

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SINGAPORE CHRONICLE

Mr. Editor,

I had the pleasure of reading your Chronicle of the 8th and 15th instant, Nos. 41. and 42. In the first number, I find inserted my letter, or rather a part of it, to your address dated the 19th. September last, most lamentably abridged. If you thought the letter worth insertion in your valuable paper, I could have wished you by rights to have given publication to the whole length of the original. In your next number 42, a correspondent of yours named "CHECK MATE," with yourself in another column of the same paper, appear to be eager for further explanation regarding the right the Dutch have on Lingin, holding on the words used by me on good and solid grounds.

Having once taken up my pen to speak of the rights the Netherlands Government have on Lingin to be sound and of an unshaken foundation from my acquaintance of the matter, I will necessarily endeavour to prove to you and your readers the following facts, as briefly as possible. Those who are acquainted with the history of the Empire of Johoor know that, this Empire, at one time in the year 1729, or thereabouts, was conquered by the Siacnees and their Sultan defeated, the conquerors were not allowed to enjoy their victory for a length of time. The defeated Sultan had obtained the aid of the Bogueese prince of Siam, to whom he made

his application at the very commencement of hostilities between him and the Siac prince. The Bogueese attacked, defeated and drove the Siac people completely from the Empire of Johoor and restored the Sultan to his throne and dignity. The empire being thus delivered from her enemies and the Sultan again seated on his throne, an everlasting treaty, as such it is named, took place between the Sultan and the Bogueese prince as his deliverers; upon this the engagement entered into was to be in force from one descendant of the contracting parties to that of the other, by which the said Bogueese prince named Dain-Combojah, and his male issues were incorporated as lawful princes of the empire of Johoor, with the title and dignity of that of I-ang-per-Tuan-Mudah, or viceroy and prime minister of the empire; it is since this that the Bogueese have increased in power, while that of the Malays gradually decreased in the empire of Johoor. It was further stipulated in the said treaty, that all political transactions of the empire be left entirely to the sole management of I-ang-per-Tuan-Mudah, or viceroy, without whose consent, or concurrence no political acts of any description whatsoever, is to be considered valid. Moreover the power of I-ang-per-Tuan-Mudah is extensive, without whose personal presence no prince is exalted to the throne, having the power of raising to the throne its successor by the death of the reigning Sultan. To the truth of the above statement, should it needs be required, I beg to refer you and your readers to the Malayan manuscript entitled "Undang undang Johoor." According to the Malay laws and constitution, the eldest son of the reigning Sultan, procreant by the Queen, is indisputably the successor to the father's throne, but when there is no children of that birth, only others by inferior mothers in existence, it is then entirely left to the choice of the ministers, grandees and the people of the empire to select one amongst those princes to the succession of the vacant throne, whom they may think proper (reference may be had if necessary by yourself and readers in their book entitled "See Jarra Malayon"). Such was the case by the death of Sultan Mahmood Sha the III. He died in the year 1809 without having any issue by the Queen, but leaving two sons by two inferior women. According to the preceding Malay laws and constitution I-ang-per-Tuan-Mudah Raja Japhar, with the power of hereditary vested in him, and in concurrence with the princes, grandees and people of all classes who were at the time of the death of the Sultan Mahmood Sha the III present at Lingin, he lawfully elected the second son of the deceased Sultan, named Toonkoo Abdul Rahman Sha to the vacant throne of his father, under the title and dignity of Sree Padukan Abdul Rahman Sha, Sultan of Johoor, Pahang, Rhio and Lingin, and as such he was acknowledged, respected and obeyed by all and every one of the princes, ministers, grandees and people of the empire of Johoor, from the day he ascended the throne in the year 1809, until the day of his death in the year 1812. When he was succeeded by his son Toonkoo Mahmood Sha the III, the present reigning Sultan at Lingin. The coronation of Toonkoo Abdul Rahman Sha to the throne of the empire of Johoor took place at Lingin in the year 1809, as above stated. In the year 1810 Mr. Thomas Stamford Raffles, secretary to the Pinang government, and Political agent to Lord Minto, Governor General of Bengal, arrived at Lingin in the Company's cruiser "Aurora" Captain Mac Donnell, in his written correspondences with Toonkoo Abdul Rahman Sha, he is fully titled with the dignity of Sultan of Johoor. In the year 1811 Lord Minto himself, while on his way to Java and whilst at Malacca, wrote to the Sultan Abdul Rahman Sha with the same title, dignifying him Sultan of Johoor. In the year 1812, in June, Captain Mac Donnell of the Company's cruiser "Aurora" perhaps better known under the appellation of "Protector of the Eastern Seas," as he was styled, was the bearer of a letter from the Lieutenant governor of Java to the Sultan Abdul Rahman Sha, he was in the same manner in this correspondence titled and dignified as Sultan of Johoor.

In the year 1818, while the Dutch were daily expected at Malacca, Major Farquhar then Resident of Malacca, on his mission to several of the native states in the Archipelago, according to reports to consult with and form with those states treaties of commerce, as it was supposed, for such he arrived at Lingin in the month of August of the same year, and actually entered into correspondence with the Sultan Abdul Rahman Sha, acknowledging him with all the necessary formalities due to the dignity of Sultan of Johoor, and on the 19th of the same month and in concurrence with I-ang-per-Tuan-Mudah Raja Japhar the Major closed a treaty of commerce with them at Rhio.

Thus, from the year 1809 until the year 1818 Sultan Abdul Rahman Sha was not only acknowledged, respected and obeyed by the subjects of his empire Johoor, the British Government and its authorities had also corresponded and even closed treaties of commerce with him, acknowledging the dignities of sovereignty of Johoor to him. All this while no mention is made respecting Toonkoo Hooseen, commonly called Toonkoo Long; very good reason, why he being considered nothing more than a prince without authority. But in the year 1819 when Sir Stamford Raffles determined to take possession of Singapore unlawfully, I must say unlawfully quoting the subject of Powers,—and the artifice used to obtain that Island, it was then that Major Farquhar was sent to Rhio to bring over Toonkoo-Hooseen commonly called Toonkoo-Long, who was residing at Pulo-Pinigad, in which the Major succeeded with the assistance of that notorious Turnkoo-Osman of Rhio. At that time, it is to be distinctly observed, Sir Stamford Raffles honored Toonkoo-Hooseen commonly called Toonkoo-Long, with the title of Sultan. Pray Sultan of what? Sultan of Singapore!!! one of the insignificant Island belonging to Johoor; for the distinguished name it has since derived as a mart or general place of trade in the east, which it now most deservedly bears the honour (I believe) of so much fame, is greatly due to the praiseworthy efforts of an adventurous number of the British capitalists for what it is at present, besides the meed due to its founder Sir Stamford Raffles.

Raja Japhar was the fifth successor as I-ang-per-Tuan-Mudah, or viceroy and prime minister of the empire, and was vested with all the dignities and authority of that office hereditary. He was a man of noble character and principles, and as such he was at all time esteemed by every one either natives or European who knew him.

The renewal of the treaty between the Netherlands Government and the Sultan of Johoor Pahang, Rhio, and Lingin in the year 1818 was not secretly performed by Admiral Walterbeek and Raja Japhar;—no! but it was concluded with the unanimous concurrence and approval of the lawful Sultan Abdul Rahman Sha, as well as that of

I-ang-per-Tuan-Mudah Raja Japhar the Tum-mongong of Johoor (who had afterwards fallen off from the Sultan and went over to his son-in-law Toonkoo-Hooseen commonly called Toonkoo Long, honored with the title of Sultan of Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles) and the Bandarah of Pahang, whose chops and signatures are affixed to the treaty.

The Regalia of the empire of Johoor was voluntarily handed over by the old Queen Tuankoo Hamida commonly called Tuankoo Pootree to Mr. Adrian Koek secundo of Malacca, at her residence Pulo Pinigad. Mr. Koek an old and intimate friend of the Queen's entered into conversation with her, which delaying his return to the governor longer than was expected, the governor for the safety of his person, as well as to dignify its appearance, went over with an English party to guard him, but not for the purpose as is maliciously stated in your paper to intimidate and reduce the Queen to obedience for the purpose of wresting from her hands the Regalia of the empire by military force. In submitting V. R's former statement in a clearer light light for the gratification of "Check Mate" and other readers of your papers, it is hoped to carry with it sufficient vindication than that of any gross conjecture "Check Mate" might entertain of the reception of the Regalia by the Netherlands Government being obtained by violence.

Having it within my power to gratify your wish as to "what became in 1819 of Inchi Owan Saban, uncle of Toonkoo-Hooseen?" I will not hesitate to acquaint you that the crime, committed by Inchi Owan Saban was of an odious and despicable nature offered to Government, at the moment of the proclamation of the renewed treaty between the Netherlands Government and the Sultan of Johoor, Pahang, Rhio, and Lingin, at Pulo-Pinigad, according to old customs; he dauntlessly called out to massacre the Dutch, and frantically bawling out those words whilst holding a naked kris in his hand, he was taken prisoner not only by his own countrymen, but by his kinsman also and delivered to the Dutch authority, who transmitted him to Malacca, where he was kept state prisoner, until released by the Netherlands Commissioners in 1823, and not till 1825 was his release as stated by you, he was at large full two years before Malacca was given up by the Dutch to the English in exchange for Bencoolen. Neither were there upon this, or any other occasion anything in the slightest shape of Dutch malignity or violence, as expressed by you. Allow me, Mr. Editor, to say what I think of the matter, that this patriotic and spirited denunciator Inchi Owan Saban before his countrymen at Pulo-Pinigad, ought to have deservedly fared the just resentment of Government by being shot on the spot; would have spared themselves of a variety of expences incumbent on them by useless prolongation of imprisonment to a worthless villain.

These are all facts Mr. Editor, and facts we all know are stubborn things.

I have not the least intention, nor inclination to become a correspondant with you, or any one else, which is not likely to tend to much benefit by the discussion of past acts of Government, altogether useless in the present times. That of my letter of the 19th September last to your address on the subject of the Netherlands Government having good and solid ground as their right on Lingin will prove to be my only motive, however I have not hesitated to be explicit with the statement of an account I feel myself tolerably well acquainted with, to offer to you. I finally conclude by resigning the discussion of Crowns and Regalias with the statement of facts produced regarding it and others, for something which comes PAT to my recollection, St. Luke Chap. VI. Verses 41. and 42. V. R's thanks however is due to the disinclination of one, whose wishes are not to add to irksomeness though, it is not from any belief of mistatements, a kind commiserator.

I am,

Mr. Editor,

Yours Obediently,

V. R.

Malacca, the 28th. Oct. 1836.