

MARITIME GEOGRAPHY

AND

STATISTICS,

OR

A DESCRIPTION

OF THE

Ocean and its Coasts,

MARITIME COMMERCE, NAVIGATION,

&c. &c. &c.

“ Le Trident de Neptune est le Sceptre du Monde.”

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A Commander in the Royal Navy.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

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THE MALAY PENINSULA.

SOUTH-east of Siam is the peninsula of MALACCA or MALAYA, 200 leagues long and forty greatest breadth.* The interior is occupied by mountains covered with impenetrable forests and apparently almost uninhabited; the highest summit is that named Mount Ophir, S.E. of Malacca. These mountains contain tin mines and give rise to numerous rivers, most of which are navigable by small vessels, and some of them for vessels of burden. The coasts seem to be divided into seven petty sovereignties, of which Queda, Pera, Salangore are on the west; Johore at the east extremity; and Pahang, Tringano and Patany on the east. The first place on the west coast is Bangri in 9° ; it has a considerable native trade, but is seldom visited by Europeans.

Janseylan, or Junkseylon, is a considerable island, extending forty miles in length north and south, and fifteen in breadth; it is united to the main by a low sandy bank, one mile long and half a mile broad, overflowed every high water, and forming on the north the harbour of Papra, whose

* The absolute limit of the Malay peninsula is undefined; the narrow tract that separates the Bay of Bengal from the Gulf of Siam is called the isthmus of Kraw; its least breadth in latitude 10° is about twenty leagues.

whose entrance is crossed by a bar, on which is twenty feet high water springs, the rise of tide being ten feet. The island rises in moderately elevated hills covered with wood; and has many brooks, which empty themselves into the sea through mangrove marshes. The interior of the island is well cultivated, and has wild hogs and deer: the domestic animals are bullocks, buffaloes and goats; poultry is not abundant. The inhabitants are Siamese, and about 12,000 in number. The Birmans made some unsuccessful attempts to get possession of this island, which at present seems to be dependent on the Siamese government on the main land within it.

The islands south of Janseylan are Pulo Panjang, or Long island, eight leagues long and two broad, fertile and pleasant.

Pulo Bouton and Pulo Balam, two large and high islands, one of which has a domed summit seen twenty leagues. Pulo Pera, a high round barren rock, nearly in mid-channel of the entrance of the strait of Malacca, and the usual point of departure from the strait.

Pulo Lancavy, a large island close to the main.

Pulo Ladda, or Pepper Island, five leagues from the main, and opposite the navigable river Purlis. It is inhabited by piratical Malays; but is very convenient for wooding and watering. On the E. and S.W. sides are good harbours.

QUEDA, or Qualla Batrang, one of the chief trading places of the peninsula, is in 6° north. Its river's mouth is crossed by a mud bank with twelve

feet water at spring tides, but vessels of 300 tons can ascend it. The banks of the river are swampy, and covered with jungle towards its mouth. Seven miles up it is a brick fort and village, named Allestar, the residence of the Rajah. It contains about 300 houses, inhabited by Chinese,* Malays, and Chulias. Its trade has greatly declined since the establishment of Prince of Wales's Island. Provisions, particularly bullocks and poultry, with fruit and vegetables, are abundant here.

Qualla Moorba, six leagues south of Queda, is a large, deep, and rapid river, with a great sand bank before it; it descends from mountains abounding in tin. Pry River succeeds, and has a Malay town at its entrance, which, together with a district eighteen miles up the river, and three miles in breadth, was ceded in 1800 by the Rajah of Queda to the East India Company, and is dependant on Prince of Wales's Island.

Prince of Wales's Island, Pulo Pinang, or Betelnut Island of the Malays, is separated from the Malay shore by a channel, in the narrowest part two miles broad, which forms an excellent harbour, being sheltered from all winds but the north, which never blows with any violence. The north entrance is crossed by a mud bank, on which the
least

* Chinese are found established in almost all the principal Malay towns. See hereafter Prince of Wales's Island, Batavia, &c.

least water is four fathoms, and the most, four fathoms and a half, but it deepens within to fourteen fathoms. The south channel is obstructed by mud banks, but which are buoyed, and leave a safe channel with three fathoms and a half.

The island is five leagues long, and two to three broad. On the north west it rises in high hills, covered with large trees; on the east side is an extent of level ground well cultivated. The island has two rivers considerable for its size. That called Paz winds through the level part of the island for twenty miles; its mouth is crossed by a mud bank with twelve feet in the springs, but boats can ascend it a considerable way. The second river, called Taloo Moodoo, is a rapid torrent stream that often overflows; its mouth is crossed by a sand bank.

Fort Cornwallis is situated on the N.E. point of the island, and though considerable sums have been expended on it, is little more than a sufficient defence against the Malays, and is incapable of any resistance to a regular attack by European tactics. The town, named George Town by the English, and Panjang Panaique by the Malays, is of considerable extent; the streets wide and straight, with many good houses. A river runs close past it, and it has a good wharf for loaded boats, to which water is conveyed by pipes. A government house, a jail, a church, and several bridges have been latterly built, and other improvements executed.

Pulo Pinang was granted by the King of Queda,

1787, to Captain Light, who married his daughter, and transferred to the East India Company. Its situation rendering it an eligible rendezvous for the British China trade, as well as a retreat for the King's ships when obliged to quit the Coromandel coast in the monsoon, a small detachment of troops was sent from Bengal to occupy it; and several English merchants, engaged in the Malay trade, making it their depot, it rapidly increased in population, particularly by the arrival of Chinese and Malays. In 1805 it was erected into a separate government, and a large establishment appointed to it. In 1801 the population was 10,000, exclusive of Europeans and military; of those 2,000 are Chinese, who chiefly follow the mechanical trades and shopkeeping, while the Malays, who constitute the mass of the remaining population, cultivate the soil, and chiefly pepper, rice, areca, and cocoa palms.

Though situated within five degrees of the equator, the climate of Prince of Wales's Island is remarkably temperate: the sea breeze that blows regularly throughout the day moderates the heat, and the vapours collected by the woody mountains condense in the night in heavy dews, that perpetuate a verdant herbage, unknown in southern India. One of the mountains rises with a steep ascent to a considerable elevation, and on its summit, which forms a platform of forty yards in diameter, is a signal-house. The thermometer at this elevation seldom rises above 75° , and in the night falls to 60° . At the town the extremes are 85° and

85° and 75°. Among several waterfalls which this beautiful island possesses, one in particular attracts the notice of travellers, by its wildly picturesque effect: it precipitates itself down a rocky precipice into a natural basin, surrounded by perpendicular walls of rock, whose craggy projections are covered with lofty trees and evergreen shrubs, and forming a fit retreat for Diana and her nymphs, or for Thomson's more interesting Musidora, "to taste the lucid coolness of the flood."

Pinang has no beasts of prey, nor any wild quadrupeds but wild hogs, the little animal named hog deer*, and the bandicoot, a species of rat. Alligators are very numerous, and the termites, or white ants, are here peculiarly destructive. Pinang is abundantly supplied with poultry from the opposite coast, from whence are also brought buffaloes for draft, and horses are procured from Sumatra. The sheep for the tables of the English come from Bengal. Fruits are extremely plenty, particularly pine-apples, which grow wild, shadocks, oranges, limes, &c.

The harbour abounds in fish, principally of the flat kind. The rocks are covered with a delicate small oyster, and on the banks, before the entrance of the rivers, common oysters are found. In short, there is nothing wanting to render this island the most pleasant residence in India.

A building-yard has latterly been established at

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Pinang,

* Baba-Roussa of the Malays.

Pinang, and a ship of war and Indiaman of 1000 tons have been built here, the principal part of the timber being brought from Pegu. The rise of tide is nine feet.

Laroot River seems to be a great inlet of the sea, as well as the river Pera, which latter is twenty leagues south of Prince of Wales's Island, and is crossed by a sand bar with ten and twelve feet, but within which the bottom is mud, and the navigation without obstacle. The Dutch had formerly a factory on this river, to secure the monopoly of its tin trade. Opposite the river's mouth are the islands Dingding and Sambelongs, or Nine Islands. On the east side of the former are the ruins of a Dutch fort, where is a good watering-place. The Arroas are two groups of rocky islets, covered with the tree named by the Malays caioo-aroo, resembling the fir, and which grows chiefly in the sea marshes. These islands are frequented by the Malays to fish and procure turtle. On the N.E. side of the *Long Arroa* is a fine sandy beach, with a run of good water.

Pulo Jarra and Pulo Varella are two small islands, in the *fair way* of the Strait of Malacca: the former nearest the Malay shore, and the latter near that of Sumatra.

Salangore, a Malay town and fort, on the south bank of a river, navigable at high water for vessels of considerable size: it was formerly a great Malay trading place for tin, but the vicinity of Prince of Wales's Island has destroyed its commerce.

MALACCA is situated at the mouth of the small river

river Crysorant, which can only be entered by the Malay proas. The fort or citadel of St. Paul, built by the Portuguese, is on an elevation on the left bank of the river, and contains all the government buildings, and a garrison of 500 troops. The town on the opposite side of the river (which is crossed by a bridge of several arches) is surrounded by entrenchments, to protect it from the Malays: it contains about 100 Europeans, 250 half cast, 5,000 Chinese, 6,000 Malays, and 600 Chulias. The road is entirely open, and large ships are obliged to anchor three miles from the town, from the shoalness of the water closer in. The country a little way inland is hilly, and to the east of the town rises the lofty mountain of Ledang, also called Queen's Mountain, and Ophir: The land near the shore is low, and thickly covered with wood, which it might be supposed would render the town unhealthy; on the contrary, however, it is one of the most healthy places of India, in no part of which are there more instances of longevity. Malacca was formerly a great trading place for tin, but which is now carried to Prince of Wales's Island. It is, however, an excellent place for ships to touch at, provisions being in great abundance, and fruits in an unparalleled profusion and variety. Amongst them is the delicious mangustine, of which this seems to be the western limit.

Johore River is near the extremity of the Malay peninsula: it is of considerable size, with two channels in, formed by the large island of Singapore.

pore. The town where the Rajah resides is twenty miles up the river, and is a considerable Malay native trading place, but seldom visited by Europeans.

Point Romania, *Oojong-Tanah* of the Malays, is the S.E. point of the peninsula, and is a low point with a hummock, named Mount Barbuçet, west of it. Off it is a cluster of rocky islets, and on the west side of the point is Romania River, with but two or three feet in its narrow entrance at low water.

Point Romania is also the east limit of the Strait of Singapore, which forms the communication between the Strait of Malacca and the China Sea. This extremity of the peninsula is uninhabited and covered with wood, the retreat of wild elephants, buffaloes, deer, hogs, monkeys, peacocks, &c. The rivers are full of alligators and guanas, and the rocks covered with oysters. In the middle of the Strait of Singapore is Pedro Branco, or the White Rock, named from its being whitened by the dung of sea-birds. It is surrounded by sunken rocks.

China Sea.

From Point Romania, for a considerable way to the north, the coast is low, woody, and lined with a sandy beach, without any place of note, but has several islands off it, the southernmost of which is Pulo Tingy, rising in a very high cone: its few inhabitants have their huts on the north side, amongst plantations of cocoa-nuts and plantation trees, and on the south side is a watering place.

Pulo Aore (Wawoor) is small, and formed of
two

two hills separated by a gap, so as to make like two islands. It is covered with wood, and on the S.W. side is a good bay, with a Malay village, but nothing is to be got here except wood, water, and cocoa-nuts.

Pulo Pisang (plantain), or Pambeelen, is like Pulo Aore formed of two hills, but less and lower: it is uninhabited.

Pulo Timoan, or Teoman, the largest island on this coast, is ten miles long and four broad; at its south extremity is a double peaked mountain, named by seaman the Asses Ears. It has two good sandy bays, one on the S.E. where is a Malay village, and the other on the S.W. with good anchorage and fresh water.

Pulo Varella, ten leagues north of Timoan, is a barren rock with only a few bushes. Abreast of it on the main, the low land finishes, and a chain of high mountains commences, and extends to Pulo Capas. In this extent of coast are Pahang, formerly a great Malay trading place, exporting rattans, areca, and gold dust. Tingoran, another Malay place of trade; the coast here again becomes low, and we meet with Tringano, a considerable town on a river which may be entered by vessels of twelve feet, and ascended by small craft three leagues: it is a great Malay trading place, exporting by country proas pepper, wax, dammer, and some gold dust found in the sands of the torrents. Calantan River, farther north, is also a place of Malay trade. Between it and Tringano are the Reding Islands, a chain ten leagues long,

long, parallel to the main ; they are inhabited, afford pepper, rattans, &c. but having no port are seldom visited by Europeans.

Patany, on a bay north of a cape of the same name, was formerly much frequented by the Portuguese, and the English had a factory here at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The town is surrounded by a pallsade, and has a good port. The Chinese settled here have some trade in their own vessels to Siam, Cochin China, China, and Batavia.

Siam.

The Gulf of SIAM is bounded on the west and north by the Malay Peninsula and Siam, and on the east by Cambodia, extending between the latitudes 9° and 14° , its entrance being between Cape Patany and Cambodia Point. The River Meinam (Mother of Waters), or of Siam, falls into the head of the gulf; it is thought to rise in the same mountains as the Ganges; is deep, rapid, and always full. It overflows in September, and returns to its bed in December. The soil near its banks is composed of its mud, and forms vast rice marshes. There are two channels into the river at either side of a low island. The western branch is the largest, and has eight or nine feet at low water, and eighteen feet at high water springs. On the eastern branch, ten leagues up, is Bangkok, a fortified town; and fourteen leagues farther is the capital of the country, named JUTHIA (a Portuguese corruption of the native name *Siyuthia*), which resembles a Chinese town. It is situated on a flat, intersected by canals from the river, crossed by a great number of bridges of stone and wood,

wood, and the communication from different parts of the town is by boats. The streets run parallel to the canals, with smaller intersecting ones; some of them are large, but the greater number very narrow and dirty, and many of them are overflowed in the spring tides. Many Chinese and Moors from India reside here, and their houses are of stone or brick, very low, and covered with tiles. The houses of the Siamese are like those of the Malays, of timber and bamboo, covered with palm tree leaves. The town is surrounded by a brick wall, and defended by some batteries. In the city are three palaces, vast stables for the King's elephants, and many temples; and on the river are a great number of floating houses. On the south bank of the river, below the city, was the Dutch factory, handsomely built, and lower down are villages of Japanese, Malays, and Indian Portuguese.