

OF CALANTAN—In a late number we had a few observations relative to some correspondence of the Committee of the *Singapore Institution Free Schools* with the Rajah of Calantan, of which the object was to induce him to send the children of his followers here for education. The Rajah, having conceived that he would give umbrage to the government of Siam, to which he said his territory was subject, if he complied with this recommendation, the Committee referred him to the Treaty between the English and Siamese, which embodies a provision that the latter shall not make any incursions into Calantan, or molest its commerce, in order to shew that the territory was not subject to Siam, but under our protection. It appears, however, from the following translation of a letter lately received in reply to this expostulation, that the Rajah, if satisfied that the Committee are in the right, sets no very great value upon the protection which we have it in our power to afford him, in the event of his doing anything that may run counter to the pleasure of the king of Siam:—

“What our friends say about the Treaty between the English and the Siamese, to wit, that there is such a Treaty, and that it forbids the Siamese to throw any obstacles in the way of our sending our children to Singapore, we fully believe, nevertheless our heart is not quite at ease in respect to our country. We are like a prow sailing alone, her rudder broken, her cable parted, and herself well nigh sinking; while a black cloud is seen rising on the verge of the sky. If a storm comes, we have no one to help us to contend against it. Our friends remark that we have created difficulties in our own imagination. Still we are afraid, because we observe that a storm is rising, and that whether it be light or severe, it must sink our crazy prow. Our friends request that we send them a few of our children. At present they are all small, and have not yet learned even to talk; of course they cannot be expected to learn anything at school. When they are larger there will be no reason why our friends, rather than we, should not teach them all the rules of politeness and all useful knowledge, since we are anxious that they should be well educated. Because of the manifest sincerity of our

friends, we cannot forget or neglect their counsel. But they will keep in mind the difficulties of our situation. Thus and thus do we declare unto you

We have not yet regularly come into possession of the Royal Seal, and therefore, as you see, we have not affixed it.”

Kalantan, September, 1838.

This is a fair specimen, as far as our experience goes, of the metaphorical style of the Malays,—and those in whose minds the idea of *cause & effect* exists in suitable connexion, will of course ascribe the preference shewn for nautical imagery to the maritime habits of the people—dwellers by the sea-coast.—Regarded in another and more important point of view, however, the letter of the Rajah conveys but a poor idea of the degree of confidence which the States on the East Coast of the Peninsula repose in the power of the British government to protect them against the Siamese: This is a feeling which it is not very creditable to us should exist at all, and which it is impolitic to allow to continue. To the natives of the Archipelago who are acquainted with the more extensive establishments of the Dutch in Java and other islands, with their numerous troops and armed fleets, it may perhaps be natural to regard us as the inferior power of the two, Singagore being all they see of our Indian empire.—But it cannot be the result of the very best management that the States of the Peninsula should at this time of day look up to Siam as a superior power—or, at any rate that they should shew their dread of that power to be stronger than their confidence in our means of protection. The “black cloud which is rising on the verge of the sky”, is intended we may suppose to be typical of the preparations which the Siamese are now making for the invasion of Quedah; and which the Rajah perhaps supposes may be directed against some of the other Malay states besides. But however vain may be his fears as to the predicament of his own territory, there is no doubt that his simile of “a prow sailing alone, her rudder broken, her cable parted, and herself well nigh sinking” applies in full force to Quedah, with the farther consolatory addition that “the crew are at each others throats”—It is not by any means improbable that some of the Malay states may regard our conduct with respect to Quedah as arising from an awe of the Siamese power. That they consider it as disgraceful there can be no doubt—unaccustomed as they are to deal with those refinements by which it has been sought to be, if not justified, at least excused.

We do not know whether it is the intention of the Committee to endeavour to make the Calantan Rajah believe that instead of being embarked in “a crazy prow,” he is on board of one tight staunch, and strong and which need not fear any “black cloud” gathering on the horizon, but they have not much encouragement to attempt it—for independent of the threatening appearances we suppose him alluding to, he certainly seems resolved to be as much afraid as possible.