

SIMMONDS'S COLONIAL MAGAZINE.

NOTES ON THE COMMERCE OF SIAM.

BY THE EDITOR OF THE "SINGAPORE FREE PRESS."

It appears to us that too little attention has hitherto been given by British merchants to the capabilities of Siam for a large and profitable commercial intercourse. The trade with Siam, as far as regards British possessions, has been generally in the hands of one or two Europeans, and some native merchants from Bombay, and no attempt has hitherto, as far as we are aware, been made to give it a wider and more general character, or to test its capacity for an increase both of consumption and production; yet there is no doubt that in both respects there is much room for expansion in Siam, and that there is only wanting a greater attention from European merchants, and a better tariff, to allow of Siam assuming a much more important place in the commercial scale of nations than that which she at present occupies. Impressed with this conviction, we have hitherto taken every opportunity we could find, as well to exhibit the present aspect of commerce in Siam, as to show by what means and to what extent it might be improved; and it is with this object that we now avail ourselves of the kindness of a friend well acquainted with the subject, who has placed a few rough notes at our disposal, and which will enable us once more to state a few facts and make a few observations upon the commerce of Siam. Unlike Japan and Cochin China, intercourse with Siam does not require to be yet established; it was placed upon a legitimate legal footing even before we had achieved the same object in China, and all that now remains to be done is to prevail upon the Siamese Government to make those modifications and amendments in those parts of the treaty, as regards the residence of foreigners and the tariff of duties, which experience has shown to be opposed to a full and free development of the commerce of the country. The Siamese King, like most semi-barbarous persons, is slow to perceive the advantages which would result to himself and his country from a greater encouragement of commerce, and seeks in monopolies for that revenue which he would better find in an expansion of trade and increase of the productive resources of his kingdom; and it may be that he dreads the effects of freer contact with foreigners upon his subjects. But there is little doubt, that were the advantages of a