pulau Pinang. Scurvy seems to have been raging on board the ships at the time, as Capt. Lancaster remained at his anchorage till the end of August, losing no less than 26 of the crew from the ravages of scurvy.

It is a singular fact that the very first English trader of Malaya should have found his way direct to this little out-of-the-way and then uninhabited island, which destiny has shown was to become such a famous and prosperous port of call in our time. Capt. Lancaster loaded his ships chiefly with pepper taken from Portuguese and Peguan vessels which he plundered off Perak, where three of them are said to have "laden a cargo of pepper." His own ship and its

two companions were, however, lost. The notes of Lancaster's voyage, and still more the instructive and interesting accounts of the profits to be made, first convinced Englishmen of the great advantages that were to be derived from Malayan trade. Eight years after Lancaster's voyage to Malaya, the famous East India Company was formed with a charter for fifteen years (afterwards extended) chiefly with the object of trading with Malaya; and this Company sent out in 1601 the same captain (now Sir James) Lancaster as "admiral of the vessels," with the celebrated Davis as Pilot. Lancaster first made for the Nicobars and afterwards, when loaded with pepper, sent home two of his ships from Acheen (1602) where he was well received.

## CHAPTER II.

### Francis Light.

In a little country place in Suffolk there was born in the year 1740 a little boy who was to play a most important part in his after life. That boy's name was Francis Light and he received his name at his baptism on December 15th 1740. Nothing appears to be known of young Light's parents. They probably died when he was quite young, as he was adopted and educated by a certain William Negus, a relative of Milton, and son of Colonel Francis Negus, who held a high position at the Court of George I and who acquired the large estates of Dalvingho (Light's birthplace) and Milton, by his marriage with Elizabeth, daughter and heiress of William Churchill, Esq., M.P. of Woodbridge, Patent Printer to the King. Young Light, after his adoption, was sent, like other sons of Suffolk squires, to the Woodbridge Grammar School, but he left