

The Pall Mall Gazette (London,)
Thursday, November 25, 1875

EPITOME OF OPINION IN THE MORNING JOURNALS.

THE MALAY OUTBREAK.

The *Times* observes that the history of the disturbances in the Malay Peninsula has not been cleared up in the most satisfactory manner by the information which the Colonial Office has given to the public. The disturbances are strictly of a local character, and, apparently (continues the *Times*) we may look forward to a short, sharp, retributive raid and an instant restoration of order. But the sad fate of Mr. Birch, and the unpleasant necessity in which we are placed of undertaking to bring his murderers to justice by the intervention of a military force, have compelled us to look closely at our position in the Malayan Peninsula; and we must confess that we are by no means satisfied with the state of things which a careful scrutiny of recent events reveals. Our present business is, of course, to punish the criminals and crush the insurrection in Perak. But, when we have done this, we may ask a few questions, to which the Colonial Office must be prepared to give answers. How did we get into the position of which we have now to cut the knot with the sword? Under what authority were the rights acquired and the obligations incurred by which we are now embarrassed? Is there any creditable way of surrendering those rights and getting free from those obligations? Must we hold to them with all their risks, or make them worth having by enlarging them so as to comprehend complete sovereignty? The country has a right to explicit answers on these important points, for it certainly appears that the Government of the Straits Settlements has drifted, within the past two years, into quite novel relations with the neighbouring States of the Malayan Peninsula. Somehow or other we have plunged into what seems very like the responsibilities of annexation in Perak, and have had no opportunity of even considering whether we were bound to undertake them or might honourably decline them.