

THE MURDER OF MR. BIRCH.

The following communication has been issued from the Colonial Office:—"The telegrams received at this office today (Saturday) throw some additional light upon the circumstances attending the murder of Mr. Birch in Perak. It appears that a proclamation had been issued, and had been posted throughout Perak on the 1st November. Mr. Birch on that day telegraphed to Sir W. Jervois 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 that 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 Captain Innes, R.E., Lieutenants Booth and Elliott, with sixty men of the 10th, Lieutenant Abbott, R.N., sixty Seiks, 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 Lela, in whose village the murder was committed, and who 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 these disturbances are still confined to a limited area, and that the Residency on the Perak River is securely held. He has at his disposal between 700 and 800 European troops, besides eighty artillery, and two men-of-war in the station. Others are expected, and, in addition, General Colborne sailed with 300 men of the 80th Regiment on the 11th for Singapore."

The *Times* publishes the following special telegrams in reference to affairs in the Malay Peninsula:—

HONGKONG, Nov. 12.—In consequence of the outbreak at Perak, General Colborne, with Captain Huskisson as Aide-de-Camp, 300 men of the 80th Regiment, under the command of Major Amiel, and Captains Tyler, Creagh, and Howard, Lieutenants Prior, Cole, and Walmsley, Surgeon L'Estrange, and Commissaries Johnstone and Skinner, left yesterday for Singapore.

PERAK, via Penang, Nov. 12.—The Malays are stockaded within seven miles of the Residency. The gunboats are at Sabatang, ten miles lower down. The troops are intrenching the Residency, and await reinforcements before attacking. We expect news of offensive operations seven days hence.

CALCUTTA, Nov. 14, 10.32 a.m.—The Third 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.

PENANG, Nov. 12th.—Early in 1874 Sir Andrew Clarke, in consequence of piracies, but before Lord Kimberley's sanction, convened a meeting of Chiefs and concluded a Convention whereby Residents were placed at Perak Larut, and other districts. Mr. Birch was appointed at Perak and Captain Speedy at Larut. There were two claimants to the throne on Sultan Ali's death—the Rajah Muda Abdoola and Ismail. Ismail acted as Sultan and kept the regalia, but Abdoola is the rightful heir. Sir Andrew Clarke upheld Abdoola. The Chiefs did not carry out the Convention. A second Proclamation was, therefore, issued with Abdoola's consent ratifying the former Treaty, and appointing British officers as Queen's Commissioners to govern the country. Mr. Birch heard that these Proclamations had been torn down by Malays, and, en route to investigate the matter, was killed. Ismail is suspected of complicity in the disturbance. I arrived at Larut river, and proceeded by night unmolested to the Residency, 20 miles further. I saw Captain Speedy. He states that the district is quiet. The Chinese residents have offered 2000 men to fight the Malays. Captain Speedy has stockaded the Pass between Perak and Larut. The Malay Muntri Rajah of Larut tells me his interests and Perak Malay interests are not identical, and he is friendly to the British.

A Reuter's telegram, dated Penang, Nov. 12th, is as follows:—The Residency of Perak is now garrisoned by 800 British troops, supported by the gun-vessels *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 Jervois is preparing to undertake military operations.