

THE
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DESCRIPTION OF FORT MARLBOROUGH.

THE situation of Bencoolen, or Fort Marlborough, upon the western coast of Sumatra, is certainly one of the most picturesque which can be well imagined; and in many respects, as a magnificent *coup-d'œil*, far exceeds any view I have yet seen either in the eastern islands, which abound in beautiful scenery, or the upper provinces of Hindoostan. A grand amphitheatre of lofty hills, piercing the lowering strata of clouds, with their craggy summits, recalls to the recollection of the spectator some of the finest sports of Alpine scenery discoverable in Europe; while that most singular geological formation, the Gonong Beenks, or sugar loaf, not only stands separate as a prominent, unerring, and permanent mark to ships, but to the scientific eye distinctly exhibits the origin of those mountainous formations, in the stupendous depositions which have descended from that prodigious flood of waters that formerly deluged the globe. This fine country is blessed with a soil boasting the highest fertility, and is evidently capable of bringing forth any vegetable production found in Hindoostan, and probably in Europe. In proof of this it may be mentioned, that potatoes, formerly unknown in the *Aurea Chersonesus* of the ancient geographers, have within the last few years been introduced into Sumatra, under the administration of Sir Stamford Raffles, with the most gratifying success. They are thriving in perfection, and not only equal to any procurable elsewhere, but now form an important article in the diet of the population. The nutmegs and

spices, on account of which the settlement has been long celebrated, are cultivated to an extent, and thrive in a manner, of which I could not previously have entertained the slightest idea. Yet with all these advantages, not exceeded by any British settlement in the world, the appearance of Marlborough cannot be said to add any credit to the well-earned character, which our countrymen have generally acquired, for enterprize and persevering industry. It would therefore form a matter of singularly curious and interesting speculation, to enter into an inquiry regarding the causes which have conspired to retard the prosperity of Bencoolen; that have operated during the lapse of nearly a century and a-half, to contract the principal seat of British power in the Malay countries, within limits scarcely exceeding the bounds of an ordinary English village, and are not twice the dimensions of those of the town of Singapore, that has been founded only since the year 1823; causes that have reduced its population; and have rendered the necessities of life scarcely procurable over a magnificent extent of territory capable of producing all that is required, and comprehending a settlement and possessions, to which, if proper attention were paid, that are clearly capable of completely recompensing our country for the loss of Java, and our other insular possessions, which a dash of the pen of his late Lordship of Londonderry so liberally bestowed upon the unmitigated enemies of our commerce, and would be rivals, the Dutch.

 DR. SSAWWA BOLSHOI'S ACCOUNT OF HIS CAPTIVITY AMONG THE KIRGHEES KAISSACS, IN THE YEARS 1803-4.

(From the Russian.)

IN December 1802 I was ordered to join the imperial mission destined to Bucharja, at Orenburg. We were joined at this place by a caravan of merchants, consisting of 100 camels, and were attended by 44 Kirghees, partly as guides and partly as carriers, and by an escort of 50 Cossacs and other horsemen.

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On the 30th of July 1803 we left the fortress of Orsk, and advanced till within about 75 wersts of the *Sur* river, when we were informed by our scouts that a strong party of Kirghees was encamped there, who had been ordered by their sultan, Abulgas Kaipow, to hinder our passing that river.

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