

of the states have been settled for centuries, and have risen to power and an advanced state of civilization: others, which had obtained the summit of prosperity, and were enjoying the benefits of a most extensive commerce, have, in the lapse of ages, and under changes of systems and governments, been gradually retrograding, and their power and authority is much circumscribed. There are others again of a recent formation, and where government and character have not arrived at that stability, consistency, and uniformity, which we find in the more anciently established kingdoms. Some of the states were founded by emigrants from the powerful empire of Menangkabu; others by shipwrecked mariners from the coasts of Malabar and Coromandel; and by settlers from Acheen, Java, Borneo, Celebes, and the Malayan peninsula; many of whom have perhaps been associated together as piratical adventurers, and have derived from the product of their former barbarous avocations, the means of founding a flourishing kingdom. Great distinctions of manners, habits, &c., must be the consequence of such a motley assemblage of different tribes."

Acheen once figured in history; but its ancient power is broken; and the accounts of what it was centuries ago, will afford us but a poor idea of what it now is. Sir T. S. Raffles, while in Sumatra, remarked concerning the country: "The power of the king is daily becoming more precarious, and the government is rapidly breaking up. Almost all the powerful chiefs, whether of the coast or interior, have assumed a virtual independence, without formally renouncing the king's authority; while the power of the young king is too much enfeebled to be able either to compel obedience, or to levy the usual taxes and duties for the support of his dignity. One of the principal of these refractory chiefs is the pangulu of Susa, one of the districts formerly most productive in pepper. The young king is by no means deficient in general abilities, but has been designedly deprived of proper education by his mother, whose influence in the country is still superior to his own. This circumstance has thrown the prince, in a great measure, into the hands of about half a dozen of half-caste Portuguese and French."

Again, immediately after having resided three months at Acheen, in 1819, he remarked concerning that place: "The most important discoveries we made, were the existence of extensive teak forests near the northern coasts, and the general prevalence of mutilated Hindoo images in the interior; of the former, I obtained specimen branches of the trees, and undoubted evidence; and of the latter, the accounts given were of a nature which left little doubt in my mind with regard to the fact. I have obtained also several copies of their annals, and much information regarding their constitution and customs: their line of Mohammedan kings appears to have commenced in 601 of the Hegira, and from that period until that reign of Secunder Muda, or Macota Alem as he is more generally called, Acheen is said to have been tributary to Rum; it then obtained exemption from tribute. The crown and regalia, appear to have been brought from Rum,

shortly after the establishment of Islamism; and I think it probable that Acheen was the first and most important footing obtained by the Mohammedans to the eastward, and whence their religion was subsequently disseminated among the islands."

Menangkabu is a very ancient kingdom, and its jurisdiction once extended over nearly or quite the whole of Sumatra. It has been famed, since the earliest periods of history, for the riches of its gold mines, its iron ores, and other mineral productions. It was from Menangkabu that the gold which traders found at Malacca, in remote periods, was carried. It was to the gold of Menangkabu that Malacca owed its designation of the golden Chersonesus; and within its dominions, geographers have marked the situation of mount Ophir. Sir Stamford was of opinion that the Menangkabuan of the Malayan peninsula have emigrated from Sumatra; and was confirmed in this belief, from the fact that the sultan and all the principal officers of Rumbö, a Malay kingdom, about sixty miles inland from Malacca, hold their authority immediately from Menangkabu, and have written commissions for their respective offices: this shows the extensive influence of Menangkabu even now, reduced as it is in common with all the Malay states.

The capital of Menangkabu is the celebrated Pageruyong, visited by sir Stamford and lady Raffles in 1818. It is built at the foot and partly on the slope of a steep and rugged hill called Gunung Bongso, remarkable for its appearance with three peaks. Below the city, under a precipice of from fifty to a hundred feet, winds the beautiful stream of Selo, which passes Suruasa, and takes the name of *Soungy Amas* or the golden river. In front of the city rises the mountain Berapi, the summit of which is about twenty miles distant. Pageruyong and Suruasa have been repeatedly ravaged; all the adjacent country however is described as being exceedingly populous and highly cultivated. On a moderate calculation, the population within a range of fifty miles round Pageruyong cannot be estimated at less than a million. "The whole country," says sir S., "as far as the eye could distinctly trace, was one continued scene of cultivation, interspersed with innumerable towns and villages, shaded by cocoa nut and other fruit trees. I may safely say, that this view equalled anything I ever saw in Java; the scenery is more majestic and grand, population equally dense, cultivation equally rich. In comparison with the plain of Matarun, the richest part of Java, I think it would rise. Here, then, for the first time, was I able to trace the source of that power—the origin of that nation, so extensively scattered over the eastern archipelago. The estimated height of Pageruyong above the level of the sea is 1800 feet. In Mr. Marsden's map, the city is placed at about eighty-two miles northeast of Padang, and sixty-six from the coast. By our observations we found it to be not more than fifty miles from Padang, and forty-five from the coast, in a straight line: the latitude being 14' south, and longitude twenty-eight miles east of Padang."

The principal provinces and districts, which constitute the king-