

We noticed in our last number the arrival of a prahu commissioned by the Rajah of Delhi to convey a letter to the Resident Councillor of this place, supposing it to have some connexion with the endeavours of government to repress piracy in the Straits. In this we are not mistaken, and we have since learned that the Rajah or Sultan, as he is more commonly called, of Delhi, expresses every desire to second the Straits authorities in their exertions on that behalf, having deputed one of his Council to enter into arrangements for the purpose. We are not aware that any other of the native princes or chiefs, has yet met the application of the Commissioners with so much alacrity, or symptoms of a like sincerity—and as the Rajah of Delhi is not only one of the most powerful chiefs on the East Coast of Sumatra, but unlike the majority, has never been accused or suspected of harbouring or encouraging pirates, we trust the local

authorities will use every means to improve a good understanding with that chief. Nothing, we believe, is better calculated to conciliate the good will, and animate the exertions of really well-disposed native princes, than to receive their overtures with attention, and to shew that some degree of value is attached to their connexion, and to the services they propose to render. To minister to this vanity costs nothing—but very little in the way of coldness or neglect speedily serves to wound it, and convert its owner into, what is worse than useless at all times and in all places—an offended and reluctant ally.

The territory subject to the Sultan of Delhi is perhaps the most fertile and productive of any along the whole extent of the East Coast of Sumatra. It extends from the town of Delhi northward along the coast to Timiang Point, a distance of about 40 miles, and southward to Point Pabuangang or Bunga-bunga, a distance of 15 miles where the river Sudang forms its boundary. The interior limits appear by no means defined, but extend inwards from the Coast until they approximate the dominions of the Battas, a distance apparently of 25 miles. The principal product of Delhi is pepper—of which 36,000 piculs are said to be annually exported—being either sent to Singapore and Penang, but mostly to the latter, or laden on board the vessels which visit the place for the purposes of trade. The cultivation of rice is very extensive, but not sufficient for the food of the inhabitants as it is imported in considerable quantity for consumption. The culture of both of these articles, which are the principal products of Delhi, is, we learn, rapidly increasing. Bees' Wax and Sulphur, of which the latter is procurable in great quantity from the mountains of the Batta country, are also exported—as also Ivory, but in limited quantity. Tobacco is cultivated to some extent. Kachang or peas, of various descriptions, are grown with ease and produced in abundance. The Sugar-cane also flourishes in perfection—and a sufficient quantity of Sugar is manufactured for the use of the inhabitants, besides what is consumed in the mastication of the cane itself. Pulses, yams, sweet potatoes and other esculent vegetables are natives of the soil and form part of the ordinary food of the inhabitants, besides Indian corn which is extensively planted. They have also a great variety of fruits, and a valuable supply of timber, both for ship-building and furniture. Their domestic animals consist of the horse, cow, goat &c., besides the buffalo which also runs wild in their forests where other wild animals also abound, of which the most formidable are the tiger, the bear, the elephant and the rhinoceros. The population of the state of Delhi which forms but a small portion of the whole territory subject to it, is said to amount to 20,000 Mahomedans and Battas.

The occupations of husbandry & cultivation appear to be almost entirely carried on by the Battas. These people, notwithstanding their alleged cannibal propensities, are represented to us by some of their Malay neighbours of Delhi as extremely honest, docile and industrious—although there are other tribes of them possessing considerable ferocity of disposition. Their external cleanliness and care in some respects contrast strangely with their filth and revolting practices in others. The spaces round their dwellings and their plantations of every kind are kept beautifully clean, and swept and tended with a precision and regularity that would delight the eye of the most fastidious nursery-man. Their persons and clothing are, on the other hand, very dirty,—and nothing is too gross for their food, as they will eat carrion of buffalo, cat, rat, dog, or whatever it may be with the same apparent relish as their more general food. They keenly resent every attempt to defraud them—or refusal to acknowledge their just claims. Cases have occurred, when having had occasion to complain to the Sultan against their employer on a plantation for some breach of contract, and not having had justice dealt out to them as promptly as it appeared to them the case required, they have cut down every pepper vine on the estate and decamped back into their own country. This makes the Malays recognise and adopt the policy of fair dealing with the Battas, who, it is admitted are themselves most punctilious in the discharge of their own contracts. The terms and conditions on which the Battas are engaged in the cultivation of Pepper &c. vary according to circumstances; they do not, however, appear to be at any time paid in wages, properly so called. The more general contract is that the owner of the soil pays a stipulated but low price to them for two-thirds of the whole produce of the vines, and the selling price of the day for the remaining third.

It is customary, however, when the plantation is to be commenced, to maintain the Battas on rice and salt, and to provide them with certain implements of husbandry until the pepper has begun to bear—which is generally in three years, when the new contract succeeds, by which it squares with the interest of the Battas to make the estate as productive as possible. A peaceable and unsuspecting intercourse appears to be carried on between the Malays of the State of Delhi and the Battas of the interior, which both no doubt find it their interest to promote—and the Sultan of Delhi has the good sense to make all the Battas within his jurisdiction subject to the same laws as his Malayan subjects, and to assign the same punishment to a breach of the laws committed by a Malay, where a Battah is the sufferer as *vice versa*. The present Sultran, indeed, appears to be rather an amiable person; he has abolished, or at least does not put in force, several barbarous punishments of a capital nature assigned by the laws or customs of Delhi to offences of a particular kind—and

finds it a more merciful as well as a wiser policy to condemn the offenders to hard labour on the roads—employing them to make streets and lay out roads about his capital—which he is very desirous, it is said, to see resembling what he saw on a visit which he made to Penang. The river on the banks of which the town of Delhi stands, instead of being bordered on either side by mangrove jungle, or fringed with a dense and impervious forest, as is so generally the case in these countries, possesses clear and elevated banks, and flows for the most part through a fine open country, exhibiting at every stage well-peopled villages and extensive tracts of planted and cultivated land.