

A
COMPENDIOUS AND COMPLETE
SYSTEM
OF
MODERN GEOGRAPHY.
OR A
View of the Present State
OF
THE WORLD.

BEING A FAITHFUL ABRIDGEMENT OF THE AMERICAN UNIVERSAL GEOGRAPHY, (EDITION OF 1812.) WITH CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS MADE FROM INFORMATION SINCE RECEIVED.

BY JEDIDIAH MORSE, D. D. A. A. & S. H. & S. A. Soc.
Author of the American Universal Geography, American Gazetteer, &c. &c.

ILLUSTRATED BY
A REPRESENTATION OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM,
AND SIX MAPS OF
THE PRINCIPAL DIVISIONS OF THE GLOBE.

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MALAYA, OR MALACCA.

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

Extent. The northern limits are not strictly defined ; but Malacca is about 8°, or near 560 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 ; and an influx of words of that language has followed the adoption of the Mahometan religion.

Divisions. Malacca is represented as divided into the kingdom of Patani in the north, and that of Yohor or Jor occupying the southern extremity of the peninsula, the chief towns being Batusaber the capital, Linga, Bintan, and Carimon.

City. The city of Malacca in the last century was supposed to contain 12,000 inhabitants, of which however only 3000 dwelt 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. The Portuguese settlement did not extend above 5 leagues around; yet became highly important from its advantageous position for Indian and Chinese commerce.*

In general the Malays are a well made people, though rather below the middle stature. Their complexion is tawney, and their hair is very long, black, and shining.

They are restless, fond of navigation, war, plunder, emigrations, colonies, desperate enterprizes, adventures, and gallantry. They are universally considered by those with whom they have intercourse, as the most treacherous, ferocious people on the globe.

It is nothing uncommon for a handful of these savages suddenly to embark, attack a vessel by surprize, poinard in hand, massacre the people, and make themselves masters of her. Malay barks, with 25 or 30 men, have been known to board European ships of 30 or 40 guns, in order to take possession of them, and murder with their poinards a great part of the crew. The Malay history is full of such enterprizes, which mark the desperate ferocity of these barbarians.

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 miles in length, and 20 in the greatest breadth, indented by deep bays, affording excellent harbors, and intersected by vast inlets and creeks, one of which, navigable for small vessels, passes quite through the isle.† The soil is chiefly black mould, the cliffs of a white arenaceous stone. The extensive forests afford some precious trees, as ebony, and the Nicobar bread fruit. The only quadrupeds seem to be wild hogs, monkeys, and rats. The sea supplies numerous fish, and excellent oysters. 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. On Barren isle, about 15 leagues east of the Andamans, is a violent volcano, which emits showers of red hot stones; and the whole island has a singular and volcanic appearance. A British settlement has been recently formed on the Greater Andaman, and some convicts 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 bird's nests, so highly esteemed in China, abound here as well as in the Andamans. The people are of a copper color, with small oblique eyes and other Tartar features. In their dress a small stripe of cloth hangs down behind; and hence the ignorant tales of seamen, which led even Linnæus to

* Mandelslo, i. Col. 337.

† As. Res. iv. 386.

‡ As. Res. iii. 149.

infer, that some kind of men had tails. The only quadrupeds are swine and dogs. The traffic is in cocoa nuts, of which one hundred are given for a yard of blue cloth.
