

THE ISLAND OF SUMATRA.

By the arrival of the Kingeton, from Java, intelligence of much importance, as affecting British interests in the India Seas, has been received. The Governor of Fort Marlborough has displayed his characteristic energy and activity since his arrival in Sumatra, and has anxiously endeavoured to extend the British influence over the whole of that valuable and extensive island. Sumatra has hitherto been very little known. The European establishments are entirely on the coast—Europeans had never penetrated into the interior. All attempts to do so, indeed, were reckoned desperate; no European would embark in them. The population of the interior were considered as savages, and the mountains impassable, and yet the natives would still bring down their gold and cassia, and camphor, &c. for which Sumatra had from the earliest ages been famous. The Governor felt there was but one alternative, and that was to open the road by going himself. His enterprise was crowned with success. He penetrated into the interior in three different directions; to the southward inland of Manua, to the important provinces occupied by a people called the Passummahs; to the northward to Menangcabon, the far-famed capital of the Malay empire; and inland of Bencoolen, across the island to Palembang.

The result has been the discovery of a mine of wealth—a country highly cultivated, and abounding in precious metals. The Passummahs are an athletic fine race of men, as superior to the people on the coast as it is possible to conceive; they are agricultural and numerous. At Menangcabon he was gratified with a population and country fully equal to any part of Java. Within the space of 20 miles the population does not fall short of a million. In short, it is the Governor's opinion, that, with a little encouragement, far greater resources are to be

found in Sumatra than the British could have derived from Java; but much remains to be done. A central Government must be established, the whole island must be brought under control, and the avenue of commerce, now closed up, reopened. Our readers are aware, that Menangcabon was the place whence all the gold that gave Melano the name of the Golden Chersonesus was carried.

These discoveries have not, however, been made without great personal risk and fatigue. The country could only be explored on foot—mountains 6,000 feet high were to be crossed, and rocks, precipices, and forests, to be traversed. For many nights the party had no shelter, but the leaves they could collect after their day's journey, and their journies were seldom less than from 20 to 30 miles a day over the very worst roads that ever was passed. In this expedition the Governor was accompanied by Lady Raffles. She was occasionally carried on a man's back, but generally walked, as the roads were too bad to admit of her being carried in a chair. Doctor Arnold, physician and naturalist, fell a sacrifice to the fatigue, and died of a violent fever. Dr Horsfield, who accompanied the Governor to Menangeabon, was, on the 12th of August, the date of our last intelligence from Fort Marlborough, dangerously ill, with a dysentery, but we hope his life will be spared, to carry home the important collections he has made, both in Java and Sumatra.

As this was the first appearance of the European authority in the interior, Lady Raffles was the most peaceable standard the party could hoist. It was impossible for the natives to consider their object warlike, when the Governor proceeded unarmed, and confided his wife to their hospitality.

They found the country beautiful and magnificent. Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles has thrown the trade open, and reformed all the establishments. Treaties have been entered into with the Princes of Menangeabon.