

FOREIGN AND COLONIAL NEWS.

PENANG.—Little has been done in China by either of the belligerents since the last mail left, but that little shows that the war must be prosecuted with the utmost vigour and with a large force if we would bring it to a speedy termination. But more than this is needed. To make peace before the Canton Chinese have been thoroughly subdued would be to leave matters in a worse state than before, to hold out a perpetual incentive to fresh insults and atrocities, and to provoke further hostilities, each more inveterate and costly than the last. The democratic feeling, always strong in the Kwang-tung Chinese, has been excited to the utmost by the success of the rebellion and the helplessness of the Imperial Government. They have unbounded confidence not only in their numbers but in their warlike skill and craft; and though we may laugh at their pretensions, it is clear that, since the last war, they have made a great advance in handling their guns, and that they have even improved since the present hostilities commenced. They will continue to improve. Their increasing intercourse with Europeans in all directions renders this inevitable. Whether they remain in nominal subjection to the Manchu dynasty or become independent, their power to injure and annoy will now become greater almost from year to year, while there is not the slightest reason to hope that they will become more humane save by slow degrees. We repeat that the whole Chino-Tibetan race are still savages at heart. Pride, selfishness, and ruthlessness are as predominant in the most civilised as in the most barbarous. The English newspapers are horrified to learn that the Governor-General of Kwang-tung in the course of his vice-royalty has put to death many thousands of his countrymen without the least compunction. But when was it ever said that mercy formed one of the virtues of a Chinese, a Burmese, or a Siamese, when possessed of power? The truth is that they are not only perfectly callous to the sufferings, of every human being who is not embraced within the narrow circle of their sympathies, but have a positive pleasure in the pain and agony of all who come within the wide range of their enmities and prejudices. Undoubtedly there are many individual and even large local exceptions, but history and what has passed under the eyes of this generation prove that the national character, with many good traits, has the savage taint still deep. The connection between the Kwang-tung people and European nations, and especially the English, has grown so intimate and complex, that the question of predominance must be now decided once for all. The former can be perfectly well-behaved when interest and fear suppress the working of the savage element. The necessity of the case dictates our course. With or without the co-operation of other civilised powers, we must prosecute the war till the Kwang-tung people are thoroughly subjugated. To patch up a peace with the Government, while the people, who condemn it and refuse to obey it and carry out its treaties, remain hostile and unquelled, would be weakness and folly. The future position of Englishmen, not only in China but in our own colonies and wherever the Chinese preponderate in numbers, is now the real point at issue between the English and the Kwang-tung people. The Chinese are swarming in the seas and islands to the south and west of China. They are numerous and influential in Cochin-China, Siam, Burmah, and Tibet. Through the constant annual emigration and the national associations, the prevailing feeling in the mother-country is propagated throughout all the colonial communities. Not one of these, however

long established, has, in its principal elements, ceased to be thoroughly Chinese. The same secret societies that wield the masses in Kwang-tung may, at any time, make their power felt in Hongkong, Singapore, Pinang, Ava, and wherever a Chinese community exists, because in every such community branches of them are in full activity. In the Straits the Chinese have even seduced a portion of the Malay and Indian population to join these societies, and wherever they have much intercourse with the natives the respect and fidelity of the latter to the Government is weakened. Thus in Pinang we have just found that certain portions of the Malays are little to be depended on, because they have been corrupted by constant intercourse with Chinese, have adopted Chinese vices and insolence, and own a merely nominal allegiance to Mahomedanism. The natives of India were last week leagued with the Chinese or afraid of them. So long as thousands of Chinese come here annually from Kwang-tung, Canton must continue to give the tone to the feeling of our Chinese population towards the Government and Europeans. It is at Canton that the race must be coerced into a friendly and respectful demeanour. It is nonsense to talk of permanently alienating them. Nations in their condition of civilization—like truculent bullies in more humanized societies—are made more savage by success and concession. Their arrogance and cruelty proceed from the false notion of immemorial superiority to all the rest of mankind. Convince them by hard blows of their inferiority, and they will be found the most amiable and friendly of all the eastern peoples with whom we have intercourse. Subjugate them thoroughly once for all, and the national self-interest and fear will do the rest. But to convince them that we have the power and the will to exact vengeance for any insult to the British flag or injury to British subjects, and that their insolence and turbulence are no longer to be tolerated, will require the war to be prosecuted in a very different mode from the last, and to be pushed to its only safe conclusion rapidly and unrelentingly. Every month that is now lost strengthens the Chinese in their belief that war is to us so difficult and costly that we engage in it with the utmost reluctance, and confirms the old lesson that, even though we may once in half a century put forth our might, we will in general suffer, postpone, and compromise, far more readily than punish. Let all Europeans who know the Chinese impress upon their less-informed countrymen that we are now engaged not in a common political war, but in one of those great ethnic struggles by which the relative positions of races are adjusted and the progress of humanity and true religion secured and accelerated. For our part we believe, in no irreverent spirit, that it is the destiny, and at certain periods and in certain lands becomes the duty, of the more advanced races to “go forth conquering and to conquer.”—From the ‘Penang Gazette,’ March 28.