

DUTCH OPERATIONS ON CELEBES.—A trading prahu which has come in during the week from *Bugis Betul*, laden with Coffee, reports that a body of Dutch troops had been marched from Macassar into their country—that the Bugis had collected an army of 2,000 men to oppose them, and had fortified themselves in a stockade on their own frontier—that the Dutch seeing these preparations had sought an interview with the Bugis Rajah, that two of their number had been admitted into the Stockade for that purpose—and that some negotiation was forthwith entered upon which continued up to the time the trading vessel left. Such is the report—the authenticity of which we are however totally without means of ascertaining—but as the natives are not perhaps so much given to fabricate statements as to exaggerate facts, it is not likely to be altogether destitute of foundation, and may very possibly be quite true. So far indeed as the ambition of the Dutch to establish their supremacy throughout the Archipelago is considered, there seems every reason to believe it too true. We say *too true*, because in every step made towards the extension of their authority in these seas, we contemplate some injurious result to the trade of this port. We do not, however, suppose that the Dutch will attempt the forcible subjugation of the Bugis tribes, after their dear-bought experience of the spirit of resistance among them to foreign domination, and the difficulties attending the tranquil occupation of territory wrested from them by force of arms. The independence of these states is more likely to fall a sacrifice to Dutch gold than to Dutch valour, and to become a prey to the avarice of the

Rajah and his nobles, rather than to any defect of spirit among the inhabitants. The Dutch, we believe, have never neglected an opportunity of buying themselves into supremacy, when the results of the contest for it appeared in any degree doubtful—and from the accounts received of their present operations in Celebes, they would seem to be negotiating for a quiet surrender of the Boni territory to their authority—as the Bugis, whose arrival we have noticed, speculate upon the probability of the Rajah “giving up the country to the Dutch”—the effect of which they say would be, to drive all the Bugis merchants to leave the country and settle themselves in other places—But in whatever manner—whether by conquest or by Treaty—the authority of the Dutch is established at *Boni, Goa*, or any other of the independent states of Celebes, the results to British commerce will be one and the same. Exclusion and monopoly will be then the order of the day—not a yard of our cottons or woollens will be allowed to be imported *from this*—as is already the case at Macassar and all their other out-ports in the archipelago—not a picul of Coffee or other produce be allowed to be exported by the native traders *to this*—and Singapore will thus be deprived of an important and lucrative branch of her trade. But if all this, and much worse, were to happen, it seems we must even put up with it—Complaints, petitions, remonstrances, pass unheeded—nothing can rouse the supine indifference of our government with respect to the state and prospects of British trade in these seas—and the Dutch must not only be allowed to enjoy the fruits of twelve years’ encroachments upon our trade in Java, but to persevere in a system of aggression against the trade of this port which, if it effected all that it was intended and desired to do, would go nigh to reduce Singapore to nearly the same state of insignificance which was its lot before the far-seeing eye of a RAFFLES descried in its situation those advantages for the establishment of a free emporium of British trade, which so soon carried it to a pitch of prosperity that more than realised the warmest anticipations he had formed. He could not however, imagine that in a few years after, a Treaty was to be concluded which was to leave every island to the Westward and Southward of his favourite Settlement, at the disposal of the Dutch—which was to prohibit us not only from forming establishments on any of them, but from making a Treaty with any of their chiefs, while it left the Dutch at liberty to conquer and oppress every island in the archipelago without exception—a Treaty, which pretends to secure for us the most perfect freedom of commerce, and is said to be based on the enlarged and liberal principles of reciprocal advantages, & yet leaves it at the discretion of the Dutch to exclude our manufactures from every one of their possessions in these seas, out of Java! If this is not the meaning of the Treaty why is such a system of aggression allowed to continue? or must the trade of Singapore, like that of Java suffer from it for a dozen of years, before it is discovered that any wrong has been committed, or any injury sustained?