

NEW GUINEA.

THE island of New Guinea lies close to the northern extremity of Queensland, being separated from the mainland by Torres Strait. Excluding Australia itself, New Guinea is the largest island in the world, and lies between the equator and 12° south, and between $130^{\circ} 50'$ and $134^{\circ} 30'$ east longitude. Its greatest length is 1,490 miles, and its maximum breadth 430 miles, its area being about 234,770 square miles. It is occupied by British, Dutch, and German colonists; the British portion includes the south-east of the island, with an area of 90,540 square miles, of which 87,786 are on the mainland, and 2,754 square miles comprise various groups of islands. The eastern end of the possession is very mountainous; moving westward, the various chains unite to form a great central cordillera, which attains its highest point in the Owen Stanley Range, where Mount Victoria rises to a height of 13,200 feet above sea-level. Conspicuous also in the eastern portion of the island are Mount Suckling (12,228 feet), Mount Obree (10,246 feet), Mount Yule (10,046 feet), and Mount Brown (7,940 feet). The mountains follow the coast, and are distant from it about 20 to 50 miles; at the head of the Gulf of Papua the ranges become broken and considerably reduced in height, as well as further removed from the seaboard. The western portion of the possession may be generally described as low and swampy, densely clothed with forest; dense forest growth is also characteristic of the mountains. New Guinea is a well-watered country; its two largest rivers are the Fly River, with its tributary (the Strickland), and the Purari. The Fly River has a total length of 600 miles, but some portion of its upper course lies within Dutch territory. The river has been navigated for a great distance, and it is said that small steamers of fair draught can ascend over 500 miles. The Purari rises in German territory, and is navigable for a considerable distance from its mouth. There are many other rivers, but, as they have not been explored, no detailed description of them can be given. The southern and south-east coast-line is well indented, and several fair harbours exist.

Lying as it does just under the equator, the climate of New Guinea is very warm, but as no extensive range of observations has been made, the maximum and minimum temperature cannot be definitely stated. At Port Moresby the average shade temperature at 9 a.m. is 81.6° Fahrenheit, with a maximum of 94° ; this would argue very high

maximum daily temperature, but not greater than along some portions of the northern coast of Australia. The rainfall varies greatly in different parts of the island ; at Port Moresby the quantity recorded in 1901 was 54 inches, but this was probably in excess of the average ; at Dogura on the north-east coast, on the opposite side of the island, the average is 59 inches ; but at Samarai, at the south-east end of the island, the rainfall registers between 120 and 130 inches per annum. At Daru, in the west of the possession, the average is about 85 inches, but a fall of nearly 150 inches has been registered, and it is probable that equally great rainfall is experienced in the central mountains.