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A SYSTEM
OF
Amos Dean
Albany
G E O G R A P H Y,

POPULAR AND SCIENTIFIC,

OR

A PHYSICAL, POLITICAL, AND STATISTICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

WORLD AND ITS VARIOUS DIVISIONS.

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&c. &c.

ILLUSTRATED BY A COMPLETE SERIES OF MAPS, AND
OTHER ENGRAVINGS.

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MDCCKXXXVI.

MALACCA.

Situation and Extent.] THE territory of Malacca, supposed by some geographers to be the *Golden Chersonesus*, forms a long peninsula at the southern extremity of India beyond the Ganges, connected on the N. with the British province of Tenasserim by the isthmus of Kraw, which is here about 97 miles in breadth, and on all other sides washed by the Indian ocean. In length it may be estimated at 775 miles, and in average breadth at 125 miles. It may be described as stretching from Point Romania the southern extremity, in $1^{\circ} 22'$ N. lat., to opposite the northernmost point of the island of Junk Ceylon in $8^{\circ} 27'$, this island forming the northernmost extremity of the E. side of the straits of Malacca, where the peninsula unites with the isthmus of Kraw.

Historical Notice.] The peninsula of Malacca is by the natives called *Tanah Malaya*, or 'the land of the Malays'; and from its appearing to be wholly inhabited by that race, has generally been considered as their original country. It is now sufficiently proved, however, that the ancestors of the present possessors of the coast of this peninsula were adventurers from Sumatra, who, in the 12th century, migrated to the S.E. extremity of the peninsula, where they founded Singapoer, and who gradually drove the indigenous inhabitants back before them into the mountains. Up to A.D. 1276, the Malayan princes were pagans: sultan Mahommed Shah, who at that era ascended the throne in this country, was the first prince that adopted the Arabian religion. His influence appears to have extended over the neighbouring islands of Lingen and Bentang,—together with Johore, Patany, Queda, and Pera, on the coasts,—and Campar and Aru in Sumatra,—all of which acquired the appellation of *Malaya*. During part of the 15th century a large proportion of Malacca appears to have been in subjection to the Siamese sovereigns. In 1511, the Portuguese, under Alphonso d'Albuquerque, conquered sultan Mahommed Shah the 12th Malayan prince. In 1821, the Siamese, having conquered Queda, claimed this country as far south as the 7th parallel. At this date the most important subdivisions and Malay principalities were: *Perak*, *Salengore*, a Buggese colony, *Malacca*, *Rumbo*, *Johore*, including Patrang and *Pakanja*, *Tringano*, *Callantan*, and *Patany*, all mostly named from the different small rivers on which these capitals stand, and extending along the sea-coast on both sides. The inland parts to the N. are inhabited by the *Patany* people, who seem a mixture of Siamese and Malays, and occupy independent *dursions* or 'villages.' Among the forests are a race of people not exceeding 4 feet 8 inches in average stature. The *Menanaboners* are in little distinguishable from the Malays of Johore.

Physical Features.] A range of extremely bleak quartz and granite mountains intersects the peninsula throughout its whole length. It attains

its greatest elevation towards the northern extremity, and appears to be a continuation of the chain which commences at the frontier of the Chinese Yunnan. From both sides of this chain innumerable small streams descend to either coast; but they are almost all choked up at their mouths with sand-banks and mud-bars. The principal of them are: the *Tunelong*, the *Praya*, and the *Perak* on the W., and the *Pekango*, *Callantan*, and *Rindango*, on the E. The interior of the country is little known in consequence of the extreme difficulty of penetrating any distance into its thick forests and pestilent marshes. The sea-coast is well-covered with wood, and exhibits a great variety of verdure. Many small islands belong to this peninsula, especially at the southernmost point, where they seem to be a prolongation of the mainland, being only separated by narrow straits. On the eastern side, the sea is more open.

Soil and Productions.] The soil is not remarkable for its fertility; and grain not being raised in sufficient quantity for the supply of the inhabitants is imported from Bengal and Sumatra. Legumes and fruits are abundant and of excellent quality; and the sugar-cane and indigo-plant have been introduced. Pepper is a valuable production, but is inferior in quality to that of Java. Ambergris and pearls have been procured on the coast; and in the interior, iron, gold, and tin. The great article of export is opium; tin is also sent in considerable quantities to China. Besides these articles the Malay peninsula exports bees' wax, edible-nests,¹ catch, dammer, fish-maws, rice, rattans, shark-fins, betel-nut, canes, dragon's blood, ivory, gold-dust, sago, aquilla-wood, sapan-wood, and hides.—The zoology is pretty varied. Tigers, leopards, apes, opossums, the

¹ These nests are constructed by a kind of swallows which frequent the coasts in these seas at certain seasons. Writers and naturalists are by no means agreed concerning the substance of which they are formed. Kempfer supposes it to be *mollusca*, or sea worms. De Poivre calls it the spawn of fish. Dalrymple says, that it is seaweeds; while Linnaeus supposes it to be that species of animal substance which is frequently found on the beach, and is known by the name of sea-blubber. The author of the account of the embassy to China, believes that the nests are formed of the remnants of the food of the swallows, which consists of insects; and he affirms that this bird is occupied in building two whole months. The nests adhere to each other, and to the rock on which they are built. They are of the size of a goose's egg, and of a semicircular form. When dressed, they dissolve into a kind of jelly, of which the flavour is said to be peculiarly delicious. They are distinguished into two kinds: of which the one is white,—the other black,—the former being by far the most valuable. "The white sort," says Marsden, "sells in China at the rate of 1000 or 1500 Spanish dollars the *peku*: the black is usually disposed of at Batavia, for about 20 dollars the same weight, where it is chiefly converted into glue, of which it makes a very superior kind. The difference between the two, has, by some, been supposed to be owing to the mixture of the feathers of the birds, with the viscous substance of which the nests are formed; and this they deduce from the experiment of steeping the black nests for a short time in hot water, when they are said to become, in a great degree, white. Among the natives I have heard a few assert that they are the work of a different species of bird. It was suggested to me, that the white might probably be the recent nests in which they were taken; and the black such as had been used for a number of years successively. This opinion appearing plausible, I was particular in my inquiries as to that point, and learned what seemed much to corroborate it. When the natives prepare to take the nests, they enter the caves with torches, and forming ladders, according to the usual mode, of a single bamboo notched, they ascend and pull down the nests, which adhere, in numbers together, firm to the side and top of the rock. They informed me, that the more frequently and regularly the cave is stripped, the greater proportion of white nests they are sure to find, and that on this experience they often make a practice of beating down and destroying the old nests, in larger quantities than they trouble themselves to carry away, in order that they may find white nests the next season in their room. The birds, during the building time, are seen in large flocks on the beach collecting in their bills the foam which is thrown up by the surf, of which there is little doubt but they construct their nests, after it has undergone, perhaps, a preparation, from a commixture with their saliva, or other secretion with which nature has provided them for that purpose."

Trichecus dugong, and rhinoceroses, are found in the forest; buffaloes are the principal cattle, and elephants of a highly esteemed breed are found adjacent to the Siamese territories.

Population.] Among the aboriginal natives are the diminutive tribe of negroes already alluded to. By the Malays they are named *Samang*. They are exceedingly barbarous and miserable, especially those of them who inhabit the mountain Javai in Queda. Another more civilized race of the same people have their station further south within the territories of Perak.—The *Malays* are called *Khek* by the Siamese, and *Masu* by the Birmese. They are below the middle stature, but in general well-made. Their complexion is tawny; their hair long, black, and shining; their eyes large; and their noses flat,—a formation supposed to proceed more from art than from nature. Though their territory is nearer the line than any other part of the continent of which it is a part, and is consequently, at least as warm as any other of its regions, yet they are little infected with that sloth which a warm climate has often been supposed to generate. The free Malays are an intelligent, active, industrious body of men, engaged like the Chinese in trade and foreign commerce. Many of their prows are very fine vessels, and navigated with considerable skill. In the pursuit of plunder the Malays exhibit a striking contrast to the mild and timid Bengalese. No undertaking appears too hazardous to their courage, and few crimes are too dreadful for their ferocity to achieve. Even the skill and courage of Europeans are sometimes overmatched in conflict with this people. A band of Malays, not exceeding 25 or 30 have been known to board an European vessel of 30 or 40 guns, attack the crew with their daggers, and seize the vessel. Their courage and their ferocity are so well-known in the East, that European ships will seldom employ above two or three of them among its crew.

Their political constitution is formed upon a rude species of feudality, the supreme power residing in a rajah or king, who assumes the title of sultan, and has under him a number of *dattoos*, or nobles, each with their respective retainers. The power, however, of the sultan over his nobles, and of the nobles over their subordinate vassals, unless when supported by personal energy and consequent popularity, is both limited and very precarious. Under this turbulent system, a warlike and enterprising habit is formed, which pervades every part of the character, and influences the general conduct of every Malay. No one who is not a slave ever moves from his house without being armed; his *creese* or dagger is continually at his side; and its point is always poisoned. It is equally dangerous to offend or punish a Malay. Such a nation might be expected to be truly formidable to its more effeminate neighbours; but the same causes which have produced the superior prowess of the Malays, prevent it from becoming dangerous to other nations. The chiefs, indeed, are nominally subject to a superior; but he is seldom able to command their obedience. They are generally more ready to controvert his authority, than to advance the schemes of his ambition. Thus the nation is seldom united; and that courage, which, if properly directed, might become formidable to Eastern Asia, is exhausted in the petty struggles of contiguous tribes, and in piratical depredations.

Malay Language.] It is somewhat singular that a nation thus incessantly engaged in feats of arms, should have a language which is esteemed as being more polished and harmonious than any other eastern dialect. It abounds in liquids and vowels, and has been termed the Italian of the East.

It is understood in almost every part of Southern Asia. It is said to want inflexion, whether to express relative number, gender, time, or mood. Juxtaposition is every thing in it. It is written in the Arabic character, modified by increasing the number of diacritical points, and has received from that language so many terms, that Thunberg supposed it to be a dialect of the Arabic. It is said, by others, to be derived from the Sanscrit; and to have received the Arabic terms, only in consequence of the introduction of the Mahomedan faith. * The Malayan literature consists chiefly of transcripts and versions of the koran, commentaries on Mahomedan law, and historic tales in verse and prose. The great sources of all the Malay poetic legends are the Javanese and the Arabic languages. The college of Malacca has been removed to Singapore, and united to the Malay college founded there by Sir Stamford Raffles.

Religion.] The religion professed by the Malayan princes prior to their conversion to Mahomedanism, was probably some modification of that of the Hindoos. The modern Malays are of the Soonee sect; but do not possess much of the bigotry so common among Western Mahomedans. The Chinese at Malacca regularly celebrate the anniversary festivals of their own religion.

British Settlement of Malacca.] The city of Malacca, situated near the southern extremity of the peninsula, was founded in the 13th century. In 1511, it was captured by the Portuguese, who retained it till 1640, when it was captured by the Dutch. In 1795, it was seized by England, but restored at the peace of Amiens. In 1807, it was again taken by a British detachment. At the peace of 1815, it was once more returned to the Dutch; but on the 9th of April, 1825, it was finally ceded to Britain, with other territories, in exchange for the British settlements on the island of Sumatra. The British territory attached to Malacca extends about 40 miles along the shore, by 30 of extreme breadth inland; but it does not contain an area of above 800 square miles. On the N. it is bounded by Selengore at Cape Rochado, on the S. by Johore at the river Muar, and on the E. by the Rumbou country. The principal rivers are the *Muar*, and the *Lingtuah*. The surface is not fertile, but the tin mines are productive, as 4000 *peculs* have been procured in one year from them. A recent report announced the discovery of a very rich gold mine at Bukit Taong, within the British territories. The trade is principally with Singapore. According to a census taken in 1828, the whole territory of Malacca contained only 33,806 persons. When acquired by our government in 1825, the revenue amounted to only 20,000 dollars, but it has since greatly increased. It has been proposed to erect our more eastern possessions in India into a distinct presidency, the capital of which shall be fixed at Malacca.

Principality of Quedah.] The principality of Quedah, by the Siamese called *Cheret*, is situated on the W. coast, immediately opposite to Prince of Wales's Island. It extends along the coast about 150 miles, commencing from the river Traang, which is its northern boundary and is from 25 to 30 miles in breadth. The coast is here low, and covered with forests. There is sufficient water in the Quedah river at spring-tides to admit a vessel of 300 tons over the mudflat at its mouth. Prior to the Siamese invasion, this country was populous, and exported large quantities of rice, cattle, fruit, and poultry, to Penang. About the beginning of this century, the sultan of Quedah ceded a district of coast to Britain, now called *Wellesley* province, which in 1824 contained 14,000 souls. In

November, 1821, the Quedah was invaded by a large fleet of Siamese prows, and subdued with little difficulty, the king seeking refuge at Penang, where he still remains under British protection, with an allowance of 500 dollars monthly.

Johore.] This principality comprehends the whole eastern extremity of the Malay peninsula, from the river Muar on the W. to Kamamang on the E. It also includes the numerous islands at the mouth of the straits of Malacca, between the 2d parallel of N. and the 1st of S. latitude, besides all the islands in the sea of China lying between the 104th and 109th degrees of E. longitude. These extensive dominions, however, are virtually partitioned into three sections: viz. 1st, the islands to the S. of the straits which are under the protection of the Dutch; 2d, those to the N., and the country on the W. coast of the peninsula and its extremity in the possession of the English; and the continental portion on the E. coast, forming the independent but petty state of *Pahang*. The three Johore principalities of *Pahang*, *Tringano*, and *Callantan*, contain a population of 135,000 souls, exclusive of Chinese. The mineral produce of these states is tin and gold. The tin-mines of *Pahang*, wrought by the Malays, produce 1000 peculs of that metal and two peculs of gold annually. In *Tringano* the produce of tin is 7000 peculs annually, and a proportionate quantity of gold. *Callantan* produces in tin 3000 peculs, and in pepper 12,000 peculs annually. Independent of the Chinese engaged in other branches of industry, above 15,000 of that persevering race are employed in the Johore states in working the gold mines; and the produce of their united industry is calculated at 420,000 Spanish dollars annually.

BINTANG.] This island, belonging to the Dutch, lies off the S.E. extremity of the peninsula. It is about 35 miles in length by 18 in breadth. The chief town is *Rhio*, formerly a port of considerable trade.

PRINCE OF WALES'S ISLAND.] This island, named also *Pulo Penang*, or 'Betel-nut island,' is situated off the W. coast of the peninsula, having its N.E. point in 5° 25' N. lat. and 100° 19' E. long. It is an irregular quadrangle, and computed to contain about 160 square miles. In 1785, this island was granted to captain Light, of a country ship, by the king of Quedah, as a marriage-portion with his daughter. Captain Light transferred it to the East India company, and was appointed its first governor in 1786. This island is entirely composed of granite. The soil is various, but generally very good. The forests produce excellent ship-building timber. Much of the N., and nearly the whole of the S. and E. parts, are under cultivation. The principal productions are pepper, nutmegs, betel-nuts, cocoa-nuts, coffee, sugar, rice, ginger, yams, mangosteens, three varieties of pine-apples, guavas, oranges, citrons, and pomegranates. Pepper is the staple article of produce, and its cultivation is almost exclusively in the hands of the Chinese. The nutmeg may be reckoned next. It is upwards of 20 years since the trees were first planted here, and there are now 150,000 on the island, of which one-third are in a condition to bear fruit. Each tree is calculated to yield 1000 nuts annually, which sell for five Spanish dollars, and the mace for about the same sum. The clove is also cultivated with great success. The *urceola elastica*, or American caoutchouc, is found in great plenty here. Almost all the country-ships bound to the eastward, particularly those for China, touch here. The harbour is formed by a strait about two miles across, which separates the N. side of the island from the Quedah shore. It is capacious, and affords good anchorage. In 1822 the total imports were valued at 2,662,558

Spanish dollars. The population of this island and its dependencies, including Wellealy province on the mainland, up to the 31st of December, 1822, was 51,207 souls, of whom 24,520 were Malays and Bugnese, 8,900 Chinese, 6,915 Chulias, 1,670 Bengalese, 1,172 native Christians, and 400 Europeans and their descendants. Such a variety of different races are congregated here, that it is said there are 22 languages spoken on the island.

[SINGAPORE.] Singapore is a beautiful island in the straits of Malacca, situated at the southern extremity of the peninsula, and in the entrance of the Chinese sea. This island was taken possession of by the British government, on the 26th of February, 1819, under a treaty concluded with the *tomogong*, or native chief, who held his lands from the sultan of Johore; and in 1824, a regular cession, in full sovereignty of this and the neighbouring islands for 10 miles round it, was obtained from the sultan and tomogong. This settlement is a most valuable acquisition to our Eastern territories, for which we are indebted to the discernment and energetic plans of the late Sir T. S. Raffles. It is in the direct route from Bengal to China, and excels all the adjacent stations in point of commanding the immense trade of the whole of the numerous and fertile islands in these seas, as well as of the eastern coast of Sumatra. Singapore harbour affords safe anchorage at all seasons; the town itself stands on a point of land, and is divided into three districts: viz. Malay town,—Chinese town,—and English town, which latter yet contains but few Europeans. English town is laid out in beautiful squares, and spacious streets crossing each other at right angles; and is agreeably decorated with trees. Singapore suffered dreadfully by fire on the 7th of February, 1830. The climate of Singapore, although warm, is yet, in spite of its mangrove swamps and marshy soils, extremely salubrious; and appears to be little subject to the remittent and yellow fevers and other diseases so fatal to Europeans in most tropical climates. The markets are well-supplied with fish and poultry; and dried and salted provisions are plentifully imported in the Chinese junks from Siam. Tropical fruits and roots are also abundant; but the only vegetable productions adapted for commercial purposes which have hitherto been raised in this young settlement, are the pepper-vine, and the *nauclea gambir* or *terra japonica*, an article exported to Java, and the other eastern isles, where it is chiefly used for chewing with the betel leaf. The trade of the island is very considerable, and is fast increasing. Singapore has the honour of being the first colony in modern times (perhaps in ancient also) in which the principle of free trade has been declared; and if any example were wanting to prove the policy of a liberal system with regard to commerce, we should say, look at the history of Singapore. The intercourse, through means of Chinese junks, is immense. Vessels of smaller sizes from Siam and Cochin-China are yearly increasing, and a considerable trade is also opening with Manilla. In 1822, the value of exports and imports amounted to 8,568,172 dollars; and in 1825 it was estimated at not less than 20,000,000. In 1828-9 the exports alone amounted to 18,046,604 sicca rupees, of which 6,639,730 were in England. Sugar is generally sold here at half-a-dollar less per picul than at Pulo-Penang. The intercourse of Malay prows is also surprising: hundreds of them going out and in daily, exchanging their produce for European manufactures. The following returns relative to this island were made in 1827.

CENSUS OF THE INHABITANTS OF SINGAPORE, TAKEN 1ST JANUARY, 1827.

	<i>Males.</i>	<i>Females.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Europeans	69	18	87
Armenians	16	3	19
Native Christians	128	60	188
Arabs	18	0	18
Chinese	5,747	341	6,088
Malays	2,501	2,289	4,790
Buguese	666	576	1,242
Javanese	174	93	267
Natives of Bengal	209	53	262
Ditto of Coromandel	772	5	777
Caffres	2	3	5
Siamese	5	2	7
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Troops and followers	10,307	3,443	13,750
Convicts	492	122	614
	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	11,047	3,569	14,616

When first taken possession of by the British the total population did not exceed 150 souls; but in February, 1829, the population had risen to 17,664, exclusive of the military and convicts. Of this population, however, only 122 were Europeans, and only 4,232 females.

	<i>Dollars.</i>
Total amount of <i>Imports</i> during the year 1826	6,863,581
Do. do. do. 1825	6,289,396
	<hr/>
Increase	574,185
Total amount of <i>Exports</i> during 1826	6,422,845
Do. do. do. 1825	5,837,370
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Increase	585,475

Authorities.] The Singapore Chronicle, and works of Marsden, Crawford, Farquhar, Horsburgh, Johnson, Thom, etc.

END OF VOLUME FOURTH.

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