

**The Pall Mall Gazette (London),
Saturday, November 13, 1875**

THE MALAY DISTURBANCES.

The *Times* holds that the Malay outbreak is more than explained by the engagements and so-called treaties in which we have entangled ourselves with the native Sovereigns ; but if this view of the case enables us to regard as probably due to local exaggeration the apprehension of a "religious war," it may be questioned whether the new prospect thus revealed is much more satisfactory. If we need no longer fear a persistent contest with the whole Malay population, such as the Dutch are enduring in Sumatra, we see, on the other hand, an indefinite number of troublesome obligations towards semi-barbarous territories, inhabited by one of the most unmanageable of races. The trouble seems to spring, in the first instance, from the usual cause—the irrepressible demands of commerce. If the Malay Peninsula possessed no attractions and were simply a nest of pirates, we might have contented ourselves, as we have done elsewhere, with maintaining the police of the seas by inflicting severe punishment on the natives for acts of piracy. But the Peninsula is a very rich country, and the Malays have seen enough of our money to want our assistance, and too little of our power to understand the necessity of keeping faith with us. It is not easy to see the way out of the complicated entanglement. Of course there are those, especially residents in the Straits, who say that if the Malays cannot govern their country as we like we must do it for them. There is the tin, the silver, the gold, and the alluvial soil on the one side, and English traders, with strongholds at Penang and Singapore, on the other ; and how they are to be kept at a prudent distance it will be every year more difficult to say. We may hope for the best in the present local disturbance ; but it is evident we have sown the seeds of a plentiful growth of difficulties in the future.

The *Daily News* observes that it is now made pretty clear that the outbreak of which Mr. Birch's murder was the signal was political, so

far as such a qualification is applicable to the quarrels of a number of barbarous chiefs. The truth seems to be that the Malay chiefs of Perak have found the restraint we have attempted to put upon them intolerable. Our immediate duty, however, is happily clear. We must show the populations around our settlements that no temporary successes will avail to secure impunity to those who have committed this great crime. It is not probable that any very large number of men will be required for this purpose. The picture which has been drawn of a stubborn resistance to our advance, such as the Dutch have encountered on the part of the Atchinese, does not represent the expectations of those who best know the country and people.

THE MALAY OUTBREAK.

The *Saturday Review* finds it difficult to believe that the Malays can offer serious resistance to British power. The rapid concentration of military and naval force which is preparing ought to be more than sufficient for the occasion, and the Mussulman "revival" of which we hear will hardly combine the Malay race in effective antagonism to British rule. The telegraph has greatly increased our means of dealing with such a difficulty, and on the whole it seems probable that this will be really a little war. Such events as the murder of a Resident or the failure of an attack made as soon as resistance or revolt draws to a head are always liable to occur while we undertake to maintain tranquillity among ferocious and treacherous barbarians. In such attacks it is generally better to have failed than not to have attempted.

The *Spectator* observes that if the Sultan Ismail could fight a guerrilla war patiently, avoiding every attack, or defending his stockades only when artillery were not at hand, he might give serious trouble ; but his followers, to keep together, will require the excitement of victory, and a battle once risked, all will probably be over. The fanaticism of Malays is very stern, but it will no more prevent the shells from doing their work than any other enthusiasm, and there is nothing in the insurrection to keep the insurgents together after a defeat. They are not oppressed, their religion is in no danger, and they are not unanimous in their devotion to the Pretender. They will probably disperse, and everything return to its customary quiet, the énéute leaving only this lesson to be considered :—We are trying to protect our vast interests eastward of Ceylon with too few men, and some day or other shall meet with a catastrophe. It is positively childish to go about as we do in the whole of that vast region, trading, exploring, warning, and punishing pirates, threatening great Governments like that of China, and claiming rights in a long peninsula like Malaya, without retaining 3,000 Queen's soldiers anywhere within call. The fleet cannot do everything.