

ON SOME ORIENTAL GEOGRAPHERS.

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READ 22ND APRIL, 1869.

It is difficult for the ordinary traveller of our times, observing the sedentary habits, the listlessness, the fatalism of modern Orientals, to credit what activity of mind and body but a few centuries ago distinguished the Arab, the Persian, the Malay, and even the Chinese nations. The ardour of a new faith, the promptings of an ambition suddenly aroused, the very delight and wonder of their own success, then stirred the Musulmans of every clime to tempt dangers hitherto viewed with terror,—urged them to trust their own valour single-handed amongst heathen foes, or to defy the elements themselves. This fervid spirit, as we know, did not permanently endure. Five hundred years after the prophet's death it already was passing off, and although the great Malay conquerors of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries had somewhat of the old fire in their souls, that extensive commerce of the Arabs and Persians, which it had been one among the greatest aims of their first rulers to encourage, was decaying rapidly. I purpose in this paper to say something of those early travellers whose stories have come down to our own times, and I would preface what I have to tell with a very short summary of the knowledge possessed by the ancient world upon this subject of oriental geography.

Herodotus, to whom one turns, of course, for information on such matters, has but little to tell us of the Eastern world, excepting of Persia and Media. The conquests of Alexander first gave to Europe a slight idea of the countries lying immediately on this side the Indus, and laid the foundation for that commerce which has since been carried on without

interruption. Major Rennell opines that the Ptolomies had a direct communication with all parts of India by sea, from their port of Berenice, but the gross products of that country were probably conveyed through Persia by land and water carriage. It was not, apparently, until A.D. 50 that even the action of the monsoons was practically understood. About that time a certain Hippalus, captain of a vessel in the Red Sea trade, stood out from the straits of Bab-el-Mandeb, and trusted himself to that wind, henceforth known throughout the ancient world by his name. The S.W. monsoon carried him to Musiris, on the coast of Malabar, and from that date the ocean traffic with India may be said to have commenced. A century afterwards, the author of *The Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* was able to correct the gross mistake of Ptolemy, who had described the coast line of Hindostan as running nearly east and west, with the delta of the Ganges somewhere in the latitude of Siam. Ptolemy, however, had extended the knowledge of his contemporaries as far east as the Malayan peninsula, and the western coast of Cochin China. With the fourth century this trade by the Red Sea began to suffer from the competition of Persia, and gradually dwindled away, under the later Emperors of the East, until the Arab conquest of Egypt. In the reign of Justinian we have evidence that the trade by sea still continued, in the travels of "Cosmas the Egyptian," who wrote an important work called *Typographia Christiana*. After the subjugation of Egypt and Persia by the Moslem, the entire Eastern trade fell into Arab hands, and for a time, as I have said, it was prosecuted with a vigour and intrepidity hitherto unknown. Expressly with a view to encourage this traffic, Khalif Omar founded the city of Busrah, between the Persian gulf and the point of junction of the two great rivers Tigris and Euphrates. From that date we have numerous accounts of merchants and travellers voyaging to and fro

over the Indian seas. Masudi, in his great work called the *Moroudj-al-dzeheb*, takes the first place among these geographers, but there were others much earlier in date. Some years since, M. Stanislas Julien published a translation of a Buddhist work, which recounts the wanderings of Hiouen-thsang, who set out in the year 629 A.D. to examine the condition of those disciples of his creed resident in India and the Eastern islands. For seventeen years he wandered up and down, on his pious pilgrimage. Starting from Liang-tcheou, in the north-west of China, this enthusiastic disciple of Buddha made his way overland to Peshawur, a journey which we are now just attempting to repeat ; thence to Kashmere ; thence, turning southward, to Benares ; through north-east Bengal, to the delta of the Ganges ; southward still, along the coast, to Madras. Then back, northwards and westerly, to Malwa, through Sindh, Moulton, and at length home. This voyage, which tells us somewhat of countries that no civilized man has since visited, is eminently Chinese in character : minute to a singular degree, and apparently precise. Mr. Fergusson, in his most valuable work upon *Tree and Serpent Worship*, has drawn very freely from this interesting diary.

Another voyage, as early in date as the beginning of the ninth century, is that of Soliman, which has been several times translated into French and English. M. Renaud's edition, published in 1845, consists of two parts, first, the writing of Soliman himself, and, second, the commentary upon it, almost contemporaneous, published by Abú Said Hassan. To these two authors we are indebted for a vast amount of information relating to the ancient divisions of India and the far East. Soliman set sail from the Persian gulf for Quilon, which he reached after one month's voyage. Thence he proceeded to the islands of Lendjebalous, which M. Alfred Maury concludes to be the Nicobar isles. Thence, touching at various places, he passed to Sumatra and Java,

and, proceeding further, reached (probably) Siam, and Cochin China ;—throughout the record of his voyage we find evidence of a most extensive commerce between the Persian gulf and the remotest kingdoms of the East.

In the year 1324, Ibn Batuta, the most active and diligent of Arab or Moorish travellers, set out from Tangier, with a primary object of making his Haj, or pilgrimage, to Mecca, and a secondary desire to see the world. The book in which he has recorded his adventures, is full of interest, not altogether void of the droll extravagance of which I shall give some examples in speaking of Abd-er-Razzak, the Persian voyager, but very much more useful to later students than is that curious work. Wandering from Tangier to Egypt, from thence to Arabia, and onwards to Hindostan, Ibn Batuta at length found himself at Delhi, high in favour of the tyrant Sultan Mohammed, whose cruelty was destined to break up the monarchy bequeathed him by his father. From this position the traveller escaped by accepting a post of honour in an embassy despatched by the sultan to the emperor of China, whither he attempted to proceed by ship from Calicut, A.D. 1342. But before the coast was gained his party was attacked by rebels, every member of it slain except himself, and he compelled to return alone to the emperor. The second attempt had better success. After a long and interesting journey, well described, he reached Calicut, where the Chinese vessels were awaiting his arrival. But, while in course of embarking, a cyclone swept the harbour, and once more Ibn Batuta found himself bereft of his colleagues, who were drowned, his property, which was sunk, and all his wives, who were carried off to China, and there confiscated by the emperor's order. The Moorish traveller found himself once more in utter poverty, but resigned himself to fate. Not the least curious feature in the lives of these voyagers is their calmness under any sufferings that do not actually

cause bodily pain, and the apparent inconsistency of their conduct. One would have expected Ibn Batuta to return once more among his friends, and borrow or beg a fresh outfit. Not so does he act. Setting sail from Hanavar, he quietly resumes his vagrant life of former days, and, in process of time, turns up successively at the Maldive Islands, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, and China, of all of which he treats in his book, whereof a translation was made by Professor Lee of Cambridge, for the Oriental Translation Committee, 1829.

Ebn Haukal is the most famous, perhaps, of Arab geographers, probably because he has given more trouble to the commentators than any other of them. But his *Itinerary*, called the *Masalek Memalek*, is very uninteresting. It lacks the life and spirit of these other countrymen of his. Amusing it cannot be called, except to that gifted mind which could discern entertainment in the pages of a railway guide; instructive in some degree it may have been to the author's contemporaries, who recognised the obsolete or distorted names which now drive geographers to despair. It gives, as a rule, neither winds nor tides, and never latitude or longitude. Its barren lists of distances are neither accurate in themselves, nor deducible to any uniform standard. Once in a while Ebn Haukal throws off some such hint of trade as "here they export slaves of white complexion," or "here, (at Sirin,) they find a certain thing called *mouhi*, resembling fine beaver, or raw silk; it rubs itself against the stones on the sea shore, and its plumage or down comes off, which the people gather and weave into garments, which cost above a thousand *dinars*." Ebn Haukal was only acquainted with the coast towns of Hindostan, and his idea of the interior was of a desert, which the natives alone could enter, so full of danger was it. In this desert lay the city of Canooj, and past this stretched the Cheen Macheen, "beyond which no man passes."

As an example of the tone or manner of an Oriental traveller, I cannot find a more characteristic author than Abd-er-Razzak, the son of Ishak, a Persian-Arab of the fifteenth century. I will very briefly trace his route, and then comment upon his manner of viewing the events and wonders he beheld. Abd-er-Razzak, was born at Herat, in A.D. 1413, and at twenty-four years of age entered the service of Shah Rukh. Four years afterwards he was sent on an embassy to India, and of this voyage he has left a detailed account. After his return he was employed in various diplomatic services by the Shah and the Sultan Abu Said. He died at the age of sixty-nine, sheikh of the monastery of Mirza Shah Rukh, at Herat.

Abd-er-Razzak left his native town, January 13th, 1441, the first day of Ramazan, by the Kohistan route. Eighteen days after, he reached Kirman, where the devout Moslem paused for the feast. On the fifth day of Schewah, February 16th, he quitted Kirman, and, a fortnight afterwards, arrived at Ormuz, then a commercial centre of the greatest importance—"There," says the traveller, "merchants of seven climates, Egypt, Syria, Roum, Azez-bijan, Irak-Arabi, Irak-adjemi,—the provinces of Fars, Khorassan, Ma-wara-Amahar, Turkistan, the kingdom of Kipehak in Tartary, of the Kalmucks, of China and Cochin China, and the city of Pekin, all make their way. They bring hither those rare and precious articles which the sun, the moon, and the rains have combined to bring to perfection, and which are capable of being transported by sea. Travellers from all quarters resort hither, and for all merchandise, except gold and silver, a tenth of the value is paid by way of duty."

From Ormuz, which our traveller is never tired of praising, he set sail for India, but was compelled by stress of weather to put in at Muscat, where all the party lay several months in terrible anguish of mind and body. Here died the elder

brother of Abd-er-Razzak. At length, in May, 1442, he was carried aboard a vessel bound for Calicut, and, after a voyage of eighteen days, reached that city.

For some reason or other the ambassador does not appear to have been well received by the Sameri, or king of Calicut, although that monarch lay under great obligations to the Shah of Persia. But sovereign and people are spoken of with contempt by Abd-er-Razzak; the latter are more like devils than men, too dreadful to dream about, and the monarch is described as a worthy ruler of such black and naked fiends. He admits a few good qualities they possess, such as honesty and courage, but evidently dislikes the country. His position here was indeed embarrassing, slighted by the sovereign, and bitterly disliking every native of the country. After some weeks' discomfort, a message arrived from the King of Vijanagar* begging the Persian embassy to visit his court. With permission of the Sameri, Abd-er-Razzak accepted the invitation. Departing by sea from Calicut, he landed at the port of Mangalor, whence, after a stay of two or three days, he proceeded inland to the capital, remarking on the way two enormous temples, one of cast bronze, and the other built of some blue stone. Our traveller is excessively enthusiastic about the women of Belloor and Vijanagar. He compares them to several products of the earth and sky, roses, pomegranates, moons, and houris. This subject he again insists upon in describing the festival of Mahanadi, at which he was present in a place of honour. For Abd-er-Razzak fared better at the court of Vijanagar than at Calicut. The king gave him an audience, and proved most courteous, supplying him daily with rice, betel nut, gold, and camphor in abundance. But after some months the royal favour declined. Some merchants of Ormuz, actu-

* The name of this city constantly occurs in Arab writings on India. The ruinous evidences of its past glory still stand on the banks of the Turgabudra, opposite Anagundi.

ated apparently by fears for their trade interests, circulated a report that Abd-er-Razzak had no credentials from the Shah, nor was aught in fact except an adventurer. On this the king's tone changed, and the ambassador shortly afterwards quitted Vijanagar, with spirits much harassed by his successive misfortunes.

He set out on the return journey on 12th Kaban (Nov. 5), 1443, and on 8th Zu'lkadah (January 28th), 1444, sailed from Mangalore; after a terribly bad voyage reached Muscat in March, and, on a day very white in Abd-er-Razzak's calendar, landed again at Ormuz, April 22nd, 1444. According to the scheme proposed, I shall say a few words of the work in which this voyage is narrated.

The author commences with a short explanation of his hopes in publishing the book—viz., that learned men will ponder its information, and approve it. He then magniloquently refers to the evidences of a deity's existence in the order of the stars, the vastness of the ocean, and many other aspects of nature. After a while we come to the essential fragment of fact contained in this mountain of husk, namely, that he, Abd-er-Razzak, "in pursuance of the orders of Providence, &c., &c.," was commanded by his Majesty to undertake a voyage to India. The passages that follow, telling of his journey to Ormuz, and the description of that wealthy port, are very interesting. But the sea again tempts our excitable traveller into rhapsodies terribly incoherent. "As soon as I caught sight of the vessel," he says, "all the terrors of the sea presented themselves before me. I fell into so deep a swoon, that for three days respiration alone indicated that life remained within me. When I came a little to myself, the merchants, my intimate friends, cried with one voice that the time for navigation was passed. * * All with one accord, having sacrificed the sum which they had paid for freight in the ships, abandoned their project,"

and precipitately leapt ashore at Muscat. At this moment, when his "heart was crushed like glass, and the mirror of his "understanding had become covered with rust, in consequence "of this hurricane of painful circumstances," our brave traveller heard by accident a merchant speak of Herat, at the mention of which august city he "went very nearly distracted." Hastily requesting the merchant to pause a moment, he plunged into poetry, and threw off the following verses:—

"When in the midst of strangers, at the hour of evening prayer,
"I sat me down to weep,

"I recall my adventures, the recital of which is accompanied by
"unusual sighs.

"At the remembrance of my mistress and my country, I weep so
"bitterly

"That I should deprive the whole world of the trade and habit of
"travelling.

"I am a native of the country of the Arabs, and not of a strange
region."

Our voyager is excessively poetical. Every circumstance of his travels suggests a copy of verses. Speaking of the climate of Muscat he thus delivers himself:—

"Soon as the sun shone forth from the height of heaven,

"The heart of stone grew hot beneath its orb;

"The horizon was so much scorched up by its rays

"That the heart of stone became soft as wax—

"The bodies of the fishes at the bottom of the fish-ponds

"Burned like the silk which is exposed to the fire.

"Both the water and the air gave out so burning a heat,

"That the fish went away to seek refuge in the fire.

"In the plains the chase became a matter of perfect ease,

"For the desert was filled with wasted gazelles."

Then he falls ill, and the opportunity is not neglected—

"I am reduced to such a state of weakness, oh my friend! that the
"zephyr carries me each instant from one climate to another, like the
"swell of the wave.

"I continue no longer in my gay position, for the action of fate has
"made me rise and fall, like the cord of a hydraulic machine."

Exquisitely droll is the poor courtier's description of his maladies. He exhausts the wealth of Oriental metaphor to express his sufferings, and when this resource fails, continues his moaning in such verses as I have quoted. At length,

“regarding the past as having never occurred,” he is carried by a “few strong men” on board a ship bound for Hindostan, and, without loss of time, turns the occasion to account, and indulges in a mountainous feast of quotation, hyperbole, and verse.

At first sight of the natives of Calicut, prose fails him again: he bursts into awful song. They are, he declares,

“Extraordinary beings, neither men nor devils;

“At sight of whom the mind takes alarm!

“If I were to see such in my dreams

“My heart would be in a tremble for many years!

“I have had love passages with a beauty whose face was like the moon; but I could never fall in love with a negress.”

The last strophe is not to be surpassed.

His description of Calicut and its people; of his voyage to Vijanagar; the temple at Mangalore, and other monuments existing in his day, are all exceedingly valuable. But his poetic vein is irrepressible. Telling us of the great temple at Beloor, he remarks that—

“Since its head shot up towards the skies, that vault, previously without stones in it, now seems formed of them.

“Since that its stones have rubbed themselves against the sun, the gold of that orb has taken a purer alloy.”

Then we get to the regions of sober sense again on reaching Vidjanagar, where the traveller beheld certain feasts, and noted down some events, for which we are grateful to him. In fact he behaves like a sane though excitable person during his stay at Vidjanagar. But he recovers his wilder self on the return journey. The storm that overwhelms his vessel in the Persian gulf is described with droll vehemence, but even at its height our intrepid author does not neglect the muses. He tells us that “the planks of which the ship was composed, “and which by their conformation seemed to form a continuous line, were on the point of becoming divided, like the letters of the alphabet. The sailor who, with respect to his “swimming, might be compared to a fish, was anxious to

“ throw himself into the water *like an anchor*. The captain, though familiarised with the navigation of all the seas, shed bitter tears, and had forgotten all his science. * * * For myself, in this situation, with tears in my eyes I gave myself up for lost. Through the effect of the stupor, and of the profound sadness to which I began a prey, I remained, like the sea, with my lips dry and my eyes moist.” Then he betakes himself to poetry—

“ My mind, hitherto so strong, was like the ice that is suddenly exposed to the heat of the mouth of Tamong; even now my heart is troubled and agitated, as is the fish taken out of fresh water.

“ May the torrent of destruction overturn the edifice of fate, which thus brings in successive waves the waters of misfortune upon my head.”

And again, in prose not less impressive:—“ The pure water of my life was troubled by the agitation of the sea; and the brilliant mirror of my ideas, *in consequence* of the dampness of the water, and the putrefaction of the air, was covered with rust. Each moment that the pupils of my eyes contemplated that muddy water, it resembled, through the effect of my extreme alarm, a flaming sword. At sight of the agitated sea, overset by the tempestuous winds, I drew from my breast an icy sigh; it was a sharp weapon, which tore my very soul.”

One cannot but rejoice that the traveller who has left such exquisite fooling, for the amusement of later generations, reached home in safety, and died in his bed at a ripe age. If any member of the Historic Society should wish to make closer acquaintance with this droll but interesting work, I should recommend him to procure Mr. R. H. Major's *India in the Fifteenth Century*, published for the Hakluyt Society, wherein will be found the very sympathetic and admirable translation of Abd-er-Razzak's itinerary which I have used for quotation, and much more information on the subject of Oriental voyages to India from which I have quoted.

It is singular that the Malay language and literature have

attracted so little attention from the zealous orientalists of our day. Sanscrit, Persian, Chinese, and Hindustani have their unfailing supply of enthusiastic students, but with the recent death of Mr. Crawford, the Malay has lost its sole champion of eminence. Yet is this a language vastly important. What is the *Lingua Franca* on the Mediterranean coasts, that is the Malay throughout the further East. It forms an universal medium for communications relating to seafaring matters. It is the natural speech of some millions of people, and the root-tongue to a countless population; and in islands or countries where the interior dialect has changed almost beyond recognition from the parent stock, it is still an intelligible language on the seaboard. If one take a map, and roughly estimate the area over which Malayan is the sole tongue,—pure Malayan that is,—one may indeed deny the importance of its study; but on extending our view over that larger space where, though not universal, it forms the *current* language, that into which the aboriginal tongue, or dialect, is naturally interpreted,—one cannot but feel surprise that more regard has not been paid to it. The first category is short enough—Malacca, Sumatra, and Celebes, are the only countries of size and importance of which it can be said that Malay is the sole language in use; and even this assertion must be received with a great deal of qualification. But in the second category must be reckoned the whole Indian Archipelago, from Achen Head to the Gulf of Carpentaria. Nor is this all. The philologist, examining the languages of the Philippines, of New Zealand, Australia, all the islands, I believe, between the Sandwich Isles and the Marquesas, will find that their root lies bedded in the Malay. The mere extent of land and water where their tongue still bears evidence to the energy and courage of these rovers, is probably little less than one-sixth of the world's area, though the population there dwelling is of course quite out of proportion

to the space it occupies. And we do not yet find any token of its dying out in favour of another speech. The Chinese are indeed pressing hard upon those less earnest races inhabiting the south-east of Asia; indeed one can already foresee a time when the Celestials will regain that importance throughout the Malayan countries, which, in their latest strongholds, they only lost a century ago. But this language does not seem to threaten the native tongue, nor, looking at its singular difficulties of grammar and pronunciation, can we believe it ever likely to supersede, in European favour, the simple and melodious Malay. We know that even to this day, there are villages about the foot of Kina Balu, in Borneo, where Chinese is commonly spoken side by side with the native dialect, but those who use the foreign speech are themselves descendants of the old Chinese settlers, driven out for the most part, or murdered, by the present sultan's grandfather. There is no evidence that the Chinese has anywhere triumphed over the Malay, or even the Javanese, but one day's stroll through Singapore or Pulo Penang, will shew the traveller what rapid strides the latter easy tongue is making even among foreign immigrants.

Unquestionably the Malay is a language most important, as the current medium along the seaboard from Aden to Japan; in which latter country, I believe, very many of its words have been naturalised; if indeed the Japanese is not, as some have fancied, to be reckoned among those countless tongues which spring from the Malayan stock. I once escaped from a disagreeable position at Kandy, by addressing a few words of Malay to the hostile mob, and I have heard a negro at Panama interlarding Malay words in his discourse—apparently with the understanding of his hearers.

But the number of persons who have made a real study of this spreading tongue is very few. I never heard of any scholar in this generation, except the late Mr. Crawford, who

could write or even read it with fluency. Sir James Brooke, the most perfect master of its elegant inflections, equally with its most pedantic complications, could not; or else he did not care to take the trouble even in very simple communications. He always had his letters read to him by a native secretary. But the explanation offered sounds reasonable enough. "Why undertake a most laborious study which can never be turned to profit?" people say. "Why learn to read a language which has no literature?" This reproach is constantly cast at the Malay, and it is not to be denied that a certain degree of truth almost justifies it. Undoubtedly, if all known manuscripts in this language were brought together, and the little pile compared with such a mountain of parchment as Arab, Hindu, Persian, or Chinese could easily erect, our Malay library would appear very small in quantity, and rather uncouth in style or character. This is not a literary people. Its signs of writing are all borrowed; its very words, expressive of abstract ideas, are for the most part stolen, from Arabic, Persian, or Hindu. English, in later years, has contributed several expressions to the Malay vocabulary. But there are important works in this language, though few in number, and almost exclusively confined to one subject—sea travel. This is highly characteristic of the race. The *Annals*, some stories from the *Arabian Nights*, some heroic poems, a very few treatises upon minor points of religion, and certain works containing laws of the various kingdoms, are the sole exceptions that I know of. I am speaking of pure Malay; in the Javanese dialect there is, I believe, a considerable number of original works, and the same may be perhaps the case in some other countries.

But the genius of the race, well shown in the title or name they arrogate,—“orang laüt,” men of the sea,*—is essentially

* This expression was once applied almost exclusively to the piratical peoples. Of later years, all Malays have laid claim to it.

maritime and adventurous. Hence the commonest works that have been written in their language,—or, at least, that have survived the great confusion which for the last two hundred years has involved this people in its various seats,—treat of voyages and of wonders beyond sea, of currents and miracles, of products and saints, of trade and supernatural marvels. There is not less of the latter element here than in the Arabic and Persian geographies, but on the other hand, there is more of the information useful to practical men. The Malay is unmistakeably a sailor, and, when the fortune of his race was at its apogee, when the thirteen kingdoms flourished in a certain barbarous order and civilisation, he was unmistakeably a great merchant. These facts are constantly impressed upon one in hearing the story of this “Nicodah” or that, preserved to our day. When one takes up a *Mesalek Memalek*, or the periplus of some renowned Arab or Persian, Ebn Haukal, Edrisi, or Moustouffi, one is frequently puzzled to understand in what capacity the geographer made his travels, but there is not such probability of error as regards the very few Malay travellers whose works have come down to us. The former class consisted of persons, very enthusiastic no doubt, and excessively hard-working, but essentially philosophic,—to that degree that a fact is of the same value to them whether useful or not;—the other, of sharp, business-like men, credulous as children,—much more so than the others,—about matters outside their own line, such as the doings of Solomon in bygone days, and the habits of supernatural beings at the present time, but full of practical wisdom as to the things of everyday life. There is in them also a vein of humour, or what I cannot but fancy to have been meant as such, wholly absent from their more pretentious models. Ebn Haukal had heard of the Romans, and perhaps, though his orthodoxy would not allow him to confess the truth, knew a good deal about them,

and about the Greeks also ; Nicodah Mummin was profoundly ignorant of these matters, but, *en revanche*, he was infinitely better "up" in the doings of jins and sorcerers. Ebn Haukal cared nothing about winds and currents, apparently conceiving that only two seas existed on the earth's surface, the Mediterranean and the Persian, whilst Soliman enumerates seven between the mouth of the Tigris and China ; Nicodah Mummin apparently considered that his main duty lay in setting down rules for sailing in given waters, rules for trading in given localities, and general hints about things useful to be known by the sailor and the merchant.

The misfortune is that these MSS. are so very few, and so ill written. The Malays never had a national alphabet, and, these many centuries past, they have been corrupting their spoken language, taking words from every nation with which they have come in contact. The *lontars* of the several states, codes of law and custom, which have great authority in many parts ;—the celebrated "Malay Annals," translated by Dr. Leyden ;—and various editions of the voyages of Sawira Gading, the heaven-descended hero of this nation—are almost all the works of any antiquity which have been made known to Europe. Many more exist, of which the names will be found in Dr. Leyden's list, Marsden's, and other Malay scholars', but few of them have been translated. Indeed, if one credit the opinion of the late Rajah Brooke, than whom no better authority could possibly be found, there are more *titles* current and accepted than there are written works, but I myself have seen manuscripts in Malay hands, and have heard passages from them read for the amusement and instruction of my crew, which, I feel quite sure, would be found of vast interest and importance to English geographers. One in especial I recollect, which treated, either as a main subject or episodically, of the invasion of Java by Malays, A.D. 1400, and the destruction of the great city Mudjophite—if I rightly

remember the name. But, as has been said, there are too few persons interested in the Malay language or literature, and a pressing danger exists that we may lose some or all of these curious records.

And this consideration brings me to the last point on which I would touch. Of all towns of the world Liverpool has the most widely extended commerce. Your ships sail to every quarter, bearing in many cases citizens of intelligence resident among you, who go out on their own business, not pressed for time, nor too much engaged with the details of that transaction which has necessitated their presence. Such gentlemen I have met, pleasantly wandering up and down the Eastern countries, surveying their natural objects of interest, and observing with no unintelligent eye the various records of antiquity which from time to time they encounter. Unfortunately these gentlemen, though amply endowed with means to further geographical or historical research, do not generally possess much knowledge of the special objects in demand by our learned societies, more particularly in regard to geographical matters. If a manuscript be offered them for sale, as frequently happens, they look rather at its quality as a work of art than at the particular interest or value of its contents; for they have no means of distinguishing between a copy of some well-known and well-edited manuscript and some inestimable treasure that has not hitherto been brought before the eyes of our *savans*. Resident in Liverpool, they have not the opportunity to keep themselves acquainted with the progress of geographical research, and doubtless let slip many chances of furthering that science from mere ignorance that their evidence would be of value in regard to this or the other point. But why should not Liverpool have its own Geographical Society? If we quit the special ground which I have been treading to-night, there will be seen yet stronger proof that such a society is particularly needed in your town, and would

probably be of very singular service to the general cause. You have among you retired seamen, merchants, and others, whose wanderings in the pursuit of their business must have made them acquainted with most valuable facts in geography and ethnology. Give these gentlemen the opportunity of meeting together, of discovering gradually, by conversation and debate among themselves, by hearing the crude opinions of other people, by reading the discussions of our London society, what it is that our learned men know, what they seek to discover, and where they hold mistaken views—I have no doubt that within a short time the Geographical Society of Liverpool would take very high ground indeed, especially for the practical nature of its discussions. The parent body in London, headed by our venerable President, would greet with most cordial welcome its young sister. In Liverpool, with a few of your leading merchants on the list of members, geographical science would make rapid strides. What country in the world is unvisited by their ships? If the captains, clerks, doctors, supercargoes, and other officers of intelligence, had orders to gather information, from all sources open to them, on the phenomena of nature, the characteristics of the land, the peculiarities of the race, in every clime to which they travelled, we might with reason expect the most valuable result from their enquiries. At present such men are like children wandering in a realm that teems with precious stones. They know not what to search for; they toss aside some gem of priceless merit to secure a tawdry pebble, or preserve pebble and gem alike with equal care, knowing neither the value of the one nor the worthlessness of the other. I feel confident that the suggestion only was needed to induce the formation of such a society, which would bring not only increased honour to your town, but besides, a lasting benefit to the cause of science.