

THE
ASIATIC JOURNAL

AND

MONTHLY REGISTER

FOR

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VOL. XXI.

JANUARY TO JUNE, 1826.



LONDON :

PRINTED FOR KINGSBURY, PARBURY, & ALLEN,
BOOKSELLERS TO THE HONOURABLE EAST-INDIA COMPANY,
LEADENHALL STREET.

1826.

THE MALAY PENINSULA.*

THE territory of Malacca is forty miles in length along the sea, and extends thirty miles inland. That of Salengor bounds it to the north at Cape Rachado, which is within the limits of this latter state. Johor bounds it to the south, at the river of Muar, and the territory of Rumbo to the east. The largest mountain in the territory of Malacca is Leadang, which the Portuguese and other Europeans, in imitation of them, have denominated Mount Ophir, and which is 4,000 feet high. Besides a number of petty streams, there are two considerable rivers; namely, Muar, already named, and Lingy-tuah, the embouchure of which last is a little to the south of Cape Rachado. The territory of Malacca affords both gold and tin, and the mines of the latter have been wrought of late years so successfully, as to produce, annually, 4,000 piculs; which quantity, it is reasonably believed, may be greatly extended by an additional application of capital, under better security, and with free and steady markets. It does not, upon the whole, appear, as far as inquiry has extended, that the soil of Malacca deserves to be eulogized for its fertility. We draw this conclusion from its never having supplied its own population, small as it is, with sufficient corn for its consumption; a matter which would certainly not have failed to be the case in such a state of society, and where the raising of other productions does not interfere with the growing of corn, had the territory been generally fruitful. Malacca produces some good pepper, about 4,000 piculs annually, and this branch of culture may, undoubtedly, be greatly extended. Coffee has recently been tried, but sufficient time has not yet elapsed to determine with what success. Crude sago, brought from Sumatra, is manufactured at Malacca into pearl sago, and the trade in this commodity, which was first prepared here not above ten years ago, is very considerable. The trade of Malacca is, at present, principally with Singapore, to which it furnishes tin, pepper, sago, hogs, poultry, fruit, bricks, and tiles. This intercourse, instead of proving injurious to either party, as some superficial observers have suspected, is highly beneficial to both; and, in fact, their prosperity depends, in no small degree, upon its being kept free and unrestrained. The whole territory of Malacca, including the town, contains no more than 22,000 inhabitants, according to a census taken in 1822. This population, from all accounts, long stationary, and which gives little more than eighteen inhabitants to a square mile, is but a poor compliment to the different forms of European Government and policy under which this settlement has been ruled for more than three centuries. The permanent inhabitants of Malacca are the Malays, a race of Hindu colonists from Teliga, the descendants of the Portuguese conquerors, and those of the Dutch. To this list is to be added, the usual admixture of Chinese, and of Mahomedans of the coast of Coromandel.

The revenue of Malacca is derived from the farm or monopoly of opium, spirits, fresh fish, pork, buffalo beef, betel leaf, timber, gaming, together with a tax on shops, markets, ferries, the weighing of goods, and cargo-boats. Besides these, there were, until within the last year, considerable custom-house duties, recently reduced to a trifle. During the latter years of the English rule, the duties charged were double those levied at Prince of Wales' Island, and quite sufficient, in amount, to discourage consumption and production. With this multiplicity of taxation, the revenue is but a pittance: *viz.* 25,000 Spanish dollars annually; and even this is an improvement, in the present year, of near

* From the *Singapore Chronicle*.

near twenty-five per cent. upon that of former ones, an increase which is supposed to have mainly arisen from the stimulus given to industry by the anticipated occupation of the settlement by the British. It is singular, that the revenue of Singapore, derived from two or three obvious exciseable commodities, without monopolies, and without customs, is considerably more than triple that of Malacca, although its population be but one-half as numerous.

The petty state of Rumbo is an anomaly on the Malayan peninsula, being an internal territory unconnected with the sea, and its inhabitants agricultural: it lies between Pahang and Malacca. The people of Rumbo, who are poor, but inoffensive, are a more recent emigration from the parent stock in Sumatra than any of the other Malays of the peninsula. The chief still professes himself a tributary of the rajahs of Menankabao, from whom he receives an investiture, and the people are distinguished from their neighbours, and identified with those of the western and central parts of Sumatra, by their habit of substituting the vowel *o* for *a* in the termination of words.

The principality of Johor embraces the whole extremity of the Malayan peninsula, from Muar, in latitude $2^{\circ} 10'$ north, on the west coast, and from Kamamang, in latitude $4^{\circ} 15'$, on the east. Independent of this, it embraces the numerous islands at the mouth of the Straits of Malacca, lying between the 2d degree of north, and the 1st degree of south latitude; and not only these, but all the islands in the China seas lying between the 104th and 109th degrees of east longitude, as far as the Natunas. This extensive but ill-peopled and sterile domain is virtually sub-divided into three principalities; *viz.* the islands lying south to the Straits of Malacca, and which are under the protection of the Dutch; those lying to the north, as well as the territory lying on the west coast of the peninsula and its whole extremity, which are under the protection of the English; and the continental portion of the east coast, which is independent, constituting the state of Pahang. The islands under Dutch protection, some of which are very large, are many of them destitute of inhabitants, and all of them ill-peopled and sterile. Several of them, however, are productive in tin, and others afford considerable supplies of black pepper, and an extensive one of catechu. By far the most important station is the Dutch settlement of Rhio, situated on the island which Europeans call Bintang, but for which the natives have no name. The continental portion of the Johor territory under the protection of the English, is still more barren and thinly peopled than the insular, and has hitherto been remarkable for affording no important productions to commerce. Johor, the old seat of Government, is situated about twenty miles up a large river, the embouchure of which is in a nook, opposite the N. E. end of the island of Singapore, and not above twenty miles from Cape Romania. The place is a small fishing village, with twenty or thirty houses, and of no consequence, unless some tin mines, which have lately been discovered, should prove productive, as is not improbable. The inhabitants of these two portions, especially those of the islands, are a rude race of fishermen, called, by their own countrymen, *Orang laut*, or "men of the sea." They have been of great and notorious repute as pirates for at least three centuries, and were early distinguished as such in the European history of India. Purchas calls them Cellati (which is evidently the Malay word *Sallati*, or belonging to the Straits), and describes them as "men living on the sea by fishing and piracy."

The territory of Pahang extends from Sadile, in lat. $2^{\circ} 15'$, to Kamamang, already mentioned; Pahang yields tin and gold. The first of these, which

produced to the extent of 1,000 piculs annually, is worked by the Malays. The gold amounts to about two piculs yearly, and is wrought by Chinese miners, who consume about twenty chests of opium. The whole population is said not to fall short of 50,000. The Rajah of Pahang, as he is commonly called, is, nominally, no more than Bindahara, treasurer or first minister of the Sultan of Johor; but, in reality, is as independent of that chief as the Vizier of Oude is of the Mogul. In early times he appears to have been altogether independent, and is described by the Portuguese writers, who, in the careless orthography of those times, style him "the King of Pan."

Tringanu, the next state on the eastern coast, extends from Kamamang to the river Basut, at which last it borders upon Calantan. In the interior it is bounded by Perak at the central range of mountains, no part, however, of which is included within its bounds. The population of this principality is said to amount to 35,000 Malays, exclusive of Chinese, and it is sub-divided into thirty-five *mukims*, or parishes. Its production in tin and gold is very considerable, the first being said not to fall short of 7,000 piculs yearly.

Calantan is a larger and more populous state than Tringanu, and on the coast extends from the river Basut to that of Banara, where it borders on Patani. It contains fifty *mukims* or parishes, with a population, independent of Chinese, of 50,000. The produce of Calantan consists of gold, tin, and pepper, the second of which amounts to 3,000, and the last to 12,000 piculs annually. Independent of the Chinese engaged in other descriptions of industry, it is said that within the three states of Pahang, Tringanu, and Calantan, 15,000 of this race are engaged in the gold mines, and that their industry produces this metal to the value of 420,000 Spanish dollars yearly. The greater part of this comes to the market of Singapore, and some portion finds its way across the mountains to Penang and Malacca; the last place, indeed, having, previously to the establishment of the new settlement, constituted the principal mart for gold in this part.

The state of Patani is the largest and most populous of the Malayan peninsula, extending north as far as the lat. of $7^{\circ} 20'$, the boundary between it and the proper country of the Siamese being a place called Tana, within the latter. This state is divided into the following five Governments; *viz.* Pujut, Jambu, Raman, Saggeh, and Sai; Raman and Saggeh are in the interior, the rest on the sea-coast. The territory of Patani, more fertile and productive than that of the other Malayan states, yields but a small quantity of tin, but a considerable one of rice, and a large one of salt. Unlike the other Malayan states of Queda, Perak, Tringanu, and Calantan, which hitherto had yielded little more than a nominal obedience to Siam, Patani is completely subjected to, and occupied by, the Siamese, who even constitute a considerable portion of its population; while, instead of paying a nominal tribute, it is assessed with a tax in corn and money. The English once had a factory in Patani, where they first arrived in the year 1612. "Some of the English," says Purchas, "came to Patani, with a letter from his Majesty (James I.) to the Queen, accompanied with a present from the merchants, of 600 rials of eight. This letter was delivered in great pomp, being laid in a basin of gold, carried on an elephant furnished with many little flags, lances, and minstrels. The Queen's Court also being sumptuously prepared to this business, they obtained grant of a trade on like conditions as the Hollanders, who had their factory there ten years before this time, and their house, in that space, twice burnt." The long discontinued intercourse with this country has been renewed since the establishment of Singapore.