

They had no cultivation and lived on coco-nuts. The islands are also believed to be the *Lanja bálús* or *Lankha bálús* of the old Arab navigators: "These Islands support a numerous population. Both men and women go naked, only the women wear a girdle of the leaves of trees. When a ship passes near, the men come out in boats of various sizes and barter ambergris and coco-nuts for iron," a description which has applied accurately for many centuries. [Ibn Khordádhbeh says (*De Goeje's transl.*, p. 45) that the inhabitants of Nicobar (Alankabálous), an island situated at ten or fifteen days from Serendib, are naked; they live on bananas, fresh fish, and coco-nuts; the precious metal is iron in their country; they frequent foreign merchants.—H. C.] Rashiduddin writes of them nearly in the same terms under the name of *Lákváram*, but read *NÁKAVÁRAM*) opposite LAMURI. Odoric also has a chapter on the island of *Nicoveran*, but it is one full of fable. (*H. Tsang*, III. 114 and 517; *Relations*, p. 8; *Elliot*, I. p. 71; *Cathay*, p. 97.)

[Mr. G. Phillips writes (*J.R.A.S.*, July 1895, p. 529) that the name Tsui-lan given to the Nicobars by the Chinese is, he has but little doubt, "a corruption of Nocueran, the name given by Marco Polo to the group. The characters Tsui-lan are pronounced Ch'ui-lan in Amoy, out of which it is easy to make Cueran. The Chinese omitted the initial syllable and called them the Cueran Islands, while Marco Polo called them the Nocueran Islands."—H. C.]

[The Nicobar Islands "are generally known by the Chinese under the name of *Rákchas* or Demons who devour men, from the belief that their inhabitants were anthropophagi. In A.D. 607, the Emperor of China, Yang-ti, had sent an envoy to Siam, who also reached the country of the *Rákchas*. According to *Tu-yen's Tung-tien*, the Nicobars lie east [west] of Poli. Its inhabitants are very ugly, having red hair, black bodies, teeth like beasts, and claws like hawks. Sometimes they traded with *Lin-yih* (Champa), but then at night; in day-time they covered their faces." (*G. Schlegel, Geog. Notes*, I. pp. 1-2.—H. C.)

Mr. Phillips, from his anonymous Chinese author, gives a quaint legend as to the nakedness of these islanders. Sakya Muni, having arrived from Ceylon, stopped at the islands to bathe. Whilst he was in the water the natives stole his clothes, upon which the Buddha cursed them; and they have never since been able to wear any clothing without suffering for it.

[Professor Schlegel gives the same legend (*Geog. Notes*, I. p. 8) with reference to the *Andaman* Islands from the *Sing-ch'a Shêng-lan*, published in 1436 by Fei-sin; Mr. Phillips seems to have made a confusion between the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. (*Doolittle's Vocab.* II. p. 556; cf. *Schlegel, l.c.* p. 11.)—H. C.]

The chief part of the population is believed to be of race akin to the Malay, but they seem to be of more than one race, and there is great variety in dialect. There have long been reports of a black tribe with woolly hair in the unknown interior of the Great Nicobar, and my friend Colonel H. Man, when Superintendent of our Andaman Settlements, received spontaneous corroboration of this from natives of the former island, who were on a visit to Port Blair. Since this has been in type I have seen in the *F. of India* (28th July, 1874) notice of a valuable work by F. A. de Roepstorff on the dialects and manners of the Nicobarians. This notice speaks of an aboriginal race called *Shob'aengs*, "purely Mongolian," but does not mention negroes. The natives do not now go quite naked; the men wear a narrow cloth; and the women a grass girdle. They are very skilful in management of their canoes. Some years since there were frightful disclosures regarding the massacre of the crews of vessels touching at these islands, and this has led eventually to their occupation by the Indian Government. Trinkat and Nancouri are the islands which were guilty. A woman of Trinkat who could speak Malay was examined by Colonel Man, and she acknowledged having seen nineteen vessels scuttled, after their cargoes had been plundered and their crews massacred. "The natives who were captured at Trinkat," says Colonel Man in another letter, "were a most savage-looking set, with remarkably long arms, and very projecting eye-teeth."

The islands have always been famous for the quality and abundance of their