

PULU PENANG.

"See Naples and then die," say the Italians in their enthusiasm for the city bathed by a sea, frequently agitated by cold northerly winds, and perfumed by some meagre orange trees, whose petals are from time to time withered by frost. What would this poetical people say if it knew Pulu-Penang, the island of the Prince of Wales? Pulu-Penang, which, placed in the centre of the Malay country, is the Paradise of this Eden of the universe. It is on this corner of the earth that God has realised the idea of a perpetual spring, and isolated it in the midst of the ocean, in order that it should not be invaded by a coarse and covetous crowd. It is the domain of the poetical people of India, the Parsee, the Hindoo, the Javanese, the industrious Chinaman, some select Europeans, priests of foreign missions and of the English, the Kings of the known universe. For them does this privileged soil ripen the fruits of all tropic climates, from the banana of the old Indian world to the *litchi* of Fo-Kein and Kouang-Tong. For them it adorns its bosom with the flowers of all countries, the scented camelia, the red jasmine, the lotus, and the rose. And as if there were not enough of enjoyment, it offers to the men of all countries a climate appropriate to their desires or their wants.

The mountainous cone which commands the island is divided into climatic zones with as much regularity as the scale of a thermometer; at the foot of this volcanic elevation you find the warm temperature of the oceanic regions; at its summit the tonic freshness of Laguna or Solassy—a bracing climate that invigorates without the painful contractions occasioned by our sharp winter cold.

This paradise came into possession of the English by having been given by the King of Kheda as a wedding dower to his daughter, who married an Englishman. The happy husband, with the consent of his royal consort, named it Prince of Wales's Island, and presented it to his country; and since then it has under the English government become a place of resurrection for the bold conquerors of India. It is there that these proud traders who have invaded the world in rendering it tributary to their productions, go to recover health that has been worn out in commercial struggles; combats a hundred times more honourable than the victories obtained by the limping heroes of the Invalides.

The operation of this climate is almost infallible; the organisation, debilitated by the humid heat of Calcutta, Madras, or Bombay, recovers here as well as at Cape Town or Teneriffe the energy that has been lost for years. In ancient times it would have been supposed that Hygeia had made her abode on this charming island, and the restored invalids would have proclaimed through the word the miracles effected by the beneficent power of this health-giving divinity. At present, when there is not much faith in occult powers, the possessors of this fine country second the restorative action of the climate, by appropriating it to the exigencies of a tranquil and comfortable existence.

The Prince of Wales's Island is not much larger than Jersey, and you may make the tour of it in a single day, under the shade of the trees that encircle it with a leafy girdle. But within this small extent is what the learned men of the middle ages called a microcosm; it is a little world in itself, with plains and valleys, rivers, bays, and even Alps. On the slopes of the hills have been planted the clove tree, with its brown stars, the odoriferous cinnamon, the nutmeg, whose yellow fruit hides itself beneath shining leaves resembling those of the laurel, and the plains are occupied by the sugar cane with stems as robust as the enormous bamboos of Yu-Nan.

The town of Penang is prettily situated on the sea shore, and inhabited mostly by Europeans and Chinese. Only the people from the temperate countries, ambitious and eager for gain as they are, have been induced to pen themselves into houses, which, though white and pretty, are still houses. The Indians and Malays have made themselves nests under the trees and among the flowers.

Never has her Majesty, the Queen of Great Britain (whom God preserve), ever inhabited so charming a palace as the humblest of her subjects, a poor Malay, or what is still lower, a miserable Bengalee, may possess at Penang.

Poor Queen! she is condemned never to enjoy her own riches. If she could but once see, even in a dream, her possessions in India, her palaces at Calcutta, her gardens at Benares and Ceylon, her grottoes at Elephanta, her villas at the Pointe de Galles, Singapore, and Malacca, she would say with the before-mentioned Italian, "See my dominions, and then die."—Translated from the French of Dr. Yvan, in *Bentley's Miscellany*.