

MALACCA LANDS.—Our Malacca correspondent is not mistaken in supposing that it would be matter of the most sincere regret to us, that any garbled statement should appear in our columns, unnoticed or uncontradicted—especially when such statement tended to prejudice an officer of the government, or any other individual, in the opinion of the public. If therefore Mr. WESTERHOUT has undergone misrepresentation by any thing published in this paper about his proceedings relative to the Malacca lands, nothing would gratify us more than to see that gentleman righted in the eyes of the public by means of X. It must however be considered rather unfortunate that we cannot come to a conclusion in his favour, without at the same time being under the necessity of crediting facts against others of an infinitely darker complexion than aught that has been yet laid to his charge. Thus, we are not only called upon by X. to regard as a “foul act of perjury” the deposition of a Malay published in our number of 2nd inst., in which that gentleman is charged with using menaces to compel the deponent to take a lease for his lands from the government—but we are also required to believe that the Magistrate before whom the deposition in question was taken, or his mother, or both together, were guilty of suborning this false testimony,—at least we can draw no more charitable inference from the manner in which our correspondent adduces the “influential circumstance” of the deponent being indebted to the “worthy Magistrates’ mother in the sum of Drs. 12”—the fact of the Magistrate “urging the disclosure” contained in the deposition, and directing the party making it to a shop where “a select coterie was assembled for the occasion.” We can understand, as is plainly enough meant to be conveyed, that Mr. WESTERHOUT may have enemies among his neighbours at Malacca,—and we have heard it said that a good many of his countrymen there are to a degree jealous and envious of his late advancement to an office of some trust and importance under government.—But that any feelings originating in that source should carry hostility to the point indicated by our correspondent seems scarcely credible, and at any rate suggests considerations into the discussion of which we would rather not enter.

Our correspondent admits the existence of discontent in some districts with the proposed change of system respecting the lands—but

again, he attributes this to the machinations of “interested persons industriously going about circulating papers and reports—stirring up the people to distrust and disaffection against government”—What! is there nothing in the nature of the system which government is desirous to introduce regarding the lands, calculated of itself to generate objections among the natives to acquiesce in it? Is the fact of the native tenants being called upon by this government to exchange an indisputable right to the occupancy of the soil, under payment of a tenth of the produce, for a twenty years’ lease and a money rent, itself incapable of originating opposition without “interested persons” putting themselves to the trouble of exciting suspicion and disaffection towards the government? It is admitted indeed by our correspondent himself that “the Land regulations proposed by government are neither likely to conduce to their own interests, or to the welfare of cultivators”—Unless therefore the cultivators are to be bettered by a change, is not *that* a sufficient reason for their objecting to any innovation upon customs to which long use has made them partial? We do not know who the “interested persons” referred to are—there being none *directly* interested in the lands excepting the government and the tenants holding under it—but as to the “papers and reports” which our correspondent says have been industriously circulated among the natives, we are informed that one or two articles which have appeared in this paper on the subject of the lands of Malacca, have been *done into Malay*, and circulated far and wide among the native tenants—and these are probably some of the papers to which our correspondent refers.—But, if justice was done to us in the translation, our correspondent must admit there was nothing contained in them calculated to produce disaffection, if it was *contrary to the experience of the Malays themselves* that any means had been taken to impress them with the belief that government would enforce a compliance with its own terms—and if any such means had been taken, that then their disaffection so far was fully justified. We quite agree with X. that a memorial would be a suitable method of embodying the objections of the Malacca tenants to adopt the new regulation—a course which we recommended in a late number—and we were informed several days ago, that such a memorial had actually been prepared, and was already subscribed by several hun-

dred individuals. But will our correspondent, although he recommends memorializing, receive it as a genuine expression of the feelings of the natives, when he says that tenants have come in and “made depositions to the effect that threats of expulsion from their grounds were held out by European landholders if they refused to sign the papers put before them”?—for unless some of these European landholders put the natives in the way of memorializing, we know not who is to do it. Our correspondent seems to intimate that it is in prosecution of some inimical designs against M. WESTERHOUT that these gentlemen exert themselves to create a spirit of opposition among the native tenants to the proposed new land regulations of the Government. But, how can such a course be prejudicial to Mr. W? What can it be to him whether or not the new system is either partially or universally adopted by the natives?—for our correspondent would not we know wish us to suppose that that gentlemen’s continuance in office depended upon the government scheme being carried through—or that the government would be in the least annoyed with him, if it were not. In what manner then, we ask, can he be injured by the alleged endeavours of the European landholders to excite in the natives sentiments of opposition to the measure in question?

In conclusion, we shall be happy to hear again from X. on the subject—and if he will make his “stubborn facts” still more stubborn, and enter farther into particulars than he has yet done, his next communication will not be the less acceptable.—On looking back at some of our articles he will we think find a few points which he may deem worthy of explanation, now that he has taken up the pen.