

---

THE MALAY PENINSULA.

(TIMES TELEGRAMS.)

PERAK, *via* Penang, Friday.—The Malays are stockaded within seven miles of the Residency. The gunboats are ten miles lower down. The troops are entrenching the Residency and await reinforcements before attacking.

We expect news of offensive operations seven days hence.

CALCUTTA, Sunday, 10 32 a.m.—The 3rd Buffs, now quartered here, a Goorkha regiment, and a battery of mountain artillery, in the aggregate numbering 1,000 men, of whom about half are Europeans, have been directed to hold themselves ready to start for Perak.

The British India Steam Company has been requested to have transports ready.

If final orders are issued, the force will probably start by the middle of the week.

---

THE MURDER OF MR. BIRCH.

PENANG, Friday.—The Residency at Perak is now garrisoned by 800 British troops, supported by the gunboats *Thistle* and *Fly*. Sultan Abdallah is friendly to the British. The murder of Mr. Birch is believed to have been unpremeditated. The Malays, however, are arming for defence. Governor Jervoise is preparing to undertake military operations.

The following has been received from the Colonial Office for publication:—"The telegrams received at this office to-day (Saturday) throw some additional light upon the circumstances attending the murder of Mr. Birch at Perak. It appears that a proclamation had been issued and had been posted throughout Perak on the 1st of November. Mr. Birch on that day telegraphed to Sir M. Jervoise that the proclamation had been well received, and that all was quiet in Perak. On the following day, however, a Malay tore down the proclamation posted at Passir Sala, where the Resident was, and on being struck by the interpreter of the Residency, at once stabbed the officer. An affray followed, in which Mr. Birch, who was in his bath, was murdered. The force sent to punish the perpetrators of this outrage consisted of Capt. Innes, R.E., Lieutenants Booth and Elliott, with sixty men of the 10th, Lieut. Abbott, R.N., and fifty police and Malays with rockets. They arrived at the Residency on the 5th, and on the 6th marched through the jungle against the Maharajah, in whose village the murder was committed, and whose village was found occupying a stockaded position. After an hour and a half's fighting the European troops charged the stockade. In this charge Captain Innes was killed and Lieutenants Booth and Elliott were wounded; and it was considered necessary to order a retreat, which was effected in an orderly manner, and not before the enemy had abandoned the stockade. The Governor telegraphs that the principal chiefs of Perak remain unshaken in their loyalty, and that the Sultan has offered to assist with men and boats. He reports that the disturbances are still confined to a limited area, and that the Residency on Perak River is securely held. He has at his disposal between seven and eight hundred European troops, besides eighty artillery, and two men-of-war are on the station."

A correspondent writes:—Mr. J. Woodford Birch, who has just been treacherously murdered at Perak, was no novice in the government of Mahomedans. For many years he was Government agent of the eastern province of Ceylon, where the population is largely Mahomedan and partly Malay. There Mr. Birch gained the confidence alike of the Colonial Office and the natives by his energy and good judgment, besides earning a reputation for himself as a crack elephant shot. When the Straits Settlements were constituted a Crown colony Mr. Birch was appointed its first Colonial Secretary upon the recommendation of Sir Hercules Robinson, then Governor of Ceylon. If, as is now reported probable, a religious war should break out on the Malay Peninsula, there would be some danger of its influences spreading to Ceylon. The Ceylon Rifle Regiment, disbanded about two years ago, was formerly recruited at the Straits, and in Colombo and other large towns there is a considerable sprinkling of Malays, and a still larger number of Mahomedan Moormen. The best of the disbanded Rifles were drafted into the armed island police, while by far the greater portion were left to seek civil employment, or to wander discontented or desperate over the country.