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"*A* DICTIONARY *of the* MALAY TONGUE, *as spoken in the Peninsula of Malacca, the Islands of Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Pulo Pinang, &c. &c. in two Parts, English and Malay, and Malay and English. To which is prefixed, a Grammar of that Language. Embellished with a Map. By* JAMES HOWISON, *M. D. Member of the Asiatic Society.*" 4to. pp. 235.—SEWELL. 1801.

THE inhabitants of the isles scattered over the Indian archipelago, may be classed under two grand divisions, Mahommedans and Idolaters. It is to the former of these classes, that the name of Malayan is applied by foreigners, and by themselves. They are usually found settled on the sea coasts; trade, and sometimes piracy, are their usual occupations; a ferocious intrepidity distinguishes their general character, and the Portugueze experienced on their first arrival, a fiercer resistance from these hardy navigators, than from the numerous armies of the continental powers. The relative proportion between the Malayan and the idolatrous inhabitants varies in each island; in some the whole of the inhabitants have been converted to Islamism; in others the sovereigns of particular districts have embraced that faith, and been followed by their subjects, whilst the majority have adhered to their pristine superstitions. We are aware that our account of this people is not altogether free from objections. Sir William Jones has stated his persuasion, "that they descended from Arabian traders and mariners after the age of Mahommed." We are disposed to believe that many individuals of that nation settled amongst them, and produced the conversion to Islamism; but the very peculiar configuration and cast of countenance, common to the Malayan, with the other nations eastward of Hindustan, does not permit us to consider them as a distinct race. The tradition of the inhabitants of Malacca, recorded by the Portugueze historian, John de Barras, appears to us a preferable hypothesis. This states the city of Malacca to have been founded in 1260, by a Javan of the name of Parameswara; and that in the reigns of his successors, the people were gradually converted to Islamism, by the influx of Persian and Guzerat merchants. Doubtless, traders from the commercial cities of Arabia, would also resort to Malacca, which soon became the most flourishing emporium of the east. At the beginning of the fifteenth century, the Mahommedan religion had spread considerably, and extended itself through the neighbouring islands. In this hypothesis, we consider the commercial city of Malacca as the centre, whence the tenets of Mahommed emanated, and were diffused amongst the isles, with the name of Malayan ascribed to its votaries. But this name itself has its difficulties; for Malaya is the name of a mountain celebrated in the Puranas, for the production of the most fragrant sandal. It is usually supposed to be one of the western ranges of the Ghauts, which intersect the Deccan. The coast of Malabar is named by its inhabitants Malaya; in its vicinity, we find the Malaya-dwipa, (vulgo, maldives) or Malayan isles; both appear

pear to have derived their name from their proximity to mount Malaya.- If we suppose Parameswara, (a common Hindu name) to have led a colony from Malaya to the golden Chersonesus, every difficulty will be obviated by this simple and probable hypothesis. It accounts for the name of the city and peninsula of Malacca, and for the general designation of those who adopted the religion disseminated from that city, amongst the isles.

Mr. Marsden, (whose history of Sumatra is incomparably the most scientific and complete performance, which the connection between Great Britain and the east has hitherto produced), speaks of the Malayan language in the following terms. "The Malay language is original in the peninsula of Malaya, and has from thence extended itself throughout the eastern islands, so as to become the lingua franca of that part of the globe. It has been much celebrated, and justly, for the smoothness and sweetness of its sound, which have gained it the appellation of the Italian of the east." Had the ingenious author only stated that the Malayan language originated in the peninsula, he would have expressed himself more accurately; as the passage now stands it might lead to a supposition, that a dialect of which at least a fourth of the nouns are pure Arabic, was the original language of the eastern peninsula. In literature, the Malayans have made slender proficiency; their books are for the most part, either transcripts from the Koran, or legendary tales of little merit as compositions. Like the other nations converted to the Moslem faith, the Malayans have adopted with it the Arabic character, in which they now write; that they possessed one previously is indisputable; and like those of Sumatra, it probably betrayed its origin, by an alphabetic arrangement similar to that of the Devanagari.

We learn from Dr. Howison, in his advertisement to the work before us, that the first attempt to form an English and Asiatic grammar, was one of the Malayan language, published by Mr. Bowry, in 1701. The extreme scarcity of that work suggested the utility which must result from this, at a period when the conquests of Great Britain have enlarged the sphere of her intercourse, with the countries in which it is vernacular.

"The peninsula beyond the river Ganges, which stretches down to Johor, the extreme southern point (indeed it is the most southern point of land on the continent of Asia), is generally known by the name of Malacca, or the country of the Malays; and that appellation is very properly retained, since Malay is the true mother tongue of that country. It is likewise the chief language of Junkselon, Pulo Ladda, Pulo Pinang, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Bava, Lombock, Cumbava, Flores, Timor, Timorlaut, Celebes, Ceram, the Molucca islands, and innumerable others; it is, in fact, as observed in our advertisement, the lingua franca, or trading language of a great part of the eastern world. Again, it is the more necessary for English voyagers to become acquainted with this language, since the European inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope (which important place now belongs to this nation) have always accustomed themselves to speak to their servants in the Malay tongue. In some of the islands, however, particularly Borneo, the largest

island in the world except New-Holland, it being about eighteen hundred miles in circumference, there are several kingdoms, each of which has a dialect peculiar to itself: with several of these, Mr. Bowrey says, he conversed. But that a more general idea may be formed of the extent of country over which the Malay is spoken, we shall refer to the accurate map, engraved by Arrowsmith, and prefixed to this volume; by which it appears, that the Malay is the principal vernacular tongue used by the people who inhabit that vast region and chain of islands comprehended between ninety three and one hundred and thirty five degrees of east longitude, a space of about two thousand, two hundred and twenty miles; and extending from fourteen degrees north to eleven degrees of south latitude, comprehending twenty five degrees, about one thousand seven hundred and forty miles.

"The inhabitants of this immense group of islands are supposed to have proceeded originally from the peninsula of Malacca; and of this there can be little doubt, since it is the nearest continent, from which the islands proceed in a constant and regular progression, all over the southern and eastern seas, as far as New Guinea."

In adapting the Arabic alphabet to the sounds which compose the Malayan tongue, it has undergone no alteration, excepting in the letter Ghain, which in this language is destined to represent "ng." The Grammar occupies only 26 pages; yet such is the simplicity of the language it illustrates, that it seems to comprehend in that short space, every essential particular. The inflexions of nouns and verbs are performed by means of particles prefixed; the plural number is formed by repeating the word; and the conjugation of one verb furnishes an exact model for all the rest.

Mr. Marsden has criticised by anticipation this and all future Malayan grammars. "Attempts," says that gentleman, "have been made to compose a grammar of the Malay tongue, upon the principles on which those of the European languages are formed. But the absurdity of such productions, is obvious. Where there is no inflexion of either nouns or verbs, there can be no cases, declensions, moods, nor conjugations. All this is performed by the addition of certain words expressive of a determinate meaning, which should not be considered as mere auxiliaries, or as particles subservient to other words. Thus in the instance of Rooma, a house: derree pada rooma, signifies from a house; but it would be talking without use or meaning, to say that derree pada is the sign of the ablative case of that noun, for then, every preposition would equally require an appropriate case, and as well as *of*, *to*, *and from*, we should have a case for deatas rooma, on the top of the house. So of verbs, Callo sayo boolee gellan, if I could walk; this may be termed the subjunctive or potential mood, of the verb gellan, whereas it is in fact a sentence, of which gellan, boolee, &c. are constituent words. These endeavours to square every thing to our own local and partial ideas, puts me in mind of some vocabularies I have seen, in which the country titles were thus explained.—Pangeran, a duke: Dattoo, an earl; Dupatty, a lord-mayor. It is improper, I say, to talk of the case of a noun, which does not change its termination, or the mood of a verb, which does not

not alter its form. An useful set of observations might be collected for speaking the language with correctness and propriety, but they must be as different from the artificial and technical rules of our grammarians as the dress of an European lady from the simplicity of a Malay habit."

With this passage, probably, in his eye, Dr. Howison observes that, " In our grammatical department it may be objected, that we have forced the inflexions of our nouns and verbs into a resemblance to those of European languages beyond what the simplicity of the Malay will admit of: we must, however, insist that although we have made use of words as auxiliaries, which grammarians might not consider strictly as such, still a ten years' acquaintance with the Malays and their language, authorize us in adopting the words and arrangements, which, we are certain, will be understood and are used by them."

Notwithstanding the ingenuity of Mr. Marsden's observations, we entirely approve of Dr. Howison's retaining the grammatical arrangements of European languages in his work, as the best calculated to facilitate the acquisition of the Malay tongue, to an European. In the example quoted, the objection applies with equal force to the English subjunctive, " if I could walk," as to the Malay synonism. In fact, Mr. Marsden's reflections would be just, if no reference be made to the grammatical standard existing in the mind of the student, who will always experience less difficulty in accomodating a foreign idiom to his own preconceptions, than in acquiring a language in which they shall prove of no assistance.

In turning over the pages of the dictionary, we find the Malayan tongue may still be distinctly traced to its two sources, Sanscrit and Arabic. We have not taken the trouble to ascertain the relative proportion of each; but it is deserving of notice, that the former occurs infinitely more frequently in the language of Malacca, than in those of Pegu and Siam, the intermediate countries. The number of words, which can be traced to either, is inconsiderable; therefore it were superfluous to pronounce examples of them. In order to satisfy our readers of the existence of Arabic and Sanscrit words, without alteration in the Malayan tongue, we insert a few, as they present themselves in turning over the pages: 1st. Sanscrit, Gaja, an elephant; Varna, a colour; Laba, advantage; Satru, an enemy; Carija, an affair; Samania, all; balatantra, an army; Boodee, wisdom; Sama, like as; Madu, a bee; ghinta, a bell; Pandita, a bishop; Chinta, fear; Rupa, mien, appearance; Rata, a cart; Guha, a cane; Denda, a tax; Dermawan, charitable. Courteous, Dr. Howison says, is Soopun and Choombu; Soopun Choombu was the name of a courtier at the palace of Tasisudon. Do the languages of Malaya and Tibet bear so strong a resemblance? Both words are Sanscrit, though slightly deflected from their original meaning. Examples of Sanscrit words might be multiplied *ad infinitum*; the same is true of the Arabic, of which we also insert a few. Muslihat, craftiness; Vakeel, an agent; Hucum, an order or sentence; Fajer, morning; Mati, dead; Maut, death; Laic, decent; Feker, reflection; Sualu juvab, question and answer; Tabib, a doctor; Amur, life; Maf, an excuse; Adil, just; Hyran, astonished. It were superfluous to multiply

ply examples; the first inhabitants of the golden Chersonesus spoke a dialect of the Sanscrit language; an admixture of Arabic terms consequent to the change of religion, has produced the modern Malayan.