

# THE SCOTS MAGAZINE,

For JANUARY 1803.

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In one point of view it may be stated, that, taking the mountainous parts of Scotland as a district of the British Empire, it is the interest of the Empire that this district be made to produce as much human food as it is capable of doing at the least possible expence; that this may be done by stocking it chiefly with sheep; that it is the interest of the Empire the food so produced should not be consumed by persons residing amongst the mountains totally unemployed, but rather in some other parts of the country, where their labour can be made productive either in the business of agriculture, fisheries, or manufactures; and that by suffering every person to pursue what appears to them to be their own interest, that although some temporary inconveniences may arise, yet, upon the whole, that matters will in the end adjust themselves into the forms most suitable to the place.

In another point of view it may be stated, that it is a great hardship, if not a great injustice, that the inhabitants of an extensive district should all at once be driven from their native country, to make way for sheep farming, which is likely to be carried to an imprudent extent; that, in a few years, this excess will be evident; that before it is discovered, the country will be depopulated, and that race of people which has of late years maintained so honourable a share in the operations of our armies and navies will then be no more; that in a case where such a numerous body of the people are deeply interested, it is the duty of Government to consider it as an extraordinary case, and one of those occasions which justifies them in departing a little from the maxims of general policy; that for this purpose regulations should be made to prevent land owners from lessening

the population upon their estates below a given proportion, and that some regulation of this sort would, in the end, be in favour of the land owners, as it would preserve the population best suited to the most improved mode of Highland farming, such as is practised at Breadalbane, and to the establishment of fishing villages, on the principle laid down and practised so successfully by Mr Hugh Stevenson, of Oban, at Arnisdale on Loch Hourn.

In whatever light the foregoing statements may be viewed, there is another on which there can, I think, be no difference of opinion. This is, that if there are any public works to be executed, which, when completed, will prove generally beneficial to the country, it is advisable these works should be undertaken at the present time. This would furnish employment for the industrious and valuable part of the people in their own country; they would by this means be accustomed to labour, they would acquire some capital, and the foundations would be laid for future employments. If, as I have been credibly informed, the inhabitants are strongly attached to their native country, they would greedily embrace the opportunity of being enabled to remain in it, with the prospect of bettering their condition; because, before the works were completed, it must be evident to every one, that the whole face of the country would be changed.

The Caletonian canal, and the bridges and roads before mentioned, are of the description here alluded to, they will not only furnish present employment, but promise to accomplish all the leading objects which can reasonably be looked forward to for the improvement and future welfare of the country, whether we regard its agriculture, fisheries, or manufactures.

## CHARACTER OF THE MALAYS.

BY H. W. ELMORE, ESQ.

From the Asiatic Annual Register.

AS the Malays have the character of a treacherous set of men, I would advise all people to be on their guard

while in any of their ports; and when on shore never to be without a dagger in their hand. Every one of them go

armed with a *creade*, (hanger), or a weapon something like a chopper, and very sharp. When you are prepared they will not be so apt to insult you, which the vulgar are ready enough to do.

It is in the power of any man to kill his own slave with impunity; and they are such a dastardly set, that they have not courage to resent an affront personally, but will dress their slaves, and give them orders to kill any man they pitch upon, who, after being intoxicated with opium, is insensible of any danger he runs into, being equally at the risque of his life, to return without executing his master's orders, or to be cut to pieces in the attempt.

Rice, fish, and fruit, are the common food of these people, who eat very little flesh or animal food. They drink water toddy (a distillation from the palm tree), and coffee; and they chew betel constantly. They eat but two meals a-day, one in the morning, and the other about sun-set; the latter of which is the principal. In the intermediate space, they refresh themselves by chewing betel, or smoking tobacco mixed with opium. They sit cross-legged on the floor at their meals; and the better sort have very low tables for their provisions, which are set on them in China plates, or dishes made of wood highly japanned; but they use neither knives or spoons. They have vessels for the purpose of spitting in when they chew betel, or smoke tobacco; and are particular in keeping their persons and the inside of their houses clean. They have but little furniture, except the necessary utensils for cooking their provisions, and carpets to sleep and sit upon; but they are very ostentatious of displaying a great number of pillows, the ends of which are richly embroidered, and the whole covered with the richest silks. These people are so little addicted to litigious disputes, that they have neither lawyers, attornies, nor bailiffs. If any disputes or differences arise, the parties apply personally to the judge, (or *carrangue*) who determines the matter with expedition and equity.

In some matters, particularly of a criminal nature, they are permitted to do justice to themselves. If a man detects another in the commission of adultery, murder, or robbery, he has a

right to execute justice himself, by destroying the culprit; the weapon in these cases is invariably the creade or dagger.

The Malays are all strict Mahomedans, which religion they are particularly tenacious of infringing. Many of them are great pretenders to magic, and carry charms about them, on a supposition of their securing them from every danger.

The common people have no other covering than a small piece of linen fastened round the waist; but the better sort wear a kind of waistcoat, made of silk or broad-cloth, over which they throw a loose garment of silk that reaches to the knees; they also wear a pair of drawers, but wear neither shirt, shoes, or stockings; and when they go abroad, they always wear a creade or dagger, and a handkerchief tied in a peculiar way round the head.

The *salaam*, or lifting the hands to the head with the palms joined together, until the thumbs touch the forehead, and bending the body, is their mode of salutation. When they appear before their superiors, they raise their hands above the forehead; and if before a prince, they prostrate themselves on the ground, with the forehead resting on their hands, which are still joined, and retire backwards on their knees.

The natives pay great homage to their princes and rajahs, and it is difficult for a stranger to get access to them; the readiest means to effect this is, by complimenting them with some valuable present; and the stranger will be treated with respect according to the present he makes, avarice being their ruling passion. The return is generally made in fruit, and a few fowls; but if the stranger, at the time of making the present, is a great distance from his ship, or living on shore near the palace, for the convenience of trade, he is sent some rice, pillaw, and fish from the princes table.

It is an universal custom, both with men and women, to bathe in a river, at least once a day; this makes them all expert swimmers, which not only promotes health, but prevents that contraction of fibre which would be otherwise unavoidable in a hot climate.

They are so proud and revengeful, and so indolent, that they will neither

endeavour to improve themselves in arts, sciences, or husbandry, but suffer their manufactures to be neglected, and their lands to lie without cultivation.

## CHARACTER OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE MALDIVY ISLANDS.

BY A GENTLEMAN WHO HAS VISITED THOSE ISLANDS.

From the Same.

THE Maldivy islands are supposed to have been peopled from the island of Ceylon, though I do not find that the Maldivians resemble the Cingalese; for they are black, and not so well shaped as the Maldivians, who are of an olive colour. Though the manners of the Maldivians be rude, they are nevertheless an ingenious people; sagacious and expert in many manufactures, and skilled in astrology, which science they probably acquired by the intercourse which has immemorially subsisted between them and the natives of Hindustan. They are discreet and prudent, clever in trade, and discerning in the affairs of life. They are brave and resolute, dexterous at their weapons, and orderly in their manners.

Their women are beautiful, though of an olive colour; some, however, are as white as Europeans; their hair is black, which they admire, and they keep their children shaved from the eighth day of their birth, till they are nine or ten years old, leaving a small edge of hair on the foreheads of the girls, to distinguish them from the boys: they suppose that this makes the hair grow blacker. Indeed they consider their hair as their greatest ornament, and take great pains to make it grow thick and black: when it is not naturally thick, they add false to it, and to make it blacker, wash it with a sort of lie twice or thrice a week; they then rub it with a very sweet oil, and afterwards fasten it all back with a sort of hoop, resembling a taylor's thimble; this hoop is either of gold or silver, and those that can af-

ford it have it in jewels. When the hair is thus bound back, to finish the head-dress, they twine round it sweet smelling flowers. All this is done with great exactness, though without a comb, for they have none.

Both men and women wash their bodies every day, and afterwards rub themselves with the same oil used for the hair.

The men are not allowed to wear their hair long; this is a privilege granted to gentlemen, the king's servants, and soldiers who wear it as long as the women, and take equal pains in performing and dressing it; with this difference only, that the men bind their hair on one side, or on the top of the head, and not behind the head like the women. They shave themselves, for they have no barbers by profession; use, I suppose, renders their skins hard; for they wet their faces with cold water, and then shave with razors which have very little edge; nor do they set any value on our sharp razors; they shave their beards close; but the churchmen and those who have been at the pilgrimage of Mecca and Medina Tahnaby, wear long beards, shaving just round their lips, that what they eat or drink may not touch the hair; of this they have so great a horror, that I have seen them throw away a dish they were eating, on finding a hair in it.

They carefully preserve the parings of their nails, and clippings of their hair, and bury them in their church-yards.

The men go naked from the waist upwards