

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE DISTURBANCES IN THE MALAY PENINSULA.

To the EDITOR of the PALL MALL GAZETTE.

SIR,—It appears to me that the letter of "A Straits Resident" in the *Times* of the 12th inst. has produced a tendency to underrate the range of the present disturbances in the Malay Peninsula which he probably would have been the last to wish to bring about. He is in the main right in thinking that the movement is confined to a district, and that the "Jehad" preached in the Perak State will not be spread over the whole country. But only two States are likely to escape the contagion. Any one acquainted with the Maharajah of Johore knows his traditions and principles, and also knows that, having his subjects well in hand, it would be absurd to suppose that he or his would engage in a project which he would feel could be only suicidal to his own best interests, and especially to himself personally, as he is viewed by the Malays outside his own territory as an interloper and usurper on the old Johore family, which has still a small territory on the Muar River, near Malacca, and he is not quite of the Malay blue blood. And Queda (Portuguese orthography, which still obtains; it is pronounced *Kedah*), being under the thumb of the Siamese, from annexation by whom it has been protected more than once by the British Government, is in the last degree unlikely to participate in an enterprise which would have for its object the expulsion of the English from the Malayan countries. Queda and Johore may without exaggeration be called civilized States. But outside these two we have communities which cannot have any very friendly feelings towards us, and which have, *teste* Sir Andrew Clarke, a tract the area of which is almost equal to that of Ceylon. Perak, Salangor, Pahang, Sungei Ujong, and Rambow have all been more or less mixed up in the quarrels that have devastated the country for years, and it is quite possible that the discontented parties in these States would join together in thwarting the action of the Residents, and might unite in an attempt to drive us out by force of arms. In this case they would no doubt imitate their brethren in Atchin in proclaiming a religious war, and would incite their adherents to fight the Faringi in the fatal white baju. Besides this, it is a known fact that the Atchinese appealed to us against the provisions of the Sumatra Convention of 1871, the conclusion of which everybody in the Straits deplored, and which was ascribed by the natives to our fear of Holland. Atchin was delivered over to the tender mercies of the Dutch, whose failure has doubtless encouraged the Malays of the mainland in the present émeute, and this the more as the Dutch are an infinitely greater Malay Power than ourselves, and a Malay might fairly ask himself the question, If the Atchinese can stop the Dutch advance, why should we not drive out the British? At any rate, they seem resolved to try, and the telegram referring to Mr. Swettenham's escape seems to point to the fact that Salangor also is in a blaze, although it is possible that this officer may perhaps have been on a visit at the Perak Residency at the time of Mr. Birch's murder; and he perhaps it may be who was relieved by the late Captain Innes. Neither Rambow nor Sungei Ujong are likely to have remained unaffected by the troubles farther north, and in this case we may expect some disturbance at Malacca.

The "Straits Resident," in conclusion, says—and he is justified in saying it—that if the Malays cannot govern themselves we must do it for them. He, however, although he remarked with truth that the only opponents of our rule would be the worthless and lawless rajahs, omitted to mention that the cost of governing the peninsula would certainly before long be defrayed by its revenue (as could, I think, be proved by statistics), and so the *Times*, as the representative of those who have no direct interest in the colony of the Straits Settlements, exhorts the Government by all means to avoid burdening England "with so troublesome a responsibility." Are not the interests of British subjects of the same worth in whatever part of the world they may lie?

I knew Mr. Birch and Captain Innes well, and if they could have foreseen that their death would have paved the way to the civilization of the magnificent country which it was their occupation and pride to open up, I think they would have been reconciled to the sacrifice. But if we retire after merely chastising the Perak Malays, and withdraw our Residents, according to the advice of the *Times*, and do not manfully accept the responsibilities which we have both created for ourselves and inherited from our predecessors, they will not only have fallen in vain, victims to a policy which failed for want of sufficient backing, but their lives will have been given up for a cause abandoned on account of their loss. "Vestigia nulla retrorsum" is our only safe watchword in the Malay Peninsula.—Your obedient servant,

ORANG PUTEH.

November 14.