The governor of the whole government has his residence at Padang. The residency of Padang is bounded south by Benkulen and north by Tapanuli. It contains a large number of separate districts, mostly corresponding to natural divisions formed by mountain-spurs or river valleys. Among the rest are Indrapura, Tapan, Lunang, and Silaut, which form the regency of Indrapura, and are the remains of the ancient kingdom of that name. Administratively Padang is divided into Ayer Bangis and Rau, Priaman, Padang, Painan. The headquarters of Ayer Bangis and Rau is Talu, to the north of Mt Ophir. Ayer Bangis it­self is on the coast, and has a good roadstead on one of the islands that protect its bay. At Rau is the Dutch fort of Amerongen, and to the north-west the old fort of Balong or Sevenhoven. Padang is a town of some 2000 houses and 15,000 inhabitants, with a Chinese settlement and a European quarter. It is the chief market in Sumatra for gold. Indrapura lies about 8 miles up the river of its own name, and is now only an unimportant village of bamboo huts. The residency of Tapanuli is divided into Siboga (which includes the Nias Islands), Natal, Mandeling and Angkola, Padang Lawas. The town of Siboga has con­siderable commercial importance, the bay on which it stands being one of the finest in all Sumatra. Tapanuli, the ancient capital, and Sinkil, a commercial town, also deserve to be mentioned. In Natal (properly Natar) the leading places are Jambur, Sinkuang, and Natar. Padang Sidem- puan, the chief town of Mandeling and Angkola, lies to the south of Mt Lubu Raya. Fort Elout was formerly the military centre in Great Mandeling. The residency of the Padang Highlands lies east of Padang proper. The whole surface is mountainous, and the natural districts are very numerous. Again, Batipu and the X. Kotas,@@1 the L. Kotas, Tanah Datar, and the XIII. and IX. Kotas form the five administrative divisions. Bukit Tinggi, or, as it is usually called, Fort de Kock, is the capital of the residency ; other places of note are Bondjol, Padang Pandjang Payakombo, Fort van der Capellen, Pagar Rujung (the residence of the last prince of Menangkabau), Priyangan (the remains of another capital of Menangkabau), Sinkarah, and Solok. To the government of the West Coast belong the following islands :—Banyak Islands, a small limestone group, well wooded and sparsely peopled ; Nias Islands, with an area of 2523 square miles; Batu Islands (Pulu Pingi, Pulu Baai, Tanah Masa, Tanah Balla, &c. ; area 630 square miles) ; Mentawei and Pageh or Nassau Islands (area 4200 square miles) ; Engano (area 360 square miles), annexed by Hol­land in 1863 and seldom visited. The Nias Islands are a very interesting group (see Dr Schreiber in *Petermann’s Mittheil.,* 1881). There are no volcanoes, but earthquakes are very frequent. In the north the villages are mainly perched on steep hills reached by ladders ; in the south they are larger and occupy low-lying sites.

B. The residency of Benkulen or Bencoolen *(i.e.,* Bang Kulon, “ west coast ”) lies along the west coast from the Mandjuta to the south end of Sumatra. It is divided into eight districts :—Mokko-Mokko ; Lais or Sungei Lama ; the district *(ommelanden)* of Benkulen ; the capital Ben­kulen ; Seluma ; Mana and Pasumah Ulu Mana ; Kauer ; and lastly Kru. Among the noteworthy places are Mokko- Mokko, with the old English fort Anna ; Bantal ; Lais (Laye), the former seat of the English resident ; and Ben­kulen, the capital, with 12,000 inhabitants, Fort Marl­borough, and a Chinese kampong (see Bencoolen).

C. The residency of the Lampong districts, separated from Palembang by the Masudji river, is partly mountain­ous (Lampong Peak 6800 feet), partly so flat as to be under

water in the rainy season. It is divided into the districts of Telok Betong, Tulang Bawang, Seputih, Sekampong, Katimbang, and Semangka. The more important places are Telok Betong, chief town of the residency, Menggala (with a good trade), Gunung Sugi, Sukadana, Tandjong Karang, Beniawang.

D. The residency of Palembang consists of the former kingdom of this name, various districts more or less de­pendent on that monarchy, and (since 1839) the kingdom of Jambi. With the exclusion of this last it is divided into the administrative districts of Palembang; Tebing Tinggi; Lematang I lu, Lematang Ilir, and the Pasumah country; Komering Ulu, Ogan Ulu, Inim, and the Ranau districts ; Musi Ilir; Ogan Ilir, Komering Ilir, and Blidah; and Iliran and Banyu Asin. In the kingdom of Jambi the government is left in the hands of the native chief. The town of Palem­bang is a large place of 50,000 inhabitants (2500 Chinese), with extensive barracks, hospitals, &c., a mosque (1740), considered the finest in the Dutch Indies, and a traditional tomb of Alexander the Great. A good description of the town and its river approaches is given by Mr Forbes.

E. The kingdom of Indragiri (along with Kwanten and the districts of Retell and Mandah) is administratively subject to the residency of Riouw.

F. The residency of the East Coast was formed in 1873 of the territory of Siak and its dependencies and the state of Kampar. It consists of five divisions,—the island Bengkalis, Siak proper, Labuan Batu, Asahan, Deli. The island has an area of 529 square miles and a population of 5000. Deli is the most important part of the residency, —having been since 1870 the seat of the Amsterdam Deli Company, engaged in growing tobacco, coffee, &c.

G. In 1878 the Achin (Atjeh) kingdom was turned into a Dutch government, but the greater part of the territory is still but little known. Compare Achin, vol. i. p. 95 *sq.*

*Flora.—*Though Sumatra is separated from Java by so narrow a strait, the botanist at once finds that he has broken new ground when he crosses to the northern island, and the farther he advances inward the more striking becomes the originality of the flora. The alang fields, which play a great part in Java, have even a wider range in Sumatra, descending to within 700 or 800 feet of sea-level ; where- ever a space in the forest is clearea this aggressive grass begins to take possession of the soil, and if once it be fully rooted the wood­land has great difficulty in re-establishing itself. Among the orders more strongly represented in Sumatra than in Java are the *Dip- terocarpaceæ, Ghrysobalanaceæ,* sclerocarp *Myrtaccæ, Melastomaccæ,* Begonias, *Nepenthes, Oxalidaceæ, Myristicaceæ, Ternströmiaccæ, Connaraceæ, Amyridaccæ, Cyrtandraceæ, Epacridaceæ,* and *Eriocaulaceæ.* Many of the Sumatran forms which do not occur in Java are found in the Malay Peninsula. In the north the pine tree *(Pinus Merkusiî)* has advanced almost to the equator, and in the south are a variety of species characteristic of the Australian region. The distribution of species does not depend on elevation to the same extent as in Java, where the horizontal zones are clearly marked ; and there appears to be a tendency of all forms to grow at lower altitudes than in that island. A remarkable feature of the Sumatran flora is the great variety of trees that vie with each other in stature and beauty, and as a timber-producing country the island ranks high even among the richly wooded lands of the archipelago.@@2 The process of reckless deforestation is, however, beginning to tell on certain districts,—the natives often destroying a whole tree for a plank or rafter. The principal cultivated plants, apart from sugar cane aud coffee, are rice (in great variety of kinds), the cocoa-nut palm, the areng palm, the areca and the sago palms, maize (jagung), yams, and sweet potatoes ; and among the fruit trees are the Indian tamarind, the blimbing, pomegranate, jambosa, guava, papaw, orange, and lemon. Even before the arrival of Europeans Sumatra was known for its pepper plantations ; and these still form the most conspicuous feature of the south of the island. For the foreign market coffee is the most important of all the crops,—the Padang districts being the chief seat of its cultiva­tion. The average value of the coffee brought to market in Padang in the three years 1880-82 was £521,000. Benzoin was formerly obtained almost exclusively from Sumatra from the *Styrax Benzoin.@@*3

@@@1 “ Kota ” means settlement or township, and a great many of the districts are named from the number of kotas they contain ; thus in Agam we have the VII. Kotas, the VIII. Kotas, &c.

@@@2 The Central Sumatra Expedition alone collected specimens of about 400 kinds of timber.

@@@3 See Miquel, *Flora I nd. Ba tarse-,* Suppl. 1,“ Prodr. Floræ Sumatranæ,” 1860.