members of the expedition acted in every way so as to give me satisfaction, and when I say that the *personnel* of the expedition behaved as well as the camels, I cannot give any greater praise.

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XIII.—*Geography of Perak and Salangore, and a brief Sketch of some of the adjacent Malay States.* By W. BARRINGTON D'ALMEIDA, F.R.G.S.

The kingdom of Perak lies between 4° and 6° N. lat. For its northern boundary it has the Krean River, which until lately separated it from Province Wellesley. At the south, the Bernam River divides it from the neighbouring Malay State of Salangore. To the east we have the Malayan chain of mountains which, like a backbone, runs through the middle of the peninsula, separating it from Tringanu and Pahang; and on the west its coast-line of 130 miles is washed by the Straits of Malacca. The portion of Perak best known to us, at present, is an oblong strip of country hemmed in by the Perak River on two sides and by the sea and the Krean River on the other. This slip of country is said by the late Mr. Birch to cover an area of from 2000 to 3000 square miles. A bird’s-eye view of it, from somewhere above the Island of Pangkore, would give a panorama of the loveliest description; extending to the north, east, and west, you would see a landscape varied with forests of primeval jungle, smiling valleys, teeming with the richest produce, and watered by innumerable streams. As the eye gets gradually accustomed to this picture, some of the leading features begin to be defined. First, you would be struck with the great river of Perak, running south, east, and north; then the eye would rest on a chain of mountains, situated at the north-east of this strip of country, stretching beyond the Krean River in the north and almost touching the Bruas River in the south. In this chain of mountain, known as the Laroot Range, you would perceive three conspicuous elevations, standing almost at equal distance from each other: they are the three principal mountains on this side of the Perak River, and are known to the natives as the Gunong Hijau, or Green Mountain; Gunong Pondok, or Shark’s Tooth; and the Gunong Buboo, or Wild Man Mountain. The famous tin-mines of Laroot are found in this neighbourhood, and the sides of these mountains are covered with tall jungle-trees, some of them remarkable for their durability and well suited for shipping and building purposes.
The next feature to be observed in the landscape are the numerous rivers which flow at right angles with the great Perak River. Some of them appear to take their rise from the mountain-chain just mentioned, while others will be found to be fed directly from the Perak River. The most important of these are the Krean, the Kurow, the Laroot, and the Bruas. They are also at equal distance from each other, and, besides draining and irrigating the district through which they flow, they serve—in a land where roads have yet to be introduced—as the only channels of communication between the interior and the sea, for the transport of tin, timber, and the other produce of the country.

Attention would, in the next place, be directed to the strip of land which was ceded to us as far back as 1826, and the boundary of which was rectified under Sir A. Clarke, by the Treaty of Pangkore. Its boundaries, according to a clause in that treaty, begin at Bukit or Sagari Hill, above the Bruas River, in a straight line on to the sea; thence south to Pulo Katta; and from this point the line continues about 5 miles north-east into the country; and thence direct north to Bukit Sagari. It has a depth of about 5 miles from the coast, and is said to be well suited for sugar-growing and to be rich in tin. It is watered by two large streams, the Bruas and the Dinding. The latter runs right into the centre of this strip of land, and is described as an extensive lagoon, well sheltered from the sea-coast by a chain of the Dinding Mountains, and, though rather shallow at the entrance, is of great depth within, where large vessels may ride in perfect safety. Foreigners whom I have come across in my excursions in the East have always praised the foresight which Englishmen have always displayed, in selecting spots for colonisation or mercantile enterprise; they always contrive, say they, to secure two very important requirements: 1st, a good anchorage, and, 2ndly, a site well adapted for attack and defence. In this respect we have been most fortunate in the selection made by the Hon. Robert Fullerton, Governor of Prince of Wales Island, in 1826, or, perhaps to speak more correctly, by Captain James Low, the Government Political Agent at that time; for the Dinding River and the Straits of Pangkore afford us all the anchorage we can desire, while the Island of Pangkore, flanked as it is in the north by Penang, and by Singapore in the south, would in the event of a war prove as important to us as Malta to either Gibraltar or Aden. And now before touching on Perak proper and its great river, let me draw your attention for a moment to the district of Laroot, noted for its tin-mines, and, until lately, as the seat of plunder, arson, and murder. In fact, it was spoken of in the East as the "huge cockpit of slaughter,"...
where faction fights were constantly going on between the Chinese miners themselves and between the Malays. This called for the interference of the Governor of the Straits Settlements, who, by placing an Assistant Resident at Laroot, and a Resident (the late Mr. Birch) at Perak, restored order and peace to the community. It has been successively visited by Sir A. Clarke, the late Governor; by Mr. Bradell, the Attorney-General for Singapore; by the late Mr. Birch, the Colonial Secretary, and Mr. Irving, the Assistant Colonial Secretary for the Straits Settlements, and other officials; also before and after the outbreak of the war, by the present Governor, Sir W. Jervoise, and a Correspondent of the ‘Penang Gazette,’ in company with the Buffs, and from their reports, correspondence, and speeches, I gather the following.

Laroot is a district of the kingdom of Perak, lying between the Krean, the Perak, and Bruas Rivers on the land side, and the Straits of Malacca on the west. It takes its name from the River Laroot which, rising in the neighbourhood of Gunong Hijau in the Laroot Range, falls into the sea about 28 miles to the south of the Krean River. “Compared with other rivers on the coast,” says Mr. Irving, “it is an inconsiderable stream, as the range of mountains which forms the watershed of the peninsula, at this place, approaches the coast. The Colonial steamer Pluto, drawing only 6 feet of water, was not able to do more than enter the river; but the small steamers belonging to the Tunku Mantrie, or headman, are able to get up to the town, a distance of 2 miles from the coast.” The town in 1872 was surrounded with stockaded positions, and Mr. Irving observed that there was an excellent road all the way to the mines in the Laroot Range, about 10 miles from the town. The coast of Laroot between the Kurow and the Jurōm Mas (or Gold Needle) River, is a perfect network of rivers and rivulets, and indented by endless creeks and bays, which afford countless sheltering-places for pirates. Most of these creeks and inlets have been explored by the boats of the Thalia and the Midge, when in search for pirates in 1872, under Captain Woolcombe.

The physical aspect of the district is thus described by Mr. Birch:—“From the sea-shore to some 20 miles inland, Laroot is a great level; here it begins to rise in uplands until it reaches a mountain-range rising to an altitude of some 3000 feet above the level of the sea. This level or plain is well watered and well suited for the cultivation of sugar, tapioca, tobacco, &c. Rice is the only cereal now cultivated. The whole of the land, comprising a strip of about 50 miles long by 6 miles broad, along the base of the Laroot Range, is more or less stanniferous, and the supply of tin is inexhaustible. At present (1872) about 4
square miles are occupied for mining purposes, and there are 120 mines open. Of the Laroot Range, Gunong Buboo, or the ‘Wild Man,’ is said to be the loftiest. Its slopes are clothed with a dense forest of jungle-trees, some of which are highly valued in a commercial point of view, and which I shall mention at the close of this paper. As yet no native appears to have ascended to its summit, from a superstitious dread that the Gins, who are supposed to dwell in that locality, should take it into their heads to ‘distil him into a jelly,’ as Horatio says, or ‘resolve’ him, as dealers of spirits might say, into a mountain ‘dew,’ so that we shall have to wait until the aspiring curiosity of some Englishman is put to the test before we can give the exact height of this wild man.”

As Mr. Birch informs us, however, that the Laroot Range of mountains rises to an altitude of some 3000 feet above sea-level, we may assume that the Buboo is considerably above this elevation, as it is said to be the most conspicuous landmark to mariners beating up the Straits for the mouth of the Perak River, which, as seen on the map, is several miles south of this mountain. The mountains of this range are composed principally of granitic rock, and their slopes are admirably adapted for the growth of the chinchona, vanille, coffee, tea, nutmeg, and cloves.

Between the Gunong Pondok and a hill called Bukit Gantang (or Measure Hill), rises a river called the Kangsa, flowing westwards between mountain, hill, and valley to the village of Qualla Kangsa, being fed in its course by the mountain-streams, the Papin and the Lawin, or probably Lawan (meaning a turbulent stream).

The distance from Qualla Kangsa to the town of Laroot is about 27 to 30 miles. This tract of country between the west of the Laroot Range and Qualla Kangsa was visited in February, 1874, after the signing of the Pangkore Treaty, by Messrs. Swettenham and Pickering, and Captain Dunlop, in their mission to release the Chinese who had been kept in slavery for debt by the Malay Chiefs. They traversed it by means of elephants, and by boats on the Kangsa River, and before the outbreak of the war, Sir William Jervoise and Staff, in paying an official visit to the Chiefs on the Perak River, proceeded by the same route. They describe this neighbourhood as “a rich and fertile country, surrounded with beautiful scenery, and well adapted for the cultivation of tea, coffee, and tobacco.” The soil is described as being that of a thick alluvial deposit, the climate as extremely healthy, and the temperature from 65° to 86° Fahr. From the special correspondent of the ‘Penang Gazette,’ who accompanied the Buffs on their route from Laroot to Qualla
Kangsa, we have a very graphic account of this district. His letter is dated December 2, 1875, from Bukit Gantang, which is a hill between Gunong Pondok and Gunong Buboo, and about 6 or 7 miles from Laroot.

"The country," he says, "is very beautiful; the jungle has been partially cleared away all the way from Simpang to here, and there are some charming bits of scenery along the road. The town of Bukit Gantang is very prettily situated, lying snugly at the bottom of a hill which on the southern side rises over 2000 feet. It has a very respectable bazaar, considering its seclusion and proximity to the turbulent chiefs. Up to this the roads have been excellent, and thanks to Captain Speedy, who is indefatigable in his exertions, and energetic in his measures, the troops have got thus far with the greatest ease and comfort. Beyond this the road is heavy. The Gantang Hills are covered with splendid timber, and the slopes could easily be cleared in the Ceylon fashion for the cultivation of coffee. Not only are minerals to be found in abundance here, but tea, coffee, and tobacco might be grown in large quantities and of the finest quality. I saw specimens of the two latter grown at Simpang Tiga without special care and simply as an experiment, and they were of a very fine quality. One drawback to Bukit Gantang is that it rains every afternoon from year's end to year's end, and I may add it is the happy hunting-ground of mosquitoes. On the other side of Gantang, a considerable quantity of paddy is grown. After leaving it for some distance we reach the entrance of the mountain-pass; the scenery here is very beautiful. The road winds along one of the slopes, and all around rises a magnificent primeval forest, some of the trees being over 150 feet high with clean, stately stems. Beyond this road, there is no possibility of proceeding; elephants alone can break through the jungle and wade the swamps. It was fortunate the Malays did not defend this pass, for a few hundreds of them lying in ambush might have done an amount of mischief unpleasant to think of. In the middle of the pass is a stockade occupied by a few policemen. It was strongly placed, and would have been difficult of assault. Close to the stockade is Gunong Pondok, the Shark's Tooth, a curious mountain, some thousands of feet high, and formed of limestone and saltpetre. It is apparently inaccessible, the sides falling sheer down. In one of its cavernous cliffs I saw some long stalactites hanging down in various forms from the roof. The village of Pondok is about 2 miles from the stockade, lying at the south-eastern mouth of the pass. The country all about here is level and thickly covered with low jungle. Nine miles beyond this is Qualla Kangsa."
Gunong Pondok, I may add, was selected by two Malay Rajahs as their (what is very happily termed) "squeezing station:" here on its slopes they built a house, and backed by a band of unscrupulous followers they became a terror of the neighbourhood by levying black-mail on all the passers-by. One of Mr. Birch's first acts, after the signing of the Pangkore Treaty, was to dislodge these ruffians, and this was the cause of the enmity towards him which finally ended in his murder.

The district of Laroot is governed by a headman, called the Tunku Mantrie, who was appointed to this office by the late Sultan of Perak; but so powerless had the present Sultan become, that, but for the interference of Sir A. Clarke, he would have declared himself independent of his suzerain. When Mr. Irving visited Laroot in 1872, he found that the Mantrie had two steamers with which he traded with Penang, and that the control of the trade of Laroot was entirely in his hands. He levied an export duty on tin of $19 a bharar;* and as the export to Penang at that time was at the rate of about 800 bharas a month, he was then making a fine revenue from this source alone of $182,000, or 45,100l. per annum.

Perak proper, or the Silver State, is so called from the river bearing that name. It comprises all that land extending from the Bruns River to the Bernam, and all the land east of the Perak River extending to the confines of Tringanu and Pahang. Its inland depth from the coast is said to be from 180 to 200 miles, and though we are not as yet much acquainted with the districts east of its great river, I am glad to be able to give some reliable information from official sources regarding the river of Perak and the country lying to the west of it, and that adjacent to its banks.

The general aspect of Perak is that of a well-watered and mountainous country. As usual with countries in the Tropics, the tracts of land near the sea are low and marshy, with a dense and tangled forest of mangroves and nipas; beyond this is a succession of mountain chains, culminating in the Gunong Buboo, which is clothed with a dense forest, and seen distinctly from the sea. Throughout Perak the soil of the lower country and low hills is composed of sand mingled with decomposed vegetable matter. It is the most extensive and the richest in natural resources of all the independent Malay States, and the whole country, besides abounding in tin, is rich in iron, lead, saltpetre, slates, and marble. Its climate is salubrious, and the temperature, though hot along the coast, is cool and agreeable in the interior.

* About 400 lbs.
The great feature of the country is the Perak River. It rises north of the Krian River, and beyond the southern boundary of the kingdom of Quedah. It empties itself into the sea a little north of 4° N. lat., and its course from the sea into the interior is thus described by Mr. Birch:—"It extends inland about 30 or 40 miles, and then, after doubling back for about 100 miles, stretches north, keeping up a very tortuous course, but parallel with the coast, and 20 miles distant from it. It is fed from the interior by several tributaries, which drain the slopes from the central range of mountains forming the backbone of the peninsula." Mr. Birch explored this river, to a distance of about 200 miles from its mouth, and nearly all its tributaries. The land along the principal river and its tributaries he found well adapted for agriculture, and throughout the country the natives cultivated Indian corn, coffee, &c., and especially tobacco in Upper Perak. He estimated the population along the banks of the Perak at 10,000, and on its tributaries he conjectured it to be from 20,000 to 30,000. I fear some error has crept into these figures, for I find in a speech made by Sir A. Clarke, in 1874, before the Legislative Council, at Singapore, that the population of Perak, which was given in 1861 as at 50,000, was not more, if so many as 25,000 in 1874. However, to go on. These people, he informs us, live on the very edge of the river, some of them in houses supported by four poles stuck into the bed of the river, and others on its banks in houses concealed in a forest of fruit and jungle trees. The houses are built of wood and are thatched with the dried leaf of the nipa, known as the attap by the natives. Mr. Birch, in one of his last speeches made at Singapore, speaks further about this river in these terms:—"The river is a very magnificent one. At least 150 miles from the mouth, it is over 400 feet wide, and, as the tidal influence extends a very short distance from its mouth, it may be well imagined what rich and fertile lands are to be found along its valley. The greatest resources of this fine district lie in its soil. If any capitalist can be induced along the valley of the Perak River to undertake the cultivation of tobacco, of sugar, or indigo, he will very soon prove the success with which he can work. The climate is excellent, the water pure and in abundance, and very easily available for purposes of irrigation; the soil is remarkably rich, with large herds of cattle at every village, and consequently affording great facilities for enriching the land; while on the mountains around, which are very accessible, good coffee land may undoubtedly be found. Ceylon has progressed of late years with astonishing rapidity, for during the last twenty-five years its revenue has much more than doubled; and yet Ceylon has
not in it the wonderful resources in minerals and in land, and
the extraordinary facilities for obtaining water, that the States
of the Malay Peninsula possess within themselves.” The river,
he further adds, is navigable for gunboats 40 or 50 miles from
its mouth. Mr. Birch noticed along the banks of this and the
other rivers a system of robbery practised by the Chiefs on their
subjects, like that of the old Barons who dwelt on the Danube
and the castled Rhine. “Every Rajah,” says he, “has his
squeezing station, where he levies black-mail on trading-boats
and articles of merchandise going up and down the river.” Can
it be wondered at, after this, that the Malays were driven to
piracy and plunder?

From Mr. Swettenham, Assistant Resident at Salangore, and
Mr. G. B. Elliott, who is also, I believe, officially connected,
we have a further account of this fine river:—“It stretches
inland,” say they, “at right angles to the sea, with a slant
northwards for about 40 or 50 miles to a place called Durian
Sabatang, where Sultan Abdullah, the present Sultan, lives on
the left bank. Here it turns away north, and runs parallel with
the sea-coast for 100 miles to Qualla Kangsa (which is 30 miles
from the Laroot River). About 4 or 5 miles from Durian Saba­
tang is Banda Bahru, where the British Residency is fixed, and
about the same distance higher up is Passir Salah, where Mr.
Birch met his sad end; and 30 or 40 miles higher we come to
Blanja, where ex-Sultan Ismail lived, and who, it will be re­
membered, was instrumental in Mr. Birch’s murder, and who
was given up by the Sultan of Quedah, on the 20th of last
March, after giving the British forces a great deal of trouble in
hunting after him. Higher up is Sengang, where the Rajah
Mudah resides, who, by long usage in Perak, is the heir apparent
to the throne, though not a son of the present Sultan. Beyond
this we arrive at Qualla Kangsa, 150 miles from the mouth of
the river, where Rajah Lela, the principal accomplice in Mr.
Birch’s murder, resided, and who is still at large, having escaped
our efforts so far in apprehending him.”

Mr. Swettenham describes the view of the Perak River, as
seen at Qualla Kangsa, in these terms:—“I have certainly sel­
dom seen a prettier view than I am looking at now; about 3
miles of the beautiful Perak River is lying at our feet in a convex
curve, the Kangsa River joining it at about 50 yards from where
I sit. The Maharajah’s house is just opposite a little to the
right in a cluster of coco-nut trees, the whole view being shut in
all round by the low but varied hills of the Ulu Perak.” On this
occasion, which was in February of 1874, they began to perceive a
growing unfriendliness on the part of the Malays, for, whereas
they had been received before with a peaceful demeanour, he now