

"THE NANNING EXPEDITION."

The Pamphlet of which we have given the title and what may be called the introductory part, in a preceding column, was written, as stated in the Prospectus, with the benevolent object of applying the profits, if any, to the benefit of the widow of the late Lieut. WHITE who lost his life during the above unfortunate Expedition. The interest excited by the forlorn situation of this young lady, and the circumstances under which her gallant husband met with his untimely fate, have contributed materially to render the sale of the pamphlet, (here especially) more extensive than it would have been otherwise. But while we render due praise to the writer for his benevolent intentions, we think sufficient time has been allowed to elapse, to render a critique on the *matter* unlikely, at this period, to affect the *object* of the pamphlet, in a pecuniary view.

We must confess we have been much disappointed in the perusal of this little work. Written by "an Officer of the Expedition," we were led to expect mightier things—both with regard to the Political events which led to the military operations against Nanning, and the nature also of those operations.

It appears evident that the imperfect *ex-parte* statements he puts forth relative to the former, have been *taught* him, by those who will look only to one side of the question; and in the details of the military operations, there are a few omissions which we shall take the liberty of pointing out.

It is not to be doubted, however, that, coming from such an authentic source, the military operations, as far they go, are faithfully recorded, and with the exception of the calamitous result arising from their nature, we have no fault to find with them. We are not sufficiently skilled in the art of war, or so acquainted with the pages of "*Torrens*" or "*Dundas*," as to form an opinion whether they were ill-conducted or otherwise; but we believe, considering the nature of the country, the subtle enemy, and the hidden obstacles the troops had to contend with, they were as well managed as might be.

In confining ourselves for the present, to a discussion on the "Political events," which led to the above-mentioned Military operations, we shall also "review the grounds upon which the War was undertaken,"—and we hope to prove that we have made no "false assumptions," or any assumptions of our own, in our former notices of this War, without being well aware of their correctness and truth. A tolerably intimate acquaintance with Malacca, its secret and internal politics, and the manner in which its government has been administered for a few years back, will, we trust, entitle us to as much credit, on these points, as the writer of the pamphlet can lay claim to.

Previous to the year 1828, the Company could claim the possession of no lands at Malacca, with the exception of their uncertain tenure of Nanning; as the lands within the territory of Malacca had been amply granted away during the time the Dutch held sway on the Peninsula, to private individuals. Some of the grants are of a very ancient date, and most of them very extensive; so much so that similar estates in a well-populated country could not fail to bring the owners, splendid incomes. The Malacca lands, however, have been much neglected and allowed to run into jungle with the exception of here and there a pepper plantation, a *dusun*, or garden, with a rice-field attached.

Mr. FULLERTON, who always took a great interest in Malacca, perceiving that Malacca could never rise to its pristine importance as a Commercial port, conceived that it might be rendered a profitable possession, as an agricultural district. To attain this end, he was induced to enter into a compact with the land-owners to transfer all right and title to their lands, to the Company.

The following extract from the *Malacca Observer* of the 25th March 1828,

will best explain the nature of this agreement:

"On the 15th inst., an important revolution took place with respect to most of the lands near Malacca. The owners have agreed to transfer, make over and relinquish to the Company 'all the rights, benefits, privileges, and emoluments' enjoyed by them (the owners) under the title deeds; while the Government covenant to pay to them or heirs, in consideration thereof, the stipulated sums mentioned underneath, as long as this Settlement is under the British Flag. The right of levying the tenth of the produce shall be vested in the Company from the first of November next, & shall for ever from that date cease on the part of the owners. It is further agreed that should Malacca be transferred to any other Power, Government bind themselves to retransfer to the present holders or their heirs, all these rights, and put them again in the possession of the advantages derivable therefrom.

The sums are annual, and to be paid once a quarter.

On the whole, we imagine that the Company will be no losers by the speculation while the land-owners may remain more at their ease.

	Sicca	Rupees
Mr. De Wind	4500	
Mrs. Westerhout	2500	
Mr. Koek's Estate	2000	
Apokechil	1500	
Mr. D. Koek	850	
Gregory De Soza	700	
Mr. A. Velge	500	
Mr. Westerhout	450	
Maunco De Soza	400	
Mahomet Tyre	300	
	13,700	

Besides these, there are a few more parcels of land, which the Government wish to take over, in like manner, for the annual sum, as we have heard it roughly valued, of 5000 Sicca Rupees."

In the above extract mention is made of a *tenth* being paid to the land-owners; but the manner in which that tax was collected by those gentlemen was far from being a *burden* on their poor tenants. They were in fact, kindhearted masters; assisted, relieved, encouraged and protected those on their estates, and if the seasons proved unproductive, exacted not "to the uttermost farthing," or do it, the petty rents each petty ryot had to pay in money or kind.

Had the Company or their agents at Malacca, followed the same liberal system with regard to the lands taken over from these gentlemen, they would have found the transfer less ruinous to their treasury, and less derogatory to their government; whilst we fear they have, by the system they have adopted in collecting the tythe, "gained unto themselves a name," throughout the whole territory, not altogether untainted by acts of oppression, and covetousness; and have produced a feeling of dissatisfaction, not altogether desirable.

On the transfer of the lands being made from the land-owners to the Company, "A Land Department" was established of which Mr. W. T. LEWIS, Assistant Resident at Malacca, was appointed Superintendent, with a handsome allowance, and a per-centage on the collection of the tax, to stimulate his exertions. A goodly establishment was likewise afforded him, and nothing was left undone to make the system as *effective* as possible. A Produce Farm was introduced, which after a short trial, was abolished as it was considered inadequate, and tolls were established at every inlet to the town, where a tenth of *every* article of produce was rigorously exacted—fruits, vegetables, paddy, wax, fowls, eggs, &c. &c. with, we believe, buffalo-hides. So exact are the tollkeepers, that (to give one instance out of a thousand) a poor Chinese labourer, passing with a single *laboo*, or melon, was stopped, and on his refusing to pay a tenth of the fruit, on the plea that he had but *one*, and that it was not for sale, the rapacious tollkeeper cut a large slice off it, and sent the man away in all the insolence of office. To complain of such an affair, would subject the complainant to further abuse, as the Superintendent of Lands was also the sitting Police Magistrate!

Such a system, as might be imagined, produced general dissatisfaction throughout the whole district of Malacca; the tenants complained to their former landlords, but the latter could not interfere, as they had given up all right and authority over their former possessions. At the close of the first year, on examining the accounts, it was found the Land Department instead of proving a gain to the Company, was a dead loss,

to the tune of 16,000 Sicca Rupees, (if we mistake not); and endeavours were made to induce the former proprietors to cancel the agreement entered into, and accept their lands back again. This they, with one or two exceptions, refused to do, and in this enviable condition matters have continued, as far as we are aware. It was about this period, (June 1829), that the first Expedition against Nanning was prepared, but not carried into effect.

Another circumstance not yet divulged to the Public, subsequently rendered the system of collecting a tenth, more unpopular and odious among *all* classes of the inhabitants, high and low. Mr. FULLERTON, whilst at Malacca, last year, a short time before his departure, was advised to introduce a new tax on fish,—or rather a collection of one fish out every ten caught, and exposed for sale—those not exposed for sale, being considered smuggled! The fishermen who are mostly all of that class called Portuguese, instantly struck work, and assembled before the Police Office, to remonstrate. Such was the uproar the formidable crowd excited, and the "threatening aspect" it assumed, that, Mr. LEWIS, in order to clear a passage for himself, out of the office, struck a man, with a Constable's baton on the head, and left him senseless, and bleeding. He proceeded then to the Commandant of the troops, whose house was close by, and requested military aid to disperse the mob, and it was not until the main Guard was turned out with loaded arms, and the Riot Act read, that the crowd would return to their homes. Persuasion was even used by the Resident and another Magistrate present to induce the discontented to refrain from committing open violence! The wounded man was carried to Mr. FULLERTON, who resided at the *Castle* close by, but on hearing the case, he acted as nobly as the Assistant Resident on the Quedah shore did, on the sad occasion recorded in *Investigator's* letter, which we published yesterday—"Tum tertawa saja," he only laughed, and ordered the man to the hospital, which kindness the friends of the latter ungratefully refused to accept.

The tax, thus introduced, was subsequently enforced, and continues to be so.

Such was the state of affairs at Malacca before the late Expedition set out to enforce the claim of the Company to a right to collect a tenth of the produce of Nanning, and to dispossess the Chief of that district, of his lawful authority.

The Panghooloo was not ignorant of the nature of the system about to be introduced, neither was he insensible to the indignity offered to him by the proposal of his accepting a paltry pension on condition that he resign all right and title to the government of Nanning—a right vested in his ancestors both with the tacit and expressed consent of all the European Authorities who have had possession of Malacca—and a right which we cannot be justified in depriving him of, by any other rule than that which the stronger exercises over the weaker.

Of the injustice of the invasion, on the feeble pretexts which were got up on the occasion, Mr. FULLERTON himself must have been conscious; else why was he wavering and undecided relative to the adoption of compulsory measures in the first instance? "His Lordship," (i.e. "Bengal," according to the Pamphlet,) "equally unwilling to incur the responsibility, laid the business, with all Mr. FULLERTON'S minutes, before the Court of Directors."

It is well known that the Court of Directors, in the multiplicity of their affairs, are too apt to depend much on the statements of their servant at a distance, without ever taking the trouble, or wishing to hear the other side of the question. Their total ignorance on such contemptible matters as Malacca politics, would lead them, without further enquiry, to approve of whatever suggestions Mr. FULLERTON and his party might have made on the subject, and to

order the adoption of warlike measures, to compel the petty Nanning Chief to submit to the terms proposed.

To talk of "the improved cultivation of the country rendering the levying of the tax an easy matter, without distressing the inhabitants"—is a very bold assertion—and we should like to know from the writer of the Narrative whether Mr. FULLERTON ascertained such to be a fact, on his own personal inspection, or merely on the hearsay of certain interested individuals? For our part, we firmly believe, such an "assumption" to be a mere farce—nay more, a pretext, to devastate a defenceless district, whose inhabitants, however, by their formidable resistance, have astonished & confounded those who plotted against them, and have involved us in an useless and expensive war, which by its consequences must depopulate and ruin the whole country!

As our time and means of publication do not allow us to make farther remarks here, we beg to defer giving the remainder to our next publication.