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**BY BENJAMIN DAVIES.**

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*Third Edition, carefully corrected and revised.*

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# MALAYA, OR MALACCA.

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THE peninsula appended to the Birman territories on the south is styled Malaya or Malacca.

The Portuguese are regarded as the first discoverers of Malacca in 1509, to which they were led by the vain idea of finding the golden Chersonese of the ancients. In 1511 they conquered the peninsula, and held it till 1641, when it was seized by the Dutch.

The modern limits are not strictly defined; but Malacca is about 8°, or 560 British miles in length, by about 150 miles of medial breadth, a territory sufficiently ample for a powerful monarchy, had its native productions corresponded with its extent.

**LANGUAGE.** The Malayan language has been called the Italian of the east, from the melody of frequent vowels and liquids.

The Arabic character is made use of. They write on paper, using ink of their own composition, and pens made of the twigs of a tree.

**PRODUCTS.** The indolence of the inhabitants has prevented the country from being explored; but it produces pepper, and other spices, with some precious gums and woods. The wild elephants supply abundance of ivory; but the tin, the only mineral mentioned, may perhaps be the produce of Banka.

The city of Malacca, which seems to have been founded by Mahometans in the thirteenth century, in the last century was supposed to contain 12,000 inhabitants, of which however only 3000 dwelled within the walls. Not above 300 were native Portuguese, the others being a mixed race of Mahometan Malays, accounted among the chief merchants of the east. Latitude 2° 30' N. and longitude 101° 50' E.

In general the Malays are a well made people, though rather below the middle stature, their limbs well shaped, but small, and particularly slender at the wrists and ancles. Their complexion is tawny, their eyes large, their noses seem rather flattened by art than nature; and their hair is very long, black, and shining.

Besides the tiger and elephant, Malacca produces the civet cat described by Sonnerat, who also mentions that wild men are found in this peninsula, perhaps the noted Orang Outang.

They are restless, fond of navigation, war, plunder, emigrations, colonies, desperate enterprises, adventures, and gallantry. They

talk incessantly of their honour and their bravery, whilst they are universally considered by those with whom they have intercourse as the most treacherous, ferocious people on the face of the globe; and yet they speak the softest language of Asia. How much are they like a certain well known European nation?

This ferocity is so well known to the European navigators that they universally avoid taking on board any seamen of that nation, except in the greatest distress, and then on no account to exceed two or three.

Opposite to the coast of Malacca, though at a considerable distance, are the islands of Andaman and of Nicobar. The great Andaman is about 140 British miles in length, but not more than 20 in the greatest breadth.—The people of the Andamans are as little civilized as any in the world, and are probably cannibals. They have woolly heads, and perfectly resemble negroes. Their character is truly brutal, insidious, and ferocious, and their canoes of the rudest kind. A British settlement has been recently formed on the Greater Andaman, and some convicts have been sent thither from Bengal. The natives, about 2000, have already profited by the example of English industry.

The Nicobars are three; the largest being about five leagues in circumference. They produce cocoa and areca trees, with yams, and sweet potatoes; and the eatable birds' nests, so highly esteemed in China, abound here as well as in the Andamans. The people are of a copper colour, with small oblique eyes, and other Tatar features. In their dress, a small strip of cloth hangs down behind; and hence the ignorant tales of seamen which led even Linnæus to infer that some kind of men had tails.