

POSSESSION OF BORNEO.—We believe on good authority, that the British Government has determined to establish a military and naval station on the island of Borneo. This, of course, is a prelude to the sovereignty being claimed; and, indeed, the only wonder is that Britain should have so long been indifferent to a possession which of all others connected with its trade to the East is the most important. The latest Singapore journals state that Her Majesty's steamer *Driver* had departed for Borneo, having on board as passengers Captain Bethune and Mr. Henry Wise, charged by the English Government with a special mission, the object of which was unknown. The steamer was to touch successively at three points of the coast; first at Sarawak; then at Borneo Proper, where the commander had orders to confer with the Sultan of the country; lastly at Pulo Subuwan, where there is an intention to establish a depot of coal for the steam-boats which work between Ceylon and China; and we find in a late number of the *Mauricien* some further remarks, which we consider of sufficient interest to translate and publish:—"The island of Borneo cannot much longer resist the power of civilization. The rapid development of the commerce of the straits since the events of China, and, still more, the insecurity of the navigation in sight of the coasts of Borneo, where, from time immemorial, the population has exercised no other employment than piracy, have directed the attention of the English and Dutch Governments towards this island, which, from its vast extent, may almost be called a continent. Its riches, its resources, and the fertility of its soil were already vaguely known, and are becoming daily more so by the expeditions in pursuit of the pirates, with whom for the last three years a severe struggle has been maintained, though as yet with very uncertain advantage. However, the coasts and rivers, of which there was but an imperfect knowledge, are thus explored and developed; and thence to the occupation and colonization of part of the island of Borneo the distance is not far. The most insignificant occurrence may furnish the pretext and the opportunity. Great Britain will doubtless be the first to profit by it, notwithstanding the pretensions of Holland to the sovereignty of a part of Borneo. She has enforced respect to her flag, carrying fire and sword into the retreats of the Malay pirates, or taking vengeance for the murder of the Hon. Erskine Murray, committed by the people of the Sultan of Poti. Two of our ships, the frigate *Samarang* and the steam-vessel *Phlegethon*, are cruising continually on the coasts of Borneo, less for hydrographic purposes than to open a relation with the Rajahs, who, divided among themselves, are ready to sell themselves to the strongest. The first steps towards the establishment of a foreign colony are generally founded on the divisions of the natives. From the last Singapore journals we see that the commanders of the *Samarang* and *Phlegethon* are already making the first advances, having succeeded in communicating with the Rajah of Borneo; they have supported him in opposition to the Sultan, his sovereign, who, obliged to yield to intimidation, has been under the necessity of dismissing one of his Ministers, who, contrary to the intervention of the foreigners, would not hear speak of concession. Thence, after being provisioned, the two vessels in company proceeded successively towards the Bay of Victoria and that of Ambooa, where, while occupied in their hydrographical labours, they are inquiring into the destiny of the numerous captives who have fallen into the hands of the Malays, who keep them in the interior. Among the number is said to be an English lady, who is supposed to be kept prisoner in the country around the river Tampasook; but the information acquired by Sir Edward Boucher and Captain Scott from one of the chiefs of this country is of too vague a nature to deserve much faith. The village commanded by this chief was also reputed one of the worst haunts of piracy, and the 200 pieces of cannon which garnished the ramparts were not calculated to inspire a very flattering opinion of the conscientiousness of its inhabitants; the innocent are not used to be so cautious. The expedition of the *Samarang* and *Phlegethon* terminated at Sarawak, where they left Mr. Brook, who possesses there an establishment important as the germ of the future colony. They then departed for Singapore.—*South Australian Register.*