

THE MALAY PENINSULA.

A TELEGRAM from the far East which announced last week that threatened difficulties "between the Bandar and Pahang and the Maharajah of Johore" had been settled by Sir Andrew Clarke conveyed the intimation that the new Governor of the Straits Settlements had taken a fresh step in the pacification of the turbulent little States of the Malay Peninsula by composing a quarrel of long standing between the Bandaharah of Pahang and the ruler of Johore. It was a boundary question which might have been easily settled years ago by any English governor who had had the confidence of both the parties to the dispute; and we trust and believe that the settlement now effected by Sir Andrew Clarke is at once evidence of the personal influence which he is acquiring among the native princes in the Malay Peninsula and a promise of improvement in our relations with them. When the new Governor of the Straits Settlements arrived in that colony last November he found the southern extremity of the Malay Peninsula in a disturbed state, seriously affecting our commerce in that part of the world. The State of Perak was torn not only by a war of succession but by furious disputes between powerful factions of Chinese which had sided in the Malay quarrel and threatened to fight it out in our island of Pinang. With a little judicious management, the English *vir pietate gravis* extinguished the strife by obtaining a general recognition of the rightful Malay sovereign and reconciling the Chinese miners. Farther south, Salangore was fast restoring itself into that happy state of political nature where every stout fellow who does not shrink from cutting a throat or a purse, and has influence enough to gather a score of congenial followers to share his fortunes, sets up for independent sovereignty, and, like his co-tenant the tiger, lives on what prey crosses his path. The not very happy action of the preceding Colonial Administration, by setting up and supporting a foreign chief, had rather promoted than retarded this process of disintegration, and in a short time the whole State of Singapore would have become a mere nest of freebooters. Sir Andrew Clarke had here, as elsewhere, an inheritance of difficulties bequeathed to him, but here, as elsewhere, he will work out of them. Indeed, so sanguine are some of the Singapore merchants of his success that a joint-stock company was started in that city last summer, for making enormous fortunes out of a concession of all the tin which lies still, alas, buried in the heart of the Salangore mountains and forests. But such schemes are better calculated to injure than to advance any statesmanlike objects which Sir A. Clarke and the Colonial Office can have in view; and they are not likely to receive any serious support, either pecuniary or political. The Malay Peninsula, now the possession of a few scattered tribes of natives and of beasts of prey, is full of mineral wealth, and needs but the vivifying breath of a rational Government to develop rapidly into wealth and importance. As soon as it was understood that the arm of the British Power protected life and property on its soil, crowds of Chinese workmen and abundance of British and native capital would be forthcoming to bring into the markets the untold wealth which lies hidden there; and the true policy of Sir Andrew Clarke will lie in enforcing this very obvious truth on the rulers of the States around him. That he designs to carry out the views which Sir Stamford Raffles had when he founded Singapore in 1819 seems clear, and we wish him every success. He will not only convert a wilderness into a garden, but he will make the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal and of the Straits of Malacca what it ought long since to have been—if not British in name, at least exclusively British in fact. This becomes now a matter of daily increasing importance, since France is strengthening herself on the eastern side of Siam, and the Dutch are extending their influence in Sumatra, not for themselves only perhaps, but for those successors of theirs who are seen looming in the distant, perhaps not very distant, future.
