
THE LATE MISSION IN INDIA.

[EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM PENANG, DATED SEPT. 2, 1825.]

On the evening of the 13th ult. the Mission for Tavoy and Mergui, on the coast of Tenasserim, quitted Penang, intending to pay the Rajah of Ligor a visit at Reddah, on our way. We arrived there on the evening of the 14th; sent to announce our arrival, and the next morning quitted the brig under a salute of 13 guns from a little cruiser which attended us. We found tom-jons (a light conveyance borne on men's shoulders) in readiness for us, & were conducted into the presence of this mighty chief, whom some of our alarmists had ridiculously represented as meditating the direst vengeance against us. I expected to find a surly morose wretch, but was agreeably disappointed in finding him exceedingly civil and affable. He was reclining on his throne, consisting of an elegant scarlet velvet sofa, with gold embroidered pillows. — introduced us as the Rajahs of Tavoy and Mergui; we made our obeisance, and seated ourselves in chairs placed for us: for the first quarter of an hour we were on some little ceremony, but we then threw it off, and entered into familiar conversation through interpreters, as he does not speak a word of Malay; he asked us innumerable questions, on our police, manners and customs; examined our dress, made us pull out our watches, and particularly admired a gold chain dangling to mine. It is the custom to give these people any thing they admire, but I was obliged to apologise, as the chain was a present from a valued friend. He, however, handed it to a workman, and ordered him to make a similar one. He was much struck with my height—made me stand—measured me, and observed that the Siamese never attained such a length. Some of his questions were very pertinent, such as few natives would think of asking. He was most inquisitive about the coast of Tenasserim, asked under whom it was placed—with what Government we were to correspond—and with what degree of authority the different Governments were invested; he hoped that a good understanding would always exist between him and us, and that we would behave kindly to any Siamese who should be under our authority. About two o'clock he ordered in refreshments, consisting of fruits and sweetmeats, but luckily we had brought some of our own viands on shore with us, and his Majesty was highly delighted to see us discuss them with such good appetites. We could not prevail on him to partake, but he ordered one of his attendants to do so, who did not seem to relish it. We conversed again after eating—examined some guns, and other articles we had brought with us, as presents, and left him at five o'clock. He gave us each a present on coming away, consisting of a cup, curiously worked in gold and silver. The Rajah was very plainly dressed, and, in fact, had nothing on but a piece of green silk round his loins; his son, however, made up the deficiency, for he was covered with gold and jewels. The Rajah is a stout, thick-set man, and on a near approach extremely coarse in his features; he has a good deal of the Chinaman in his appearance. He was very affable, and allowed us to seat ourselves on his throne, much to the astonishment of the surrounding Siamese, who, already resembling monkeys in countenance, make the resemblance still stronger by the manner in which they are obliged to appear before their chief; they dare not stand upright, but crawl about on all-fours; and if they turned their backs to him, would be in danger of having their heads chopped off. If they see the Rajah at a distance, they must squat down till he has passed. I was never more gratified than with this visit, and when I become proficient in the Siamese language, will certainly pay my respects to the Rajah again. Reddah itself is a vile place, nothing to be seen but the most miserable huts, surrounded by swamps.
