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FOR CONSULTATION ONLY

A HISTORY OF OUR RELATIONS

WITH

THE ANDAMANESE.

COMPILED FROM HISTORIES AND TRAVELS, AND FROM THE RECORDS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA.

BY

M. V. PORTMAN, M.A.I., ETC.,
FELLOW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA,
OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE ANDAMANESE.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS book has been written at the request of Lieutenant-Colonel R. C. Temple, C.I.E., Chief Commissioner of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, who, on assuming that office in August 1894, was anxious that the records of the Government relations with the Andamanese, which were perishing, with all that had been written about this interesting race before our occupation of their islands, should be condensed into one work before it was too late.

After giving a description of the Andaman Islands, and of the appearance and customs of the Andamanese, I quote all that has been written about those islands from the earliest times up to the date of our first Settlement on them in the last century; and the present work, if not containing all that is known, at least has, between two covers, a larger number of the earlier records than any other; for, in addition to the assistance afforded me in this direction by Colonel Yule's article on the Andaman Islands in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and by Mr. Man's book, "The Andaman Islanders"; copies have been made for me of documents in the libraries of the India Office, of the British Museum, and of the Home Department of the Government of India, in Calcutta.

I then include all that can be discovered regarding our occupation of the Andamans from 1789 to 1796, and am indebted to Mr. E. H. Man, C.I.E., for a copy of Lieutenant Colebrooke's little known paper on the Andamanese, one of the most important extracts in the book; the few notices of the Andamans which are found between 1796 and 1857 are then given, including the interesting account of the wrecks

of the British ships *Briton* and *Runnymede* on the Archipelago Islands.

All the papers relating to our present occupation of the Andamans are quoted, and the circumstances which led up to that occupation, and from 1858 a continued history of our relations with the Andamanese compiled from the reports of the different Superintendents of Port Blair, and of the Officers in charge of the Andamanese, is written, with the comments and orders of the Government of India, and the policy laid down by that Government regarding our attitude towards the aborigines.

I also re-publish such original writings on the Andamanese as have hitherto been considered of weight, and have guided scientific authors in the conclusions they have formed regarding this people.

Where possible, I have let each official tell his own story in his own words, by quoting the records *in extenso*, correcting in notes statements or conclusions which subsequent experience has shown to be erroneous; in the chapters regarding my own administration of the Andamanese, particularly of the Little Andaman, I have, in order to avoid the involved diction which would have occurred had I written of myself in the third person, and noted on my remarks in the first person, used the first person throughout at the risk of an accusation of egotism, but I have been so intimately associated with the Andamanese and their administration for the past sixteen years, that it would have been difficult to write otherwise.

Where I have criticised the work of others I hope that my criticisms may be taken in the spirit in which they were written; *viz.*, an anxiety that the public should know the exact truth, so far as it can be learnt, regarding a race which will shortly be extinct. With that object a series of works, of which this is one, is being

written by the direction of the Trustees of the British Museum, and this series is to contain a photographic record of the Andamanese in every action of their lives; comparative vocabularies of the dialects spoken by them, with specimens of their tales, legends, songs, etc.; and a general answer to the questions put in "Notes and Queries on Anthropology."

Much of this work is well in hand, and when finished will be presented to the public through the British Museum and the Government of India.

For the assistance which has been given me, without which the above-mentioned work could not have been undertaken, I have to express my thanks to Sir A. Wollaston Franks, K.C.B., a Trustee of the British Museum, and to Mr. C. H. Read of the British Museum; to the Secretary of State for India, who issued an order that I was to receive all reasonable facilities for the undertaking; to successive Viceroys of India, and other officials of high rank in India, who have issued similar orders, and countenanced and encouraged the work, more especially to the Marquess of Lansdowne, K.G., and to Mr. J. P. Hewett, C.I.E, Secretary to the Government of India, in the Home Department; and to Colonel T. Cadell, V.C., late Chief Commissioner of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, who had given me all possible aid, official and private, had personally taken an interest in the work, and had shown me much kindness when difficulties occurred.

After I took charge of the Andamanese in 1879, I had the advantage of discussing many matters in connection with them, and the general administration of the Settlement of Port Blair in the early days, with Mr. J. N. Homfray, who had been in Port Blair from 1858 until his death there in 1883.

Mr. E. H. Man, C.I.E., and Mr. F. E. Tuson, have also assisted me regarding matters which have occurred before I came to Port Blair, and about which the records are either silent, or are altogether missing.

M. V. PORTMAN,
Officer in charge of the Andamanese.

PORT BLAIR, ANDAMAN ISLANDS;
The 28th April 1896.

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A HISTORY OF OUR RELATIONS

WITH

THE ANDAMANESE.

CHAPTER I.

Position and physical geography of the Andaman Islands—Their geological formation—Dr. Rink's remarks—Mr. R. D. Oldham's remarks—Notes on the subsidence of the Islands—Dr. Prain's remarks—Narcondam—Barren Island—Piracies, and kidnapping of the Andamanese for slaves, by the Malays—The Harbours of the Andamans—The climate of the Andamans—Seasons—Andaman Forests—Fauna—The Andamanese—Theory of a Negrito population in a now submerged tropical continent—Remnants of the Negrito race—Numbers of the Andamanese at the time of our occupation of the Islands in 1858—The Kitchen-Middens in the Andamans—Legends of the Andamanese regarding the antiquity of the race—Views of the Malays about the Andamanese, and their name for the Islands and people—Identity of the Andamanese with the Hanumáns of the Rámáyana.

THE Andaman Islands lie in the Bay of Bengal, between the 10th and 14th Parallels of North Latitude, and between the 92nd and 94th Meridians of East Longitude. The Group of Islands is divided into the Great and Little Andaman, the former being subdivided into the North, Middle, and South Andaman, with the outlying Islands of Landfall, Interview, Rutland, and the North and South Sentinel; the Archipelago, and Labyrinth Groups. Including all the small Islets, however, there are 204 Islands in the Andamans.

The Great Andaman, from Cape Price, the North end of the North Andaman, to the South end of Rutland Island, is 155 miles in length, and nowhere more than 18 miles in breadth. The Little Andaman, 26½ miles by 16, lies 31 miles south of Rutland Island, the entire length of the Group being 219 miles.

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The Great Andaman Islands are hilly, rising in the North Andaman to 2,400 feet, in the Middle Andaman to 1,678 feet, and in the South Andaman to 1,510 feet. Numerous creeks intersect the Islands, and there are three Straits, Homfray, Middle, and MacPherson's, which are navigable for vessels of less than twelve feet draught.

Eighteen miles to the westward of the South Andaman is the North Sentinel Island, and 36 miles south of that is the South Sentinel.

About 70 miles to the eastward of the Andamans lie the Island of Narcondam, opposite the North Andaman, and Barren Island opposite the Middle Andaman. These belong to the Andaman Group.

Geologists are of opinion that the Andamans are a continuation of the Arracan Yomah. The older rocks are probably oldest Tertiary or late Cretaceous, though their exact age cannot be told on account of the absence of fossils. These rocks appear again in precisely the same form in the Nias Islands on the west coast of Sumatra.

The newer, or Archipelago rocks, contain Radiolarians and Foraminifera, and are upper Tertiary. These rocks occur again in the Nicobars, and in the main body of the island of Sumatra.

The Sentinel islands are also of this formation, with a superstratum of coral.

There is a good deal of serpentine rock in the Islands, and jasper, chromite, and copper and iron pyrites are found, also small pockets of coal.

Rink remarks, with regard to the newer rocks :

"The extreme uniformity of the strata indicates that these masses were deposited on the bottom of a quiet sea, probably not far from the mouth of a large river. There is not a trace to be found of local causes by which fragments of foreign rocks could have been brought into these deposits. The patches of coal have been derived from drift-wood which was deposited with the clay and sand."

With regard to certain formations in the sandstone cliffs, which

may be seen at Port Campbell, on the West coast of the South Andaman, and at Redskin Island in the Labyrinth Group, he states :—

"Some spheroidal masses seen sticking out of the cliffs, or regularly arranged in lines, are remarkable. They consist of a much harder substance than the greater part of the sandstone. This imbedded and more solid sandstone is identical in composition with the main mass, differing only by the calcareous cement being present in a larger quantity. This forms in some places round masses four feet in diameter, and because they resist decomposition longer, they protrude in the most varied forms out of the cliffs, and are strewed over the shore indicating the former place of the rock.

"One might, at first sight, suppose that these imbedded masses are, on account of their rounded form, pebbles of a foreign rock, but their composition shows that they have a similar origin with the rest of the sandstone, the only difference being that the calcareous matter, which pervades the whole mass, has been concentrated at certain points. The rounded form, moreover, could not be due to rolling about, for the concentrically laminar structure clearly shows that their exterior form is connected with their internal arrangement."

Mr. R. D. Oldham states in "Notes on the Geology of the Andaman Islands" :—

"I can only distinguish with certainty two sedimentary formations in the Andaman Islands, which I propose to call the Port Blair, and Archipelago series, respectively.

"The Port Blair series consists principally of firm grey sandstone and inter-bedded slaty shales, not unfrequently containing nests of coaly matter, and, occasionally, beds of conglomerate and pale grey limestone as subsidiary members. The sandstone is the characteristic rock of the series, it is generally, if not always, non-calcareous, and is easily recognised, where exposed between tidemarks, by its peculiar mode of weathering : owing to irregular distribution of the cementing material, bosses of harder stone are left standing up above the general level of the rock, and these bosses are invariably irregularly honey-combed by the solvent action of the sea water.

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"In several places I found red and green jaspery beds very similar to what occur in Manipur and Burma, but I was unable to determine whether any of these belonged to an older series or not. In part at least, they seem to belong to the same series as the sandstones and shales, in the midst of which they may be found cropping out, but it is by no means impossible that some of them belong to an older series, for, on the east coast of the South Andaman, close to the boundaries of the serpentine, south of Shoal Bay, I found great banks of conglomerate containing pebbles of similar jaspery rock; it is of course possible that this conglomerate is newer than the sandstone, but the fact that, though found close to the serpentine it contains no pebbles of that rock, indicates that it is probably of earlier date than the serpentine intrusions, and consequently probably of the same age as the Port Blair series.

"On Entry Island, and again in a small bay, not marked on the Marine chart, immediately south of Port Meadows, I found beds of volcanic origin. In the middle of the small bay just mentioned, a square rock composed of a breccia of pale green felsite, cemented by a matrix of felsitic ash, stands out of the water, and on Entry Island, among a series of rocks indurated and contorted so as to baffle description, there are some beds full of angular fragments, and apparently of volcanic origin. The age of these it is difficult to determine; they seem to pass northwards into beds among which jaspery slate and limestone are to be found, and at the northern extremity of the island there is some intrusive serpentine, but at the southern end of the island near the top of the section, if I read it aright, I found in a bed of sandstone an isolated boulder, about a foot long, of a serpentinous rock, evidently derived from the serpentine intrusion. On the whole, it is probable that these are of later date than the Port Blair sandstones.

"The newer series, which I have called the Archipelago series, as the whole of the islands of the Archipelago are formed by it, consists typically of soft limestones formed of coral and shell sand, soft calcareous sandstones and soft white clays, with occasionally a band of

conglomerate, the pebbles of which seem originally to have been coral, though no structure is now discernible. These beds seem to cover a large area in the Andamans."

With regard to the Cinque Islands, the formation of which resembles that of Rutland Island, the South-east coast of the South Andaman, and part of the East coast of the Middle Andaman, he states :—

"The Cinque Islands consist principally of intrusive rock of the serpentine series, but there are also some metamorphosed and indurated sedimentary beds ; of these, some are siliceous, but for the most part they are calcareous, the most remarkable form being a green chloritic calcite or serpentinous matrix with numerous granules of crystalline calcite scattered through it; the rounded outlines of these granules seem to be due to attrition, and the crystalline structure to subsequent metamorphism. These rocks did not seem to me to belong to the Port Blair, but to the Archipelago series, and at the first blush it would seem as if they had been metamorphosed by the intrusion of the serpentine ; fortunately, however, at one or two places, and more specially on the eastern face of the southern island, close to its northern end, there are exposures of a conglomeratic bed, in which the pebbles are of serpentine, and the matrix is fine-grained and very serpentinous. This conglomerate, both from its position and induration, belongs to the same series as the other sedimentary rocks of the island, and proves that they are of later date than the serpentine intrusion, and that in all probability their metamorphism is due to the contortion they have locally undergone. The conglomerate just mentioned is a curious bed, not of the type commonly known as conglomerate, but exhibits that structure, usually considered due to the action of floating ice, which is seen in the boulder bed of the Talchirs, or the Blaini conglomerate of the Himalayas. The matrix is, or rather was, originally, a fine mud or clay, and through it the pebbles are scattered, not touching each other, but each isolated in the matrix.

"As regards the intrusive rocks of the Andamans, I have little

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to say; they are similar to those of Manipur and Burma to the north, and of the Nicobars to the south, and, as far as I could judge from the manner of their occurrence, of certainly later date than the Port Blair series, the only section which seems to throw any doubt on this conclusion being the sandstones on Craggy Island. I have followed my predecessors in calling these rocks serpentine, that being the most prominent or remarkable form which they take, but they not unfrequently pass into crystalline diorite or gabbro.

"In tracing the Andaman rocks northwards to Burma, we have little difficulty in identifying the Port Blair series with the Negrais rocks of Theobald. Not only do they resemble each other in the petrographical features and relative proportions of their individual members, but the peculiar mode of weathering, where exposed between tidemarks, which I have remarked in the former, is matched by the sandstones of the Negrais Group, which have been described as usually presenting, when seen on the sea beach, a 'honey-combed or cancellated appearance, the result of a peculiar mode of weathering.'

"Unfortunately, the age of the Negrais rocks cannot be determined with accuracy, but they are believed to underlie and be associated with some beds of known nummulitic age, so that we may class the Port Blair rocks as Eocene or slightly older.

"Thus, whatever line we follow, we are brought up to the same conclusion, *viz.*, that the Port Blair series is probably of early tertiary, or possibly late cretaceous age, and by tracing them southwards, we find that the rocks of the Archipelago series are probably of Miocene age or even newer.

"Since the publication of Kurz's Report on the vegetation of the Andamans, it has been an accepted fact that the Andaman Islands are, and have been, during recent times, undergoing subsidence. It was difficult to conceive how this could be the case, for the Arracan coast to the north and the Nicobar Islands to the south, between which the Andamans form the connecting link, are both fringed by raised beaches which show that they have recently been elevated, but

the observations recorded by Mr. Kurz were so unanswerable that they were allowed to override the argument from analogy. Mr. Kurz's conclusions were based principally on the fact that he found the stumps of trees, belonging to species which only grow above high-water mark and beyond the reach of salt water, in the mangrove swamps and on the sea shore, while, as corroborative evidence, he adduces the facts that, according to the Report of the Andaman Committee, the sea had encroached some 40 or 50 feet since the first settlement on Chatham Island, Port Cornwallis; and that 'Lieutenant Jameson of Chatham Island has informed me that a similar encroachment of the sea is taking place at that island in Port Blair.' As regards the latter point, there is no evidence that the 'encroachment' of the sea at Port Cornwallis was due to subsidence, and, as far as can be judged by the lithograph in the Report of the Andaman Committee, and the wood-cut in Dr. Mouat's book, both taken from a photograph, I should be inclined to look upon it as a case of encroachment by erosion of the sea shore and not by subsidence. The evidence of the trees is, however, almost conclusive, for the only explanation possible, apart from an outward set of the soil towards the sea, such as is known to take place under certain circumstances, is that the land is sinking, and I can myself produce an observation which supports this conclusion. The large bay on the north-east coast of Havelock Island is for the most part fringed with low-lying land, next to the beach this rises some 4 or 5 feet above high-water mark, but in many places behind this it sinks to form a hollow, and then rises again to the same level as the outer ridge, or rather higher. The whole of this low land is covered with forest, but, wherever there is one of the hollows just mentioned, there the forest trees are all dead, and the soil is often moist with salt water; the soil of these low-lying patches must have once been dry, like that where the forest is still growing, and the uniformity in size of the dead and the living trees shows that in all probability several generations have lived and died on rise and in hollow alike, until, as the land gradually subsided, the sea water rose in the soil of the hollows and the trees succumbed to its fatal influence.

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"We may, therefore, take it as proved that the Andamans are at the present day gradually sinking, but there is ample evidence in the raised beaches that fringe the shores of the Andamans, that in the immediate past elevation has exceeded subsidence.

"There is not wanting evidence that the depression of the Islands, which is going on at the present time, has but recently commenced, for the Kitchen-Middens of the Andamanese are in positions where a very slight subsidence would submerge them, and the time that they represent may be understood by the section of one which I examined near Port Mouat; it was twelve feet in thickness in the centre, and in this there was a bed one foot six inches thick of vegetable mould, with shells scattered through it, marking a period when generations of shrubs and plants must have lived and died while the Midden was abandoned, or only occasionally visited. This was doubtless started on a rock rising among the mangroves, and gradually extended on to the mud; and it is a noteworthy fact that the surface of the mud under the shells does not appreciably differ from the general level of the mud outside. It shows that at a time when probably not one-sixteenth of the present bulk of the Midden had accumulated, the level of the mangrove swamps was very nearly what it is now. Had the soil surrounding the rock on which the Midden was started been well clear of the influence of the tides, it would certainly not have supported a growth of mangrove, and, so far as my experience has shown me, would consequently have been of a very different character to what is actually found, while, had the surface of the mangrove swamp stood much lower than what it now is, the mud would certainly have risen above what is the base of the Kitchen-Midden in its earlier stages; in other words, the surface of the mangrove swamp was then very nearly at the highest level it could reach, and as this was limited by the height to which the tides rise, it shows that during the time represented by the formation of this Midden—a period which must be measured by centuries, if not by tens of centuries—the land has not appreciably altered its level relatively to the sea."

Additional evidence of the present subsidence of the Andaman

Islands can be obtained: at Ranguchang, on the east coast of the South Andaman, about seven miles south of Port Blair, where the land inside the sea beach, to the south of the mouth of the creek, is slowly sinking, and forest trees are dying from the advent of the sea water and giving place to mangroves; at the North end of the Little Andaman, where the foreshore is strewn with dead tree trunks with no trace of the soil in which their roots formerly stood; at the North end of the North Sentinel Island; and at the North end of the North Andaman, where it is very marked. The subsidence appears to be greater on the east coast than on the west.

It is an interesting fact that the soundings recorded a hundred years ago by Lieutenant Blair's survey of the Middle Straits, Port Cornwallis, and Port Meadows, remain the same at the present day.

A remarkable feature of the Andaman Group are the outlying Islands of Narcondam and Barren Island.

Of these Dr. Prain states :—

"These volcanic peaks are a continuation northwards of the Sunda range of volcanoes; and the Sunda range itself is but a section of the volcanic system that extends from the Andes, through the Rocky Mountains, the Aleutian and Kurile Islands, Khamschatka, Japan, the Philippines, Flores, Sumbawa, Java and Sumatra, to these very spots, and beyond them to the isolated extinct volcanoes in Burma about Pagan.

"Whenever a continental area (and such an area includes not merely part of a continent, but any adjacent islands with shallow soundings) rises out of the deep sea, you find (not on the edge, but immediately behind it, on the continental side that is) a line of volcanoes, due, doubtless, to the wrenching and dislocation of the earth's crust at the sharp bend that must accompany the shearing. Sometimes, as in America, you do not find a sea behind the ridge that marks the edge of the continental area, but oftener, as in the Kurile Sea, the Sea of Japan, and the Andaman Sea, you do find such a sea; the only thing about the Andaman one is that the ridge has not shoved itself so far up as in the case of Japan or Java, and so we find that the edge is sub-aerial, but the place behind it

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where the volcanoes spout up, is submarine, and therefore only the cones of the volcanoes, and not the ridge to which they belong, has got above the surface.

"But while Narcondam and Barren Island belong to the same system as the Sumatra volcanoes, they almost certainly never were connected originally with Sumatra. The sea is too deep for any such thing to have been possible. It is a recognised truth that there is no evidence for, but every reason for deciding against the idea that any land (other than an isolated volcanic peak) has ever risen or sunk more than 200 fathoms. Very likely 100 is more of a just estimate, and even that can have been but rare."

Dr. Prain also adds, in another letter :—

"Narcondam is one of the Pegu Group of volcanoes, and Barren Island is one of the Sunda Group. These two thus give us the locality where the two groups approach most closely. They may be sub-divisions of the same Group."

Narcondam Island is a lofty peak rising 2,330 feet above the sea from out of deep water. It is 2½ miles long by 1½ mile wide, is uninhabited, and has never been visited by the Andamanese. The name is probably of Malay, and not of direct Sanskrit origin, as has been often supposed.

The supposed Sanskrit derivation, "Narak-kund," would give the meaning of the name to be "Pit of Hell," which, having been accepted, caused much confusion, owing to the difficulty of reconciling it with Narcondam which is merely an upheaved peak of volcanic origin, when it is obviously more applicable to Barren Island, a former active volcano.

Barren Island is a now quiescent volcano rising from deep water to a height of 1,150 feet above the sea. It is circular in form, with a diameter of about two miles.

It was last seen in a state of active eruption in 1803, and the crater is now choked and cold. A thin column of steam issues from a sulphur bed on the side of the cone, near the top, and a hot spring at the base gives an average temperature of 107° Fahrenheit.

When in eruption the flames could have been seen from Outram and Lawrence Islands in the Andaman Archipelago, and on a very clear day the Island is visible from the top of Mount Harriet in the South Andaman. Some have suggested that the Andamanese, who are unable to make fire, procured their fire from this volcano, but I do not consider this to be likely as they would be much afraid of the volcano, would not venture so far to sea in any case, and would certainly not approach an island they dreaded. They distinctly state that they have never in any former period visited the island, and there is no mention of it in any of their legends. So important an object as an active volcano would scarcely have been omitted had they ever visited it.

As the physical features of the Andaman Islands have a considerable bearing on the habits of the Andamanese, and the conduct of our policy towards them, I will endeavour to describe them in so far as is relevant.

Of the shores one might say, in general terms; steep-to, with deep water, on the east coast; shallow water and fringing reef on the west coast.

On either coast a heavy surf beats, according to which monsoon may be blowing, and landing would be difficult were it not for the numerous straits and creeks, and the excellent harbours.

These latter are so important a feature of the Andaman Group that I will enumerate them at some length.

They were formerly, no doubt, for ordinary vessels, the *only* attraction in these islands, for shelter in bad weather could be obtained, and supplies of wood and water could be procured. There could have been no trading with the aborigines, and there are no mineral or other valuables to be obtained.

The Andamans were undoubtedly, however, a head-quarters for Malay pirates, the many well-sheltered harbours, with big creeks running off them for miles inland, affording hiding places and shelter at all times of the year. Sharks' fins, edible birds' nests, and trepang could have been collected, if indeed there was then a trade in these articles, also tortoise-shell.

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But of more importance to the Malays was the central position of the Islands, so far handier for molesting the trade of the Bay of Bengal than the Malay Peninsula; also, which has been ascertained beyond doubt, the considerable trade which was done in Andamanese slaves. Many of these were supplied to the Raja of Kedah, part of whose tribute to the King of Siam consisted of these slaves, who up to so late as 1860 are known to have been at the Siamese Court.

The Harbours in the Andaman Islands are :—

On the East coast—

NORTH ANDAMAN.—Cadell Bay; affording shelter in the south-west monsoon only.

The Table Island Group; also affording shelter in the south-west monsoon only.

Port Cornwallis; a magnificent harbour, completely sheltered in all weathers.

Stewart's Sound; a fine harbour in which complete shelter can always be obtained.

(A boat passage from here to Interview Island, called Austen Strait, exists.)

MIDDLE ANDAMAN.—There is shelter in both monsoons to be obtained inside the south end of Long Island.

Homfray Strait and Middle Strait both afford shelter for vessels of light draught, and excellent passages to the West coast with many hiding places.

(These parts are known to have been favourite lurking places of the Malays.)

SOUTH ANDAMAN.—Port Meadows; a very good, well-sheltered harbour.

Kyd Island, with the large, many-branched creek running to the southward, affords a shelter for small vessels, and a convenient mode of access to the interior of the South Andaman.

Port Blair; a well known and magnificent harbour.

MacPherson's Strait, which is both a harbour and shelter at all times of the year; and a convenient passage to the West coast.

RUTLAND ISLAND.—Portman Harbour affords a shelter in the south-west monsoon only.

On the West coast—

NORTH ANDAMAN.—Shelter can be obtained in both monsoons between Paget Island and the mainland.

The long and completely sheltered stretch of water between Interview Island and the mainland affords both harbour and hiding places.

MIDDLE ANDAMAN.—Kwangtung Harbour, at the western mouth of Middle and Homfray Straits, is well sheltered and capacious. It is most convenient as a head-quarters for traffic, etc., through these Straits.

SOUTH ANDAMAN.—Port Campbell is a good and capacious harbour, but with an intricate and dangerous entrance.

The Labyrinth Islands afford numbers of well-sheltered anchorages and hiding places.

IN THE ARCHIPELAGO ISLANDS.—On the eastern coast shelter can be obtained in *Chárka-Júru*, Kwangtung Strait, and *Tádma-Júru*.

AT THE LITTLE ANDAMAN.—With the exception of Hut Bay on the East coast, which affords a certain amount of shelter in the south-west monsoon, there are no harbours; yet it is worthy of notice that, in this island, there are more traces of Malay or other foreign influence among the aborigines, than in the others.

Few groups of islands can show, within such a small area, a similar number of really fine harbours.

The climate of the Andamans is equable, the mean average temperature being 84° Fahrenheit, and the average diurnal variation 10° Fahrenheit.

The yearly average rainfall is over 100 inches, and it rains on half the whole number of days in the year.

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Nervous depression and dyspepsia, malarious, bronchial and lung complaints, and rheumatism, are the most common diseases among the Aborigines as resultants of the climate.

The Seasons are—

The South-west Monsoon, and rainy season, lasting from about the 20th of April to the 20th of October. Breaks of calm, fine weather occur during this season, and usually at the close of it a long break often of three weeks in duration occurs, when the sea is glassy calm.

After the 20th of October variable winds and heavy gales (often cyclones), usher in the North-east Monsoon, which may commence by the 10th of November.

Sometimes the months of November and December are dry with high winds, but more generally a good deal of rain accompanies the North-east wind in these months, and heavy South-east gales have been experienced in the first week of December and even later.

After the 1st of January the rain almost ceases, the force of the Monsoon declines, and until the middle of April there are light winds, fine weather, and a fairly calm sea.

The whole of the Islands are covered with an extremely dense jungle, reaching to the sea-shore, and, owing to the thick undergrowth of canes, etc., it is in places impassable even to the Aborigines. Only on the North Sentinel and Brothers Islands is the jungle at all open and free from undergrowth.

Mangrove swamps are of course common and extensive.

The trees are lofty, and often covered with gigantic climbing plants, which hang from the summits in festoons. The typical tree is Dipterocarpus lævis, and the principal trees of which use is made by the Andamanese are the Mangrove, Padouk, Melochia velutina, some of the Sterculiaceæ, Bombax insigne, Areca laxa, Pandanus, Bambusa, Anadendron paniculatum, with some others.

Fruits are gathered from many of the forest trees, and others have medicinal virtues assigned by the Andamanese to their leaves.

There are six species of edible roots, or yams, and many palms.

No coconuts exist, the reason probably being that the

Andamanese eat up the majority which are washed on the shore, and the jungle pigs account for the remainder, rooting up and eating the sprouting nuts.

Only those who know the Andamanese can appreciate how closely they scan the shore in search of food, and how little likely it is that such a prize as a coconut would escape their eyes Moreover, when the Islands were thickly peopled, before our advent, and each tribe had to keep to its own country, not a yard of the entire coast-line but was explored weekly by parties in search of food.

Much of the scenery of the Andaman Islands is of great beauty, but this does not in the least appeal to the eye of the Aboriginal.

The sea round the Islands swarms with fish and turtle, quantities of shell-fish, including the huge Tridacna, are to be found on the reefs, and at no time could an absolute scarcity of food have been experienced.

In the interior, while there are no big game, or any dangerous beasts of prey, there are numbers of a small variety of pig, the jungle cat (Paradoxurus andamanensis), and flying foxes; fish and prawns in the fresh-water streams; the big water lizard, honey, fruits, roots, seeds, and last, but by no means least in the estimation of the Andamanese, grubs, give a full and varied dietary.

We have now to consider the Andamanese themselves.

It has been shown that, at some remote period, the Andaman Islands were joined to Cape Negrais, through the present Preparis and Coco Islands, and were thus part of the mainland of Asia.

A Negrito race then existed over an enormous extent of country, remnants being now found pure in the Andamans, and until recently in the now extinct Tasmanians; nearly pure in the Aëtas of the Philippines, which islands were probably at that time attached to the same mainland as the Andamans; and in the Semangs of the Malay Peninsula; and there are traces of Negrito blood in some of the Kolarian races of India. It is a question for consideration whether the Bushmen, the dwarf tribes in the Congo Forest, and other Negrito-African tribes, are not part of the same race, the very wide

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distribution of which, in hitherto unsuspected parts, is now being recognised.

Customs similar to those of the Andamanese are to be found among the people on the islands on the west of Torres Straits, and possibly the Papuans and other Melanesian races are Negritos crossed with the Malayan or Polynesian type.

This Negrito race has been exterminated elsewhere by higher types, but before this extermination took place land communication with Arracan was cut off by subsidence and the Andamans became islands. Since this occurrence the Andamanese aborigines have remained, as we found them on our occupation of the islands in 1858, a people to themselves, cut off by the nature of the islands, and by their own hostility to all strangers, from outside influences, and preserving their persons and customs as the last pure remnant of one of the oldest races existing.

The date of the separation of the Andamans from the mainland of Burma cannot be determined, but the years since the occurrence must be reckoned by thousands, and it is probable that, during all those years, the population of the Andamans remained very much as it is at present.

At the time of our occupation in 1858, the population of the Great Andaman might be estimated roughly at 6,000 souls, and there were possibly 2,000 more people on the Little Andaman. When we consider that some Andamanese have no children, very few have more than three, the majority of the children die in infancy, and the grown-up Andamanese revenges the slightest injury to his person or property, or even a fancied insult, by a murder, and also that the tribes were continually at feud with each other, I think we may accept the above estimated population to be the average for many centuries past.

First the Kitchen-Middens of the Andamanese, and then their Legends, to which less importance can be attached, are the only data we have on which to calculate the numbers and antiquity of the race.

As regards the former. A Kitchen-Midden is, as a rule, not more than fifty feet in diameter (though there are some exceptions), and on this a Sept of not more than thirty persons would live. These Middens are found at what may be considered the head-quarters of the Tribe or Sept, but they could not be places of permanent habitation for the following reasons :—The changes of the Monsoon, the scarcity of food (all close to the spot being gradually eaten up); the nomadic disposition of the Aborigines; and above all, the stench arising from the camp, which in a few weeks becomes intolerable.

We must, therefore, allow a sufficient number of Kitchen-Middens for the necessary changes to take place, and there are not a very large number of them to be seen. The layers of soil in them show that they were occasionally abandoned for many years, and the same Midden, as we know by observation of the present habits of the Andamanese, is not re-occupied after people have left it until at least three months have elapsed (indeed, if a death had occurred in the village on it, the Andamanese would not return to it for perhaps a year); the first evidence obtained from the Middens is, therefore, that the Andamanese were never very numerous.

The next point is, that the principal Middens show signs of great age, the shells at the base of some being fossilised, and they average twelve to fifteen feet in height, nor are there many new, low Middens, from which we may argue that no great increase has taken place in the numbers of the people.

The third point which an examination of these Middens proves is, that, as the Andamanese race are now, so they were ages ago when first the Middens were commenced. Although different layers of shells in the Middens show us where the diet has slightly changed, certain oysters, for example, being at one period much in vogue and at another time entirely avoided, yet even among the fossilised shells at the base of the Middens we find the same refuse, and the same broken bits of pottery, as we find strewn on the surface to-day.

We will now consider what light the Legends of the Andamanese

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throw on their origin. Comparing those of different tribes, and stripping them of their supernatural additions, we arrive at this.

All Andamanese tradition dates back to some great cataclysm which submerged a greater part of the land. The Andamanese say that before this cataclysm they were all one tribe, and spoke the same language, but that after it the survivors became separated into tribes, their languages gradually differed until at last they became mutually unintelligible as at present, and they point to certain very ancient Kitchen-Middens, now having their bases on the sea level, as having been then commenced on the spots to which the survivors repaired.

They say that before the cataclysm the places where these Middens now are were high up on mountains, and that no one would have made permanent camps there then.

It is quite possible that this tradition may be an account of what occurred when, by subsidence, the Andamans were cut off from the mainland of Arracan, and though geologists are slow to allow of sudden convulsions, yet it is certain that the subsidence, whether sudden or gradual, did actually take place. A general gradual subsidence, ending in a severe earthquake which lowered a large tract of land a few feet, and thus submerged a considerable area, might be sufficient to account for the tradition.

It is curious that, though there are no wild beasts larger than a pig at the Andamans now (excepting reptiles and marine mammals), the Andamanese state that large and fierce beasts, as well as many aborigines, were drowned in the cataclysm; and, even in the Little Andaman the people have names for animals which they cannot describe, but evidently have traditions of.

It is also scarcely probable that, with Burma and the Malay Peninsula so full of big game, none should have strayed on to the Andamans when they were attached to the mainland.

Whatever value we may attach to these legends, however, one thing seems certain, *viz.*, that the Andamanese have inhabited these islands in their present state for a period which can only be considered

by thousands of years, and they antedate any history or record preserved among other peoples.

The following incident will show how the Andamanese are regarded by the Malays, who, as I have said, knew more of them than any other persons previous to our occupation.

When visiting Penang in 1885 with thirteen Andamanese, I was mobbed in the streets by the Malays who called to their friends to come and see the "Handumáns."

Now much scientific energy, and no little ingenuity, has been expended in endeavouring to find out the origin of the word "Andaman."

"*Andamanain*" (the word used by Marco Polo), being considered to be an Arabic (oblique) Dual signifying "The Two Andamans."

Also Ptolemy's "Insulæ Bonæ Fortunæ" Ἀγαθοῦ δαίμονος νῆσος" was suspected of having been converted into *Agdaman*, *Angaman*, and ultimately *Andaman*. The name is, however, not distinctly recorded before the 9th century.

*The Hon'ble W. E. Maxwell, a well-known Malay scholar, who happened to be at Penang when I was there and to whom I mentioned the matter, cut the Gordian knot at once by saying that the Malays had known, and slaved at, the Andamans from time immemorial; that they looked on the Andamanese, (who were also known as "the Rakshasas") as the Hanumáns mentioned in the Rámáyana, and had consequently called the Group, the Islands of the Hanumáns (or Handumáns as they pronounce the word), hence Andaman Islands as we know them.

The history of the Malays amply accounts for the number and variety of foreign ingredients in their language. Hindus appear to have settled in Sumatra and Java as early as the 4th century of our era, and to have continued to exercise sway over the native populations for many centuries. These received from them into their language a large number of Sanskrit terms from which we can infer the nature of the civilising influence imported by the Hindu rulers.

* The late Sir W. Maxwell, Governor of the Gold Coast.

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This Sanskrit element forms such an integral part of the Malay vocabulary that, in spite of the subsequent infusion of Arabic and Persian words adopted in the usual course of Mohammedan conquest, it has retained its ancient citizenship in the language.

It is not difficult then to believe that the Andamans formed part of what was originally known as Ráma's Bridge, and the Andamanese were thought to be the Hanumáns, the scene being afterwards changed to Palk Straits, though what is now known as Adam's Bridge was a continuous isthmus, not broken up into its present form until 1480.

Indeed, according to Wilford, Hindu legends noticed the remarkable chain of islands from Cape Negrais to Achin, and ascribe it to Ráma who attempted here first to bridge the sea, an enterprise afterwards transferred to Palk Straits and Adam's Bridge.

The existence of the Andamanese, who were credited with dogs' faces and tails (which latter feature was probably derived from the bushy-tailed waistbelts they wear), will then fully account for the Hanumáns.

Narcondam may also thus be a similar Malay corruption of some Sanskrit word having a general or descriptive meaning, though not necessarily the "*Narak*" hitherto insisted on.

The Orang Laut, or Malay "Sea Gipsies" of the English writers, who have always borne a sufficiently bad reputation as pirates and general evil-doers, were probably the section of the Malay people who had most to do with the Andamans.