

A curious circumstance occurred lately at *Lingie* near Malacca, which came to our knowledge some short time since, but which we were unwilling to notice until we obtained more particular information on the subject from Malacca.

We mentioned in a preceding number, published in January last, (see No. 5, present year,) that a tax of three dollars the bahar, or a dollar the picul, had been imposed by RAJAH ALLI and SEYD SABAN, (two worthies of that ilk.) on all tin exported from the Mines at Lingie. A quantity of that metal had been purchased from the Rajah Mooda of Lingie, by HOOTKEE, a Chinese merchant residing at Malacca, previous to the imposition of the above tax, at a fixed price; and being anxious to obtain it, the above merchant sent the brig *Catharine* to Lingie, to have the tin conveyed to Malacca. The vessel, we understand, was well-armed, and had on board, a mock commissioner, (a discharged Dutch soldier) "dressed up as a civilian,"

with a fictitious interpreter, and one or two other "fighting characters." Seyd Saban, seeing a square-rigged vessel coming up the river, so equipped, quitted his *fort* or stockade, and fled inland; but after 90 bahars of the tin had been shipped, he returned and demanded the tax from the supercargo, (a Chinaman, we believe) who refused paying it, and referred him to the owner of the tin, Hootkee. Seyd Saban then *mildly* requested the supercargo to pay him as much of the tax as he pleased!—which was likewise refused by the latter, who required Seyd Saban to exhibit his *right* to levy such an unusual impost. The latter produced a document, written in Malayan characters and having two seals attached to it, which paper, he said, had been given to him by the English Authorities as a reward or compensation for his *valuable* interference in the Nanning War. The *Catharine* shortly after returned to Malacca with her cargo, followed by Seyd Saban, who immediately complained to the Government against the supercargo. The Resident sent for the latter, & required him to give two securities for 500 Dollars each, to appear at the next Criminal Session, along with one or two principals concerned in the above transactions;—"then & there" to stand their trial, before a Jury,—on what indictments charged, we have not heard.

It appears, however, that on the arrival of the Governor, at Malacca, a few days after, the security-bond was ordered to be destroyed, as the transaction had occurred beyond the jurisdiction of the Court of Judicature. Thus the affair rests at present.

The power which the Malacca Authorities have exercised in this case, in investing Seyd Saban and Rajah Allie, with *rights* and privileges, which they themselves have no claim or title to, and consequently are incapable of conferring on others,—seems to us to be a very extraordinary one. There *may* be some ancient document empowering them, the Malacca authorities, to interfere in such matters, but we question much the existence of it. The precedent, however, is bad; and in this case injurious; as the sanctioning of so exorbitant an imposition as one dollar per picul, must tend, ere long, unless modified, to render the mines unproductive, when they, of course, will be abandoned by the miners. Such are the rewards of a shortsighted and avaricious policy.

Another circumstance has occurred lately at Malacca, which is worthy of notice. A letter dated the 6th instant, informs us that a Malay prow came into the river, a few days previously, from *Batu Barrah* (in Sumatra) bringing six slaves,—three women, and three children—also some paddy and rice. The Naquodah, "unfortunately,"—according to our correspondent, but fortunately, in our opinion,—met with the Constable, and not knowing him, offered for sale, a woman and her child, for 50 dollars; the Constable struck a bargain, in presence of a witness, and having reported the affair to a Magistrate, the Naquodah was committed to prison. As the prisoner will most probably, be tried soon, for piracy, under which head his crime must be placed, we will not make any observations that may be prejudicial to the case. We only hope that, if he be found guilty, the Court will inflict the severest punishment allowed by the law for such a crime; as we have reason to fear a practice still prevails both at this Settlement, and at Malacca, among natives, of purchasing slaves from native vessels. An example is therefore much required to put a stop to this most nefarious traffic. The conduct of the Constable on the above occasion, so different to that of former constables whom we have heard of, is deserving of the commendation of every lover of humanity and justice.