

practice of offering up human beings as sacrifices to the gods.

Humboldt, in his work on the indigenous inhabitants of South America, gives us an interesting account of the introduction of this latter atrocity among the Aztecs, a people of Mexico, whose annals record its first perpetration to have taken place so late as the year 1317.

But the most extraordinary instance of cannibalism which is known to exist in the world is that practised by the Battas, an extensive and populous nation of Sumatra. These people, according to Sir Stamford Raffles, have a regular government, and deliberative assemblies; they possess a peculiar language and written character, can generally write, and have a talent for eloquence; they acknowledge a God, are fair and honourable in their dealings, and crimes amongst them are few; their country is highly cultivated. Yet this people, so far advanced in civilization, are cannibals upon principle and system. Mr. Marsden,* in his "History of Sumatra," seems to confine their cannibalism to the accustomed cases of prisoners taken in war and to other gratifications of revenge. But it is stated by Sir Stamford Raffles, upon testimony which is unimpeachable, that criminals and prisoners are not only eaten according to the law of the land,

*William Marsden, who was sent out from Dublin to Sumatra, about 1775, as a writer in the East India Company's service.