

NARRATIVE OF THE LATE NANNING
EXPEDITION &c.

(Continued from our 45th No.)

"This delay on the part of the British induced the superstitious Malaysians to attribute more than human powers to the Panghooloo, before whom the British lion appeared to have crouched. His character for sanctity, which had been growing for years, was vastly strengthened by this circumstance, and he was exalted into a demigod, and the sick, and the maimed, and the blind, crowded from all quarters, to drink the waters in which the holy foot had been dipped, fully persuaded that thereby they would be healed of their diseases, however inveterate those might be. Worshipped on all sides, and encouraged by the inactivity of the British, it is not to be wondered at that an uneducated mind should be considerably inflated, and that the Panghooloo, who com-

menced by resisting what he conceived to be an unjust demand should subsequently resort to acts of aggression. We accordingly find that he seized upon the lands of a less powerful neighbour, and forcibly ejected him, on the pretext that the ground in question belonged from time immemorial to the Panghooloo of Nanning, and had been handed down to him as such by his ancestors. The dispossessed tenant, holding the Title Deeds of the Estate, dated so far back as 1723, took refuge in Malacca, and demanded redress from the Government. The Civil authorities pointed out to the Panghooloo the injustice of his usurpation, and requested the restoration of the lands.

The requisition met with a haughty and peremptory refusal; and the due authority from the Court of Directors having been already received to dispossess the Chieftain on the original grounds of complaint, the following Proclamation was addressed to the Inhabitants of Nanning, setting forth the refractory behaviour of their leader, and declaring that no evil was intended towards such of his subjects as remained neutral during the approaching contest.

(A Copy of the Proclamation.)

"PROCLAMATION."

"WHEREAS, the Panghooloo of Nanning, by his refractory and rebellious conduct in refusing to obey the Orders of Government of which he is a Servant, having forfeited all claim to future countenance and favour, this is to give Public Notice to the Inhabitants of this district, that a force is now entering it, solely to effect his apprehension and punishment.

"The Inhabitants of Nanning are enjoined, as then value their own happiness and comfort, to remain quiet in the peaceable occupation of their several callings, in which case no evils will befall them. They have as yet committed no harm and greater freedom will be their reward; they will in future be relieved from all vassalage and feudal services, and the free employment of their own labor will be their's. In all respects, except the collection of the tenth, they will be placed upon the same footing as the rest of the Inhabitants of Malacca; but the tenth will not be taken, until the Country is improved, and the Inhabitants better able to afford it.

"New Panghooloes will in the mean time be appointed, and selected from the Inhabitants of Nanning, and the same Police law and freedom will in future be observed there as at the other districts of Malacca.

"All the Inhabitants must know that Nanning has ever belonged to the Honble Company, and that only the bad conduct of its Chief in attempting to make himself independent of such authority, and for presuming to oppress the subjects of the British Government near Bookit Poonehor, has brought this infliction on him.

(Signed.) R. IBBETSON,
Resident Singapore.Malacca, this 15th }
July, 1831. }

It however unfortunately so happened, that the determination of the Government to resort to force of arms, was known in the Bazar some days even prior to the issuing of the orders to the different departments. Having no solid foundation to rest upon, this would have died away as an idle rumour, had it not been confirmed by the great preparations which were made in the arsenal. The circumstance of a force taking the field at Malacca was one which was never before contemplated, and the means of marching at twenty-four hours' notice were totally deficient. Indeed six weeks were required to complete the preparations.

A Portuguese, meanwhile, who followed the trade of making muskets and carbines, applied himself more busily than ever to his vocation, and appeared to find ready purchasers for his stock. It was suspected, and with good reason, that these arms found their way into the interior, but the man was too cunning to allow of the possibility of any proof being advanced against him; and it was necessary to resort to either one of the two following measures, or allow him to continue his trade. The one was, either to place him under rigid surveillance, or else to stop his trade altogether. But it was the wish of the Government to allow the report of the intended attack to die away, in order to induce the people to think that the affair would blow over as it had done before, and then by rapid marches to strike the blow. To have followed these plans with regard to the Portuguese would have revived suspicion and defeated this object.

The Panghooloo was known to be so poor that he could not, unaided, maintain a large body of men for any length of time, and it was expected that the greater part of his force would be disbanded before the Expedition started. Had the Government known at this time, what was so carefully concealed from it, that a powerful combination of Independent Princes, along with by far the largest proportion of our own subjects, was upholding the Panghooloo secretly, very different measures would have been taken, and would have been attended with far different results than those that it is our lot to record in the following pages.

Notwithstanding the activity now manifested in the Ordnance and Commissariat Departments, the Expedition was not ready to start before the 6th August. In the mean time a letter was received from the Rajah of the powerful state of Rumbow, which adjoins Nanning, stating that he had heard it reported that we were preparing to make wars upon the Panghooloo of that place, and intended, after his reduction, to attack Rumbow; that he did not wish to quarrel with the British Government, and requested to be informed whether the report were correct, as upon its truth or falsehood depended entirely the line of conduct which he should adopt.

To this letter the Government replied, strongly disclaiming all hostile views, and stating that the sole object of the Expedition was the apprehension of the Nanning Chieftain. Unfortunately, this letter never reached its destination, and the Troops had marched before the Government was aware of the failure of this despatch on which so much depended. The Rumbow Chieftain naturally concluded that the report was correct, and, by joining the confederacy, strengthened it nearly as much by the influence of his name, as he did by his resources in men and money.

The information obtained by the Government, and which they spared no labor or expense to procure, tended to confirm the previously conceived opinion, that no real opposition was intended; and people of all ranks, except the military, ridiculed the idea of so large a force proceeding into the interior, flatteringly asserting that the Malayan Peninsula could be subjugated by a haviadar's party, and that not a shot would be fired. These prophecies, however, were not destined to be fulfilled, and those who scouted the idea of an enemy on the 6th, were the first to participate in it, if they did not originate, the unaccountable panic which we shall see prevailed on the 7th.

It so unfortunately happened, however, that the spies employed by Government, were false without exception. The Authorities had every right to deem the information they derived from men who had been so long confidentially employed by Government correct, but such was not to be the case. The spies declared that the Nanningites, with the exception of a few devoted to their Chieftain, were ready to join us. We knew that the Malays were addicted to treachery, cowardice, and cruelty; but

we never dreamt that they had any idea of a jest, and that, whilst they were cajoling us with a tale of this kind, they were aware that, so far from this being the case, our own subjects were arming against us.

(Here follows the detail of the military operations, occupying from page 10 to page 39.)

Before we conclude this Pamphlet, let us briefly review the situation of Malacca with regard to the necessity of continuing the war, and (in the event of such a decision being resorted to) the means which we possess, and the amount of the expenditure likely to be incurred.

With regard to the intentions of Government we know nothing, and it may therefore be presumptuous in us to hazard an opinion. But it is our firm belief, that even though it may be deferred by political treaty, such as discounting the Rumbow Rajah and others from the confederacy, war must eventually take place.

We have only to refer to the state of Malacca, at the period at which we are writing (early in October) for the justice of our opinions. Our farthest picket is at the Government bungalow at Tanjong Kling, (distant seven miles), the remainder cover the outskirts of the town. Beyond our pickets we cannot enforce our claim to the ground. It is true that the rest of the Company's territory is still in a state of cultivation, and that the enemy have not, as yet, molested the inhabitants beyond enforcing a tax of twenty cents on each village, which, in most cases, they have succeeded in obtaining.

Out of this collection of the impost has arisen one of the most extraordinary transactions in the whole affair. On the twenty-fourth of September 1831, eight of the people of the Panghooloo of Nanning went to the village of Parit Melahna in the British territory, distant about fourteen miles from Malacca, with the view of enforcing this tax. The head man of the village declined complying with the requisition until he had obtained the permission of his own chieftain, Panghooloo Intchi Kachu. As this man had sided with the Nanning people, and had formed one of the party who feasted most joyously over the guns when they fell into their hands, (a ci-devant gun buffalo forming the principal dish) and as his village moreover was close at hand, no objection was started to this arrangement, and the headman accordingly departed upon his errand.

Intchi Kachu, however, whether influenced by a sudden pique against his Nanning associate, or some other reason equally good, had, *pro-tempore*, changed his politics; and, no sooner had he heard the message of the head man, than he proceeded at the head of a body of armed followers to Parit Melahna, and succeeded, after considerable resistance, in capturing seven out of the eight men collectors. He brought his prisoners safely to Malacca, where they were speedily accommodated at the Government expense, with (as the Newspapers have it) "Board and lodging in those airy and cheerful apartments well known as—the Malacca Jail."

But the most extraordinary part of the business is yet to come. This Panghooloo applied to Government for the protection of a body of serfs, as he had by this act drawn down upon his head the whole vengeance of the Panghooloo of Nanning. Although we had long doubted his fidelity, this deed apparently gave the lie to our doubts; and, as his danger had been incurred by exposing our cause, nothing was more reasonable than that we should protect him from the consequences of the step which he had taken.

As it was necessary, however, to reduce some of the guards and pickets in order to provide this detachment, some time elapsed before the preparations were completed, and in the meanwhile, this very man arrives in Malacca, as the bearer of a letter from the Panghooloo of Nanning, in which he, with a laughable mixture of effrontery and ignorance, demands the immediate release of the prisoners, and threatens, in case of any delay in complying with this requisition, to march down and effect their release!

The very fact of such a threat having been sent to the British Government, although we scout the idea of the impracticability of its being carried into effect, or even seriously contemplated, shows the contempt in which this chieftain holds us, and that, notwithstanding all the fair promises of the Rumbow Rajah and others, he is still in a great measure supported by that very confederacy which is now professed by the parties themselves to be dissolved. But, it is our opinion, that those who have nominally withdrawn, have only decided upon doing so until it is proved which is the most powerful party of the two, and that, whilst by a strong profession of neutrality they attempt to blind the eyes of Government, they will secretly render the Panghooloo of Nanning assistance in men, arms, and money.

Let us review the reason of the absence of annoyance from the enemy at present, and the conduct of the Rajah of Rumbow. There is nothing to gain by ravaging the fields and burning the villages at his early season, whilst the crop is unripe, and, consequently, unstored; it is evidently the policy of the enemy to conciliate the cultivators as much as possible by a false constraint, to reduce themselves and the dominant power, in order to induce them to continue their labours until unprotected, by the presence of a British force.

We grant to the Rumbow chieftain and others who have written to Government to say that they were misled in the out set of the contents by the false representation of the Panghooloo of Nanning; that they have, in consequence, withdrawn from the confederacy; and that they will not rejoin it. We know nothing of the character of the Rajah personally. Upon that point, the Government were adequate to form a correct information, and it can possibly be our judgment is founded on the well known character of the Malayan chieftains, and the hypothesis that all nations seek to be free, and will, if an opening be yielded them, rather starve under the grinding oppression of a ruler of their own choice, than live comfortably under the yoke however easy, of a foreigner.

Let us return to the conduct of the Rumbow Rajah. In first place, he has asserted that he was misled the Panghooloo of Nanning, who told him of his ulterior object, after the seizure of his disaffected, receive our disclaimer. He did not, it is true, receive our disclaimer, in the first instance; but long before he withdrew, he must have heard of one of the widely dispersed Proclamations, and therefore could not be ignorant of what the intentions of Government were.

—This withdrawing at the present moment means to be looked upon as a proof of weakness. He has no object in keeping the field so long as he is contending these circumstances, to exhaust his people, and to exhaust his resources by feed-

—Ever the Rajah, which we can depend on the fidelity that through control over his goods, the Rajah, in our opinion, has withdrawn entirely by circumstances. The part of about thirty miles N. N. W. of Malacca,

and notorious as being the nest—we might say, the very hot-bed—of piracy, is, we believe, a competent part of the Rumbow territory. The British check these lawless depredators, but the posture of affairs at Malacca has led to its recall for the present.

The nature of the chieftaincy amongst the Malay tribes may be stated as comprising the sole provision of the eldest son, whilst the others, as they advance to maturity, are turned adrift with a few retainers each to make their way through the world by levying contributions from their less warlike neighbours either as pirates or banditti. We believe that Lingy is the head quarters of the Rumbow Rajah's second son, who follows the former of these most respectable callings. A war therefore with the British, whilst it would cripple his exports of tin, would check his piratical revenue, and he has consequently sound reasons for endeavoring to keep well with us so long as he deems us the stronger power.

But our inactivity at present, especially if not followed up by a war as soon as the state of the weather will allow of troops taking the field, will inspire him with such contempt for the British that he will be induced to head, instead of joining, a conspiracy to overthrow a Government which he may deem weak and inefficient. If we would render a viper innocuous, we draw his fangs: let us act with respect to the Rumbow chieftain: he has both the power and the will to annoy us; render him tributary, and his power is lost; the will is of little consequence.

It is impossible that Malacca can long remain in this state. It must follow the routine of our Indian conquests, and strengthen its frontier by an accession of territory. If it do not, its final abandonment may be anticipated; but it is rendered too important by its locality to allow of such a step. Situated so as to command the direct road to China, and at a moment when the nations of Europe are convulsed with revolution, it cannot be suffered to pass out of our hands, and we therefore repeat our conviction that the necessity of war exists in its full force.

But it is after all impossible to calculate what force may be requisite to accomplish the reduction of the enemy. It is no longer Nanning, but the Malayan Peninsula, that is to be subdued. Even the Rajah of Moar, once a firm ally of ours, (whose territories lie S. E. of us,) has within these few days seized upon the lands of a gentleman resident in Malacca, which adjoin his district, impudently asserting that they belong to him, thus affording a striking resemblance to the aggression of the Nanning chieftain.

There is no capital, properly so called, throughout the Malayan Peninsula. They never dream therefore of fighting "pro aris et focis," but recede as you advance—with a flying enemy a heavy blow cannot be struck, every village will be successively abandoned on the approach of the troops, and the principal rebels will betake themselves to their strongholds in the recesses of the jungle.

Yet, although the enemy would suffer little in actual property, even by the destruction of their villages, the total cessation in husbandry, which would inevitably result from the presence of a hostile force, would decidedly tend to loosen the link between the chieftains and their dependents. It would be useless to pursue the flying leaders through the wilder mazes of a Malayan forest; but if a severe lesson of British superiority were once read to the dependents, they would soon desert the cause of their chiefs, and for a slight reward bring in all those who are obnoxious to Government.

The trees that are now being, and which will be, felled in the succeeding operations, will tend to enrich the soil; and we feel confident that, with light imposts and the protecting presence of a British force, not only in the Company's territories, but in those which we may seize on the ground of violated treaties, Malacca will eventually achieve what she has never before accomplished, viz. the payment of her own expenses.

Anxious to afford the public mind as much information as possible on the relative situation of Malacca with regard to the temper of the inhabitants of the interior, we may add, that, although our surmises as to the murder of the Chinaman by the Malays, founded on the dilapidated state of his house and the presence of a pool of blood on the floor when we returned to Alu Gaja, proves incorrect, the enemy continues to evince decided hostility and implacable enmity to the British. Out of seven convicts captured whilst we were in advance, and who have fallen victims to their roving propensities in search of plunder, six were speedily beheaded, being Hindoos; the seventh being a Mussulman, was spared on account of his religion. But within the last three or four days, the Panghooloo has beheaded him also in revenge for the capture of his warriors.

Five hundred muskets are said to be arrayed against us at Sulo Datas Datas, and incredible exertions are being made to recruit in musket and ammunition. The war must therefore be prosecuted; and it must be a war of extermination; or rather so conducted on exterminating principles as to allow of no quarter, until the enemy adopt a more civilized and humane line of conduct.