

II.—Sketch of the Malayan Peninsula.—By Lieutenant NEWBOLD,  
23d Regt. L. I.,—A. D. C. to Br. Genl. WILSON, C. B.

*Geographical position.*—The Malayan Peninsula, properly so called, extends from lat. N. 8° 9' to lat. 1° 22' N. where it terminates at Point "Romania," or, more correctly speaking, *Ramunia*, the most southerly land of continental Asia. To the north it is connected with the great continent of India, by the isthmus of Kraw; which, according to Forrest, in its narrowest part does not exceed 97 miles across from sea to sea. He states that by this isthmus an overland intercourse for the conveyance of letters to and from China might be established, which would obviate the necessity of going round Point *Ramunia* by the straits of Malacca and Singapore; there being a navigable river on the west side, where the portage is but six hours from another river, called the Tomlong, which falls into the gulf of Siam near the Sarchin Islands. Natives of this part affirm that a canal might easily be made across the peninsula connecting the bay of Bengal, with the China seas, by joining the two rivers. This is a subject well worth the attention of Government. The part of the peninsula actually under Malayan sway is that comprised between Point *Ramunia* and the sixth degree of north latitude, where its political power is bounded by the *T'hay* or Siamese empire. Its eastern shore is washed by the China seas, and its western side is separated from the large island of Sumatra, by the straits of Malacca, through which, and the straits of Sunda, flows the great tide of commerce of the eastern and western extremes of the globe. The breadth of the peninsula is from 50 to 150 miles, and length 450. Its direction, south-east.

*Physical aspect and Geology.*—The surface of the Malayan Peninsula, on each side of the primitive mountains that run down its centre, is undulating towards the coasts. It is shaded by primeval forests, stored with treasures to the naturalist and botanist, and a profusion of tropical verdure, the result in part of the moisture with which the atmosphere and soil is charged. Small plains covered generally by long grasses, occur in positions whence the moisture happens to be drained; while the flats that wind among the low hills are swampy, and frequently covered with water to a considerable depth. Where these flats lie in the course of rivers, lakes are formed, sometimes of considerable extent; as that of *Braugh*, lying near the centre of the peninsula be-

tween Malacca and *Pahang*. Rivulets and springs are every where abundant. A few large rivers, having their sources in the mountainous chain above-mentioned, empty themselves into the seas on either side. Their banks are generally low, swampy, and covered with mangrove, *Nipah*, *Nibong* and other trees. Their bottom is for the most part muddy, except at short distances from the estuaries, where sand banks and coral reefs are often met with. Their mouths are frequently obstructed by bars augmenting or decreasing according to the operation of tides, freshes and oceanic currents. The principal rivers on the west coast are those of *Quedah*, *Perak*, *Singie*, *Muar*, and *Batta Pahat*, or Rio Formoso, that of *Johore* at the southern extremity, and those of *Pahang*, *Basut*, *Tringann*, and *Patani* on the eastern shore. A number of verdant islets stud the coasts, among which are the *Sancari*, the *Pinang* the *Dinding*, the *Sumbilan*, the *Aroo*, the *Aguada*, the *Singapore*, and *Tinghie* clusters. The southern part of the Malay Peninsula and Banca assimilate in geological formation. Dr. Horsfield, in his observations on the mineralogical constitution of Banca, observes that "the direction of the island being from north-west to the south-east, it follows not only the direction of Sumatra and the Malayan Peninsula, but the large chain of Asiatic mountains, one of the many branches of which terminates in Ceylon; while another traversing Arracan, Pegu, the Malayan Peninsula, and probably Sumatra, sends off an inferior range through Banca and Billiton, where it may be considered to disappear."

This chain of mountains may be viewed as the termination of one of those beams or pillars of lofty hills, spoken of by M. de Guignes, in his work on the Huns, as supporting the stupendous edifice, to which he compares the elevated regions of Tartary, comprehending the lofty ranges of Imaüs and Caucasus; and the dome of which is represented as one prodigious mountain, to which the Chinese give the epithet of celestial, down the steeps of which numerous broad and rapid rivers pour their waters. The Malayan chain, as far as has been hitherto explored, is of primitive formation, principally a grey stanniferous granite and clay slate. As it approaches the equator, it diminishes in height: the highest of the *Rumbowe* and *Johore* ranges not exceeding probably 3,000 feet above the level of the sea; while many of those in the north of *Quedah* are said to be upwards of 6000. Mount Ophir, a detached mountain, between 30 and 40 miles to the eastward of Malacca, I calculated roughly (by means of the thermometer and boiling water) to be 5,693 feet above the level of the sea: its summit is of grey granite. Gold dust and crystals of quartz are found in consider-

INSECTIVORA.—Of the tribe *Insectivora*, is the *Gymnura Rafflesii*, an animal of which I have not seen a specimen, called by the Malays, *Tikus-am-bang-bulan*. Sir S. Raffles discovered it in Sumatra; the native name was given to an animal brought to Colonel Farquhar, from the interior of Malacca, previous to its discovery by Sir S. R. in Sumatra, which Sir Stamford believed identical with it. There are several varieties of the genera *Tupaia*, and *Sciurus* or squirrel family.

EDENTATA.—Of the tribe *Edentata*, are the hairy and scaly *Pangolins*, the *Penggoling-rambut* and *Penggoling-sisik*, or the short tailed manis (*M. Pentadactyla* of Linnæus), called *Penggolings* from the faculty they possess of rolling themselves up.

PACHYDERMATA.—Of the thick skinned family, *Pachydermata*, is the elephant, *Elephas maximus*, in great abundance; the *Badak*, or Sumatra rhinoceros; the Malayan tapir, the *Mariba* of F. Cuvier, rare; and the wild hog. Specimens of the Malayan tapir have been sent to Europe by Duvaucel and Sir S. Raffles; a female upwards of four feet in height, has lately been presented by Lieutenant Mackenzie to the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The remark of our Secretary Mr. Cole, on a drawing of the animal just mentioned (Journal No. 16, p. 146), that “the figure in the English edition of Cuvier, represents a comparatively light and agile animal, quite devoid of the heavy look, cumbersome figure, and rugous skin, delineated in the drawing”, perfectly coincides with my observations on living specimens of the Malayan tapir. Drawings of the animal should always specify the age or approximative age; as both the colour and texture of its coat I have seen to vary as the animal grows up. The *Seladang* is supposed by some zoologists to be identical with the tapir. The Malays however make a difference, distinguishing the true tapir by the name of *Tennok*. This is a point desirable to ascertain. The *Seladang* may probably be a variety.

RUMINANTIA.—In the genus *Moschus* we have those elegant deer in miniature, the *Plandok* (*moschus pygmeus*) the Chevrolin of Buffon; the *Nöpu*, or *Moschus Javanicus*, of Pallas; and the *Kanchil*, or *Moschus Kanchil* of Raffles. The Malays dry and preserve the flesh of these animals, which tastes a little like that of the hare. They pine away in confinement. I attempted in vain to send a living specimen of each to England. The *Plandok* is a favourite animal among

the Malays, and frequently alluded to both in their prose compositions and poems. Of the genus, *Cervus*, are the *Kijang*, or *Cervus Muntjac*, the *Rusa*, or *Cervus Hippelaphus*, and the *Cambing-utan*, goat of the woods, or *Antelope Sumatrensis*. The *Cervus axis*, or spotted deer, has been imported at Pinang from Bengal. It is indigenous in Sumatra. The *Bos Arnee* or buffalo exists in a domestic state on that part of the peninsula occupied by Malays. It occurs I believe wild in Burmah, and at the southern base of the Himalayas. There are two kinds of bison found in the forest\* though rare. Neither the horse, ass, camel, cow, hare, rabbit or fox, are, I believe, indigenous in the peninsula; nor the *singh* or lion, although *Singhapura*, or Singapore, is stated in the Malay annals to have been so called from the appearance there of an animal of that species. Among the *Hystrioidæ* is the *Landok*, or *Hystrix longicauda*, the Malay porcupine. Those that have fallen under my observation, appear to be larger than the Indian porcupine.

CETACEA.—The last order of *Mammalia* is that of *Cetacea*, connecting as it were the inhabitants of the land with those of the watery deep. Of the genus *Halicore*, stands first the supposed Mermaid of the eastern seas, the *Duyong*, improperly termed *Dugong*. Skeletons of this singular production of nature have been sent to Europe by Mr. Crawford, Sir S. Raffles, and Messrs. Diard and Duvaucel. In 1830, a *Duyong* preserved in spirits was forwarded by Mr. G. Swinton, to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and delivered over to Dr. Knox for dissection.† But it had been unfortunately divided into three portions which incalculably diminished its value. It is to be hoped that this deficiency will be shortly supplied through the zeal of some of our countrymen in the Straits.

\* The horns of a bison found in the Nanking district are now in the possession of Brigadier General Wilson, c. 11.

† The following description of the *Duyong* is from the Ed. Cab. Library, No. VIII, p. 76. The *Halicore*, or daughter of the sea is called *duyong* by the Malays, and has hence acquired the name of dugong in our books of natural history. There is only a single species as yet ascertained. It inhabits the Indian seas, especially the Sumatran coasts, and has been confounded by several voyagers with the lamantins, which belong to the African and American shores. It measures seven or eight feet long, and is covered by a thick hide, of a pale-blue colour, with whitish marks on the abdomen. The head somewhat resembles that of a young elephant deprived of its proboscis. The body is fish-shaped; the anterior extremities are contained within an undivided membrane, in the form of a fin. The rudiments of a pelvis are observable and the caudal extremity is horizontally sloped, or cut like the arch of a circle. The flesh of this animal is held in great estimation, and is usually reserved for the tables of the sultan and rajah. Its own food is said to consist of *algæ*, *faci*, and other marine productions of the vegetable kind.”