

A

HISTORY OF ALL NATIONS,

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIODS TO THE PRESENT TIME;

OR,

UNIVERSAL HISTORY:

IN WHICH THE HISTORY OF

EVERY NATION, ANCIENT AND MODERN,

IS SEPARATELY GIVEN.

ILLUSTRATED BY 70 STYLOGRAPHIC MAPS, AND 700 ENGRAVINGS.

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CHAPTER CCLXXIV.**A. D. 1100 to 1840.****MALACCA.** — *Origin of the Malays — Tradition at Celebes — Emigration of the Malays from Sumatra — Character of the Nation — City of Malacca.*

THE peninsula of Malacca, or Malaya, forms the most southern point of the continent of Asia. It lies on the west of the Gulf of Siam, and extends from the twelfth degree of northern latitude almost to the equator. It is

traversed throughout by a chain of lofty mountains, and is covered to a great extent with forests and marshes. This peninsula is supposed by some geographers to be the Golden Chersonesus of the ancients, and the Ophir of Solomon. The level lands are extremely fertile, producing the finest fruits, grains, and vegetables, without artificial culture. Rice is the chief object of agriculture with the natives. The parts known to Europeans furnish cinnamon, pepper, gums, aloes, and sandal wood. The forests are arrayed in perennial verdure, and the air is impregnated with the odor of innumerable flowers, which succeed one another without an interval.



Malays.

The inhabitants of this peninsula are Malays—a race, of whom the original country is not known. The evidence seems to be in favor of the adjoining island of Sumatra, where there are traditions of an emigration to the continent about the middle of the twelfth century. In the Island of Celebes, there is a tradition to the following effect: A celebrated chief of that island, about six or seven hundred years ago, sailed on an exploring and trading voyage to the west. In the course of this expedition, he put into a river of Sumatra, where a large number of his followers deserted in a body, and, penetrating into the interior, formed a settlement called *Menankabo*. They intermarried with the natives, became in some degree civilized, gradually formed a new race, and rose to dominion. Most of them had been slaves obtained from the Molucca Islands, and employed as woodcutters and drudges on board the fleet of the chief of Celebes. Hence they were called *Ma-lays*, from *mala*, to bring, and *aya*, wood. To this day, the people of Celebes look with contempt on the Malays, and are in the habit of relating this story in proof of the low origin of that nation. A general similarity between the Malaya and the Molucca race has often been remarked; and it is notorious, that the Malay language is spoken with more purity in the Molucca Islands than in the Malayan peninsula.

The Malays of Sumatra extended their conquests and colonies, till the whole island yielded them feudal homage. In the thirteenth century, they crossed the strait and invaded Malacca, the native inhabitants of which seem to have been a species of negroes, nearly

resembling those of Africa. These were driven into the woods and mountains, and the invaders founded the cities of Malacca and Singapore, about the year 1300. Gradually extending their dominions and colonies, they transferred the chief seat of their power to the new territory.

The Portuguese, who arrived in this quarter in the early part of the sixteenth century, found Malacca a rich and flourishing city. Their avarice could not resist so strong a temptation, and a Portuguese armament, under Alfonso de Albuquerque, attacked and captured it in 1511, though the inhabitants made a brave resistance. The plunder was valued at nearly a million and a half of dollars. The conquerors put the king or reigning prince to death, which so exasperated the Siamese and other neighboring nations, that they made war upon the Portuguese, and recaptured Malacca by storm. It was, however, again taken by the latter people, and remained in their possession till the middle of the seventeenth century, when the Dutch, supported by the king of Johore—a territory at the southern extremity of the peninsula—made themselves masters of the city. After repeated vicissitudes of fortune, Malacca was transferred by treaty to Great Britain, in 1824.

This peninsula is the only considerable country wholly occupied by the Malay race. It is now divided into the kingdoms of Queda, Perak, Salengore, Johore, Pahang, Tringano, Calantan, Patani, and Ligore. There are also states in the interior less known, and several wild tribes, without specific districts or locations. Of these hardly any thing is known. Some of them are negroes, much below the Malays in civilization, and apparently but little above the apes and baboons of the forests. These tribes do not even construct dwellings, but lodge in the trees and clefts of the mountains.

The Malays are every where Mahometans. Wherever they have established themselves, they have exhibited a strong spirit of proselytism. Commercial and piratical in their character, they have seldom formed settlements far from coasts and harbors, so that their language does not prevail among interior tribes, either on the peninsula or in the islands of the Indian Archipelago. They claim some authority over these tribes, and take precedence of them by superiority of civilization; but the language, manners, and government of the inferior races remain unchanged.

A general character can hardly be assigned to a people scattered over so many countries, and intermingled every where with indigenous tribes. They have generally been described as distinguished for fraud and treachery. This opinion has doubtless been derived from mariners; for, till recently, very few others knew much about them, and the piratical tribes alone have brought themselves into general notice. Disregard of human life, revenge, idleness, and piracy, may perhaps be considered as common to the Malays. The universal practice of going armed makes the thought of murder familiar to them. The right of private revenge is generally admitted, even by the chiefs, and the taking of life may be atoned for by a small sum of money. Their treachery has perhaps been exaggerated. Their religion teaches them to use fraud and violence toward infidels. But there is full reason to believe, that, in intercourse with each other, domestic and private virtues prevail to as great an extent as among other Eastern nations of the same rank in civilization. They are much given to the per-

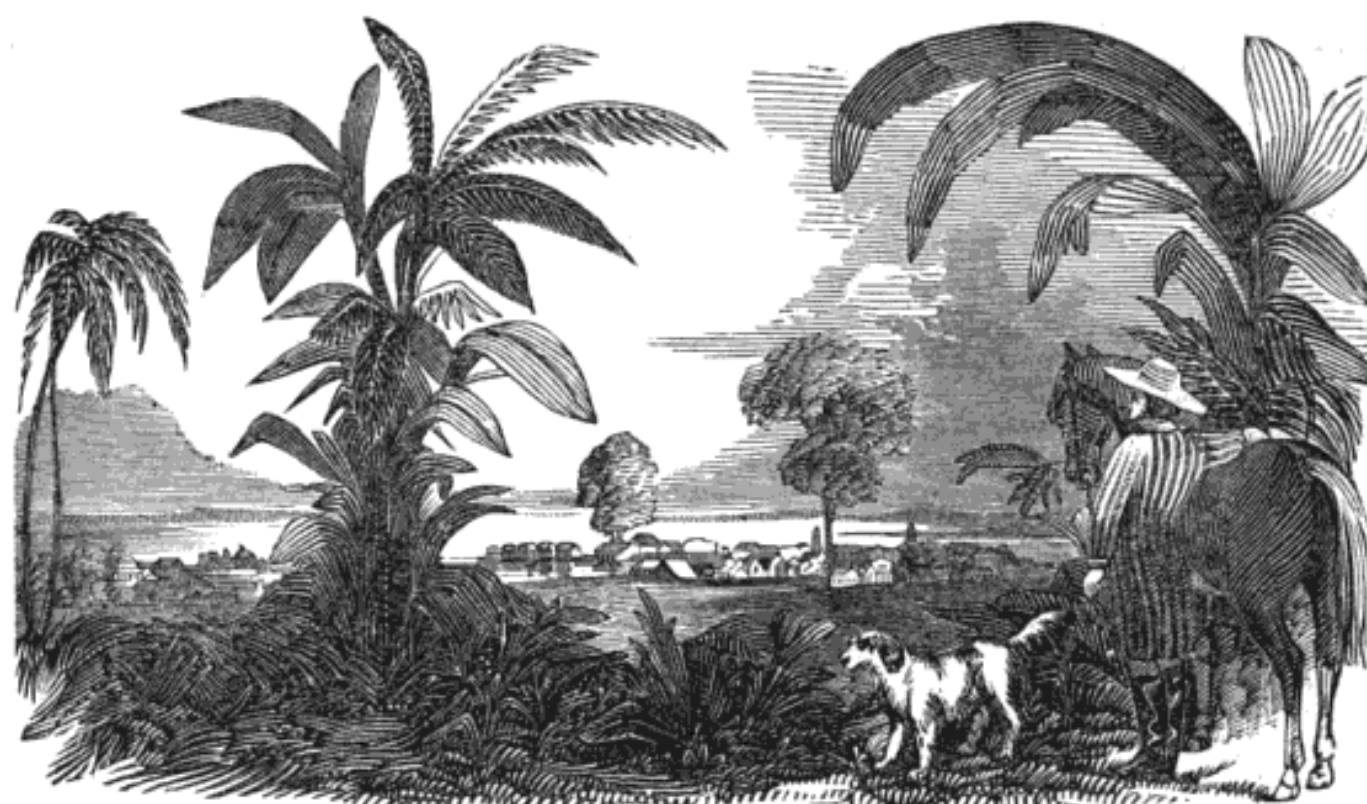
nicious use of opium, and their pirates often stimulate and madden themselves with this drug previously to attacking a vessel. Opium-takers are sometimes attacked with a frenzy similar to what is called with us *delirium tremens*. In such a case, a Malay rushes about with his drawn weapon, stabbing every one whom he encounters. This is called *running a-muck*, from the Malay word *amok*, to kill.

As to piracy, it is deemed not only a pure and chivalrous occupation, but religiously meritorious. It is carried on by prince, people, and priest, and is prompted both by pride and the spirit of rapacity. In the arts of peace, the Malays are greatly inferior to their neighbors of Java, Cochin China, and Siam. None of them can be called quite civilized, and some are truly savage. The feudal system prevails every where; the chiefs claim the time and services of the people at any occasion and for any purpose, warlike or peaceful. In no part of the East is slavery more common than among the Malays. Not only do princes sell their vassals, but parents sell their children, and

creditors their debtors. The slave trade is kept up with great activity both by sea and land.

The Malays use the Arabic letters in writing, but they have hardly any thing in the shape of literature. Their language is very easy to learn. It has no sounds difficult for a European to pronounce; its construction is simple, and its words are few. There is no change made in the parts of speech to express number, person, gender, mood, or time; and the same word is often used as a noun, adjective, verb, and adverb. Consequently, enough is soon learnt for the common purposes of conversation.

The city of Malacca is now greatly declined from its ancient splendor. An old castle and a church in ruins occupy the most prominent spots, and silence reigns throughout its streets. Even the Chinese residents seem to have forgotten their usual activity and enterprise. An English garrison is maintained here; but the commerce of the place has dwindled almost to nothing: some tin and pepper are exported. The population is about five thousand.



View of Singapore.

The islands which lie along the coast of Farther India are numerous, and some of them, as Java, Borneo, Sumatra, &c., are of great extent and importance. But these are classed, in modern geography, under a fifth division of the globe, called *Oceanica*; and we shall follow this arrangement in our history. But the Island of *Singapore* is so immediately connected with the main land, that it is proper to describe it here.

It lies at the southern extremity of the peninsula of Malacca, and is separated from the main land only by a narrow strait. This territory and the neighborhood belonged to the sultan of Johore, who, in 1703, offered the Island of Singapore as a present to Captain Hamilton, an Englishman; but he declined it, as it could be of no use to a private person. At that time, the island contained only a miserable village, inhabited by a few fishermen and pirates, although, some centuries previous, a flourishing Malay city existed here. In 1819, the English, at the suggestion of Sir Stamford Raffles, the governor of Java, formed a settlement here. The next year, it was declared a free port; and

in 1825, the sovereignty of the island was confirmed to Great Britain by the sultan of Johore, and by the Dutch, who held claims upon it. It has now become a considerable mart of trade, and is one of the places at which the British steam packets touch on their voyage between China and the Red Sea.

This island is about twenty-seven miles long, and less than half as broad. Much of it has not been explored by the English, and is probably uninhabited. Twenty or thirty other small islands lie adjacent to it, and are included in its government; but they are mostly without inhabitants. The town of Singapore is on the south side of the island, and the direct track of vessels sailing between China and the West lies through the harbor, which is capacious and safe. The town is tolerably well built, and the population of the island is about thirty thousand. Of these, nearly one half are Chinese, one quarter Malays, and the remainder a mixed population of the various Eastern races, with about one hundred and fifty English. The exports are sago, catch, and agar-agar, a species of sea-weed of which the Chinese make sweetmeats. Singapore

lies almost directly under the equator, yet the climate is salubrious and comparatively mild.

PULO PENANG, or PRINCE OF WALES'S ISLAND, on the western coast of Malacca, is also held by the British. This island was in a wild state, completely covered with forests, in 1786, when the English East India Company purchased it from the king of Queda, and formed a settlement upon it, with a view to the refreshment of their China ships. In 1805, it was made a

separate colony, subordinate to the government of Calcutta. It soon acquired considerable importance as a commercial emporium for the produce of all the neighboring districts, though recently it has been supplanted by Singapore, both as a mart of trade, and a place of refreshment. Georgetown, the capital of the island, is a well-built place, and has a market abundantly supplied with provisions.