

EAST INDIES.

The accounts from Ceylon, relative to the operations of the war against the King of Candy, are, we are sorry to say, far from consolatory.—The disastrous reports, distantly alluded to in our last, must, we fear, be regarded as confirmed.—We copy the following from a very respectable paper:—

“The attention of the public has been again forcibly called to the island of Ceylon, by accounts of a very unfortunate nature, which have recently been received from that colony. The reports are extremely various; but we are happy to be able to present our readers with an account, extracted from a private letter from an officer there, of a later date than any which has yet been laid before the public.

“It appears from the letter alluded to, that General Macdowall had returned to Columbo in June last, leaving Major Davie to garrison Candy with a force consisting of five companies of the 19th regiment, a detachment of Malays and black troops, in all amounting to 1000 men. The sickness incident to that climate, as well as a scarcity of provisions, from the difficulty of procuring supplies, began soon to be felt in the garrison; and the King of Candy, who had taken refuge in the mountains, having been informed of these circumstances, suddenly collected a large force of the natives, and marched to the attack of Candy. Major Davie, despairing of being able to hold out from the want of provisions, or to force his way through so many local obstacles to the coast, adopted the resolution of surrendering to the enemy, on condition of his being conducted with his garrison in safety to Columbo. Our troops, however, had no sooner delivered up their arms, than they found that they had put themselves into the power of an enemy whom no faith could bind. The boats which should have conducted them over a river that lay in their way, they found to have been previously destroyed; and the Adigar, after amusing them for some time with specious promises, at last suddenly fell upon them, made them prisoners, and, there is too much reason to fear, basely murdered the whole of them. We have at least only heard of one corporal of the 19th having escaped to Columbo, with the accounts of the melancholy fate of his countrymen. The behaviour of the Malays in our service on this occasion, was directly the reverse of what it has been represented in all accounts given in the public papers. The Candians, aware of the dreadful consequences of irritating that race, endeavoured by every promise of protection and reward, to induce them to join against the British. They, however, resisted all these arts; and Nardin Goa in particular, one of the most valiant Malay Princes, and a strenuous friend of the British, continued to fight by Major Davie's side till the latter was made prisoner. Nardin, covered with wounds, almost miraculously escaped, and has since arrived at Columbo. The private Malays, after the massacre of their officers, being surrounded on all sides, at length made a shew of surrendering! a better opportunity of escape however, soon after presenting itself, they boldly broke through the Candians, and two-thirds of their number have since arrived at Columbo in a very exhausted condition.—The rage of the Malays throughout the island, on hearing the fate of their officers, was extreme, and to such a pitch was their resentment carried, that the numbers of the Malay regiment was restored by volunteers, and the whole of that race in the island have taken an oath to execute the most dreadful vengeance on the Candians.—The conduct of the Malays on this occasion, has been the means of preserving to us the island; for had they joined our enemies, the weakened state of our forces there could only have barely enabled us to retain the garrisons of Columbo and Trincomalee.

“Vigorous measures have been taken for the security of the colony, and strong reinforcements detached from our continental possessions in India.”

This account is principally confirmed by a dispatch from Governor the Hon. F. North, dated Columbo, 8th July, and which appeared in Tuesday's Gazette. It is however, given on the deposition of a single Lascoryn, who stated himself to have been an eye witness of this foul transaction, and should therefore be received with caution.

He states, that on the 6th of last month (June) he was sent, along with 12 other Lascoryns, by the Town-Major to Kandi; that he passed at Negumbo, where Doolies were put under their charge, and that he arrived at Kandi, after a route of about 12 days, and that the Lascoryns delivered up the doolies and other stores which were under their charge, to the English gentlemen. After remaining there 3 days, they were ordered to return to Columbo with 12 doolies, in eleven of which were sick Europeans, and one which contained baggage. Several Candians approached the place where the doolies and sick were, and fired upon them, which was returned by the Europeans and 12 Malays who were posted there. He first went to the Mandore, where he had been before, but finding many Candians there, he got into the palace, and remained in the Court where the Malay soldiers were. The firing continued until two o'clock, when a white flag was hoisted from the palace, and the firing ceased. That Major Davie, the Captain of Artillery, and an European Malay officer, who spoke Malay, and two or three Malay native officers, went to the Adigaar, and returned soon afterwards with an Ola from the Adigaar, which he himself read, importing that the whole might proceed to Trincomalee without receiving any molestation, and that the sick should be taken care of and have medicine given them until they were well, when they might either go to Columbo, or stay at Kandi. The garrison set out on Friday, with their arms and ammunition, at 5 in the evening, to Alungantotte, where they remained all night exposed to a very heavy rain, the deponent being with them. Soon afterwards there came an order from the Adigaar to Major Davie, to make his men lay down their arms, and return to Kandi, which, after some time, they did; that between Kandi and Alungantotte, there is a village called Gevantotte, where two cannon were placed, and where the Malays were ordered to separate from the rest, and proceed to Kandi, which they all did, except four native officers, who remained with Major Davie. Soon afterwards all the prisoners were taken, two by two, and delivered over to the Candians, who took them to a little distance, and cut their heads off; that they were likewise going to kill the women, but this was put a stop to by order of the Adigaar. Major Davie, and the Captain of Artillery, with the four Malay officers who had not followed their countrymen, were carried off, as he supposes, to the Adigaar. The Sepoys and Bengal Lascars were not put to death. A Malay servant of Captain Nouradin, whom he saw, told him that the two English officers, and four Malays, were with the Adigaar. Upon Monday he saw the two English officers, and was told they were to be carried to Hargaroonketti, where the King was.

Taken down by me from the interpretation of Mr. Jonville and the Mahamodliar.

Columbo, 6th July, 1803.

(Signed)

ROBERT ARBUTHNOT,
Chief Secretary to Government.