

BORNEO.

SIR JAMES BROOKE AND THE CHINESE.

[FROM THE STRAITS TIMES OF MARCH 21.]

On Tuesday last we issued an Extra, giving an outline of the recent outrages committed by the Chinese at Sarawak, particulars of which were brought from that place by the schooner Good Luck, which sailed on the 21st ult., and arrived on the 10th inst. Although rumours had been current that the Kungsi contemplated resisting the authority of the local government, the latter appear to have treated the matter with indifference. Suddenly, however, a large body, numbering about 200 Chinese, came down the river on and before the 17th February, and at midnight commenced a most determined attack on the Government people and property. They first secured possession of the two forts, one below and the other above the town of Kuchin (the seat of Rajah Brooke's authority), which were only garrisoned by twelve men, and having furnished themselves with all the arms and ammunition in the forts, they proceeded to the work of destruction upon which they had ventured. This was at midnight, when all were asleep. One party made an attack on the residence of Sir James Brooke, whilst the remainder assaulted the houses of Mr. Crookshank, the magistrate, and Mr. Middleton, also a Government official. For some days previous Sir James Brooke was unwell, and was about to proceed to Simunjang, on the Sadong river (the seat of the Borneo Company's operations), for change of air. On the night in question his servant was sleeping in an adjoining room, and under the same roof was residing a young and very promising gentleman, named Nicolets, who had joined the Rajah's circle as a guest within the last twelve months. The surprise and consternation were so great, and the measures of the attacking party so well organised, that all communication between the different European members of the community was impossible. While the Chinese attacked the front of the house, Sir James Brooke succeeded in effecting an extraordinary escape; he passed down the bath-room and swam across a creek near his house, by which means he succeeded in gaining the Malay village; thither also others of the European residents happily reached shortly afterwards. The assailants fired into Sir James Brooke's residence, killed Mr. Nicolets (whose body was burnt in the ruins), plundered the place of every thing of value in their estimation, and then set fire to the building, ruthlessly destroying Sir James Brooke's excellent library and the valuable collection of his whole life—a loss which friend or foe must equally regret. At the house of Mr. Crookshank the assailants met with a firm resistance, but that gentleman was overpowered; he defended his amiable and recently married lady with the utmost gallantry. Mrs. Crookshank was brutally wounded before his eyes, and dragged away when he was no longer able to defend her. Mrs. Crookshank was believed to have been killed, but happily next morning she was found in the jungle. Her wounded body was covered with cocoa-nut leaves. She was removed to the Mission-house, where, under the skilful treatment of the Bishop, the Right Rev. Dr. M'Dougall, she was, at the date of the latest advices, doing well. Mr. Crookshank, after passing the night in the jungle, by some means reached the Mission-house next morning in an almost insensible state. The house of Mr. Middleton (also in the service of Sir James Brooke) was attacked; his house was fired, and two of his children unhappily perished in the flames. Mr. Wellington, a metallurgist, in the service of the Borneo Company, a guest of Mr. Middleton's, was killed, and his head cut off, probably under the mistaken supposition that he also was in the service of the Sarawak Government, as the head was given up on the following day. The Government treasury was plundered of everything it contained, which we regret to hear was considerable; nearly every European had placed his money there as the most secure place. About 10,000 dollars belonging to the Borneo Company were carried off. In the course of a few hours a large amount of Government property was destroyed.

Next day the Chinese Kungsi stated that they had no hostile intentions against any one but persons connected with the Government. Indeed, they expressed a wish that Bishop M'Dougall and Messrs. Rappell and Helms should act as their chieftains, whilst they unreservedly declared their determination to destroy Sir James Brooke and every one in his service. During the day negotiations were opened with the Chinese, and it was arranged that they should depart, unmolested by the Malays, with the plunder they had obtained. At four p.m. they started up the river in their boats.

The immediate cause of this frightful attempt to destroy the whole of the Government European authorities at Sarawak is stated to be the stringent measures which Sir James Brooke has found it expedient to adopt to prevent opium smuggling. Some heavy fines had been levied on the smugglers, the amount being paid by the Kungsi; and latterly some of the offenders had been imprisoned. But these seem scarcely sufficient to account for such ruthless slaughter and destruction, not sparing age or sex.

[FROM THE STRAITS TIMES, OF MARCH 23.]

The British steamer Sir James Brooke, belonging

to the Borneo Company, arrived at Singapore yesterday (Sunday), having left Sarawak on the 19th inst., by which opportunity we have received late and important news, which we hasten to lay before our readers.

It appears that on Sunday, Feb. 22, Sir James Brooke received intelligence of the retirement of the Chinese, whereupon he returned from the Sadong to the Sarawak river, but before he could land the Chinese Kungsi had a second time ventured down the river in great force (between 500 and 600), and with feelings whetted as it were by their late partial success, and yet chagrined at their failure to overturn the Rajah's authority. The return of the Chinese with so large a force somewhat surprised the Rajah, and compelled him to retire or venture a collision with an inadequate force. In the meantime the Kungsi people availed themselves of the time to commit further depredations on the government property. It now became apparent that most extensive means were needed to suppress the advance of the Kungsi people, whose object appeared to be to secure for themselves the entire paramount authority, alike indifferent to brute force, base treachery, or the vilest measures. Under these circumstances Sir James Brooke proceeded to Linga, to secure the co-operation of the chief and the people of that district, but on his way the steamer Sir James Brooke, from Singapore, hove in sight most timely; her arrival was not merely opportune, but the site of her anchorage formed the base of all subsequent operations. Sir James Brooke and his party at once proceeded in the steamer to Kuchin, and soon succeeded in driving the miscreants out of the town. On inquiry and search it was found that the Datoe Bandar was defending himself against the Chinese, amid a cluster of prahus. The Datoe succeeded in recapturing nine sampans (boats) and one of the government prahus (vessels) containing stores, gunpowder, opium, &c.

The body or main force of the Chinese, driven from the town, were finally either cut off by the Dyaks, or were starved in the jungle. At the outset about 100 of the Chinese were killed. The warfare assumed a mode of irregular attack. The Dyaks were let loose, who from a large circuit, battue-like, drove the Chinese into their fastnesses, accompanied by great loss to the retreaters, where they were hemmed in; in other words, there took place a kind of guerilla warfare of the most harassing character, grievously thinning the number of the rebels. Still the Chinese were undaunted; from their stronghold they ventured an attack in five prahus, and commenced ravaging the banks of the river. This was on the 9th March. The Datoe Bandar was stationed in a single prahu at Tangah Lidah (the junction of two rivers), about fifteen miles above Kuchin; meeting the Kungsi in their boats, the Datoe, in his single prahu, offered battle, which the Kungsi declined. Thinking this to be an excellent site the Kungsi landed, and constructed a stockade, which they armed with four guns, and garrisoned by about 250 men with muskets, &c. Believing themselves to be secure, the Chinese very foolishly neglected to secure their boats, which were captured by their opponents. Leaving this war prahu near the stockade, the Datoe chivalrously proceeded to Kuchin in a small canoe boat for assistance. The Datoe hastened to Kuchin to secure reinforcements, and on the 10th of March he returned to the stockades with two large prahus, and some Dyak bangkongs as a reserve. Thus strengthened, the Datoe, with his three prahus, made a dash at the Chinese stockade, where he landed with his party, and carried the place without a repulse. The Chinese in the stockade were cut to pieces; in half an hour they lost from 100 to 120 men; the rest in the stockade, having lost their boats, took to the jungle. We may remark that the defeated party in the stockade consisted of picked men; their principal chiefs were killed in the assault. The effect of this signal attack was complete. A panic seized the Kungsi people, which was eagerly availed of: the Chinese successively fled from Balaida, Siniawan, and Bau. By the night of the 11th of March the Kungsi people were in full retreat towards Sambas, closely followed by bands of Malays, who availed themselves of every opportunity to cut off the stragglers. The Chinese retired in a close body—so close, indeed, that their assailants failed to cause disorder, and made a desperate resistance in the presence of their wives and children.

Had time permitted to have organised a concentrated attack, not an individual would have escaped. As it is, the wretched fugitives are driven into the jungle, where a vast number of them must perish from want and exposure, before they can reach a place of security.

According to the most moderate estimate at least 1,000 Chinese have been killed at the various places, while all the flourishing settlements of the Chinese (except at Kuchin) have been destroyed. The exact number of Chinese who have perished during the retreat it is impossible to say; it must be considerable, since out of a population of 4,000 to 5,000 Chinese belonging to the Kungsi, not more than 2,000 escaped the late retribution, including women and children.

Having thus disposed of the leading events from Sarawak, there are a few matters of both general and local interest which we cannot allow to pass—the omission would be rather unjust, inasmuch as the circumstances are fresh in our memories. It appears that on Feb. 27, when affairs assumed a rather ugly aspect, Mr. Helms (the agent for the Borneo Company) was despatched to Sambas to inform the Dutch authorities how matters stood at Sarawak, and to request assistance. The assistant resident at Sambas expressed great sympathy, and immediately despatched a fast boat to Pontianak, where the chief resident was then staying. The latter without hesitation despatched a war steamer with such soldiers as he could well spare, accompanied by an offer of further assistance, should it be necessary for the protection of British lives and property—an act quite characteristic of our Dutch neighbours. The Dutch war steamer arrived at Sarawak on the 15th inst. (when all was happily over), and after staying three days returned to Sarawak.

On inquiry amongst the chieftains who acted against the Chinese, it was found that their loss did not exceed twelve Malays and Dyaks.

The Chinese residents at Kuchin were completely restored to confidence when the steamer left, and had re-opened their shops. So great, indeed, was their reliance in the stability of the Rajah's Government, that not one of their wives or children was sent away to Singapore in the steamer. A letter received from Sir James Brooke mentions that most of the guns taken by the Kungsi had been recovered, as also a large proportion of the muskets carried away from the forts. The loss by the late outrages chiefly falls on Sir James Brooke and the Government people.

We are right glad to notice that Mrs. Crookshank had nearly recovered from her injuries, and her husband's wounds were doing well. Sir James and the bishop were in good health and spirits.