

Facts and fancies about Java

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AUGUSTA DE WIT

Facts and Fancies about Java.

WHEN the Lady Dolly van der Deeken, in answer to questions anent her legendary husband's whereabouts, murmured something vague about 'Java, Japan, or Jupiter,' she had Java in her mind as the most 'impossible' of those impossible places. And, indeed, every schoolboy points the finger of unceremonious acquaintance at Jupiter: and Japan lies transparent on the egg-shell porcelain of many an elegant teatable. But Java? What far forlorn shore may it be that owns the strange-sounding name; and in what sail-less seas may this other Ultima Thule be

fancied to float? Time was when I never saw a globe - all spun about with net of parallels and degrees, as with some vast spider's web - without a little shock of surprise at finding 'Java' hanging in the meshes. How could there be latitude and longitude to such a thing of dreams and fancies? An attempt at determining the acreage of the rainbow, or the geological strata of a Fata Morgana, would hardly have seemed less absurd. I would have none of such vain exactitude: but still chose to think of Java as situate in the same region with the Island of Avallon, the Land of the Lotos-Eaters, palm-shaded Bohemia by the sea, and the Forest of Broceliand, Merlin's melodious grave. And it seemed to me that the very seas which girt those magic shores - still keeping their golden sands undefiled from the gross clay of the outer world - must be unlike all other water - tranquil ever, crystalline, with a seven-tinted glow of strange sea-

flowers, and the flash of jewel-like fishes gleaming up from the unsounded deeps. And higher than elsewhere, surely, the skies, blessed with the sign of the Southern Cross, must rise above those woods where the Birds of Paradise nestle.

Where is it now, the glory and the dream? The soil of Java is hot under my feet. I know - to my cost - that, if the surrounding seas be different from any other body of water, they are chiefly so in being more subject to tempest, turmoil, and sudden squalls. I find the benign influences of the Southern Cross - not a very brilliant constellation by the way - utterly undone by the fiery fury of the noonday-sun: and have learnt to appreciate the fine irony of the inherited style and title, as compared with the present habitat of the said Birds of Paradise. And yet - all chagrining experience notwithstanding, and maugre the deadly dullness of so many days, the fever of so many sultry nights, and the

home-sickness of all hours - I have still some of the old love for this country left: and I begin to understand something of the fascination by which it holds the Northerner who has breathed its adour-laden air for too long a time. So that, forgetting his home, his friends, and his kindred in the gray North, he is content to live on dreamily by some lotos-overstarred lake: and, dying, be buried under the palm-trees.

No. 1 - arrival.

My first impression of Java was not the one of effulgent light and overpowering magnificence of colour, generally experienced at the first sight of a tropical country: but, on the contrary, of something unspeakably tender, ethereal, and soft. It was in the beginning of the rainy season. Under a sky filmy with diaphanous white clouds, or, rather, cloud - one continuous fleecy texture, in which a tinge of the hidden blue was felt rather than seen - the sea had a pearly sheen, with here and there changefully

flickering white lights, and wind-ruffled streaks of a pale violet. The slight haziness in the air somewhat dulled the vivid green of innumerable islets and thickly-wooded reefs, scattered all over the sea; and, blurring their outlines, seemed to lift them until they grew vague and airy as the little clouds of a mackerel sky, wafted hither and thither by the faintest wind. And even the block of square white buildings on the landing-place - pointed out as the railway station and the custom houses - stood mellow and softly outlined against a background of whitish-grey sky and mist-blurred trees. Slowly the steamer glided on. And, as we now approached the roadstead of Batavia, there came swimming towards the ship numbers of native boats, darting out from between the islets, and diving up out of the shadows along the wooded shore, like so many waterfowl. Swiftest of all were the 'wing-praos' very slight hulls, almost

disappearing under their one enormous whitish-brown sail, tapering like a bird's wing, and thrown back with just the same impatient fling - as if poised for a swoop and rake - so exactly resembling sea-gulls skimming along, as to render the comparison almost a description. On they came, drawing purplish furrows through the pearly greys and whites of the sea. And, in their wake, darting hither and thither with the jerky movements of water-spiders, quite a swarm of little black canoes - hollowed-out tree-trunks, kept in balance by a framework of long bamboo-staves, which spread on either side like sprawling, scurrying legs. As they approached, we saw that the boats were piled with many tinted fruit, above which the naked bodies of the oarsmen rose, brown and shiny, and the wet paddle gleamed in its leisurely-seeming dip and rise, which yet sent the small skiff bounding and darting onward. They were

alongside soon, and the natives clambered on board, laden with fragrant wares. They did not take the trouble of hawking it about though, agile as they had proved themselves, but calmly squatted down amid their piled-up baskets of yellow, scarlet, crimson, and orange fruits - a medley of colours almost barbaric in its magnificence, notwithstanding the soberer tints of blackening purple, and cool, reposeful green - and calmly awaited customers. Under their gaudy kerchiefs picturesquely framing the dark brows, their brown eyes had that look of thoughtful - or is it all thoughtless? - contentment, which we of the North know only in the eyes of babies, crooning in their mother's lap. And, as they answered our questions, their speech had something childlike too, with its soft consonants and clear vowels, long-drawn-out on a musical modulation that glided all up and down the gamut. They had a great charm for me, their flatness of features and

meagreness of limbs notwithstanding: and I thought that, if not quite the fairies, they might well be the 'brownies' of that enchanted garden that men call Java.

But - alas! for day-dreaming - the gruff authoritative voice of the quartermaster was heard on deck: and - after the manner of goblins at the approach of the Philistine - all the little brownies vanished. They were gone in an instant; and, in their pretty stead, came porters, cabin-stewards with trunks, and passengers in very new clothes. For we were fast approaching: and, presently, with a big sigh of relief, the steamer lay still, and we trod the quay of Tanjong Priok. It would seem as if the first half-hour of arrival must be the same everywhere, all the world over: but here, even in the initial scramble for the train, one notices a difference. There is a crowd; and there is no noise. No scuffling and stamping, no cries, no shouting, no gruff-voiced altercations. all but inau-

dibly the barefooted coolies trot on, big steamer-trunks on their shoulders: they do not hustle, each patiently awaiting his turn at the office and on the platform; and, as they stand aside for some hurrying, pushing European, their else impassible faces assume a look of almost contemptuous amazement. Why should the “orang blanda”^{*} thus discourteously jostle them? Are there not many hours in a day, and many days to come after this? And do they not know that ‘Haste cometh of the evil’? The train has started at last, and is hurrying through a wild, dreary country; half jungle, half marshland. From the rank undergrowth of brushwood and bulrushes, rise clumps of coconut-palms, their dark shaggy crowns strangely massive above the meagre stems through which the distant horizon gleams palely. In open spaces,

* (‘People from Holland:’ the name for Europeans generally.)

young trees stand out here and there, half strangled in the dangling festoons of a purple-blossomed liana that trails its tendrilled length all over the lower shrubwood. Thickets of bamboo bend and sway in the evening wind.

To the right stretches a long straight canal, dull as lead under the lustreless sky; the breeze, in passing, blackens the motionless water, and a shiver runs through the dense vegetation along the edge-broad-leaved bananas, the spreading fronds of the palmetto, and mimosas of feathery leafage, above which the silver-grey tufts of bulrushes rise. After a while the jungle diminishes and ceases; and a vast reach of marshy country stretches away to the horizon. We neared it as the sun was setting: and, though it had not broken through the clouds, the fiery globe had suffused their whiteness with a deep, dull purple as of smouldering flames. A tremulous splendour suddenly shot over the rushbeds and rank waving grasses

of the marshy land; the shining reedpricked sheets of water crimsoned; and along the canal moving like an incandescent lava-stream, the broadly-curving banana leaves seemed fountains of purple light, and the palmetto and delicate mimosa fronds grew transparent in the all-pervading rosiness - almost immaterial. Even after the burning edge of the sun, perceived for a brief moment, had sunk away, these marvellous colours did not fade, but, softly shining on, seemed to be the natural tint of this wonderful land - independent of sunsand seasons. Then, all at once, they were extinguished by the rapidly-fallen dusk, as a fire might be under a shower of ashes: and, a few minutes after, it was night.

At the lamplit station of Batavia, I hailed one of the vehicles waiting outside - a curious little two-wheeled conveyance, which, with its enormous lanterus, airily supported roof, and long shafts between which a diminutive

pony trotted, looked like a fiery-eyed cockchafer that darts about, moving its long antennae. I hoisted myself on to the sloping seat, and, for some time was driven through an avenue, the trees on either side of which made a cloudy darkness against the pale strip of sky overhead. There was an incessant high-pitched twittering of birds among the leaves; and, every now and then, a fragrance of invisible flowers came floating out on the windless air. We passed a tall building, shimmering white through the darkness - the Governor-General's palace I was told. Then the horse's hoofs clattered over a bridge, and, past the turn of the road, a long row of brilliant windows flashed up, with a white blaze of electric light in the distance.

Past the resplendent shop-windows on the left side of the street - the other remaining dark, featureless - a leisurely crowd moved; open carriages, bearing light-dressed women to some evening

entertainment, bowled along: a manywindowed club blazed up: a canal shone with a hundred slender spears of reflected light - I had reached my destination, the suburb of Rijswijk.

A Batavia Hotel.

IF, in this commonplace-loving age, there be one thing more commonplace and utterly devoid of character than another, it is a hotel. Hotels! where be railroads there be they. The locomotive scatters them along its shining path together with cinders, thistle-seeds, and tourists. They are everywhere; and everywhere they are the same. The proverbial peas are not so indistinguishably alike. Surely, a whimsical imagination may be pardoned for fancying a difference between the pods 'shairpening' in some Scotch kailyard, the petis-pois coquettishly arranged

in Chevet's shop-window, and the Zuekererbsen matushed down to a green pulse in some strong-jawed Prussiann's plate - a difference, the far and faint and fanciful analogy to the more obvious one between the gudeman, the French chef, and the Koniglich Preussisclier Dounanen Beamten Gehilfe. But a hotel, on whatever part of Europe it may open its dull window-eyes, has not even a name native of the country, and declaring the citizenship thereof. The genius of speech despairs of making a difference in words, where there is none in facts: and thus, from Orenburg to Valentia, and from Hammerfest to Messina, the thing is still called a hotel. and the traveller still expects and finds the same Swiss portier and the same red velved portières, the same indescribable smell of sherry, stewed-meat, and eigars in the passages, the same funereallyelas waiters round the table d'hôte, and the same dishes upon it. Thus, I thought in my old European days.

But, since, I have come to Java, and I have seen a Batavia hotel - a *rumah makan*. Ah! that was a surprise, a shock, a revelation - I would say 'un frisson nouveau' if Batavia and shivering were compatible terms. 'Un etouffement nouveau' better expresses my sensations, as it flashed upon me in full noon-day glory. Noon is its own time, its hour of hours, the instant when those opposing elements of Java life - the native population most conspicuous of a morning, and the European contingent preponderant in the evening - attain that exact equipoise which gives the place its peculiar character: and when the conditions of sky, air, and earth are attuned to truest harmony with it.

The great strong, full noon-day sun beats on the stuccoed buildings, heating their whiteness to an intolerable incandescence. It has set the garden ablaze, burning up the long grey shadows of early morning to roundish

patches of a charred black, that cling to the foot of the trees: and making the air to quiver visibly above the scorched yellow grass-plots. Among their dark leafage, the hibiscus flowers flare up like living flame: and the red-and-orange blossoms, dropping from the branches of the flamboyant, seem to lie on the path like smouldering embers. Through this blaze of light and colour, move groups of gaudily-draped natives - water-carriers, flower-sellers, fruit-vendors, pedlars selling silk and precious stones - their slender body swathed in pink, red, green, or yellow sarongs, their head protected from the sun by an enormous mushroom-shaped hat of plaited straw, and their shining shoulders bending under a bamboo yoke, from the ends of which dangle baskets of merchandise. Small, brown, chubby children, a necklet their one article of wear, are gathering the tiny, yellow-white blossom-stars that bespangle the grass under the tanjong trees. Grave-

faced Arabs stride past. Chinamen trudge along - lean, agile figures - chattering and gesticulating as they go.

But, among the crowd of Orientals, no Europeans are seen, save those who rapidly pass in vehicles of every description from the jolting dos-á-dos onwards - with its diminutive pony almost disappearing between the shafts - to the elegant victoria drawn by a pair of big Australian horses. But, even when driving, the noon-day heat is dangerous to the Westerner; and the European inmates of the hotel are all in the dark cool verandahs, enjoying a dolce far niente enlivened by chaffering with the natives and drinking iced lemonades. And - here is another surprise for the newcomer! - the ladies wear what seems to be the native dress of sarong and kabaya! A kabaya is a sort of dressing-jacket of profusely-embroidered white batiste, fastened down the front with ornamental pins and little gold chains: and under it is worn the

sarong, a gaudily-coloured skirt falling down straight and narrow, with one single deep fold in front, which is kept in place by a silk scarf wound several times round the waist, its cords dangling loose. With this costume, little high-heeled slippers are worn on the bare feet; and the hair is done in native style, simply drawn back from the forehead, and twisted into a knot at the back of the head. Altogether, this style of attire is original rather than becoming.

But, if this must be confessed of the ladies, what must be said of the garb some men have the courage to appear in? A kabaya, and (may Mrs. Grundy graciously forgive me for saying it! for how shall I describe the indescribable, save by calling it by its own by me nevertobe-pronounced name?) trousers of thin sarong-stuff gaily sprinkled with blue and yellow flowers, butterflies, and dragons!

But all this is only an indue-

tion into that supreme mystery, celebrated at noon, the rice-table. Here, indeed, in 'un étouffement nouveau.' All things pertaining to it work together for bewilderment. To begin with: it is served up, not in any ordinary dining-room, but in the 'back gallery,' a place which is a sight in itself, a long and lofty hall, supported on a colonnade, between the white pillars of which glimpses are caught of the brilliantly-flowering shrubs and dark-leaved trees in the garden without. In the second place, it is handed round by native servants, inaudibly moving to and fro upon bare feet, arrayed in clothes of a semi-European cut incongruously combined with the Javanese sarong and head-'kerchief. And, last not least, the meal itself is such as never was tasted in sea or land before. The principal dish is rice and chicken, which sounds simple enough. But, on this as a basis, an entire system of

things unedible has been constructed: besides fish, flesh, fowl, and frieassees, all manner of curries, sauces, pickles, preserved fruit, salt eggs, fried bananas, 'sambals' of fowl's liver, fish-roe, young palm-shoots, and the gods of Javanese cookery alone know what more, all strongly spiced, and sprinkled with cayenne. There is nothing under the sun but it may be made into a sambal; and a conscientious cook would count that a lost day on which he had not sent in at the very least twenty of such nondescript dishes to his master's table, for whose digestion let all gentle souls pray! And, when to all this I shall have added that these many and strange things must be eaten with a spoon in the right and a fork in the left hand, the reader will be able to judge how very complicated an affair the rice-table is, and how easily the uninitiated may come to grief over it. For myself, I shall never forget my first experience

of the thing. I had just come in from a ride through the town, and I suppose the glaring sunlight, the strangely-accountred erowd, the novel sights and sounds of the city must have slightly gone to my head (there are plenty of intoxicants besides 'gin,' *vide* the Autocrat of the Breakfast Table). Anyhow, I entered the 'back gallery' with a sort of 'here-the-conquering-hero-comes' feeling: looked at the long table groaning under its dozens of rice-bowls, scores of dishes of fowls and fish, and hundreds of sambal-saucers, arrayed between pyramids of bananas, angosteens, and pine-apples, as if I could have eaten it all by way of 'apéritif;' sat me down; heaped my plate up with everything that came my way; and fell to. What followed, I have no words to express. Suffice it to say, that in less time than I now take to relate it. I was reduced to the most abject misery. My lips smarted with the fiery touch of

the sambal, my throat the more sorely scorched for the hasty draught of water with which, in my ignorance, I had tried to allay the intolerable heat, and my eyes full of tears, which it was all I could do to prevent from openly gushing down my cheeks, in streams of utter misery. A charitable person told me to put a little salt on my tongue, (as children at home are told to do on the tail of the bird they want to catch). I did so; and, after a minute of the most excruciating torture, the agony subsided. I gasped, and found I was still alive. But there and then I vowed to myself I would never so much as look at a rice-table again. I have broken that vow. I say it proudly. It is but a dull mind which cannot reverse a first opinion, or go back upon a hasty resolve. And now I know *how* to eat rice; I love it. Still, that first meal was a shock. It suddenly brought home to the senses - what up to that minute had been noted by the understanding only - the fact of my

being in a new country. The glare of the garden without, the Malay sing-song of those dark bare-footed servants, the nondescript clothes of the other guests, united with the tingling and burning in my throat to make me realise the stupendous change that had come over my universe, the antipodal attitude of things in Europe and things in Java. I had the almost bodily sensation of the intervening leagues upon leagues of the dividing chasm on the unknown side of which I had just landed. And it fairly dizzed me.

Now, the natural reaction following upon a shock of this kind throws one back upon the previous state of things in the case - the ways and manners of the old country - and one stubbornly resolves to adhere to them. But, though this may be natural, it is not wise. I, at least, soon discovered for myself the truth of the old sage's saw: 'Vérité en deçà des Pyrénées, erreur en delà,' as applied to the affairs of everyday

life: the more so, as oceans and broad continents, the space of thousands of Pyrenean ranges, separate those hither and thither sides, Holland and Java. The home-marked standard of fit and unfit must be laid aside. The soul must doff her close-clinging habits of prejudiced thought. The wise man must be content to begin life over again, becoming even as a babe and suckling, and opening cherub lips only to drink in the light, the leisure, and the luxuriant beauty of this new country as a rich mother's milk - the blameless food on which to grow up to (colonial) manhood.

But to return to that first 'rice-table.' After the rice, curries, etc. had been disposed of, beef and salad appeared, and, to my infinite astonishment, were disposed of in their turn, to be followed by the dessert - pine-apples, mangosteens, velvety 'rambootans,' and an exceedingly picturesque and prettily-shaped fruit - spheres of a pale gold containing colourless pellucid flesh

- which I heard called 'dookoo.' Then the guests began to leave the table, and I was told it was time for the siesta - another Javanese institution, not a whit less important, it would appear, than the famous rice-table - and vastly more popular with newcomers. Perhaps, the preceding meal possesses somniferous virtue; or, perhaps, the heat and glare of the morning predispose one to sleep; or, perhaps - after so many years of complaining about 'being waked too soon' - the sluggard in us rejoices at being bidden, in the name of the natural fitness of things, to go and slumber again.' I will not attempt to decide which of those three possible causes is the true one; but so much is certain: even those who kick most vigorously at the rice-table, lie them down with lamb-like meekness to the siesta. I confess I was very glad myself to escape into the coolness and quiet of my room. Plain enough it was, with its bare, white-

washed walls and ceiling, its redtiled floor and piece of coarse matting in the centre, its cane-bottomed chairs. But how I delighted, in the absence of carpets and wall-papers, when I found the stone floor so deliciously cool to the feet, and the bare walls distilling a freshness as of lily-leaves! The siesta lasted to about four. Then people began to hurry past my window, with flying towels and beating slippers, marching to the bath-rooms. And, at five, tea was brought into the verandah.

Then began the first moderately-cool hour of the day. A slight breeze sprang up and wandered about in the garden, stirring the dense foliage of the waringin-tree, and making its hundreds of pendulous air roots gently sway to and fro. A white blossoms-shower fluttered down from the tanjong-branches, spreading fragrance as it fell. And, by and by, a faint rosiness began to soften the crude white of the stuccoed walls and colonnades, and to kindle the feathery

little cirrus-clouds floating high overhead, in the deep blue sky where the great 'kalongs' were already beginning to circle.

At six it was almost dark.

The loungers in the verandah rose from their tea, and went in. And, some half-hour later. I saw the ladies inssuing forth in Paris-made dresses, and the men in the garb of society accompany them on their calls, for which I was told this was the hour. The 'front gallery' of the hotel, a spacious hall supported on pillars, was brilliantly lit. A girl sat at the piano, accompanying herself to one of those weird, thrilling songs such as Grieg and Jensen compose them. And when I went in to the eight-o'-clock dinner. the menu for which might have been written in any European hotel, I had some trouble in identifying the scene with that which, earlier in the day, had so rudely shocked my European ideas. I half believed the rice-table, the sarongs and kabayas, and the Javanese

'boys' must have been a dream, until I was convinced of the contrary by the sight of a brown lean hand thrust out to change my plate of fish for a helping of asparagus.

The Town.

IT is but for want of a better word that one uses this term of 'town' to designate that picturesque ensemble of villa-studded parks and avenues, Batavia. There is, it is true, an older Batavia, grey, grim, and stony as any war-scarred city of Europe - the strong-hold which the steel-clad colonists of 1620 built on the ruins of burnt-down Jacatra. But, long since abandoned by soldiers and peaceful eitizens alike, and its once stately mansions degraded to offices and warehouses, it has sunk into a mere suburb - the business quarter of Batavia - alive during a few hours of

the day only, and sinking back into a death-like stillness, as soon as the rumble of the last down-train has died away among its echoing streets. And the real Batavia - in contradistinction to which this ancient quarter is called 'the town' - is as unlike it as if it had been built by a different order of beings.

It is best described as a system of parks and avenues, linked by many a pleasant byway and shadowy path, with here and there a glimpse of the Kali Batavia gliding along between the bamboo groves on its banks, and everywhere the whiteness of low, pillared houses, standing well back from the road, each in its own leafy garden. Instead of walls, a row of low stone pillars, not much higher than milestones, separates private from public grounds, so that from a distance one cannot see where the park ends and the street begins. The shadow of the tall trees of the avenue keeps the garden cool; and the white dust of the road is

sprinkled with the flowers that lie scattered over the smooth grassplots and shell-strewn paths of the villa.

Among the squares of Batavia, the largest and most remarkable by far is the famous Koningsplein. It is not so much a square as simply a field, vast enough to build a city on, dotted from place to place by pasturing cattle, and bordered on the four sides of its irregular quadrangle by a triple row of branching tamarinds. From the south, two aerial mountain-tops overlook it. The brown bare expanse of meadowy ground, lying thus broadly open to the sky, with nothing but clouds and cloud-like hill-tops rising above its distant rampart of trees, seems like a tract of untamed wilderness, strangely set in the midst of a city, and all the more savage and lonely for these smooth surroundings. Between the stems of the delicate-leaved tamarinds, glimpses are caught of gateways and pillared houses: the eastern side of the quad-

range is disfigured by a glaring railway-station. And, notwithstanding, it remains a rugged solitary spot, a waste, irreclaimably barren, and which, by the sheer strength of its unconquered wildness, subdues its environment to its own mood. The houses, glinting between the trees, seem mere accidents of the landscape, simply heaps of stones; the glaring railway-station itself sinks into an indistinct whiteness, disassociated from any idea of human thought and enterprise.

Now and then a native traverses the field, slowly moving along an invisible track. He does not disturb the loneliness. He is indigenous to the place, its natural product, almost as much as the cicadas trilling among the grass blades, the snakes darting in and out among the crevices of the sun-baked soil, and the lean cattle, upon whose backs the crows perch. There is but one abiding power and presence here - the broad

brown field - under the broad blue sky, shifting shades and splendours over it, and that horizon of sombre trees all around.

This vast sweep of sky gives the Plein a tone and atmosphere of its own. The changes in the hour and the season that are but guessed at from some occasional glimpse in the street, here are fully revealed. The sunshine may have been glaring enough among the whitewashed houses of Ryswyk and Molenvliet - it is on the Plein only that tropical sunshine manifests itself in the plenitude of its power. The great sun stands flaming in the dizzy heights; from the scorched field to the incandescent zenith the air is one blaze, motionless and white-hot, in which the tall tamarinds stand sere and grey, the grass shrivels up to a tawny hay, and the bare soil stiffens and cracks. The intolerable day is past. People, returning home from the town, see a roseate sheen playing over roofs

and walls, a long crimson cloud sailing high overhead. Those walking on the Plein behold an apocalyptic heaven and a transfigured earth - a firmamental conflagration - eruptions of scarlet flame through incarnadined cloud, runnels of fire darting athwart the melting gold and translucent green of the horizon; hill-tops changed into craters and tall trees into fountains of zodiacal light.

And many are the nights, when, becoming aware of a dimness in the moonlit air, I have hastened to the Koningsplein, and found it whitely waving with mist, a very lake of vapour, fitfully heaving and sinking in the uncertain moonlight; and rolling airy waves against a shore of darkness. The seasons, too - how they triumph in this bit of open country! When, after the devouring heat of the East Monsoon, the good gift of the rains is poured down from the heavens, and the town knows of nothing but impracticable streets, flooded houses,

and crumbling walls, then it is a time of resurrection and vernal glory for the Plein. The tamarinds, gaunt grey skeletons a few days ago, burst into full-leaved greenness: the hard, white, cracked soil is suddenly covered with tender grass, fresh as the herbage of an April meadow, in that land of freshness - Holland. In the early morning, the broad young blades are white with dew. There is a thin silvery haze in the air, which dissolves into a pink and golden radiance, as the first slanting sunbeams pierce it. And the tree tops, far off and indistinct, seem to rise airily over hollows of blue shade. Not far from the Koningsplein there is another square, its very opposite in aspect and character - the idyllic Duke's Park - very shadowy, fragrant, and green. One walks in it as in a poet's dream. All around there is the multitudinous budding and blossoming of faint-coloured flowers, a play of transparent bamboo-shadows that flit and shift

over smooth grassplot and shell-streewn path, a ceaseless alternation of glooms and glories. Set amidst tall dark trees, whose topmost branches break out into flame-coloured blossom, there stands a marble mansion, temple-like in its severe grace of Doric columns and crowning frontispiece. A bend of the river enfolds the pleasance, murmuring. The Park of the Duke..... One wonders - was he at all like Olivia's princely suitor? and were these glades ever haunted by some Viola-like maiden, wooing him all-unsuspectedly from his forlorn allegiance? Surely, yonder starry orange-grove were a meet scene for the final recognition: -

‘Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times,
Thou never wouldst love woman like to me....’
The irony of facts has willed it otherwise.
A duke it was, sure enough, that

stood sponsor to the spot. But as (according to French authorities) there are fagots and fagots, even so there are Dukes and Dukes - and vastly more points of difference than of resemblance between Viola's gentle prince, and that thunderous old Lord of Saxen-Weimar, to whose rumbling Kreuzdonnerwetter and Himmels - Sakraments this abode of romance re-echoed some fifty years ago. A distant relative to the King of the Netherlands, he was indebted to his Royal kinsman's sense of family duty for these snug quarters, a very considerable income (from the National Treasury) and the post of an Army Commander, which upheld the dignitary in the pensioner. His tastes were few and simple, and saving the one delight of his soul, a penurious youth, and the hardships of the Napoleonic supremacy having so thoroughly taught him the habit, that it had become a second nature to him; and would not be ousted now by the mere

fact of his having become rich. He was proud of his parsimony, too - prouder even than of his swearing, remarkable as it was and, amidst the pomp and circumstance he had so late in life attained to, neglected not the humble talents which had solaced his less affluent days. So that, looking upon the many goodly acres around his palace, lying barren of all save grass, flowers, blossoming trees, and such like useless stuff, he at once saw what an unique opportunity it would afford him for the exercise of his favourite virtue. And, setting about the matter in his own thorough-going way, cut down the trees, ploughed up the grassplots, and had the grounds neatly laid out in onion-beds, and plantations of the sirih, which the Javanese loves. Here one might meet the Duke of a morning - a portly, bald-pated, red-faced old warrior with a prodigious 'meerschaum' protruding from his bristling white beard, stars, crosses, and gold-

lace all over his general's uniform, and a pair of list slippers on his rheumatic old toes. An orderly waiked behind him, holding a gold-edged sunshade over his shining pate. And, every now and then, the Duke would stop to look earnestly at his crops, and, stooping with a groaning of his flesh, and a creaking of his tightunic, straighten some trailing plant, or flick off an insect from the sirih leaves.

‘The Duke was in his kitchen-garden, A counting of his money,’
as one might vary the nursery rhyme.

For money it was he counted, when he gazed so long and earnestly at his vegetables - the alchemy of his thrifty imagination turning every young stalk and sprouting leaflet into a bit of metal, adorned with his Royal kinsman's effigy. And when the green pennies-to-be were plentiful, well content was the gardener; and if not - ‘Mountains and vales and floods, heard Ye those oaths?’ Tradition has kept an echo of

them. They were something quite out of the common order, and with a style and sound so emphatically their own as to baffle imitation, and render description a hopeless task.

Nor did this originality wear off as, in the course of time, the worthy Duke began to forget the language of the Fatherland. For, losing his German, he found not his Dutch, and the expressions he composed out of such odds and ends of the two languages, as he could lay tongue to, would have astonished the builders of Babel Tower. Fortunately, however, his anger was as short-lived as it was violent, and, when the last thundersclap of Kreuzmillionen Himmels Donnerwetter had gradually died away in an indistinct grumbling, he would summon his attendant for a light to rekindle his pipe with a 'come now, thou black pig-dog' that sounded quite friendly. A good old blusterer at bottom, he treated his dependents kindly, and never sent away a beggar penny-

less. 'Doitless' I should have written, for his donations never exceeded that amount.

There is a tale of an A.D.C., his appointed almoner for the time, having one day come to him with a subscription list, on which the customary doit figured as His Serene Highness the Duke of Saxen Weimar's contribution: and hinting at what he considered the disproportion between the exiguity of the gift, and the wealth and worldly station of the giver. He must have been a very rash A.D.C. The Duke turned upon him like a savage bull. And, after a volley of oaths: Too little! he roared: Too little! and again, Too little! I would have you know, younker; that a doit is a great deal when one has nothing at all!

It was a cry de profundis - laughable and half contemptible as it sounded, the echo from unforgotten depths of misery.

He had known what it meant 'to

have nothing at all.' Wherefore, and for those winged words in which he uttered the knowledge, let his onion-beds be forgiven him. Of the outrage he committed, only the memory is left - the effects have long since been obliterated: bountiful tropical nature having again showered her treasures of leaf and flower over the beggared garden, and re-erected, in their places, the green towers of her trees.

Rijswijk, Noordwijk, and Molenvliet, the commercial quarters of Batavia, are more European in aspect than the Koningsplein: the house - shops for the most part - are built in straight rows; sidewalks border the streets, and a noisy little steam-car pants and rattles past from morning till night. But, with these European, traits Javanese characteristics mingle, and the resulting effect is a most curious one, somewhat bewildering withal to the new-comer in its mixture of the unknown with the familiar. Absolutely commonplace

shops are approached through gardens, the sidewalks are strewn with flowers of the flame-of-the-forest: and, at the street-corners, instead of cabs, one finds the nondescript saddo, its driver, gay in a flowered muslin vest and a gaudy headkerchief, squatting cross-legged on the back seat. Noordwijk is unique, an Amsterdam 'gracht' in a tropical setting. Imagine a long straight canal, a gleam of green-brown water between walls of reddish masonry - spanned from place to place by a bridge, and shaded by the softly-tinted leafage of tamarinds: on either side a wide, dusty road, arid gardens sweltering in the sun, and glaring white bungalows: the fiery blue of the tropical sky over it all. Gaudily-painted 'praos' glide down the dark water: native women pass up and down the flight of stone steps that climbs from the water's edge to the street, a flower stuck to their gleaming, wet hair; the tribe of fruit-vendors and sellers of sweet drinks and

cakes have established themselves along the parapet, in the shade of the tamarinds; and the native crowd, coming and going all day long, makes a kaleidoscopic play of colours along the still dark canal.

From the little station at the corner of Noordwijk and Molenvliet, a steamcar runs along the canal down to the suburbs: every quarter of an hour it comes past, puffing and rattling: and every time the third-class compartment is choking full of natives. The fever and the fret of European life have seized upon these leisurely Orientals too. They have abandoned their sirih-chewing and day-dreaming upon the square of matting in the cool corner of the house, the dusty path along which they used to trudge in Indian file, when there was an urgent necessity for going to market; and behold them all perched upon this 'devil's engine,' where they cannot even sit down in the way they were taught to 'hurkling on their hun-

kers.'

The skippers and cargoes are more conservative in their ways - owing, perhaps, to their constant communion with the deliberate stream, sauntering along on its way from the hills to the sea, at its own pace. They take life easy; paddling along over the shifting shallows and mud-banks of the Kali (river) in the same leisurely way their forefathers did; bringing red-tiles, bricks, and earthenware in flat-bottomed boats: or pushing along rafts of bamboo-stems, which they have felled in the woods up-stream. As they come floating down the canal, these rafts of green bamboo, with the thin tips curving upwards like tails and stings of venomous insects, have a fantastical appearance of living, writhing things, which the native raftsman seems to be for ever fighting with his long pole. After dark, when the torch at the prow blazes out like the single baleful eye of the monstrous

thing, the day-dream deepens into a nightmare. And, shuddering, one remembers ghastly legends of river-dragons and serpents that haunt the sea, swimming up-stream to ravish some wretched mortal. The native boats appeal to merrier thoughts. With the staring white-and-black goggle eyes painted upon the prow, and the rows of red, blue, yellow, and green lozenges arranged like scales along the sides, they remind one irresistibly of grotesque fishes for those big children, the Javanese, to play with their little boats - at house-keeping. They eat, drink, sleep, and live in the prao. A roof of plaited bamboo leaves helps to make the stern into a semblance of a hut: and here, whilst the owner pushes along the floating home by means of a long pole and a deal of apparent exertion, his wife sits cooking the rice for the family meal over a brazier full of live coals: and the children tumble about in happy nakedness

Javanese babies, by the way, always seem happy. What do they amuse themselves with, one wonders? They do not seem to know any games, and playthings they have none, except the tanjong-flowers they make necklaces of, and perchance some luckless cockroach, round whose hind leg they tie a thread to make him walk the way he should. Their parents' Mohammedan orthodoxy debars them from the society of their natural companions - the dogs: and, as for cats, that last resource of un-amused childhood in Europe, they hold them sacred, and would not dare to lay a playful hand upon one of them. Yet, there they are - plaything-less, naked, and supremely happy.

Their parents, for the matter of that, are exactly the same: they seem perfectly happy without any visible and adequate cause for such content. As long as they are not dying - and one sometimes doubts if Javanese did at all -

all is well with them. The race has a special genius for happiness, the free gift of those same inscrutable powers who have inflicted industry, moral sense, and the overpowering desire for clothes upon the unfortunate nations of the North.

Following the left-ward bend of the canal - past the sluice, and the Post-office, the most hideous structure by the bye that ever disfigured a decent street - one comes to the bridge of Kampong Bahru: and, crossing it, suddenly finds oneself in what seems another quarter of the globe. Tall narrow houses, quaintly decorated and crowned with tilted roofs, flaming out red against the contrasting azure of the sky, stand in close built rows: the wide street is full of jostling carts and vans, fairly humming with traffic: and the people move with an energy and briskness never seen among Javanese. This is the Chinese quarter. There are three or four such

in the town, inhabited by Chinese exclusively. This habit of herding together - though now a matter of choice with the Celestials - is the survival of a time when Batavia had its 'camp' as mediaeval Italian cities had their ghetto: a period no further back than the beginning of last century.

At that time, when Chinese immigration threatened to become a danger to the colony, the then Governor-General, Valckenier, took some measures against the admittance of destitute Chinese, which, however well-designed, were so clumsily executed as to spread the rumour that the Government intended to deport even the Chinese residents of Batavia. A panic broke out among them, and then a revolt, in which they were soon joined by their countrymen from all over the island. After a desperate struggle, atrocities innumerable both sustained and inflicted, a siege sustained, and an attack of fifty and odd thousand beaten back

by their two thousand men, the Hollanders succeeded in putting down the rebellion, and the enemy fled to the woods and swamps of the lowlands around Batavia. A few months later, however, a general amnesty having been granted, such of them as had escaped from famine and jungle-fever returned, and a special quarter was assigned to them, where it would be easy both to protect and to control them. There, they have since continued to live.

The houses of some rich Chinamen in the Kampong Bahru neighbourhood are truly splendid: the most modest ones still have an air of comfort. According to the ideas of the inhabitants, there are none absolutely squalid. All these houses are, at the same time, shops. They are, in a way, wonderful people, these sons of the Celestial Empire, merchants, in one way or other, all of them. There is, of course, a difference. There is the foot-sore 'klontong' trudging through the weary streets

all day, and shaking his rattle as he goes, to advertise the reels of cotton and the cakes of soap in his wallet: and, again, there is the portly millionaire, who entertains army officers and civil servants in his own profusely-decorated mansion: but the difference is one in degree only, not in kind. Amid the pomp and circumstance of the one condition, and the squalor of the other, the individualities are the same, the attitude of mind and the habits of thought identical, the sum and substance of a Chinaman's life in Java being summed up in 'the making of bargains.' He could as soon leave off breathing as leave off buying and selling: trading seems to be his natural function. And this one fancy is the great difference between his race and ours; and the true secret of their superiority as money-makers. A Caucasian, if he is a merchant, is so with a certain part of his being only - during certain hours of the day - in his own office. A

Chinaman is a merchant with his whole heart, his whole soul, and his whole understanding, a merchant always and everywhere, from his cradle to his grave, at table, at play, over his opium-pipe, in his temple. Trade is the element in which he lives, moves, and has his being. His thoughts might be noted in figures. The world is to him one vast opportunity for making money, and all things in it are articles of trade: which, in Chinese, means gain to him, and loss to everybody else. He has few wants, infinite resources, and the faith (in himself) that removeth trading towns. Small wonder if he succeeds.

I fancy it would be quite a practical education, in the principles of business, to watch the career of one of these Chinamen, from the hour of his arrival at Tanjong Priok onward. At first, you see him trudging along with a wallet, containing soap, sewing cotton, combs, and matches. After a few months, you find him in your com-

pound, surrounded by the whole of your domestic staff, to whom he is selling sarong cloth and thin silks. When a year has gone by, a coolie trudges at his heels panting under a load of wares, the samples of which he subjects to your approval with the most correct of bows. Have but patience, and you will find him in a diminutive shop, where somehow he finds place for a settee in the corner, a mirror on the wall, and all around such a collection of articles as might fitly be termed a epitome of material civilization. Nor does he stop in that tiny house. A few years later, he will be taking his ease behind the counter of a spick-and-span establishment in the camp; and, if, by chance, you get a glimpse of his wife, you will be astonished at the size of the diamonds in her shiny coil of hair. Our friend is on the high road to prosperity now, which leads to a big house separate from the shop. Before he is fairly fifty, he has built it, high and

spacious, with an altar to the gods and to the spirits of his ancestors set in the midst of it, and a profusion of fine carving and gilding, of embroidered hangings and lacquered screens all around. He will invite you for the New Year's festivities now, and, if your wife accompanies you, introduce you to his spouse, resplendent as the rainbow in many-tinted brocades, and more thickly covered with diamonds than the untrodden meadow with the dews of a midsummer night. He talks about the funeral of his honoured father, which cost him upward of three thousand pounds sterling; and he will ask your advice, over the pineapples and the champagne, about sending his sons to Europe in one of his own ships, that the youth may see something of the world, and, if he so list, be entered as a student at the famous university of London.

A Colonial Home.

IT is the North which has introduced tight-fitting clothes and high houses, mused Taine, as, in the streets of Pompeii, he gazed at nobly planned peristyle and graceful arch, at the godlike figures shining from the frescoed walls, and, with the vision of that fair, free, large life of antiquity, contrasted the Paris apartment from which he was but newly escaped, and the dress-coat which he had worn at the last social function. And a similar reflection crosses the Northern mind when it looks upon a house in Batavia.

I am aware that Pompeii and Bata-

via, pronounced in one breath, make a shrieking discord, and that, between a homely whitewashed bungalow, and those radiant mansions which the ancients built of white marble and blue sky, the comparison must seem preposterous. And, yet, no one can see the two, and fail to make it. The resemblance is too striking. The flat roof, the pillared entrance, the gleam of the marble-paved hall, whose central arch opens on the reposeful shadow of the inner chambers, all these features of a classic dwelling are recognized in a Batavia house. Evidently, too, this resemblance is not the result of mere mechanical imitation. There is a consistency and thoroughness in the architecture of these houses, a harmony with the surrounding landscape, which stamp it as an indigenous growth, the necessary result of the climate, and the mode of life in Java, just as classic architecture was the necessary result of the climate

and the mode of life in Greece and Italy. If the two styles are similar, it is because the ideas which inspired them are not so vastly different. After all, in a sunny country, whether it be Europe or Asia, the great affair of physical life is to keep cool, and the main idea of the architect, in consequence, will be to provide that coolness. It is this which constitutes a resemblance between countries in all other respects so utterly unlike as Greece and Java, and the difference between these and Northern Europe. In the North, the human habitation is a fortress against the cold; in the South and the East, it is a shelter from the heat.

There is no need here of thick walls, solid doors, casements of impermeable material, all the barricades which the Northerner throws up against the besieging elements. In Italy as in Greece, Nature is not inimical. The powers of sun, wind, and rain are gracious to living things, and, under their

benign rule, man lives as simply and confidently as his lesser brethren: the beasts of the fields and forests and the birds of the air. He has no more need than they to hedge in his individual existence from the vast life that encompasses it. His clothes, when he wears them, are an ornament rather than a protection, and his house a place, not of refuge, but of enjoyment, a cool and shadowy spot, as open to the breeze as the forest, whose flat spreading branch, supported on the stalwart stems, seems to have been the model for its column-borne roof.

The Batavia house, then, is built on the classic plan. Its entrance is formed by a spacious loggia, raised a few steps above the level ground, and supported on high columns. Thence, a door, which stands open all day long, leads into a smaller inner hall, on either side of which are bedrooms, and behind this is another loggia - even more spacious than the one forming the entrance of the

house, where meals are taken and the hot hours of the day are spent. Generally, a verandah runs around the whole building, to beat off both the fierce sunshine of the hot, and the cataracts of rain of the wet season. And behind the house is a garden, enclosed on three sides by the buildings containing the servants' quarters, the kitchen and store rooms, the bath-rooms, and stables.

At some distance from the main building and connected with it by a portico, stands a pavilion, for the accommodation of guests, for the average Netherlands Indian is the most hospitable of mortals, and is seldom without visitors, whether relatives, friends, or even utter strangers, who have come with an introduction from a common acquaintance in Holland. It takes some time, I find, to get quite accustomed to this arrangement of a house. In the beginning of my stay here, I had an impression of always being out of doors

and of dining in the public street, especially at night, when in the midst of a blaze of light one felt oneself an object of attention and criticism to every chance passer-by in the darkness without. It was as bad in the ceremonious meals of the Kings of France, who had their table laid out in public, that their faithful subjects might behold them at the banquet, and, one supposes, satisfy their own hunger by the vicarious dining of of the Sovereign.

In time, however, as the strangeness of the situation wears off, one realises the advantage of these spacious galleries to walled-in rooms, and very gladly sacrifices the sentiment of privacy to the sensation of coolness.

For to be cool, or not to be cool, that is the great question, and all things are arranged with a view to solving it in the most satisfactory manner possible. For the sake of coolness, one has marble floors or Javanese matting instead of carpets, cane-bottomed chairs and

settees in lieu of velvet-covered furniture, gauze hangings for draperies of silks and brocade. The inner hall of almost every house, true, is furnished in European style - exiles love to surround themselves with remembrances of their faraway home. But, though, very pretty, this room is generally empty of inhabitants, except, perhaps, for an hour now and then, during the rainy season.

In this climate, to sit in a velvet chair is to realize the sensations of Saint Lawrence, without the sustaining consciousness of martyrdom. For the sake of coolness again, one gets up at half-past five, or six at the very latest, keeps indoors till sunset, sleeps away the hot hours of the afternoon on a bed which it requires experience and a delicate sense of touch to distinguish from a deal board, and spends the better part of one's waking existence in the bath room. Now, a bath in Java, is a very different thing from the dabbling among dishes in a bedroom, which Europeans

call by that name, even if their dishes attain the dimensions of a tub.

Ablutions such as these are performed as a matter of duty; a man gets into his tub as he gets into his clothes, because to omit doing so would be indecent. But, here, bathing in the tropics is a pure delight, a luxury for body and soul - a dip into the *Fontaine de Jouvence*, almost the cheerful solemnity and semi-pagan act of worship, which the donkey-driving traveller through the Cevennes performs in the clear Tarn. A special place is set apart for it, a spacious cool airy room in the outbuildings, a chamber deaf to noise, and all but blind to light; through the gratings over the door, a glimpse of sky and waving branches is caught. The marble floor and whitewashed walls breathe freshness, the water in the stone reservoir is limpid and cold as that of a pool that gleams in rocky hollows. And, as the bather dips in his bucket, and sends the frigid stream pouring over him, he

washes away, not heat and dust alone, but weariness and vexatious thought in a purification of both body and soul, and he understands why all Eastern creeds have exalted the bath into a religious observance.

Like the often-repeated bath, the rice table is a Javanese institution, and its apologists claim equal honours for it as an antidote to climatic influences. I confess I do not hold so high an opinion of its virtues, but I have fallen a victim to its charms. I love it but too well. And there lies the danger, everybody likes it far too much, and, especially, likes far too much of it. It is, humanly speaking, impossible to partake of the rice table, and not to grossly overeat oneself. There is something insidious about its composition, a cunning arrangement of its countless details into a whole so perfectly harmonious that it seems impossible to leave out a single one. If you have partaken of one dish, you must partake of the rest unless

you would spoil all. Fowl calls to fowl, and fish answers fish, and all the green things that are on the table, aye, and the red and the yellow likewise, have their appointed places upon your plate. You may try to escape consequences by taking infinitesimal pinches of each, but many a mickle makes a muckle, and your added teaspoonfuls soon swell to a heaped-up plate, such as well might stagger the stoutest appetite. Yet, even before you have recovered from your surprise, you find you have finished it all. I do not pretend to explain, I merely state the fact.

Curried fowl, fried fish, nutmeg sprinkled fricassée, hatched chicken delicately flavoured and cooked in a wrap of faintly fragrant leaves, fritters of shrimp paste, transparently pink, and so light that a breath of air might easily carry them away, then crisp cakes of Indian corn, dried and shredded deer flesh, fried slices of banana and pineapple, and the multitude of sweet, salt,

bitter, sour, and pungent sambals, and, the basis of the whole elaborate system, the satisfying rice, all gone. Once more, I shall not try to explain. There pass more things 'twixt *dapores* and back galleries than are dreamt of in the dining rooms of Europe. And, once more, I asseverate, it is a fact, a not uncommon fact even, it would appear, for nobody is surprised at its recurrence. Your fellow guests do not so much as notice it, and your hostess only smiles a hospitable smile, and asks whether you have had enough of Cayenne pepper. For, without Cayenne pepper, it is not whole-some for any man to eat of the rice table, though the thousand and odd other condiments are almost equally necessary.

Records have survived of those Pantagruelic feasts with which the great ones of the mediaeval world delighted to celebrate the auspicious events of their lives, and the chronicler never fails to sum up the almost interminable list of

the spices and essences with which the cook, on the advice of learned physicians, seasoned the viands, in order that, whilst the grosser meats satisfy the animal cravings of the stomach, those ethereal aromatics might stimulate the finer fluids, whose ebb and flow controls the soul, and the well-flavoured dishes not might only be hot on men's tongues but eke prick them in their courages. They pricked to some purpose, it seems. And, if the spice-sated Netherland Indian is a comparatively law-abiding man, it must be because battening rice counteracts maddening curry. But for this providential arrangement, I fully believe he would think no more of battle, murder, and sudden death than of an indigestion, and consider a good dinner as an ample explanation of both.

Now, as to what they clothe themselves withal. Tight fitting clothes are pronounced by Taine to be an invention of the North. A fortnight in Batavia will explain and, prove the theory

better than many books by many philosophers: and, moreover, cause the most sartorially-minded individual to consign the 'invention' to a place hotter than even Java. Like the habitations, the habits of European civilization are irksome in the tropics; and, for indoor-wear at least, they have 'suffered a sun-change into something cool and strange' - into native costume modified in fact. Now, the outward apparel of the Javanese consists of a long straight narrow skirt 'the sarong' with a loosefitting kind of jacket over it, - short for the men, who call it 'badjoo,' and longer for the women who wear it as 'kabaya;' which garments have been adopted by the Hollanders, with the one modification of the sarong into a 'divided skirt' for the men, and the substitution of white batiste and embroidery for the coloured stuffs of which native women make their kabayas. On the Javanese, a small spare, slightly-made race, the garb sits not ungrace-

fully; narrow and straight as it is, it goes well with contours so attenuated. But on the sturdier Hollander the effect is something appalling. An adequate description of the men's appearance in it would read like a caricature; and though, with the help of harmonious colours and jewellery, the women look better, it is not becoming to them either, at least in non-colonial eyes. The aesthetic sense shies and kicks out at the sight of those straight, hard, unnatural lines. Modern male costume has been held up to ridicule as a system of 'cylinders.' The sarong and kabaya combine to form one single cylinder, which obliterates all the natural lines and curves of the feminine form divine. and changes a woman into a particoloured pillar, for an analogy to which one's thoughts revert to Lot's wife. But, though utterly condemned from an artistic point of view, from a practical one it must be acquitted, and even commended. In a country where the tem-

perature ranges between 85° and 95° Fahrenheit in the shade, cool clothes which can be changed several times a day, are a condition not merely of comfort, but of absolute cleanliness and decency, not to mention hygiene. For it is a noteworthy fact that the women, who wear colonial dress up to six in the evening, stand the climate better than the men, who, in the course of things, wear it during an hour or an hour and a half at most, in the day. And it must be admitted that both men and women enjoy better health in Java, and under this colonial regime of dressing than in the British possessions, where they cling to the fashions of Europe.

As for the children, they are clad even more lightly than their elders in what the Malay calls 'monkey-trousers' chelana-monjet, a single garment, which, only just covering the body, leaves the neck, arms, and legs bare. It is hideous, and they love it. In German picture-

books one may see babes similarly accoutred riding on the back of the parent-gladdening stork, and one comes to believe that 'monkey-trousers' are, after all, the paradisiacal garment of babes, and that by a Wordsworthian recollection of these things, they cling to the costume so tenaciously. One cannot speak of an 'Indian' child, and forget the 'babu,' the native nurse, who is its ministering spirit, its dusky guardian angel, almost its Providence. All day long, she carries her little charge in her long 'slendang,' the wide scarf which deftly slung about her shoulders, makes a sort of a hammock for the baby. She would not like even the mother to take it away from her: feeds it, bathes it, dresses it prettily, take it out walking, ready, at the least sign, to lift it up again into its safe nest close to her heart. She plays with it, not as a matter of duty, but as a matter of pleasure, throwing herself into the game with enjoyment and zest, like the child she is at heart: so that

the two may be seen quarrelling sometimes, the baby stamping its feet and the babu protesting with the native cluck of indignant remonstrance, and an angry 'Terlaloel' 'it is too bad.' And, at night, when she has crooned the little one to sleep, with one of those plaintive monotonous melodies in a minor key, which seem to go on for ever, like a rustling of reeds and forest leaves whilst the crickets are trilling their evensong, she spreads her piece of matting on the floor, and lies down in front of the little bed, like a faithful dog, guarding its master's slumbers. As for the other servants, their name is Legion. A colonial household requires a very numerous domestic staff. Even families with modest incomes employ six or seven servants, and ten is by no means an exceptional number. The reason for this apparent extravagance is, that, though the Javanese is not lazy, - as he often and un-

justly is accused of being - yet he is so slow, that the result practically is the same, and one needs two or even three native servants, for work which one Caucasian would despatch in the same time.

All these have their own quarters in the 'compound' and their own families in those quarters: they go 'into the house' as a man would go to his office: coming home for meals, and entertaining their friends in the evening, on their own square of matting, and with their own saffron-tinted rice, and syrup-sweetened coffee. Such then, is the setting of every-day existence in Java.

As for the central fact, it is less interesting than its circumstances, in so far as it is more familiar. The three or four great conceptions which determine the home-life of a people - its ideas social, ethical, and religious, concerning the relations between parent and child, and between men and women

- are too deeply ingrained into its mental substance to be affected by any merely outward circumstances. Therefore, home-life among the Hollanders in Java, is essentially the same as among Hollanders in their own country. Still there is this difference, that it has more physical comfort, and less intellectual interest. The climate, it seems to me, is in a great part responsible for both these facts.

A continual temperature of about 90 degrees is not favourable to the growth of the finer faculties, in Northerners' brains at least. The little band of eminent men which has gone up from Java to shine in Dutch Universities must be regarded as the signal exception to a very general rule. Besides, the heat is so grave an addition to the already heavy burden of the day, that one requires all one's energies, both of body and soul, to conscientiously discharge one's ordinary duties; and there is no surplus left to devote to literary, artistic,

or scientific pursuits. There are no theatres, no operas, no concerts, no lectures, no really good newspapers, even, in Java. There could not be, where there is so little active public life. So that a man's one relaxation after a hard day's work - unless he looks at dances and dinners in that light, must be found in his own house.

One continually hears the phrase with us in the East, 'our house means our life.' Naturally, therefore, the house is made as pleasant as possible, and as comfortable, not to say luxurious. Incomes are proportionately very much higher in Java than in Holland. Without financial advantage as an incentive, nobody would accept life under tropical conditions - and the better part of the money is spent on good living in the majority of cases. Even families of comparatively moderate means, have a roomy house, a sufficient domestic staff, and keep a carriage and a good table.

And as to the heat, which as-

surely is a discomfort, and no trifling one, the accepted mode of life does much to palliate it not only by the regime of housing, feeding, and dressing, but almost as much by the way the day is divided. Work is begun early, so as to get as much as possible done in the cool hours: between nine and five everybody keeps indoors: and those who can snatch an hour of leisure after the one o'clock rice-table, spend it in a siesta. Only in the early morning, and in the evening does one see Europeans about. Not even the greatest enthusiasts of sport and tennis dare begin games earlier than half-past four. Formerly this was different.

On old engravings, one may see the tall sombre houses which the first colonists built on those 'grachts' now long since demolished. One may mark them walking home from a three hours' sermon in broadcloth mantles, and velvet robes, giving solemn entertainments in

their trim gardens along the canal, with the sun in noon-day glory over-head, and generally ignoring the trifling differences between Amsterdam and Batavia. They fought very valiantly for their ancestral customs; but very few returned to tell of the fight.

Since, people have reflected that a live Netherlands-Indian is better than a dead Hollander. And, giving up a fight, in which defeat was all but certain, and success worse than useless, they have effected a compromise with the climate. In Java they do as Java does, from sunrise to sunset. But, with the congenial cool of the evening, they resume their national existence, the garb, the manners and the customs of Holland. At seven there is a general 'va et vient' of open carriages bearing women in light dresses, and men in correct black-and-white, to a 'reception' in some brilliantly-lighted house.

Outside is the black tropical night, heavy with the scent of invisible blos-

soms, pricked here and there by the yellow spark of some trudging fruit-vendor's oilwick. The small fragment of Europe which that tall-colonnaded marble paved loggia, with its gliding figures of men and women, is, stands an Island of Light among the waveless seas of darkness.

Social Life.

THE social life of Batavia has a physiognomy of its own; curious enough in some of its features. But it is not this which strikes the new-comer most forcibly. In certain Byzantine mosaics, the figure represented is entirely eclipsed by the magnificence of the background. And the eye must grow accustomed to the splendour of the gold and precious stones surrounding it, before it can take in the lines of the face. In a similar manner, no surmise can be formed as to the character of Batavia social life before the charm has, at least in part, passed off, which its setting

casts over the critical faculties. It moves in romance: it is surrounded by beauty; its conditions and circumstances are in themselves a source of delight. It would seem almost enough for a feast, in the cool of the evening, to sit under the verandah, marking on the gleaming marble floor, half-reflections as in tranquil waters under a tranquil sky seen from afar: and the rich strange green - relieved against blackness - of the plants on the steps outside, their every leaf and shoot, shone upon by the lamplight, standing out sparkling against the ebon wall of night. From without, there come the chirping of crickets, and the deep-breathed fragrance of flowers - tuberose, gardenia, and datura, nocturnal blossoms. Framed between pillars and architraves, great rectangles of sky are seen, interstellar azure, and the countless scintillation of stars. Environings such as these shed a grace and dignity even over the actions of daily life. When the scene is in itself

fair, it is transfigured into what seems the vision of a poet.

Shortly after my arrival, I was invited to a ball at the palace. I was at the time staying with friends in the Salemba quarter; and we had a drive of nearly an hour through avenues of tall waringin trees. There was no wind, not the faintest breath of air; all that world of leaves stood unstirred; summits broad as hill-tops, and cascades of massive foliage, making a blackness against skies all limpid with diffused starlight. Between the vaguely-discerned stems, little lights would now and then flare up, and a reddish arm be revealed, the portion of a face, and some fruits in a basket. Once, too, we saw the shining of a fire with some native watchmen crouching around it, their faces strangely distorted in the ever-writhing and shifting light. One of them shouted out a hoarse 'who goes?' That was the only sound I heard all the time. Silence and darkness all around, and overhead the sinuous course

of the sky, like a pale river between shores of blackness flowing between the dense summits of the waringin-trees. We might have been in the heart of a woodland, miles away from the populous city, when suddenly the horses turned a corner, and there burst upon us the great white blaze of the palace, shining beyond intervening darkneses. It seemed like a low-hanging lightning-cloud, with myriads of little flames, like sparks of Saint-Elmo's fire hovering around, above, and underneath. Those aloft hung immovable, the steadfast stars, lower down, immovable too, a wide-swung circle of seemingly larger luminaries, defining a tract of darkness; within that flame-bound space, trembling hither and thither, fitful will-o-the wisps, and, without the shining boundary, rushing lights that darted by and suddenly stood, and then with jerks and stops drew ever nearer to the great effulgent cloud. The lights of stars, lanterns, oil-wicks, and carriage-

lamps seemed all to have been scattered from that central glow. As we drew nearer, its cloud-like aspect changed to the semblance of an alabaster grotto, the fire in its white core streaked with lines of black, and these lines broadened and lengthened until they grew into solid shafts: when the columns of the loggia stood revealed, rising from the height of a marble terrace.

I ascended the white steps. I was in the very heart of the light. The pillars, the floor, the walls, and the ceiling seemed to be made of light. And, suddenly, I had a sense of home-coming. Why, I knew all this very well! I had known it for years, for ever so long, ever since the time when I listened to fairy tales, and in the beautifully-bound book - I must not touch it, and I kept my hands behind my back to withstand the temptation - was shown the picture of the castle where the Sleeping Beauty lived. At night, lying

wide awake up to quite nine o'clock, I saw it as plain as could be, growing up around the lamp, with the ground-glass shade for a cupola. Later on, when I could read myself, and also climb trees as the boys in the village had taught me, sitting all through the drowsy summer afternoons in the forked branch of an old, crooked pear-tree, with Hans Andersen's tales on my knees, I rebuilt the Castle on a bolder scale for the Little Mermaid. Alas! she was never to live there! Until, at last, when Romeo crossed the threshold, and Juliet turned and stood at gaze, a burst of music flooded the widening halls, entwined couples moved like flowers that sway in the evening wind, and, between the tall columns, I caught a glimpse of the sky and all 'the little stars.' Now, I had entered the palace myself. The great La France roses, and the Maréchal Niel that fell in showers of gold over the edge of the marble urns, had budded in

my dream-garden. The music played: and in the vast hall I knew so well, the polonaise began to unwind its slow coils, with a flash of gold-lace and of diamonds, a gleaming of bare shoulders, and a wavy movement of silken trains, whose hues enriched the pale marble underfoot.... 'We should move into this place, I think,' said my partner.

Since, I have been to many entertainments. It is but honest to say that at some I have enjoyed myself exceedingly; pouring rains, and the croaking of frogs almost in the house notwithstanding: and that at others I have felt my eyes burning with tears of suppressed yearning. It is true this has not happened often: but, when it has, not all the stars in their courses, nor all the constellations in their fixed places, could inspirit me: and the perfume of the tuberoses gave me a headache. I look at these things by gas-light now: and some of them I find curious and not altogether beautiful. One especially: the official charac-

ter of social life in the best circles. It seems as if discipline regulated matters of pleasure as strictly as matters of business. A man will go to his chief's party as he would to his office of a morning; never dreaming of staying away: and imposing old ladies resent the presence of the wrong partner at a whist table, as if it were an obstacle in their husband's career. It is as if they could not, even for one evening, forget the struggle for existence, and as if they regarded a dinner or a dance as an engagement with the enemy; a brisk assault to carry by storm some place that had long stood a regular siege - a lively skirmish in which everything that comes to hand is a weapon for either attack or self-defence. One cannot be too well equipped, in this great battle of official life. Intellect is an excellent weapon, but it is not the only one: and though zeal is indispensable, it is not enough. There are too many intelligent and conscientious men jostling

each other already. To pass them by, the ambitious man must be more than merely intelligent and conscientious. He must choose some special talent - any talent provided it be special. Where merits are equal, the supererogatory talent decides the contest. For a man at all well born and well bred, accomplishments of the social order are the easiest to acquire: besides, these seemingly futile things are in reality the most important. It is the men of the world who get the good places: while stay-at-home drudges may after ten years still stay at home and drudge. Accordingly, social accomplishments are what a wise man will strive to acquire. And, before anything else, let him see that he plays a good game of cards. All elderly gentlemen like cards: all chiefs of department are elderly gentlemen: therefore, all chiefs of departments like cards. Hence these many and long drawn out parties, where I sat at little green tables until, dear God! those very

tables seemed asleep, and my faint heart was all but standing still.

But I played on. For my three partners did; and they had excellent reasons for so playing on. Though, to the superficial observer, they were taking their pleasures laboriously, they took better things than their pleasure: a chance of preferment. They had heard ballads being sung and said about the man who stormed the high places with his chair for a steed and a pack of cards for shield and spear, and utterly defeated and drove out the garrison of quill-armed men. These things have been. And once upon a time, there was a Head of a Department, who held the official virtues to be statistics, discipline, and cards: but the greatest of these was cards. By his play, he judged a man. A woman he did not judge at all: conceiving her to be a non-card-playing being. And her sitting down to a game, notwithstanding her declared and organic inability, was to him the

abomination of desolation. But let young civil servants come to him. And happy that young civil servant who could, and would, and did stand up to him, and even defeat him utterly, to the greater glory of cards! For this man was a truly great soul: and he preferred the honour of the game very far indeed to his own as a player.

Still, as all roads lead to Rome, so a good many lead to preferment. If one great man loves cards, another is partial to a good dinner, and is most affable over pâté de foie gras and a bottle of Burgundy. And a third - this one, presumably the proud father of pretty daughters - has a predilection for dances. So that a man may choose his own path upwards; and, if he will not play, why, he may dance.

And dance they do in Batavia, with fervour and assiduity. On east monsoon nights, when the very crickets judge it too hot for the practice of chirping, snatches of Strausz waltzes

may be caught floating out on the heavy air: and luminous shapes be seen twirling in some brilliantly-lighted front-gallery. Out of every ten persons you meet, nine are enthusiastic waltzers: and that ninth one, the fieriest fanatic of them all, is sure to be a young civil servant, thus 'with victory and with melody' pursuing his upward path to the heights of official honours. Nothing arrests him in his career. The gallery too narrow for his evolutions does not exist. The hours strike in vain on his deaf ears. One exhausted partner after another he has led back to her mamma and the restorative champagne-cup, and his ardour is not a whit abated, though his hair seems to be sprinkled with diamond-dust, and his cheeks have sunk to the pallor of that wilted lily, his collar - the last of the posy gathered at home, and thrown away drooping into a corner of the dressing-room, off the verandah. This is sublime

courage, indeed. As one looks at him, one is reminded of Indian braves, who, at the first outburst of the war-whoops, put on their very best paint, and their shiniest mocassins, and hurry to the gathering of the chiefs, there to dance the war-dance: not inelegantly or without hidden meaning: each prance and twirl, a prophesy of scalp-wreathed triumphs.

But dancing - like virtue - may be argued to be its own reward. And, as such, it but partially fits into the systems of amusement considered as a means to preferment. For the triumphs of the principle, commend me to a reception. Each great man's day - for it is his observe, and not his wife's - is announced beforehand in the newspapers, or printed, one in a long list, on a separate slip of paper, which you must stick up in the corner of your mirror: so that there shall be no pretext for ignorance. To make assurance doubly sure, you put a pencil mark against

the name and 'day' of your own particular great man. On the appointed date, as the clock strikes seven, you go. From afar you see the blaze of his front gallery: the drive shines with multitudinous carriage-lamps, and every now and then, as another vehicle draws up, the master of the house is seen descending the verandah-steps, to help some lady to alight from her carriage, with grave courtesy offering her his arm to conduct her towards the hostess. She rises, extends a welcoming hand, begs her newly-arrived guest to be seated, and resumes a languid conversation with the great lady at her right. Unless, indeed, the new arrival be a greater lady, in which case the former occupant will cede to her the place of honour, and content herself with the next. Soon, around the big marble topped table, the circle is drawn, one-half of it shining like the rainbowed sky: the other black as innermost darkness: one semi-circle of women:

another of men: as strictly separated as we are taught that the sheep and goats shall be, on a certain day. I cannot but think that the men must be conscious of the fact, and its dire symbolism. For, as often as not, they get up, and stand unhappily together in the farthest corner of the verandah, and, with cigars and cigarettes, make little clouds to hide themselves from the children of the light shining far off, and drink sherry out of little glasses, and in deep meditation. Until, suddenly, the booming of the eight o'clock gun breaks the spell. Every watch is taken out of every waistcoat-pocket, and set aright. Every countenance frightens, and the greatest man of all - not Lancelot, or any lesser man, for his life! - catching a look from his lady, sitting mournful in her place, steps forward, and boldly claims her for his own again. Then the others follow, the host still conducting each fair one back to her carriage: and in another

moment the verandah is left desolate, and that reception is a thing of the past.

Not more than two or three of the guests have interchanged a word with either host or hostess beyond these conventional phrases of welcome and good bye; and unless some members of the same coterie have been sitting together, - Batavia society is as full of coteries as a pine-apple is of seeds - they have not had much conversation among themselves either. Of pleasure, there has been nothing, of profit so much as may be derived from seeing and being seen. It is almost as it was at the Court of Louis XIV. Acte de présence has been made: and that is all; but, as it seems, it is enough. This is, indeed, a triumph of the bureaucratic principle.

In 'Java' - as the Batavians call the rest of the island, in curious contradistinction to the capital - this principle rules with even greater despotism: it assumes the importance of an article of faith. Batavia, after all, that 'suburb

of the Hague,' is too much influenced by the manners and opinions of the Mother Country to be accounted a colonial town. And, among the colonial ideas it is thus gradually discarding, is that one of the extreme importance and super-eminence of office. In Holland, society metes with a different measure. And the knowledge, perpetually forced on him, that the Honourable of Batavia must sink into plain Mr. Jansen or Smit of the Hague, is sobering enough to keep the vanity of even the most arrogant official within decent limits. Not to mention the fact that, among his fellow-citizens, there is a large proportion of non-officials, not at all eager to acknowledge even his temporary superiority. Whilst in 'Java,' where communication with the civilized world is much less frequent and much more difficult, old colonial notions have retained their pristine vigour. The "Resident" of a little Java station is still very much what

his predecessor, the 'Merchant,' was in the days of the East-India Company, a veritable little king. The gilt 'payong' held over his head on official occasions seems a royal canopy, and his gold-laced uniform-cap a kingly crown in the eyes of his temporary subjects. The native chiefs revere him as their 'elder brother.' His own subordinates naturally look up to him. The planters, who, in their transactions with the native population - bad keepers of contracts, on the whole - are dependent upon his decision, need to be, and to continue on good terms with him. And when it is further taken into consideration that the social life of the station must be exactly what he chooses to make of it, it will be evident why even absolutely independent persons should seek to be in his good graces. Thus the man lives in an atmosphere of adulation. If there be a lack of humour or an abundance of vanity in his com-

position, he will take his pseudo-royalty seriously, and strictly exact homage. But, in the opposite case, and when he is even averse to it, it will be still pressed upon him. An anecdote illustrating this was told me, the other day, by an official, himself the object, or, as he put it, the victim, of this particular kind of hero-worship.

He was driving at a rapid pace, down one of the precipitous Preanger roads, when the horse stumbled and fell, his light dog-cart was upset, and he himself flung out of seat. He had barely recovered from this stunning fall, when he caught sight of the Secretary - who had been following in his own carriage - coming bounding down the steep road like a big india-rubber ball, rolling over and over in the dust. 'Hullo, Jansen! have you been upset, too?' - 'No, Resident,' sputters the fat little man, scrambling to his feet again, 'but I thought the R-Resident l-l-leaps, I leap, too!' And here is the pendent:

In the Intest cholera-scare, an old lady, widow of a comptroller, had been left the sole European resident of her station, all the others having left it for the hills. The Resident, surmising inability to meet the expenses of travel to be the reason of her staying on, offered to convey here to a bungalow in the hills, which his own family was then occupying. The old lady came to thank him for the proposal. But she could not, she said, accept it. She judged her hour had come; and she was not afraid of death. Only one favour she would beg from the Resident. It should be remembered that her husband had been a comptroller, and that, as his widow, she was in rank superior to all the European inhabitants of the station, coming second after the Resident himself. Now her request was this; would the Resident be so good as to leave written instructions, in case they both should die, to the effect that her grave should be dug next to this?

One would expect such an excess of bureaucratic etiquette to breed dullness and constraint unspeakable. And it certainly somewhat galls the new-comer. But it is all an affair of custom, and, after a while, these ceremonious manners come to seem as natural and necessary as the ordinary courtesies of life, and not a whit more detrimental to the pleasantness of social intercourse. Indeed, one sometimes sees positions reversed, and Netherlands-Indians accusing Hollanders of stiffness. And it must be owned that the new-comer, in Batavia society, is struck by a certain grace and easiness of manner that contrasts forcibly with the somewhat frigid reserve of the typical Hollander: as forcibly as a sixteenth-century family mansion on the Heerengracht, solid, imposing, and gloomy as a fortress, contrasts with an airy Batavin bungalow, where birds build their nests on the capitals of the columns, and the whiteness of the floor is tinged with slanting

sunbeams and reflections of tall-leaved plants. And, analogous contrasts meet one at every step. Life here has less dignity than it has in the mother country; but it has more grace. Of its - real or seeming - necessities, not a few are lacking: superfluities, however, abound. And what was that saying about the wisdom of striving for the superfluities and caring naught for the necessities of life? Existence in Netherlands-India is based upon this principle. The superfluous is striven for - the richness and the romance of things: and everyday life is the more acceptable for it. The comparatively poor in the colony fare better than the comparatively rich at home. They have more leisure, greater comforts, and better opportunities for amusement. Hence, the prevalence of 'mondain' manners.

Hospitality is another characteristic of the average Netherlands-Indian. In the mother country, a man's house is his castle: but in Java it is the castle

of his guest. And his guest is, practically, whoever likes to be one. A relation, a friend, a mere acquaintance, an utter stranger, his name not so much as heard of before, who comes 'to bring the greetings of a friend' - as the pretty, old-fashioned phrase has it: and he will meet with the most cordial of welcomes. People are not content with simply receiving a guest: they feast him. And, when hospitality is offered, it is meant, not for days, but for weeks. To stay for two or three months at a friend's house is nothing out of the common: and this not for a single person merely, but for a whole family - parents, children, servants, and all. I know I am speaking within the mark: having myself been one of nine guests; and, of these, four had been staying for some weeks already at a hospitable house in Batavia. And in Java - as Batavians call the interior in contradistinction to the capital of the island - where hotels are bad and railways few and far between, it is by no means rare

to find an even more numerous company foregathered at the house of the Resident, who thus 'does the honours' of an entire district; or at the bungalows of rich planters, jealously competing with the official for what they consider the privilege rather than the duty of hospitality. They exercise it in a truly princely way. A well-known tea-planter, some time ago, celebrating his silver wedding, commemorated the event by an entertainment, which lasted for three days, and to which a hundred and fifty guests were invited. Bamboo huts had been erected for those who could not be accommodated in the house: barns were converted into ball-rooms and dining-halls: and the native population of half the district came and was welcomed to its share of the feast. This, of course, is a signal instance: but the tendency which it illustrates is a very general one, so much so, in fact, that it has influenced domestic architecture, and rendered

the 'pavilion' as indispensable a part of the house as the bath-room and the kitchen. A 'pavilion' is a small building of two or three rooms, surrounded by a verandah, contiguous to the servants' quarters, and communicating by a covered walk with the house. Thus, though within his host's gates, the guest lives, so to say, in his own tent; coming and going as he pleases, and enjoying the society of his friends or a solitude which nobody will think of disturbing, as the mood prompts him. Sometimes the pavilion is let. But generally it remains dedicated to uses of hospitality, and still awaits the 'coming and going man,' as the Dutch phrase has it. And at its door welcome for ever smiles, and farewell goes out weeping.

Welcome. Farewell. Here, in Batavia, the short significant words ever and again fall upon the ear, recurrent in conversations as the deep, dominant bass-note that sends a repeated vibration

through all the changes and modulations of a melody: far off and distinct, as the moan of circling seas, heard in the central dells of an island where the clear-throated thrushes sing. The sensation of the temporary, the transitory, and the uncertain that thrills the atmosphere of a sea-port is in the air of this seemingly-quiet inland town. It is a common saying here, that one should not make plans for more than a month beforehand. But even a month seems almost too bold a reaching into futurity, when every day is full of chances and changes, and the aspect of things alters over-night. A promotion, an attack of fever, a fluctuation in the sugar or tobacco market, a letter from Holland - and friends are separated, homes broken up, and careers changed.

The effects of this living on short notice, if I may so call it, are perceptible in everything pertaining to colonial customs, ideas, and society. I entered, the other day, one of those ancient

mansions long ago degraded to offices of 'the old city.' The armorial bearings of the patrician, who built it in the beginning of the century, still ornament the entrance. There are stucco mouldings over the doors that lead into the great, half dark chambers. A trace of gold and bright colours is still discernible on the blinds of the tall lattice windows, the glass of which shines with the iridescent colours that so many days of sunshine and of rain have wrought on it; and the great staircase has an oaken balustrade richly sculptured in the style of the later Renaissance. This was a house for a prosperous merchant to live and die in, and to leave as a goodly inheritance to sons who would live there in their turn. The paint might be gone, the mouldings choked with dust and cobwebs, the sculptured ornaments of the balustrade defaced; but there was not a stone loose in those thick old walls, nor a plank rotten in the floor. Yet, it had been

abandoned. And so has the conception of life, of which it was the visible and tangible expression. Much hard-and-fastness of tradition and convention has been done away with. Where circumstances change so frequently and rapidly, it could not but be that points of view and opinions must likewise change. As a result, liberality of thought has come to be a characteristic of colonial society. There is something generous and truly humane in the opinions one hears currently professed, and the courage to act up to these convictions is not wanting. Delicacy, chivalry, what one might call the decorum of the heart, sometimes are wanting. The general tone is somewhat 'robustious'; this is perhaps an effect of the climate and soil, allegorically speaking. One hears many and strange things justified or at least excused on that score. On the whole, and to give a general idea of Batavia society, I fancy one might compare it to that of some rich provincial town.

There is the same eagerness for precedence, the same intimacy and tattle and neighbourly kindness, the same high living and plain thinking. But, in the little provincial town, there is not such freedom from narrowness and prejudice, nor is there so much of that hard work done under such unfavourable circumstances nor so much of that home sickness and anxiety and lonely sorrow so bravely borne as in Batavia.

Glimpses of Native Life.

A JUST appreciation of sentiments and motives repugnant to our own is among the most difficult of intellectual feats. The Germans express their sense of this truth by a concise and vigorous, if not altogether elegant, saying: 'No man can get out of his own skin, and into his neighbour's.' A difference of colour between the said skins, it may be added, withholds even adventurous souls from attempting this temporary transmigration. And the wisdom of nations, brown and white, sanctions this diffidence. In Java, Occidentals and Orientals have been

dwelling together for about three centuries. They have become conversant with each other's language, opinions, and affairs: they are brought into a certain mutual dependence, and into daily and hourly contact: there is no arrogance or contempt on the one side, no abject fear or hatred on the other; no wilful prejudice, it would seem, on either side. But Hollanders do not understand the Javanese, nor do Javanese understand the Hollanders, in any true sense of the word. So that it seems the part of wisdom to acknowledge this at the outset, merely stating that the notions of nice and nasty, fair and foul, right and wrong, such as they obtain among the two nations are antagonistic. Anyway, on the part of a casual observer, such as the present scribe, any further criticisms would be presumptuous and almost inevitably unjust: wherefore, such will be refrained from.

But, whereas, I freely confess that the inner life of the Javanese has remained

hidden from me, their outward existence has become familiar enough. The Javanese practically live out-of-doors. They take their bath in the river, perform their toilet under some spreading waringin tree, hanging a mirror as big as the hand on the rugged stem, and squat down to their meal by the roadside. After nightfall, dark figures may be discerned around the stalls of fruit-vendors, fantastically lit up by the uncertain flame of an oil-wick. And, in the dry season, they often sleep on the moonlit sward of some garden, or on the steps of an untenanted house.

This life seems strange to us Northerners, self-constituted prisoners under roofs and within walls. But we have only to look at a Malay, and the intuitive conviction flashes on us, that it is eminently right and proper for him thus to live. He is a creature of the field. His supple, sinewy frame, his dark skin, the far-away look in his eyes, the very shape of his feet, with the short,

strong toes, well separated from one another - his whole appearance - immediately suggest a background of trees and brushwood, running water, sunlit, wind-swept spaces, and the bare brown earth. And the scenery of Java with its strange colouring, at once violent and dull, its luxuriant vegetation, and its abrupt changes in the midst of apparent monotony, lacks, otherwise, the final, completing touch by the absence of dusky figures moving through it. Landspace and people are each other's natural complement and explanation. Hence, the picturesque and poetic charm of the Javanese out-of-doors.

One of the most fascinating scenes is that of the bath in the river, soon after sunrise, such as, at batavia, I have repeatedly witnessed from the Tanah Abang embankment. The early sunlight - a clear, cool, yellow - with a sparkle as of topazes in it, brightens, the subdued green of the 'asem' trees along the riverside, and makes

the short wet grass glisten. The brown water of the Kali Batawi gleams golden between the oblique bars of shadow: and the bodies of the bathers, stripped to the waist, gleam like bronze statues. Small boys and girls swim about, kicking up the water as they go. Women stand, graceful and erect, in the clinging transparent folds of their sarongs, pulled up over the bosom, and drawn tight under the arms, leaving free the shapely shoulders. I once saw two young girls thus attired, half hidden in a clump of tall-leaved reeds, pouring water over one another's head from little buckets made of an areng-leaf. Their back hair shone, and their garments were drawn by the running water into clinging flowing folds that moulded their lithe little figures from bosom to ankle. At the sound of my footsteps, one of them looked up, lifting a childish face, and large quiet eyes, as unconscious as a fawn's. But her compassion, saying something, made

her turn her head, and look down the river. And, as I followed her glance, I saw another picturesque group - some six or eight men tugging and shoving at a broad, brick-laden barge, which had run aground on the shallow bed of the kali (river). The water dripped from their legs and tucked-up sarongs, and their backs gleamed in the sunshine as, almost bent double, they urged the ponderous thing forward. But, still, the bright red heap remained stationary. Suddenly, a young boy, who had been skipping on the embankment, came down with a running leap, and, giving the boat a sudden sharp push, sent it darting forward. Then, he stood up, laughing, and shook back the shock of back hair which had fallen over his eyes. He looked like a dusky young river god, who out of kindness had come to assist his votaries.

The flower-market is a scene of idyllie grace, when, after their early bath in the river, the women come trooping thither,

and stand bargaining, their hands full of red and pink roses, creamy jessamines, and tuberoses whiter than snow. The Javanese have a great love of flowers, thought, apparently, they take no trouble to raise them in their gardens. In Batavia, at least, I never saw any growing near their cottages in the kampong: save perhaps the sturdy hibiscus in hedges, and that large white, odoriferous convolvulus which the wind sows along roadsides and hedgerows - the beauty of the night. And they do not seem to care for a handful of flowers in a vase, to brighten the semi-darkness of their little pàgar huts.

But the women are hardly ever seen without a rosebud or tuberose-blossom twined into their hair, and the men not unfrequently have one stuck behind the ear, or between the folds of their headkerchief. As for the children, their bare brown little bodies are hung with tandjong wreaths. The pucked-out petals of all manner of fragrant flowers are used

to scent the water which the women pour over their long black hair, after washing it with a decoction of charred leaves and stalks; and, together with ambergris, and a sweet, smelling root, called 'ahkar wangi,' are strewn between the folds of their holiday-attire. Like all Orientals, the Javanese are excessively fond of perfumes; which, no doubt, partially explains their profuse use of strong-scented flowers. But that, apart from the merely sensual enjoyment of the smell, they prize flowers for the pleasure afforded to the eye by their tints and shapes, is proved by the frequency with which floral designs occur on their clothes and ornaments. The full globes of the lotos-buds, the disc of the unfolded flower with leaves radiating, its curiously-configured pistil are recognized again and again on the scabbards and handles of the men's poniards and on the girdle-clasps and the large silver kabaya-brooches of the women. The fine cloth for sarongs is

decorated with fanciful delineations of the flowers that blow in every field and meadow, their chalices and early tendrils sprouting amidst figures of widemouthed dragons, fanged and clawed. Moreover for their hidden virtues, and the sacred meanings of which they are the symbol, flowers are by the natives associated with all the principal acts and circumstances of their lives - with joy and sorrow and ceremony, and the service of the gods. When the village folk, donning their holiday-attire, go forth to the festive planting of the rice, or the gathering, stalk by stalk, of the ripe ears, they wear wreaths of flowers twined in their hair. At the feast of his circumcision, the boy is crowned with them. They are the chief ornament of lovers for their marriage day - gleaming in the elaborate head-dress of the bride, and dangling down as a long fringe from the groom's golden diadem: the scabbard of his poniard, too, is wound about with chaplets of flowers: and a heavy

garland girdles his naked waist, all yellow with 'boreh' powder. To the dead on the third, the seventh, the fortieth, the hundredth, and the thousandth day after the burial, a tribute of flowers is brought by the relations, who pray for the welfare of their kinsman's soul, and in return implore his protection together with that of all their ancestors up to Adam and Eve who are especially venerated.

Lastly, flowers are thought the most acceptable offering to the gods, the ancient gods whom no violence of Buddhist or Mohammedan invader has succeeded in ousting from that safe sanctuary - the people's heart - and the share it now, in mutual good-will and tolerance with the Toewan Allah, 'beside whom there is no God.' Under some huge waringin tree, at the gate of a town or village, an altar is erected to the tutelary genius, the 'Danhjang Dessa,' who has his abode in the thick-leaved branches. And the pious people, when-

ever they have any important business to transact, come to it, and bring a tribute of frankincense and flowers, to propitiate the god, and implore his protection and assistance, that the matter they have taken in hand may prosper. On the way from Batavia to Meester Cornelis, there stands such a tree by the roadside, an immense old waringin, in itself a forest. And the rude altar in its shade, fenced off from the public road by a wooden railing, from sunrise to sunset is fragrant with floral offerings.

There are several flower-markets in Batavia. But I have taken a particular fancy to the one held at Tanah Abang, not far from the bend in the river, where I saw my two little naiads frolicking among the rushes. Its site is a somewhat singularly chosen one for the purpose, near the entrance of the cemetery, and in the shadow of the huge old gateway, the superscription on which dedicates the place to the

repose of the dead, and to their pious memory. In its deep, dark arch, as in a black frame, is set a vista of dazzling white-blastered tombstones, pillars, and obelisks huddled into irregular groups, with here and there a figure hews in fair white marble soaring on outstretched wings, and everywhere a scintillation as of molten metal - the colourless, intolerable glare to which the fierce sunlight fires the corrugated line of the roofs protecting the monuments.

But on the hither side of the gateway there are restful shadow and coolness. Some ancient gravestones paved the ground, as if it were the floor of an old village church - bluish-grey slabs emblazoned with crests and coat-of-arms in worn away bas-relief. Heraldic beasts are still faintly discernible on some, and long Latin epitaphs, egraved in the curving characters of the seventeenth century, may be spelt out, recording names which echo down the long corridors of time in the history of the colony:

and, oddly latinized, the style and title bestowed on the deceased by the Lords Seventeen, rulers of the Honourable East India Company, the Company of Far Lands, as in the olden time it was called.

Hither, before the sun is fairly risen, come a score of native flower-sellers, shivering in the new morning air; who spread squares of matting on the soil, and, squatting down, proceed to arrange the contents of their heaped-up baskets. The bluish-grey gravestones, with the coats of arms and long inscriptions, are covered with heaps of creamy melati as delicate and sharply-defined in outline, as if they had been carved out of ivory - pink and red roses with transparent leaves, that cling to the touch - tjempakah-telor, great smooth globes of pearly whiteness - the long calices of the cambodija-blossom, in which tints of topaz-yellow and pink and purple are mixed as in an evening sky - the tall sceptre of the tuberose flower-

crowned, - and 'parchar china,' which seems to be made out of grains of pure gold.

Some who know the tastes of the 'orang blandah' have brought flowering plants to market, mostly Malmaison rose and tiny Japanese lilies, just dug up, the earth still clinging to their delicate roots: or they sit binding into stiff clumsy wreaths: wax-white gardenias, violet scabissa, and leaves as downy and grey as the wings of moths: for they have learnt that the white folks choose flowers of these dull tints to lay upon tombs of their dead. And there is one old man, brown, shrunken, and wrinkled, as if he were made of the parched earth of the cemetery, who sells handfuls of plucked-out petals, stirring up now and then, with his long finger, the soft, fragrant heap in his basket - thousands of brilliantly-coloured leaflets.

About seven o'clock, the customers, almost exclusively women, arrive, fresh from their bath in the neighbouring

river. They form picturesque groups on the sunning road, those slender figures in their bright-hued garments, pink, and red, and green, their round brown faces, and black hair still wet and shining, framed in the yellow aureole of the payong,* and spread out behind their head. And the quiet spot in the shadow of the cemetery-gate is alive with their high-pitched twittering voices, as they go about from one flowerseller to another, bargain for jessamines, orange-blossoms, and tiny pink roses, which, with deft fingers, they twist into the glossy coil of their 'kondeh,' or knotted hair.

Javanese women are most pardonably proud of their hair. Its somewhat coarse, but very long and thick and of a brilliant black, with bluish gleams in it: and it prettily frames their broad forehead with regular, well-defined curves and points. They take great care of it,

* The payong is an umbrella, quite flat when spread out, of yellow oiled paper.

too, favourably contrasting, in this respect, with European women of the lower classes, though some of their methods, it must be owned, are repugnant to European notions of decency. For, as they bathe, and sleep, and eat in public, so, in public, they cleanse each other's hair. A woman will squat down in some shady spot by the roadside, and, shaking loose her coiled-up hair, submit to the manipulations of a friend, who parts to strands with her spreadout fingers, and removes superfluities with quick monkey-like gestures. What would you have? 'The country's manner, the country's honour,' as the Dutch proverb hath it. This particular way of cleansing the hair is a national institution among the Javanese, and, as such, celebrated in the legends of the race, and in the tales of the olden time, which are still repeated, of an evening, among friends.

The scholar of the party, by the light of an oil-wick, reads from a greasy

manuscript, which he has hired for the evening at the price of one 'pitji.'[†] It is the story of the beautiful beggarmaid, who wanders from village to village. She does not know her own name or who were her parents, having, in infancy, been stolen by robbers. One day, she comes begging to the gates of the palace. The Rajah orders the guards to admit the suppliant, and his Raden-Ajoe (queen) causes a repast to be prepared for her. They are kind towards those in affliction, having known great sorrow themselves: for their only child, a daughter, mysteriously disappeared years and years ago: and not they are old and childless. The Rajah, gazing upon the stranger, frequently sighs: his daughter would have grown up to the a maiden as fair, if she had lived. And the Raden-Ajoe, taking her by the hand, bids her sit down, and unloose those glossy locks, worthy to be wreathed with the fragrant

[†] About twopence.

blossom of the asana. She herself will cleave them. Then, as she parts the long braids, ah! there upon the crown, is the cicatrice which her little daughter had! The long-lost one is found again. Then, when the exclamations of massa! and astâga! provoked by this recital of the maiden's wonderful history, have subsided, one or another of the audience, perhaps, murmurs something about fortune and good luck, and how it may be secured by the possession of one single long hair. Say it very softly, not a mortal woman's. Have you never seen the Pontianak glide by, white in the white moonlight? have you never heard her laugh, loud and long, when all was still? She is the soul of a dead virgin, whom no lover ever kissed. And now she cannot rest, because she never knew love: and she would fain win it yet: but not in kindness now, but in spite and deadly malice. She sits in the branches of trees, softly singing to herself, combing her long hair.

And when a young man, hearing her song, pauses to listen, she meets him, in the semblance of a maid fairer than the bride of the Love-god, and raises soft eyes to him and smiling lips. But, when he would embrace her, he feels the gaping wound in her back, which she had concealed under her long hair. And, as he stands speechless with horror, she breaks away from him with a long loud laugh, and cries: 'Thou has kissed the Pontianak, thou must die!' And, ere the moon is full again, his kinsmen will have brought flowers to his grave. But, if he be quick-witted and courageous, he will seize the evil spirit by her flying locks: and, if he succeeds but in plucking out one single hair, he will not die, but live to a great age, rich, honoured, and happy, the husband of a rajah's daughter and the father of princes.

Some men are fortunate, however, from their birth, and do not need the

Pontianak's long hair; that is because their own grows in a peculiar manner, from two circular spots near the crown. To the owner of such a 'double crown,' nothing adverse can ever happen. All his wishes will be fulfilled, and he will prosper in whatever matter he sets his hand to. Again, it is not men alone that are thus visibly marked by fate. In the crinklings of the hair on a horse's neck, plain signs of good or bad fortune may be read by the wise: whether the horse will be lucky and carry his rider to honour and happiness, or unlucky and maim or even kill him, may thus be known. That is the great point about a horse the way in which the hair on his neck is crinkled. If, then, you should find the auspicious sign on him, buy the animal, whatever may be the price and however old, ugly, or weak he may seem to the ignorant. But if you find the sign of ill-luck, send him away at once, and causes the marks of his hoofs to be carefully obliterated

from the path that leads to your door. If you neglect this precaution, great disaster may be brought upon you and all your house. Reflect upon this and the true significance of the history of Damocles will be revealed to you. In truth, all fortunes, good or bad, hang by single hairs.

After the bath, the Javeneze proceeds to take his morning meal; and this, again, is a public performance. The noon repast - the only solid one in the day - is prepared and eaten at home. But, for the morning and evening meals, the open air and the cuisine of the warong are preferred. The warong is the native restaurant. There are many kinds and varieties of it: from its most simple and compendious shape - two wooden cases, the one containing food, prepared and raw; the other, a chashingdish full of live coals, and a supply of crockery - to its fully-developed form, the atap-covered hut. There, a dozen, and more customers hold their symposia

presided over by the owner, who sits cross-legged on the counter amid heaps of fruit, vegetables, and confectionery. All manner of men meet here; drivers of sadoos or hack carriages, small merchants, artisans, Government clerks, policemen, water-carriers, servants, hadjis,* not to mention the 'corresponding' womankind. They talk, they talk! and they laugh! The affairs of all Batavia are discussed here - matters of business, intrigue, love, money, office, everything material to make a Javanese Decameron of, if a Doccacio would but come and put it into shape. There are several of these warongs about Tanah-Abang and the Koningsplein, and, of course, in the native quarters. But the smaller, portable ones are found everywhere: by the river-side, at the railway stations, at the sadoo-stands, along the canals, at the corners of the streets; and they seem to do a thriving business.

* Title given to those who have performed the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Each of these itinerant cooks seems to have his own place on the pavement, or in the avenue, recognised as such by the tacit consent of the others. Hither he comes trudging, in the early morning, carefully balancing his cases at the end of the long bamboo yoke, so as not to break any of the dozens of cups, glasses, and bottles on his tray: then, having disposed his commodities in the most appetizing manner, he stirs up the charcoal in the chafing-dish, and begins culinary operations. One of these is the preparation of coffee - simply boiling-water poured upon the leaves, instead of the berries, of the coffee-tree after the manner of some Arab tribes. Sometimes, however, the berries also are used, and the infusion is sweetened with lumps of the dark-brown, faintly flavoured sugar that is won from the areng-palm. Then the rice - the principal dish of this, as of any other meal - is boiled in a conical bag of plaited palm fibre: and, when ready, is made up

into heaped-up portions, with, perhaps, a bit of dried fish and some shreds of scarlet lombok[†] stuck on the top. This is for the solid part of the repast; the dessert is next thought of. It is ready in the portable cupboard - the thrifty wife of the vendor having risen long before dawn to prepare it - and is now set forth, on strips of torn-up banana-leaf, as on plats and saucers, green and white balls of rice-meal, powdered over with rasped coconut, orange cakes of Indian corn, shaking pink jellies, and slices of some tough dark-brown stuff. The cool fresh green of the banana-leaf makes the prettiest contrast imaginable to all these colours: its silky surface and faint fragrance giving, at the same time, an impression of dainty cleanliness such as could never be achieved by even the most spotless linen and china of a European dining-table.

† The seed-capsules of the red pepper-plant.

The Javanese are very frugal eaters. A handful of rice with a pinch of salt, and, perhaps, a small dried fish being sufficient for a day's ration. Of course, we, Europeans, confessedly, eat too much. But how grossly we over-eat ourselves, can only be realized on seeing a Javanese subsisting on about a-tenth part of our own daily allowance, and doing hard work on that - labouring in the field, travelling on foot for days together, and carrying heavy loads without apparent over-exertion.

However, though so abstemious in the matter of solid food, they are excessively fond of sweetmeats. I have often watched a party of grown men and women, seated on the low bench in front of a warong, and eating kwée-kwée[‡] with perfectly childish relish: or bending over a stall, gravely comparing the respective charms of white, pink, and yellow cakes; hesitating, consulting the confectioner, and at last solving the

‡ Malay for 'cakes.'

difficulty by eating a little of everything. Whatever ready money they have is spent either on personal ornaments or on sweetmeats: and, on festive occasions, they will often pawn necessary articles of furniture and dress rather than deny themselves the enjoyment of more cakes, jellies, dried fruit, and sweet syrups than they can partake of without making themselves very sick and sorry. The ancient naive idea that what is pleasant to human beings must also be acceptable to the gods, causes the Javanese to bring offerings of the rice, and the sweetmeats he is so fond of himself, to the shrine of his deities. In this, he does but as the Jews and Greek have done before him. But there is one detail about the Javanese sacrificial rites, which distinguishes them from those of every which one is never quite sure whether to call eminently spiritual, or naively selfish. Of the food offered, they believe the deity to enjoy the savour

only. The celestial being disdains the grosser material part; and the worshippers, after a decorous interval of waiting, when they may suppose the invisible and imponderable essence of the meal to have been absorbed by the good, make a cheerful repast on the visible and ponderable parts left on the altar: thus combining piety and high living in one and the same act. In Java, if anywhere, it may be said that, when the gods are feared, the people fare well!

It would be somewhat invidious to inquire whether appetite or piety be the impelling motive: but, from whatever cause, the Javanese are most assiduous in the performance of sacrificial rites. Not only are those cardinal events of human life: marriages, births and deaths, and the recurrent epochs of the agricultural year honoured with solemn observances, but any and every incident of daily existence is made the occasion for a 'sedeka,' or religious feast. 'Sedeka' is offered on setting out on

a journey, on entering into any contract or agreement, on moving into a new house, on taking possession of a newly-acquired field: the sacrifice being oftenest dedicated to the 'Danhjang dessa,' tutelary genius of towns and villages; to the spirits who render the soil fertile; to the goddess Sri, protectress of the rice crops; and to all the ancestors, up to Adam and Eve. But the worship of these benevolent deities does not exclude that of the malignant 'seitans' and 'djinnns,' the powers of the air, who are as powerful for evil as the others are for good. It is they who send plagues and pestilence, who make the babe die at its mother's breast, and make the buffalo drop dead on the half-ploughed field; who cause fires to destroy villages, and floods to sweep away the standing crops; and who seduce men to theft, deceit, robbery, and violence. Since, then, they are so powerful for harm, it is wise to be on good terms with them, and to let the Devil himself

have his meed of rice, fruit, and incense. Also, the evil spirits being exceedingly jealous, one should never glory in the possession of any desirable thing, such as riches, good health, power, or, above all, fine children: for that might provoke them into turning all these blessings into curses: whereas humility or, still better, contempt of the things men generally covet, conciliates them. This is one reason why very handsome children are often called by names implying that they are hateful, ugly, and altogether worthless. Among the saints and prophets of El-Islam, Saint Joseph is particularly venerated by matrons, who implore from him the gift of beauty for their offspring. Nor do they implore in vain. Javanese babies are absolutely charming. The brilliancy of their black eyes, and the dusky tints of their soft skin, give their round little faces a piquancy altogether fascinating. The blue eyes, fair hair, and pale skin of European children seem insipid by comparison.

And, now and then, faces are seen, akin to those that shine on Murillo's canvases, innocent and earnest, surrounding the Madonna in cloud-like clusters. But alas! these heavenly memories fade soon. The suns of a few east-monsoons utterly wither them. 'Where are the cherubs of yester year?' as Villan might vary his melancholy refrain could he see the grown-up youths and maidens of Java. Among adults, beauty is as rare as among children it is common. So that, after all, it would seem St. Joseph takes the prayer for fine *children* 'at the foot of the letter,' and answers the petition in a somewhat ironical spirit.

Though left, in almost all other respects, to chance and the guidance of its own instincts, a native child is not trusted to eat alone. The mother's idea seems to be that, if left to itself, her child would never eat at all: and that it is her plain duty to correct this mistake in nature's plan. Wherefore,

having prepared a mess of rice and banana, she lays the little thing, flat on its back, upon her knees, takes some of the food between the tips of her fingers, kneading it into a little lump, and pushes this into the baby's mouth, cramming it down the throat with her thumb, when the baby, willy nilly, must swallow it. Thus she goes on, the baby alternately screaming and choking, until she judges it has had enough - is full to the brim, so to say, and incapable of holding another grain of rice - when she will set it on its feet again, dry the tears off its round cheeks, and rock it to sleep against her breast close-folded in the long 'slendang.'

A similar principle seems to obtain in education. To watch the native schoolmaster drilling the Koran into his pupils, is to be reminded of the rice-balls and the maternal thumb. I witnessed the scene, the other day, at a little school - if a framework of four bamboo-posts and an 'atap' roof deserves that

name - in a native 'kampong' at Meester Cornelis.* I had come upon the school quite accidentally, in the course of a ramble along the river-side. As I was making my way through a plantation of thin young trees, all festooned with dangling lianas. I had been conscious for some minutes of a droning and buzzing sound, somewhere near me, and fancied it to be the humming of bees, hovering over the lantana-blossoms that covered the steep bank of the river with flames of red and orange, and filled the air with their pungent scent. But, suddenly, I caught the word 'Allah:' and, the next moment, I was standing in an open place, in the midst of some ten or twelve bamboo huts. One of these, evidently, was a school: and the droning noise I had heard proceeded from an old spectacled schoolmaster, who was reading aloud - or, rather, chanting - from a book held in his hand. A little boy stood in front of him, listening very

* A suburb of Batavia.

attentively: and, every time the old schoolmaster had completed a phrase, the child repeated it, in exactly the same sing-song, closing his eyes the while, and rocking his little body to and fro. After he had finished, another came up; there were some twelve or thirteen seated on a sort of bench, awaiting their turn: and they went through the same course of listening and repeating; the master, now and then, correcting the intonation of some phrase. It was the Koran which they were thus reciting in the Arabic language. In all probability, the master did not understand a single word of Arabic: assuredly none of the boys did. But what of that? They knew it by heart, from its very first word to its very last. They learn to (mis)pronounce the Confession of the Unity of God: and they are taught to consider themselves Moslemin. That is enough.

After the early morning meal, the Javanese begin the business of the day.

In towns, where they are debarred from their natural occupation, agriculture, and where, moreover, the Chinese artisans and shopkeepers have almost entirely ousted them from trade and commerce, the majority of the natives, men and women, are employed as domestic servants in the houses of European residents. Hence, but little is seen of them during the greater part of the day. Towards four o'clock, they re-appear, and again repair to the kali or the canal for a plunge into the tepid water. Cigarettes are lit, sirih-plugs cut up and neatly rolled, and some friendly conversation indulged in. In fine weather, games are played.

The behaviour of Javanese at play is one of the things which strike most strongly upon the Northerner's observation. There is nothing here of that vociferous enthusiasm which characterises our young barbarians at play - no shouts of exultation or defiance, no applause, no derision, no cries, no

quarrelling or noisy contest. From beginning to end of the game, a sedate silence prevails. This is not, as might be imagined, due to apathy and indifference - the Javanese are keen sportsmen, and often stake comparatively important sums on the issue of a game - but the effect of an etiquette which condemns demonstrativeness as vulgar. Outward placidity must be maintained, whatever the stress of the emotions, and whether circumstances be important or trivial. Hence, the apparent calm of Javanese at play, even when engaged in games that must excite their naturally fierce passions of ambition and envy. The winner does not seem elated: the loser is not spiteful. They are in the full sense of the word 'beaux joueurs.' During the east monsoon, when high south-easterly winds may be counted upon, flying kites is a favourite game; and not only with boys, but with grown men. Groups of them may often be seen in the squares and parks of Batavia

or in the fields near the town, floating large kites, shaped like birds and winged dragons, which, in ascending, emit a whistling sound, clear and plaintive like that of a wind-harp. They sometimes remain soaring for days together: and strains of that aerial music, attuned in sad 'minore,' float out upon every passing breath of air. And passers-by in the street look up, shading their eyes from the sun, at the bright things soaring and singing in the blue heights; and dispute much about the melodious merits of each.

The paper singing-brids, called 'swangan,' are very popular with the masses. But the true amateurs of the sport prefer another kind, the 'palembang' and 'koenchier' kites, which do not sing but fight, or, at least, in skilful hands, can be made to fight. These are made of Chinese paper, and decorated with the image of some god or hero of Javanese mythology, and the cord, of strong rameh-fibre, is coated with a paste

of glass or earthenware, pounded fine and mixed with starch. The aim of each player is to make the cord of his kite, when up in the air, cross his opponent's cord, and then, with a swift downward pull, cut it in two: a manoeuvre which requires considerable dexterity. The game is played according to strict rules and with some degree of ceremony and etiquette, as prescribed by the 'adat' - the immemorial law of courtesy which, in Java, regulates all things, from matters of life and death down to the arrangement of a girl's sash and the games which children play. When all the kites are well up in the air, tugging on the strained cords, each player chooses his antagonist. He advances to within a few paces, makes his kite approach the other's, all but touch it, swerve, and come back: having thus preferred his challenge, he retires to the place first occupied. Thither, presently, his opponent follows him: and, by the exact repetition of his manoeuvre,

signifies his acceptance of the combat; retiring afterwards in the same stately manner. And the contest begins. The agile figures of the players dart hither and thither, fitfully, with swift impulse and sudden pause, and abrupt swerve, so sure, so graceful, bending this way and that, swaying, with head thrown back and right arm flung up along the straining glistening cord, the long coils hanging from the outstretched left hand. The groups of spectators, standing well aside so as not to interfere with the swift movements of the player, gaze upward with bated breath. And, aloft, sparkling with purple and gold, their long streamers spread out upon the wind, the two kites soar and swoop, swerve, plunge a second time, slowly swim upwards again, glide a little further, and hang motionless. The thin cords are all but invisible, the thin fantastic shapes high in the air seem animated with a life of their own, wilful, untiring, swift to pursue, and quick to escape, and ardent,

full of feints and ruses. Suddenly, as one again plunges, the other, tranquilly sailing aloft, trembles, staggers, tumbles over, and then, leaping up, scuds down the wind and is gone. The severed length of cord comes down with a thud: and, as the unlucky owner darts away after the fugitive in the forlorn hope of finding it hanging somewhere in the branches of a tree, the victor lets his kite re-ascend and hover aloft, straining against the wind, tugging upon the strong shiny cord that has come off scathless from the encounter.*

The aboriginal craving for battle and mastery, which philosophers tell us, is at the bottom of all our games, is even more strongly developed in the Javanese than in the Caucasian. But the race is not an athletic one; immemorial traditions of decorum condemn hurry

* For the technical details about this game, I am indebted to an article by M. de Serière, published in the *Tydechrift voor Nederlandech Indie*, February, 1873.

and violence of movement; and active games, such as this of flying kites, are the exception. Even at play, the Javanese loves repose: and, when gratifying his combative instincts, is content to fight by proxy.

Cocks and crickets are the chosen deputies of the town-folk in this matter, and are objects of as much enthusiastic loyalty on the part of Javanese members of the fancy as ever bull-fighter won in Spain or prize-fighter in England. The Government forbids these cock and cricket fights on account of the gambling to which they invariably give rise. But the police is not omniscient or ubiquitous. Where there is a will, there is a way: and, in hidden corners, cocks continue to hack, and crickets to bite and kick each other to the greater amusement of native sporting circles. On the training of a game-cock, his owner spends much time, care, and forethought. The bird's diet is regulated to a nicety: so much boiled

rice per diem, so much water, so much meat hashed fine and mixed with medicinal herbs. Once a week, a bath is given him, after which he is taken in his coop to a sunny place to dry: and he is subjected to a regular course of massage at the hands of his trainer, who, taking the bird into his lap, with careful finger and thumb, 'pichits' or shampoos the muscles of neck, wings, and legs, to make them both supple and strong. Connoisseurs arrive from compounds and 'kampongs' to exchange criticisms. The age, strength, and agility of rival birds are discussed at length and compared: and, finally, when there are a sufficient number in good condition, a match is arranged.

The amateurs arrive on the spot with their birds cooped up in a sort of cage of banana-leaves, the head shorn of its comb, and the tail protruding out of narrow apertures. A ring is formed, every one squatting down, with his cage in front of him: and the birds are taken out

and passed round for general inspection. After careful comparison and deliberation, two of approximately equal strength are selected as antagonists: and the umpire, whose office it is to arm the birds with the trenchant steel spurs, further equalizes chances by attaching those of the weaker party to the spot where they will prove most effective: high up the leg. The owners then take up each his own bird, allow the two to peck at each other once or twice: put them down upon the ground again: and, at the signal give by the umpire, let go. The cocks fight furiously. Generally, one of the two is killed: and, almost inevitably, both are cruelly injured by the long, two-edged knives attached to their legs in place of the cut-off spurs.

Cricket fights do not seem quite as brutal: the natural weapons of the little combatants, at least, are not artificially added to; and victory, it appears, is as often achieved by

adroitness and speed as by mere force. It is said that even more patience is required to train a cricket than to train a game-cock; and the process certainly seems elaborate. First, there is the catching of the 'changkrik.' For this, the amateur goes, after nightfall, to some solitary spot out in the fields or woods - preferably near the grave of some Muslim saint, or royal hero: or in the shadow of some sacred tree. The 'changkriks' caught in consecrated places are much superior to those of the ditch and garden: they participate in the virtue of their habitat. There, then, the amateur builds some stones into a loose heap, hiding in the midst of it a decoy 'changkrik' in a little bamboo cage, and retreats. When, a little before dawn, he again approaches the spot, treading cautiously, and shading the light of his little lantern, he is sure to surprise quite a company of crickets gathered around the mound and crouch-

ing under the stones, whither they have been lured by the shrill song of the captive insect; and, if he is adroit, may catch a score at a time. Only the finest and strongest of these he retains: and straightway he begins the work of education. This is not easy; for the cricket is among the most liberty-loving of animals, and, at first, utterly refuses to be tamed. Unless the bamboo, of which his little cage is made, be very hard and fine, he manages to gnaw his way through it; and, when baulked in this attempt, tries to shatter the walls of his prison by battering them with his horny heed, never ceasing until he has killed or, at any rate, stunned himself. In order to tame him, his trainer throws the 'changrik' into a basin full of water, and there lets him struggle and kick until he is half-drowned and quite senseless; then, fishing out the little inert body, he puts it in the palm of his hand, and, with a tiny picee of cotton-wool fastened to a

‘lidi,’* begins to stroke and rub it, in a kind of lilliputian massage. Then pulling out a long lank hair from the shock hidden under his ‘kain kapala’† he delicately ties it round one of the cricket's hind legs, and hangs it to a nail, in some cool draughty place, where the air may revive him. After a couple of hours, perhaps, the tiny creature, dangling by one leg, begins to stir. It is then taken down, warmed in the hollow of the hand, encouraged to stand upon its legs, and crawl a little way, and, finally, replaced in its bamboo cage. It does not again try to escape.

When it has thus been brought to the proper frame of mind, its real education begins. With a very fine brush, made of grass-blossoms, the trainer tickles its head, side, and back: a mettlesome individual immediately begins to ‘crick’ angrily, and to snap at

* Lidl: - Fibre from the stalk of the palm leaf.

† Kain kapala: - Head-kerchief.

the teasing brush. After some time, he flies at the brush as soon as he sees it, hanging on to it with its strong jaws, as to a living thing. This shows he is in good condition for fighting. He is now, for some days, fed upon rice sprinkled with cayenne-pepper, to prick him in his courage: and is taken to the arena. His antagonist is there, in his narrow bamboo cage, quivering with impatience under the touch of his trainer's brush of grass-blossoms: the cages are placed over against one another, and are opened, and the two 'changkriks' rush at each other. The one who is first thrown, or who turns tail and flies, is beaten: and great is the glory of the victor. On fighting crickets as well as on cocks, the Javanese often stake comparatively important sums. And there is always a chance that the quarrel of the former may be fought out by the latter not without serious consequences.

Glimpses of Native Life in the Streets.

To all other pleasures, the Javanese prefers that of witnessing a performance of the wayang, the native theatre. He is an artist at heart, loving sweet sounds, graceful movements, and harmonies of bright colour. And all these he may enjoy at the wayang, where, in the pauses of the drama, ballads are sung to the tinkling accompaniment of the 'gamellan,' and splendidly-arrayed dancers 'put forth the charm of waving paces and of swaying hands.' There are several kinds of 'wayangs,' each having its own range of subjects and style of acting: the most ancient as well as

the most popular, however, is the 'wayang poerwa,' the miniature stage on which the lives and adventures of Hindoo heroes, queens, and saints are acted over again by puppets of gilt and painted leather, moving in the hands of the 'dalang,' who recites the drama.

The 'wayang poerwa' is best described as a combination of a 'Punch-and-Judy' show and a kind of 'Chinese shadows:' and - as with the famed shield which was silver on one side and gold on the other - its appearance depends upon the standpoint of the spectator. A puppet show to those in front of the screen, where the gaudily-painted figures are fixed in a piece of banana-stem; it is a Chinese lantern to those on the other side, who see the shadows projected on the luminous canvas. According to ancient custom, the men sit in front and see the puppets: the women have their place behind the screen, and look on at the play of the shadows. In fully-equipped wayangs, us many as

two hundred of these puppets are found, each with its own particular type and garb, characteristic of the person represented.

Certain conventional features, however, are repeated throughout as symbols of their moral disposition. Long thin noses continuing the line of the sloping forehead, narrow, slanting eyes, and delicate mouths, firmly shut, indicate wisdom and a gentle disposition; a bulging forehead, short thick nose, round eyes and gaping mouth, indicate lawlessness and violence. No difference is made between the portraiture of gods and those of mortals: but the Titans are distinguished by the size and unwieldiness of their body, their staring eyes, and huge teeth, sometimes resembling tusks. The bodies and faces are indifferently black, blue, white, flesh-coloured, or gilt: the colour of the face, moreover, often being a different one from that of the rest of the person. And all the figures are taken in profile.

The stage on which these puppets are

shown consists of an upright screen of white sarong cloth. A lamp hangs from the top: at the bottom, it has a transverse piece of banana stem, into the soft substance of which the puppets may easily be fixed by means of the long sharp point into which their supports terminate. The centre of the screen is occupied by the 'gunungan,' the conventionalized representation of a wooded hill, which symbolizes the idea of locality in general, and stands for a town, a palace, a lake, a well, the gate of Heaven, the stronghold of the Titans, in short, for any and every place mentioned in the course of the drama. It thus does the duty of the modern 'coulisse,' or, better still, of the Shakspearian sign board which apprised the spectators that 'Thys was a wode,' or 'Thys was a tonne.' Among the further accessories of the wayang are a set of miniature weapons, shields, swords, spears, javelins, and 'krisen,' exactly copied after those now

or formerly in use among the Javanese, and often of the most exquisite workmanship; destined to be handled by the gods and the heroes to whose hands they are very ingeniously adapted. Nor should such items as horses and chariots be forgotten. To manoeuvre this lilliputian company of puppets made into actors is the difficult task of the 'dalang.'

In continuance of the Punch-and-Judy comparison, the 'dalang' should be called the 'showman' of the wayang. But he is a showman on a grand scale. Not only does he make his puppets act their parts of deities, heroes, and high-born beauties according to the strict canons of Javanese dramatic art, observant at the same time of the exigencies of courtly etiquette: but he must know by heart the whole of those endless epics, the recitation of which occupies several nights: sometimes he himself dramatizes some popular myth or legend, and he must always be ready at a moment's notice

to imagine new and striking episodes, adapt a scene from another play to the one he is performing, and improvise dialogues in keeping with the character of the dramatis personae. He should have an ear for music and a good voice, and possess some knowledge of Kawi to give at all well the songs written in that ancient tongue, which announce the arrival of the principal characters on the stage. Moreover, he conducts the 'gamellan,' the native orchestra which accompanies every representation of the wayang: and finally he orders the symbolical dance, which gorgeously-attired 'talèèks' execute in the pauses of the drama. Manager, actor, musician, singer, reciter, improvisator, and all but playwright, he is, in himself, a pleiad of artists.

But the 'dalang's' reward is proportionate to these exertions. He and his art are alike held in almost superstitious respect. No one dreams of criticizing his performances. If he wishes

to travel, not a town or hamlet but will give him an enthusiastic welcome. And, at home, he enjoys that princely prerogative: immunity from taxes, his fellow-citizens discharging his obligations in requital of the pleasure he procures them by his wayang-performances. If nothing else were known about them, this one trait, it seems to me, would be sufficient to prove the Javanese to be a people capable of true enthusiasm, and a generous conception of life. There is something Greek in this notion that holds the artist acquitted of all other duties towards the State, if he fulfils the supreme one of giving joy.

At the same time that it is the chief national amusement, the wayang-show is, in a sense, a religious act, performed in honour of the deity, and to invoke the blessing of the gods and the favour of the 'danhjang dessa' and all other good spirits upon the giver of the entertainment. The baleful influence of the Evil Eye, also, is averted by nothing so

surely as by a wayang-performance; wherefore, no enterprise of any importance should be entered upon without one of these miniature dramatical representations being given. Domestic feasts, such as are held at the birth of a child, or at his circumcision, seldom lack this additional grace. And a marriage at which Brama, Indra, and, above all, Ardjuna, the beloved of women, had not been present in effigy, would be considered ill-omened from the beginning. As soon as it becomes known that some well-known 'dalang' will hold a wayang-performance at such and such a house,* the village folk from miles around come trooping toward the spot, trudging for hours, or even days, along the sun-scorched, dust-choked highroads, an enormous, mushroom-shaped hat on their head, and a handful of boiled rice, neatly folded in a green leaf, tucked into their girdle. At one of the

* The wayang-screen is erected in the open air, in front of the house.

numerous warongs or shops temporarily erected near the spot, where the wayang is to be performed, they buy some bananas and a cup of hot water, flavoured, perhaps, with green leaves of the coffee-plant, and sweetened with the aromatic areng-sugar. And, provided with these simple refreshments, they squat down upon the ground - the men on that side of the wayang-screen where they will see the puppets, the women on the other where the shadows are seen - and prepare to restfully enjoy the drama.

Already the last streaks of crimson and gold-shot opal have faded in the western skies, and the grey of dusk begins to deepen into nocturnal blackness. The evening-breeze is astir in the tall tree-tops, waking a drowsy bird here and there among the branches; it chirps sleepily and is still again. Aloft, a single star is seen limpid and tremulous, like a dewdrop about to fall. And the garrulous groups around the wayang-screen gradually cease their talk.

Now the 'dalang,' rising, disposes, on an improvised altar, the sacrificial gifts - fruit, and yellow rice, and flowers; and lights the frankincense that keeps off evil spirits. Then, as the column of odoriferous smoke ascends, sways, and disperses through the thin, cool air, a volley of thunderous sound bursts from the 'gamellan,' and the dancers appear.

Slowly they advance, in hand-linked couples, gliding rather than walking, with so gentle a motion that it never stirs the folds of their trailing robes, gathered at the waist by a silver clasp. Their bare shoulders, anointed with boreh,[†] gleam duskily above the purple slendang that drapes the bosom. The round blunt-featured faces are set in a multicoloured coruscation of jewellery, a play of green and blue and ruby-red sparks, that chase each other along the coiled strands of the necklace and the trembling ear-pendants, and shine with a steadier light in the brow-encircling tiara.

[†] A fragrant yellow unguent.

A broad silver band, elaborately ornamented, clasps the upper arm: a narrower bracelet encircles the wrist: the fingers are a-glitter with rings.

Arrived in front of the wayang-screen they pause; with the tips of their fingers, they take hold of the long, gold-embroidered scarfs and stand expectant of the music that is to accompany their dancing. The 'gamellan' intones a plaintive melody: a medley of tinkling, and fluting, and bell-like sounds, sounded by the long-drawn notes of the 'rebab,' the Persian viol. And, following the impulse of its rhythm, the dancers raise their hands making the scarf to float along the extended arm, waving about the glittering silk and draping themselves in its folds as in a veil. Then, standing with feet turned slightly inwards, and, motionless, they begin to turn and twist the body, bending this way and that way, with the swaying movement of thin young trees that bow beneath the passing breeze, tossing their branches.

And, with arms extended and hands spread out, they mime a ballad which some of their companions are singing, the prologue to the play. This may be a fragment of that ancient Hindoo poem, the Mahâ-Bhârata; or a myth of which Brama, Vishnu, and Shiwa are the heroes, such as these are recorded in the Manik Maja; or, again, some episode of the Ramayana: the 'wayang poerwa' being dedicated to the representation of these three epics. A favourite subject popular with the men on account of the many battles occurring in the course of the drama and with the women because Ardjuna, the gentle hero, has the leading part, is the rebellion and defeat of the Titans.

In the first scene on either hand of the 'gunungan,' the gods appear: Indra and Brama hold anxious counsel as to what course of action shall be pursued, now that the audacious Titans have dared to march against the abode

of the gods; and already their armies occupy the four quarters of Heaven; and the insolent Raksasa, their king and general, fears not the arms of the gods, their deadly swords, and intolerable lances. For, his huge body - all, but one hidden spot - is invulnerable. And none may conquer him, expect a mortal hero, pure of all passion and sin.

Sorrowfully, Brahma lifts his hands.

... Such a one exists not.

But Indra bethinks him of Ardjuna, the gentle prince, who, having utterly forsworn the glories of warfare, the pride of worldly rank and station, and the love of women, has retired to a cavern on Mount Indra Kila: and under the name of Sang Parta - assumed instead of the kingly one of Ardjuna - leads a life of prayer and penitence, mortifying his flesh, and still keeping his constant thought fixed on Shiwa, the giver of Victory. 'Maybe Sang Parta is the hero destined to overcome Niwatakawaka.'

And the other gods, divided between hope and fear, answer: 'Let us put his virtue to the test, that we may know surely.' Among the heavenly nymphs, 'the widadari,' there are seven, the fairest of all, famous for many victories over saintly priests and anchorites, whom, by a smile, they caused to break the vows they had vowed, and forsake the God to whom they had dedicated themselves. These now are sent to tempt Ardjuna. If he withstand them he will be, indeed, victor of the God of Love.

The nymphs descend on Mount Indra Kila. 'The wild kine and the deer of the mountain raise their head to gaze after them as they frolic over the dew-lit grass. The cinnamon trees put forth young shoots, less red than the maidens' lips. And the boulders, strewn around Sang Parta's cavern, glisten to welcome them, as, one by one, they pass the dark entrance.' But the hermit, absorbed in pious contemplations, never turns his averted

head, never looks upon the lovely once, nor deigns to listen to their wooing songs. And those seven fair queens are fain to depart, hiding their faces, and smarting with the pain of unrequited love.

But the gods, beholding them come back thus shamefaced and sad, rejoice exceedingly. Now, to put Sang Parta's courage to the test, Shiwa, the terrible, assumes mortal shape; and, descending on Indra Kila, defies the hermit. They fight, and Sang Parta is victor. Then Shiwa, revealing himself, praises the anchorite for his piety and his valour: and, for a reward, bestows upon him his own never-failing spear. After which he returns to the council of the gods, bidding them be of good cheer, for now it cannot be doubted any longer that Sang Parta is the hero destined to conquer the unconquerable Raksasa.

He is now summoned to the presence of the gods, and receives their command to go forth and slay Raksasa. A

goddess arms him: and a nymph whispers into his ear the secret on which the Titan's life depends; his vulnerable spot is the tip of his tongue. Sang Parta now resumes his real name: and, as Ardjuna, goes to seek Niwâtakawata. After many wanderings and perilous adventures, in which Shiwa's miraculous spear stands him in good stead, he finally meets his destined antagonist, he finally meets his destined antagonist, and defies him to single combat. For a long time they fight, each in turn seeming victor and vanquished, until, at last, Ardjuna, feigning to have received a deadly thrust, sinks down. And, as Raksasa, skipping about in insolent joy, shouts out a defiance of the gods. Ardjuna hurls his spear at the monster's wide-opened mouth and pierces his tongue, and the blasphemer drops down dead. The other Titans, seeing their king fallen, fly, and the gods are save. But Ardjuna is rewarded for his exploits, the grateful gods bestowing upon him seven surpassingly fair

‘widadari,’ a kingdom, and the power of working miracles.

This drama, called Ardjuna's marriage feast, is a comparatively short one, which may be performed in the course of one night. The majority of wayang-plays, however, require three or four nights, or even a whole week, for an adequate representation; and there are some which last for a fortnight. They consist of fourteen, fifteen, or even more acts. The number of dramatis personae is practically unlimited; new heroes and heroines constantly appear upon the scene; and, to render confusion still more confounded, they again and again change their names. Time is annihilated; the babe, whose miraculous birth is represented in the beginning of an act, having arrived at man's estate before the end of it, and one generation succeeding another in the course of the play. Generally, too, no trace of any regular plan is discoverable Incident follows incident, and intrigue

on disconnected intrigue; and, at every turn, fresh dramatic elements are introduced. So that, as the drama ceases - for it cannot in any proper sense be said to finish - characters whose very names have not been mentioned before, are making love, waging war, and holding desultory counsel about events absolutely irrelevant, and between which and those represented in the beginning of the drama, it is all but impossible to find the slightest connection.

To a Javanese, these endless plays hardly seem long enough. He never wearies of the innumerable adventures of these innumerable heroes, Titans, queens, and gods, though he has seen them represented ever since he was a child, and probably knows them by heart, almost as well as the 'dalang' himself. He has no prejudices in favour of any regular intrigue, with beginning, catastrophe, and end. And, as for improbabilities, many strange

things happen, day by day. And, as for time, was not the Prophet carried up to Heaven, and did he not sojourn among the blessed for a thousand years: and then, again, did he not return to Mecca, and, entering his chamber, found the ewer, which he had upset in his heavenward flight, not yet emptied of its contents? Such considerations cannot spoil his enjoyment of the wayang. Night after night, the Javanese sit, listening to the grandiloquent speeches of the heroes and their courting of queens and nymphs; discussing their opinions and principles, moral and otherwise: and, amid bursts of laughter, applauding any witticism, with which the 'dalang' may enliven his somewhat monotonous text. And as, at last, they regretfully rise in the reddening dawn that causes the wayang lights to pale, visions of that heroic and beautiful world accompany them on their homeward way. The maidens would hardly be amazed to behold Ardjuna slumbering under the blos-

soming citron bush. And the young men think of Palosara, who, by his unassisted arm, won a royal bride and the kingdom of Ngastina.

For details about the wayang, I am indebted to that standard-work 'De Wayang' by Serrurier; and, for the translation of the drama of Ardjuna's marriage-feast, to Professor Veth's Java, and to essays by Mechelen and Meyer.

On the Beach.

THE million-footed crowd of travelling humanity has trodden Tandjong Priok out of all beauty and pleasantness. It is nothing now but a heap of dust rendered compact by a coating of basalt and bricks, and bearing on its flat surface some half-dozen square squat sheds, the whitewashed walls of which glare intolerably in the sunlight that beats upon that barren place all day long. But, a little further down the shore, eastwards from the harbour, the natural beauty of the country re-asserts itself. There are wide, shallow bays, where the water sleeps in the shadow

of overhanging trees: sandy points, one projecting beyond the other across shimmering intervals of sea: and, alternating with open spaces where a few bamboo huts are clustered together amidst a plantation of young banana trees, great tracts of woodland come down to the very margin of the water. In one place where the narrow beach broadens out a little, some half-dozen shanties, one of which might, by courtesy, be styled a bathing-lodge, have found standing-room between the wood and the water. Some homesick exile from France has christened the handful of bamboo posts and atap leaves: *Petite Trouville*. In the dry season, when Batavia is parched with heat and choked with dust, people come hither for a plunge into the clear cool waves, and for some hours of blissful idleness in the shadow of the broad-branched nyamploeng trees, which mirror their dark leafage and clusters of white wax-like blossoms in the unruffled tide.

The day some friends took me to see the place, was one of the last in April, when the rains were not quite over yet. We had left Batavia at half-past-five, when the Koningsplein was still white with rolling mists and the stars had but just begun to fade in the greyish sky. The train had borne us along some distance on our way to Tandjong Priok, ere the sun rose. Rather, ere it appeared. There had been no heralding change of colour in the eastern sky; only the uncertain light that lay over the landscape had gradually strengthened; and, all at once, at some height above the horizon a triangular splendour burst forth, a great heart of Flame which was the sun. The pools and tracts of marshy ground flooded by the recent rains were ridged with long straight parallel lines of red. The dark tufts of palm trees here and there shone like burnished bronze. And where they grew denser, in groups and little groves, the blue mist hanging between

the stems was pierced by lances of reddish light.

At Tandjong Priok station, we alighted amidst a crowd of natives, dock-labourers and coal-heavers, on their way to the ships. They took the road in true native style, one marching behind the other, laughing and talking as they went. And we followed them, in our jolting sadoos, along a sunny avenue, planted with slim young trees, as far as to the bend of the road: then we left it and entered the wood on the right, which we had for some time been skirting.

A rough track led through it. Our sadoos jolted worse than ever in the ruts left by the broad-wheeled carts of the peasantry. We alighted and made our way as best we could through the grass-grown clearings of the jungle. The sun was but just beginning to warm the air. White shreds of mist still hung among the tree-stems, and swathed the brushwood. The grass

underfoot was white with dew, glistening with myriads of brilliant little points where the yellow sunlight touched it. The broadly curved banana leaves, and the feathery tufts of the palm trees overhead began to grow transparent, standing out in light green against the shining whiteness of the sky. There was an inexpressible vitality and exhilaration in all things, in the fine pure air, cool as well water, in the sparkle of the dew-lit grass, in the bushes with large round drops trembling on every leaf, in the pungent scent of the lantana that on every side displayed its clusters of pink mauve and orange red blossoms. It was good to feel wet through on the tramp through the drenched tangle, to feel the blood tingling in the finger tips, the lungs full of quickening air, and the sunshine right in your eyes. It was good to be alive.

After a while, we came to a little campong, some five or six bamboo huts, grouped together in an open space

of the wood. Some naked children were playing around a fire of sticks and dry leaves. Under a shed, a woman stood pounding rice in a hollowed-out wooden block, whilst another carrying a child in her slendang, talked to her. There were no men about, save one old fellow, white-haired and decrepit, who sat in his doorway, mending nets. In that sunny forest clearing, that was the one thing suggestive of the neighbouring sea.

Past the village there are several tanks of brackish water, where fish is bred for Chinese consumption. Tangles of green weed floated on the surface, which, in places, seemed to be filmed over with oily colours. A man walked along the shore, dredging. Beyond, the wood recommences. But it is less dense here; great patches of sunlight lie on the ground, and the sky shows everywhere through the stems. As we issued out of the dappled shade, we beheld the sea.

Calm and clear, the sea lay under the calm clear sky, a silvery splendour suffused in places with the faintest blue. Not a ripple disturbed the lustrous smoothness. Only, out in the open, the water heaved with a scarcely perceptible swell, its rise and subsidence revealed by a rhythmic pulsation of colour - streaks of pale turquoise breaking out upon the pearly monochrome, kindling into azure and gradually growing faint and fading again. To the westward the mole of Tandjong Priok and the two bar-iron light-towers, standing seemingly close together, had dwindled to a narrow dark line with, at its extreme point, two little black filigree figures delicately defined against the shimmering white of sea and sky. Near the shore, a fishing-prahu, its slight hull almost disappearing under the immense white wing-like sail, lay still above its motionless reflection. In the eastern distance, a group of islands, ethereal as cloudlets, hung

where the stars of the sky and the shimmer of the sky flowed together into, one tremulous splendour, dazzling and colourless. The beach with a nipah-thatched hut on the right and a group of spreading njamploeng trees on the left, framed the radiant vista with sober browns and greens. The morning was still, without a breath of air; and, all around, the foliage hung motionless. Yet, as we walked over the fine grey sand, which already felt hot under foot, there came drifting down to us now and again, whiffs of a sweet subtle fragrance, as of March violets; and transparant blossoms, fluttering down, whitened the shell-strewn beach. The njamploengs were in flower.

Looking at that dark-leaved grove on the margin of the water, I thought I had seldom seen nobler trees. Not very tall; but round and broad, great hemispheres of foliage squarely supported on column-like trunks. In their general air and hearing, in the character of the

oblong leaves and in their elegant poise upon the branch, they somewhat resemble the walnuts of northern countries. The colour is even richer, a vigorous bluish green, swarthy at a distance; and, when seen near at hand, as full of tender beryl-tints as a field of young oats, with watery gleams and glories playing through the depths of the foliage. For a crowning grace, the njamploeng has its blossoms, fragrant, white, and of a wax-like transparency - cups of milky light. Standing under an ancient tree, that overhangs the water with trailing branches and with a tangle of wave-washed roots, I could see the luminous clusters shining in that dome of dusky leafage, as stars do in the evening sky. And the water in the shadow gleamed with pale reflections.

The sea that morning passed through a succession of chromatic changes. The silvery smoothness of an hour ago, had been broken by a ripple that came and went in dashes of ruffled ultra-marine.

Then, here and there, purplish patches appeared, which presently began to spread until they touched, and flowed together, and the sea, all along the shore, seemed turned to muddy wine whilst, out in the open, it sparkled in a rich blue-green, rippling and flickering. And noon, the purplish brown had disappeared, and the emerald-like tints had faded and changed to an uncertain olive-green. The sky as yet retained its morning aspect, cloudless and shimmering with a white brilliancy as if the stars of the Milky Way had been dissolved in it. Under that enduring paleness, the fitful colouring and flushing of the sea seemed all the stranger.

As the day advanced, the heat had steadily increased, and, at last, it was intolerable,. About ten, when we swam out into the sea, the water, even where it grew deeper, felt tepid: a little after noon, it was warm. The windless air quivered. And the sand was so hot as to scorch our bare feet when we

attempted to step out of the circular shadow of the njamploengs, where a little coolness as yet remained.

A dead quiet lay on sea and land. There was neither wind nor wave; not the thinnest shadow of a sailing cloud, to temper for an instant, the unbearable glare. The foliage overhead was the one spot of colour in a white-hot universe. There must be cicadas among the leaves. I had heard them trilling, earlier in the day: but the heat had reduced them to silence. And the black ants, crawling among the roots, and in the fissures of the rough rind of the trees seemed to move but listlessly. From where I sat, I could see, framed by the circular sweep of the hanging foliage, a stretch of beach, with some huts amidst a banana plantation, and, further down, a native boat lying keel upwards upon the sand. A lean dog crouched in the shadow, panting with tongue hanging out. And no other living creature was to be seen.

The afternoon was far gone before there came a change, imperceptible at first, a gradual sobering of colour, and a growing definiteness in the contours of trees and bushes. Then, the air began to cool down. The horizon grew distinct, a curve of rich green against sunlit blue. A short ripple roughened the water and, suddenly, the breeze sprang up, driving before it a wave that hurried and rose, and broke in foam upon the beach. The tide was coming in.

It was as if the inspiriting hour, that changed the face of land and sea, made itself felt also in the little brown huts under the trees, stirring up the folk into briskness and activity. Merry voices and the cries of children mingled with the sound of hammer strokes, reverberating along the wooded beach. Among the trees, I could discern the figure of a man bending over his boat, hammer in hand; and a woman coming out of her door with a bundle of clothes under one arm, Where the lengthening sha-

dow of the njampoeng trees fell on the sunny water, two young girls were bathing: somewhat further down, a swarm of naked urchins waded through the shallows, in search of mother-of-pearl. The yellow sunlight shone on their little brown bodies, and made the ripples sparkle around them as they splashed hither and thither, feeling about with their feet for the flat sharp shards which the tide leaves buried in the sands, and standing still for an instant. When they had found one, they balanced on one foot, whilst, between the clenched toes of the other foot with a supple, monkey-like movement, they picked up the shiny fragment. And, presently, along came an old man, in a straw topee and a faded reddish sarong, who entered the sea, and waded towards the spot, where, that morning, - when it was as yet dry land - he had erected his 'tero' the pliable bamboo palisade, which, arranged in the shape of a V, with the opening towards the

shore, serves as a trap for fish. The hurdle was all but overflowed now, only the points of the bamboo stakes emerging above the rising tide, like the rigging of some wrecked and sunken ship. The old man gave it a shake, to assure himself of having driven it deep enough into the sand, to withstand the impact of the waves: and, satisfied upon this point, limped away again, with the air of a man who had finished his day's work. He might lie down on his baleh-baleh now, and peacefully smoke his cigarette. Whilst he was taking his ease, the sea would provide for his daily fish. In a few minutes, the tide would have submerged his 'tero,' and the heedless fish would swim across it: and, as the water ebbed away again, they would be driven against the converging sides of the lattice-work, and, presently, be left gasping upon the bars. Then, the women of the village would come with their baskets, and gather the living harvest, as they might a windfall of ripe

fruit; and his grandson, out at sea now, with the other young and strong men, throwing out the nets, and drawing them up again, heavy with fish, would come and hang two full baskets to his bending yoke, and with the fire-car go to Batavia, there to sell the fish for much money, a handful of copper doits. Even, if he had caught 'kakab' which the orang blandah likes, and 'gabus,' of which the rich Chinese are fond, the boy might bring him home some silver coins. And his grand-daughter would salt and dry in the sun the smaller fry, and make 'ikan kring' for him and all the household.

Happy the man who has dutiful children! In his old age, and when he is able no longer to earn his sustenance, yet he will not want; he need not beg, nor borrow from the kampong folk; and he will not be tempted to invoke Kjai Belorong, the wicked goddess of wealth, who, in exchange for riches, demands mens' souls. Do not all in this

kampong know of Pah-Sidin, and what became of him after he had prayed to the evil sprite? He was a poor man, Pah-Sidin, unlucky in whatever he undertook, and so utterly ignorant as not to know a single 'ilmu' with which to conjure good fortune. So that, though his wife worked from morning till night, weaving and batikking sarongs, and tending the garden and the field, and selling fruit and flowers, things went from bad to worse with him. One day, there was not a grain of rice left in the house, and the green crop in the field was the property of an usurer. His wife, weeping, said: 'O Pah-Sidin! how now shall we feed and clothe our little ones, Sidin, and all the others?' But he, vexed with new importunities, and weary of fasting and going about in faded clothes, without a penny to buy sirih or go to cock-fights, said: 'Be silent! for I know where to find great wealth.' Then he went away, and walked along the shore for many

days, until he came to a place where there were great rocks, and waves in which the water made a sound as of thunder. Here lives the dread goddess, Njai Loro Kidul, the Virgin Queen of the Southern Seas, whom the gatherers of edible birds' nests invoke, honouring her with splendid sacrifices before they set out on their perilous quest. And here, too, lives her servant, wicked Kjai Belorong, the money-goddess.

Pah-Sidin, standing in the entrance of a black and thunderous cave, strewed kanangan flowers, and melatih, and yellow champaka, and burnt costly frankincense, and, as the cloud of fragrant smoke ascended, he fell on his face, and cried: 'Kjai Belorong! I invoke thee! I am poor and utterly wretched! Do thou give me money, and I will give thee my soul, O Kjai Belorong!' Then, a voice, which caused the blood to run cold in his veins, answered: 'I hear thee, Pah-Sidin.' He arose, trembling, and, as he turned his head, saw that the

cave was a house, large and splendid, and full of golden treasure. But, as he looked closer, behold! it was built of human bodies; floor, walls, and roof all made of living men, who wept and groaned, crying: 'Alas, alas! who can endure these unendurable pains!' And the horrible voice, speaking for the second time, asked: 'Pah-Sidin, hast thou courage?'

Pah-Sidin, at first, would like to have fainted with horror. But soon, reflecting how he was young and strong, and the hour of his death far off as yet, and hoping, also, that, in the end, he might be able to deceive Kjaï Belorong and save his soul, and considering that, in the meanwhile, he would enjoy great honour and riches, he answered; 'Kjaï Belorong, I have courage!' And the voice spoke for the third time: 'It is well! Now go back to thy own house; for, soon, I will come to thee.'

So, Pah-Sidin returned to his house, and waited for Kjaï Belorong, saying

nothing of the matter to his wife. And in the night, she came, and sat upon the baleh-baleh, and said: 'Embrace me, Pah-Sidin, for now I am thy love,' Pah-Sidin would willingly have kissed her, for she seemed as fair as the bride of the love-god. But, looking down, he saw that, instead of legs and feet, she had a long scaly tail; then he was afraid, and would have fled. But Kjaï Belorong, seizing him in her arms, said: 'If thou but triest to escape, I will kill thee,' and she pressed him to her bosom so violently that the breath forsook his body, and he lay as one dead. Then she loosed her grasp, and disappeared, rattling her tail. When Pah-Sidin returned to consciousness, he saw, in the faint light of the dawn, the baleh-baleh all strewn with yellow scales, and each scale was a piece of the finest gold.

Pah-Sidin now was as rich as the richest Rajah: he had a splendid house, with granaries and stables, fine horses, great plantations of palms and jambus and

all other kinds of fruit, and rich *sawahs* that stretched as far as a man on horseback could see. He repudiated his wife, who was no longer young, and was worn with much care and labour, and married the daughter of a wealthy Rajah, and three other maidens, as fair as *bidadaris*. And, whenever he wished for more money. Kjaï Belorong came to him in the night, and embraced him, and gave him more than he had asked for. And thus the years went by in great glory and happiness, until the hair of his head began to grow white, and his eyes lost their brilliancy, and his black and shining teeth fell out. Then, one night, Kjaï Belorong came to his couch, unsummoned, looked at him, and said: 'Pah-Sidin! the hour is come. Follow me, and I will make thee the threshold of my palace.' But Pah-Sidin made answer, and said: 'Alas! Kjaï Belorong! look at me, how lean I am! my ribs almost pierce through the skin of my side. Assuredly, thou

wilt hurt thy tail in passing over me, if thou makest me the threshold of thy house. Rather take with thee my plough-boy, who is young, and plump, and smooth!’

Then Kjaï Belorong took the plough-boy. And Pah-Sidin married a new wife, and lived merrier than before. Thus ten years went by in great glory and happiness. But, on the last night of the tenth year, Kjaï Belorong again came to his couch, unsummoned, and looked at him, and said: ‘Pah-Sidin! the hour is come. Follow me, and I will make thee the pillar of my palace.’ But Pah-Sidin made answer and said: ‘Alas! Kjaï Belorong! look at me, how weak I am! my shoulders are so narrow, I can scarcely keep the badju (jacket) from gliding down. Assuredly, thy roof will fall in and crush thee, if thou makest me the pillar of thy house. Rather take with thee my youngest brother, who is strong, and tall, and broad of shoulders!’

Then Kjaï Belorong took the brother. But Pah-Sidin married yet another new wife, and lived even merrier than hitherto. Thus ten more years went by in great glory and happiness. But, on the last night of the tenth year, Kjaï Belorong for the third time came to his couch, unsummoned, looked at him and spoke: 'Pah-Sidin! the hour is come. Follow me, and I will make thee the hearth-stone of my palace?' And Pah-Sidin made answer, and said: 'Alas! Kjaï Belorong! look at me, how cold I am and covered all over with a clammy sweat! Assuredly thy fire will smoulder and go out if thou makest me the hearth-stone of thy house. Rather take with thee my eldest son, Sidin, who is healthy, and warm, and dry!' But the wicked Kjaï Belorong, in a voice which made Pah-Sidin's heart stand still, screamed: 'I will take none but thee, old man! and, since thou art so cold and wet, I will bid my imperishable fire warm and dry

thee!' And with these words the demon seized Pah-Sidin by the throat, and carried him off to her horrible abode, there to be the stone upon which her hearth-fire everlastingly burns. Such is the fate of those who let themselves be conquered by greed and the wiles of Kjai Belorong.

Of Crocodiles.

THE fisherfolk of these parts have yet another enemy - a much more energetic one to all appearance than the money-goddess, who evidently does not make many victims among these good-natured, frugal, and careless people; the coast warms with crocodiles; and, according to annual reports, quite a considerable number of people are every year devoured by these brutes. They infest especially the marshy country around the mouth of the Kali Batawi, where they may sometimes be seen, lying half in the water and half upon a mudbank, their wicked little eyes blinking in the

sunlight, their formidable jaws agape and showing the bright yellow of the gullet. There, they wait for the carcasses of drowned animals and the offal of all of kinds floating down the river. Imprudent bathers are often attacked by them, and they even swim up the watercourses, and venture for considerable distances inland

The Government, some years ago, put a premium on the capture of crocodiles, a relatively high sum being offered for a carcase. But the measure had to be withdrawn after a while, and this, though, to all appearance, it worked excellently well. Numbers of crocodiles were caught and killed: not a day went by but natives presented themselves at the police stations, exhibiting a limp carcase slung on to a bamboo frame, which a score of coolies 'pikoled' or carried along. Harassed officials began to believe in a universe peopled exclusively by Malays and dead or dying crocodiles: and philanthropists rejoiced over an

imminent extermination of caymans, and consequent safety of bathing for little boys and girls. But there were those who understood the nature of both natives and crocodiles, and who considered their ways; and they smiled a smile of wisdom and pity ineffable, as they looked upon the dead saurians, and saw that they were young. The philanthropists contended that a little crocodile was a crocodile nevertheless, and would, in its own bad time, be a big crocodile, and one which feasted on the flesh of men and women and innocent children: but those wise men only smiled the more. And, presently, one of them took a philanthropist by the hand, and led him by quiet waters, and showed him men and women seeking for the eggs of the crocodile, and gathering them in their bosoms, and watching the young come out, and rearing them even with a father's care und lovingkindness, to the end that they might wax fat and kick, and be hound

with iron chains, and delivered over to the schout.*

The crocodiles now are left to multiply and replenish the shores of Java; and nobody molests them, except now and then some adventurous sportsman, upon whom tigers have palled, and who cares but little for 'bantengs,' and holds the rhinoceros of no account. And, generally, too, though he lie in wait for a crocodile, he catches only a fever - of a particularly malignant kind, it is true.

The Malays, as a rule, do not readily kill crocodiles. They believe that the spirits of the dead are re-incarnated in these animals; so that, what seems a repulsive and dangerous beast, may, in reality, be an honoured father, or a longlamented bride. And they piously prefer the risk of being devoured to the certainty of becoming murderers. Far from injuring, they honour the 'cayman' by sacrifices of rice, meat, and

* A police official.

fruit, which they send down the river in little baskets of palm-leaves with a light twinkling a-top; a gift offered whenever a child is born, to propitiate the metamorphosed ancestors in river and sea, and implore their protection for this, their newly born descendant. And human feelings and susceptibilities are attributed to them which the Malay carefully abstains from wounding. He never speaks but of my 'Lord the Crocodile.' And a wayang-play, such as, for instance, Krokosono, the hero of which defeats and kills the King of the Crocodiles, no dalang would dream of representing in a place where caymans could hear or see it. There is one act, however, by which a crocodile forfeits all claim to respect: and that is killing a human being. From his supposed human nature, it evidently follows that this is an act of malice prepense, a crime knowingly committed: and, as such, should be punished as it would be were the perpetrator a man or a woman -

that is, with death; and it would seem as if the guilty creature was conscious of his crime: and, sometimes, out of sheer remorse, gave himself up to justice. At least, a story to this effect is told of a certain crocodile, which had devoured a little girl, and this, though the child's parents had duly offered rice and meat and fruit, at the stated times; of which gifts this crocodile had undoubtedly had his share. The crime, therefore, was all the more heinous. The parents, weeping, sought a hermit who lived not far from the 'dessa' or village, a wise man who understood the language of animals: and implored him to restore at least the remains of their daughter's little body to them, and to visit with condign punishment her brutal murderer. The hermit, moved with pity and indignation, forthwith left his cave, repaired to the sea-shore, and there, standing with his feet in the waves, he pronounced the patent spell which all crocodiles must obey. They came, hurrying, from

far and near: the shore was covered with their scaly backs ranged in serried rank and file. And, when all were present, the hermit addressed them in their own tongue, declaring that one of them had committed the unpardonable crime of murder - murder upon an innocent child - whose parents had offered sacrifices for her at her birth: rice and fruit and meat, of which they all had partaken, in token of amity and good will. So abominable a breach of good faith would not remain unpunished. Wherefore, let him who had perpetrated it, stand forth! But all the others, let them withdraw into the sea! The crocodiles heard. The solid land seemed to heave and break up, as the congregated thousands dispersed. But one crocodile remained behind on the beach. It crawled nearer and lay down at the feet of the hermit. And the father of the little girl, approaching, drew his 'kris,' and thrust it into the creature's eyes, killing it. The

holy man then took out of the monster's jaws the necklace of blue beads, which the little girl had worn: and handed it to the father, promising him that, within the year, his wife would bear him another daughter, even fairer than the lost one. But the carcase of the crocodile was devoured by the dogs.

Something in the landscape near Petite Trouville brought back to my memory this tale, heard from a village priest some time ago. It was a fit scene for such events. That brown hut among the bananas might have been the abode of the hapless little maid. The dense wood, behind, might well shelter an anchorite, some old man, wise and humble, content to live on wild fruit and learn from the birds among the branches and the fishes in the sea; assuredly, he would stand upon the little spit of land that has the njampoeng on it, and the crocodiles, obedient to his command, would raise their formidable beads from the water, and

with their serried ranks cover the shelving bench..... Very peaceful it lay now, in the light of the setting sun. The sea shone golden. And already, among the blossom-laden branches of the njampoeng, there began to rustle the sea breeze precursor of deep-breathed Night.

Of Buitenzorg.

THE Javanese sans-souci* lies cradled in a fold of the undulating country at the base of the Salak, whose blue top, twin to that of the Gedeh, is seen, in fine weather, from the Koningsplein, rising aerially, tender, fresh, and pure, above the dusty glare of Batavia. The village is pretty - all brown atap houses and gardens full of roses, with the wooded hill-side for a background. One may wander for hours in the splendid Botanical Garden, reputed to be the finest in the world, and a goal of pilgrimage for scientists from every part of the globe. Whoever visits the place

* Buitenzorg, literally translated, means 'away from sorrow or care.'

in September may combine these tranquil pleasures with the gaiety of the annual races, and the great ball at the Buitenzorg Club, where 'all Java' dances. I went in the last week of the month, glad to escape from the town, which, at this time of the year, is unbearable, scorched with the heat of the east monsoon and stifled under a layer of dust, which makes the grass of the gardens crumble away, and turns the 'assam' trees along the river and in the squares into grey spectres. The country through which the first part of my road lay, seemed, however, scarcely less desolate. Nothing but flat monotonous fields, some altogether bare and grey, others still covered with yellowish stubble, through which the cracks and fissures of the parched soil showed. Here and there, a patch of green, where some huddled brown roofs and a group of thin palm-trees denoted a native hamlet, forlorn in the wide arid plain.

Then, again, bare brown fields, where no living creature was to be seen, except, now and then, a herd of dun buffaloes wallowing in the ooze of some dried-up pool.

By and by, however, the character of the landscape began to change. The rich blue-green of the young rice-crops, seen first in isolated squares and patches, spread all over the gradually-ascending fields. Along the course of a rapid rivulet, a bamboo grove sprang up, little stems bending a little under their cascades of waving dull-green foliage. Then the rice-clad undulations of the ground began to rise into little hills, green to the very top, and down the sides of which the water, that fed the terraced fields, trickled in many a twisting silvery thread; and, suddenly, on the left, rose the great triangular mass of the Salak, dull-blue in the sober evening light. It was almost dark when the train stopped at the Buitenzorg station. It stands at some dis-

tance from the village: and, as I drove thither, sights and sounds reached me that denoted the hilly country. The wheels of the cab creaked over whitish pebbles clean as gravel from the rocky river-bed. The gardens on each side the road were full of flowers, that gleamed palely through the semi-darkness. The voices of passers-by, the laughter of children at play, the high thin tones of a flute somewhere in the distance, sounded clear and far through the rarefied air. As I entered the village, I noticed that the houses were built of bamboo instead of the brick, which is the usual material in the clayey lowlands.

It is said that these bamboo houses, covered with atap, withstand the shock of earthquakes, frequent in this country, much better than brick buildings with tiled roofs. However that may be, their rural aspect harmonizes with the landscape: and they are delightful to inhabit, cool under the noonday-heat, and proof against the torrential

rains, which, at Buitenzorg, fall every day, between two and four in the afternoon. I lived for some time in a little pavilion - wooden floor, pagar walls, and a roof of atap: a pleasanter abode I never knew. It was almost like living in a hermit's cell out in the woods. I was never sure whether the soft creaking noises heard all night through came from the bamboo-grove in the garden, or from the bamboo in my wall. The crickets seemed to sing in my very ears: and a faint, sweet smell pervaded the little room, such as breathes from the leafage, dead and living, of a forest. Like a cenobite's cell, too. My pavilion was not meant for a storehouse of worldly treasures. Even if moths and rust did not corrupt, thieves would have unite exceptional facilities for breaking through and stealing them. 'Breaking through' is too energetic and vigorous a term; with an ordinary penknife, one might cut away enough of the walls to admit a battalion of

burglars. Reading, one day, a French translation of Don Quixote, I rested the ponderous folio, which tired my arms, against the wall. It instantly gave way, sinking in, as if it had been a canvas awning. I do not doubt that, with my embroidering scissors, I might have cut out an elegant open-work pattern in it.

The morning after my arrival, I went to seek my way to the Botanical Garden. It was early, yet, a little after sunrise, and the air felt as cool and as pure as well-water. A frost-like dew had whitened the grass; shreds of mist hung between the trees, trailed along the hill-side, and floated like low white clouds in the depths of the ravine, where the river foamed past over the boulders of its rocky bed. And, in the branches, the birds were twittering and singing their little hearts out. I met some natives on the way to their morning bath, hugging themselves in the folds of the 'baju' the women among them having the 'slendang'

drawn over their heads. They walked at a brisk pace, very different from the listless movements of pedestrians in the sultry streets of Batavia. The type was of another kind, a slightly-ovalface, with a thin nose somewhat aquiline in design, and very brilliant eyes; the complexion of a clear yellowish brown, with a touch of red in the lips. They had an elastic gait, and the free carriage of the head peculiar to hill-folk. Some young girls were absolutely pretty.

I asked my way of an old woman who sat by the roadside, complacently smoking a cigarette, and soon found myself within the gates of the Botanical Garden, and in the celebrated waringin avenue, one of the glories of the place. The first impression, I confess, is somewhat disappointing. The avenue is not very long, so that it misses the depths of green darkness, the prospect along apparently converging parallels of pillar-like trunks, and the bluish shimmer of light afar off - those characteristic charms of

woodland glades. This seems to be rather a square, planted with trees on two sides of the quadrangle only, a comparatively narrow space of shadow abutting on the broad fields of sunlight beyond. After a while, however, one notices the smallness of the figures moving past the trees: men, horses, and bullock-carts. By comparison, one begins to realize the gigantic proportions of it all - the length and breadth and height of the leafy vaultoverhead, and the hugeness of those stupendous growths that support it. Each of them in itself is a grove, where congregated hundreds of trees, group by group of stately stems crowding round the colossal parent bole. Then, by and bye, the sense of grandeur is succeeded by a curious impression of lifelessness. In their vast size, their stark immobility, and their rigid attitudes, these grey masses resemble granite peaks and cliffs rather than trees. The aged trunks, broad-based, are riven and fissured like weather-beaten rocks, showing gnarled

protuberances and black clefts from which ferns and mosses droop. Some, rotten to the core - nothing left of the trunk but a fragment of grey gnarled rind, with the fungus-overgrown mould lying heaped up against the base - resemble boulders, covered with earth and detritus. One or two, quite decayed, hang in mid-air, dependent from a dome of interlacing branches, stems, and air-roots, like some gigantic stalactites, from the roof of a pillared cavern. And, aloft, the dense masses of foliage, grey against the sunlit brilliancy of the sky, seem like the broken and crumbling vault of this immense grotto. This strange resemblance of living vegetable matter to inert stone ceases only when, issuing from among the stems, one looks at the waringins from a distance, and sees the grey multitude of boles, trunks, and stems disappearing under spreading masses of foliage, - hills of emerald green - resplendent in the sun.

The garden is worthy of this magnifi-

cent entrance. Enthusiastic 'savants' have sung its praises in all the languages of civilization, and, by common consent, have declared it to be the finest botanical garden in the world, assigning the second place to famous Kew, and mentioning the gardens of Berlin, Paris, and Vienna as third, fourth, and fifth in order of merit. Originally, it was no more than the park belonging to the country-house which Governor-General Van Imhoff built here in 1754: a house since destroyed by an earthquake, and on the site of which the present lodge was erected. And, in this park, Professor Bernwardt, some eighty years ago, arranged a small botanical garden, a 'hortus' as the innocent pedantry of the period called it. The idea was to gather in this fertile spot specimens of all the plants and trees growing in Java, so as to afford men of science opportunity for studying the flora of the island. By and bye, however, especially under the direction of Teysmann, many

plants from other countries were introduced, with a view of acclimatizing them in Java, often with signal success. And, recently, a museum and a library have been established, and also several laboratories for chemical, botanical, and pharmaceutical research. For the cultivation of such plants as require a cool climate, gardens have been laid out on the terraced hill-side, in ascending tiers that climb up to the height of Tji-Bodas, where in the early morning, the temperature is 10° Celsius. These ameliorations for the greater part are due to the untiring energy of the eminent scientist now directing the garden.

But, apart from scientific interest, and viewed simply as a bit of landscape the garden is fascinating - the very ideal of a park - with its white pillared lodge set in the midst of lawns and groups of dark-leaved trees and mirroring sheets of water. All that morning, I wandered along its pleasant paths, pass-

ing from sunshine into chequered shade, and from shadow into sunlight again, and still, at every turn, discovering new beauties. A lakelet with a small island in the midst floating above its own reflection, its green brushwood, and dangling masses of lichens set with large lilac flowers, and the coral-red trunks of a slender kind of palm trees, mirrored in the calm water, meet the eye. Then follow long avenues of kenari-trees, massively-tall as cathedral-towers, and of bamboos almost as high, but graceful rather than majestic, pliant stems, ever swaying and bending under the cloudy masses of wind-stirred foliage fallen. A vast stretch of meadowy ground, where herds of reddish deer were browsing on the short grass, still dewy though the morning was already advanced, comes in sight. Here and there through gaps in the trees, came a sudden glimpse of the distant valley, with the river shining between the light-green rice fields, and beyond the encircling hills. Everywhere, too, the presence of living

water made itself felt, in the cool damp air, and in the delicious smell of moist earth, wet stones, and water plants. And I would suddenly catch the silvery gleams between the bushes, of a brooklet hurrying past over its pebbly bed, and foaming in small cascades that besprinkled with scintillating spray the ferns and tall nodding grasses upon the bank. Here and there, I heard the murmur and tinkle of a fountain: and I passed by quiet ponds and lakelets, dark green in the shadow of overhanging trees. One of these sheets of water - or rather the streamlet into which it narrows at one end - is completely overgrown with white lotus-flowers; and a sight more exquisitely beautiful cannot be imagined. It burst upon me suddenly, as I came out of a long, dark avenue; and, at first, I could not make out what that white splendour was. It seemed to float like a luminous summer-cloud, like a snowy drift of morning-mist, when dawn

reddens the Eastern skies. A breath of wind arose, and the even splendour trembled and seemed to break up into hundreds of white flames and sparks, that for an instant all blew one way, and then shot up again, and stood steadily shining. And as I came nearer, I discerned the great round white flowers, radiant in the sunshine. The round, purplish-brown leaves spread all over the surface of the water, covering it from bank to bank. And, out of these heaps of bronze shields, there rose the straight tall stems, like lances, with the white flame of the flower breaking out at top - sparks of St. Elmo's fire, such as, on one memorable night, centuries ago, tipped the spears of the Roman cohorts, on their march to battle and victory.

This field of radiant lotus-blossoms, and the sombre and solemn waringin avenue, contrasting glories, seem to me to be the crowning beauties of the Buitenzorg garden. The name of Buitenzorg, by

the bye, is an innovation. Natives still call the town by its ancient name of Bogor, which it bore in the glorious age when it was the capital of the Hindoo realm of Padjadjaran. A Muslim conqueror, Hassan Udin, son of the Sheik Mulana, destroyed it; and a new town was reared on the ruins, but legends of its bygone glory still haunt the imagination of the country folk. In the tales which they repeat to one another of an evening, the splendour of the ancient empire, and the wisdom and unconquerable valour of its founder are still remembered. Tjioeng Wonara was his name; and his son and successor, the victorious Raba Wanji, was even greater than he. In the craggy hill-tops of the Gedeh-range, popular tradition sees the ruins of the splendid palace he built himself on the heights; his hall where the throne of gold and ivory stood - the temple, where he worshipped the gods - the domes of his harem, and the battle-

mented towers which his unconquerable warriors kept against the world, a thousand years ago; the southern wall of the Gedeh-crater surrounds, as an impregnable bulwark, the palace and temple courts.

THE Hindoo period, however, has left in this neighbourhood records more authentic than Praboe Wangi's fancy-built palace on the heights. Near a native kampong, which derives its name from this proximity, the so-called Batu Tulis is found - a quantity of stone slabs, some lying prone, others still upright, adorned with figures in bas-relief and covered with inscriptions. The legend on the largest of these memorial tablets, traced in ancient Javanese characters, has been deciphered: it celebrates the virtues and victories of a Hindoo king. And the worn-away superscriptions and rude effigies discernible on the other stones probably commemorate contemporary princes and warriors. The Bogor coun-

try-folk venerate greatly these relics of a glorious past.

Carriers walking by the side of their lumbering, bullock-drawn 'pedati,' which creaks so leisurely along the sun-scorched roads; labourers on their way to the rice-fields, the light wooden ploughshare across their shoulders, driving the patient yoke of oxen before them; women from the hill-villages around, who come to the Bogor market in holiday attire, a chaplet of jessamine-blossoms twisted into their 'kondeh' - all turn aside from the road, to murmur a short prayer, and offer a handful of flowers of frank-incense and yellow boreh-unguent, or even Chinese joss-sticks and small paper lanterns on the consecrated spot. Whether this be an act of homage to those ancient kings and heroes, whose rude effigies adorn the stones, and whose spirits are believed still to haunt the spot: or simply a fetishistic adoration of these blocks of granite and the curious signs engraved thereon, it

is difficult to decide: the worshippers themselves hardly seem to know. When asked, they reply that they do as their fathers did before them, and so, therefore, must be right; unless, indeed, they merely smile, and offer the somewhat irrelevant remark that they are true Moslemin. This, indeed, every native of Java (save such few as have been converted to what they consider as the Christian religion) professes himself to be. And, in a measure, the Javanese are Mohammedans, they recite the Mohammedan prayers and Confession of Faith, go to the Messigit - which is Javanese for mosque - when it suits them, keep the Ramadan very strictly; also, if they can afford it, they perform that most sacred duty of the Mohammedan, the Mecca pilgrimage, and, returning thence, live for ever on the purses of their admiring co-religionists. But for the rest, one may apply to them Napoleon's dictum concerning the Russians - *mutatie mutandis*. Scratch

the Muslim, and you will find the Hindoo; scratch the Hindoo, and you will find the fetish-adoring Pagan. In the same way, too, as they confuse religious beliefs, they distort historical facts and traditions so as to make them tally with the prevalent opinions of the day. This Batu Tulis, for instance, though they venerate as record of the Hindoo empire, they yet, at the same time, honour as a monument of the Mohammedan conquest. According to them, these roughly-fashioned stones, of which, they say, there are over eight hundred dispersed throughout the neighbourhood, are the transformed shapes of Siliwangi, last King of Padjadjaran, and his followers, who, in this spot, their last refuge on flight from the victorious Muslim hosts, were turned into stones by Tuan Allah, as a punishment for their persistent refusal to embrace El-Islam: and the superscription celebrating the Hindoo prince they make out to be the record of this

miracle. A touch of romance clings to the grim legend like a tender-petalled flower to a rock. It concerns the impress of a foot, visible on one of the slabs, and a fair princess who left it there, many centuries ago. She alone of all that multitude that fled with Siliwangi, the consort of variant Poerwakali, his son, escaped the general doom, through the influence of an Arab priest who had converted her to the true religion. She could not, however, save her husband, whom, before her very eyes, she saw turned into a stone. But, in her faithful heart, love could not die, though the loved one was dead. The victor, vanquished in his turn by her incomparable beauty, implored her in vain. She would not be separated from her husband's inanimate shape, and, building herself a little hut under the waringin trees, she still, day by day, repaired to the stone, which bore Poerwakali's semblance, with sacrifices and prayers, and tears. And, often,

in a transport of love and grief, she would throw her arms about the inert mass, closely embracing it, and, into its deaf ear, murmur words, and vows of eternal loyalty, and bitter-sweet memories of days that were no more. Her tears, still flowing, fell on the stone underfoot, day by day, month by month, year by year, until at last it became soft and yielding as clay, and received and retained the impress of those tender feet, which for so long had known no other resting place.

From these memories of an empire overthrown, a religion smitten with the edge of the sword, and a love stronger than death - 'old unhappy far-off things and battles long ago' - suggested by Batu Tulis, to the gaiety of the Buitenzorg races is a wide step. But our modern souls have grown accustomed to these sudden transitions. In Java, more than in any other country, one must be prepared at any moment to pass from the fairy lands, forlorn of

history, to contemporary Philistia. Let me hasten to add, in justice, that I found that high festival of Philistinism in Java, the Buitenzorg races, both amusing and full of interest. The crowded Stands gave one an 'impression d'ensemble' of society in the colony, such as would be expected in vain on any other occasion - formal-mannered functionaries and business men from the hot towns with their exquisitely dressed pale-faced wives and daughters, mingling with sunburnt planters from the interior, and rosy cheeked girls from the neighbouring hill-stations, in white muslin frocks, brightened up by flowers such as those grown at home. And the spectacle of the races, exciting in itself, is rendered the more interesting by the changes and transformations which an essentially northern sport has suffered under the sun of the tropics by the substitution of Sandalwood and Battak ponies for horses, of native syces, who clutch the stirrup with bare toes, for

jockeys, and of silent multitudes brightly garbed, for the black-coated crowds shouting and huzzaing at Epsom or Longchamps.

Pari Penganten-The Wedding of the Rice.

ONE has but to turn one's back upon the towns built by foreigners on the malaria-stricken coast, and penetrate some little way into the interior of Java, to understand why its ancient inhabitants have given the country its name of 'the Land of the Rice.'

The whole island is one vast ricefield. Rice on the swampy plains, rice on the rising ground, rice on the slopes, rice on the very summits of the hills. From the sod under one's feet to the verge of the horizon, everything has one and the same colour, the bluish-green of the young, or the gold of the ripened

rice. The natives are all, without exception, tillers of the soil, who reckon their lives by seasons of planting and reaping, whose happiness or misery is synonymous with the abundance or the dearth of the precious grain. And the great national feast is the harvest home, with its crowning ceremony of the Wedding of the Rice.

In order to proximately understand the meaning of this strange rite, it should be borne in mind that a Javanese, similar in this respect to the ancient Greek, believes all nature to be endued with a semi-divine life. To him a tree is not a mere vegetable, nor a rock a mere mass of stone, nor the sea a mere body of water, any more than he regards a human being as mere aggregate of flesh, blood, and bone. A hidden principle of life, invisible, imponderable, and powerful for good or evil animates the seemingly-inert matter. In this sense, a Javanese believes in the *soul* of a plant or rock almost as he believes in

the soul of a human being. And this soul he endeavours to propitiate with prayers, libations, and offerings of fruit and flowers. Hence, come the frequent altars under old waringin-trees, among whose branches the tutelary genius of the village, the Danhjang dessa, is believed to dwell; and the solemn sacrifices which the searchers after edible birds' nests offer to Njai Loro Kidoel, the maiden goddess of the southern seas, who has her shrine on the rocky south coast. Hence, too, arise the rites and ceremonies connected with the cultivation of the rice-plant, which they believe is animated by the soul of Dewi Sri, the Javanese Demeter. Of these ceremonies, this of the Wedding of the Rice is the most important. I will try to describe the way it is celebrated. As soon as the owner of a field sees his rice ripening, he goes to the dukun-sawah, literally the 'medicine-man of the field,' and consults him as to the day and hour when it will be meet to

begin the harvest. This, to a Javanese, is a most important matter, and one which it requires all the astrological, necromantie, and cabbalistic knowledge of the dukun-sawah to settle; for there are many unlucky days in the Javanese year, and any enterprise begun on such a day is doomed to inevitable failure. After long and intricate calculations, into which the cabbalistic values corresponding to the year, the month, the week the day, and the hour enter, an acceptable date is at last fixed upon by the dukun-sawah, on which the selection of the Rice-Bride and Bridegroom is to take place.

On the appointed day, having first solemnly consecrated that field by walking round it with a bundle of burning rice-straw in his hand, and by the planting of tall glagah-stalks at each of the four corners, invoking Dewi Sri as he does so - the dukun arrives, and begins to search for two stalks of rice exactly equal in length and thickness, and growing

near each other. When these are found, four more are hunted for, two pairs of absolutely similar ears of rice. The first couple are the Bride and Bridgroom; the four others the bridesmaids and the 'best men,' (if the term may be used to designate what the French call *garçons d'honneur*.) These couples are now tied together as they stand, with strips of palm leaves: and the dukun invokes on them the blessing of Dewi Sri. Then he addresses the Rice-Bride and the Rice-Bridegroom, asking them, each in turn, whether they accept each other as husband and wife: and answering again. The marriage now is concluded: the stalks are smeared with the yellow *boreh-unguent*, which is made of flowers, decorated with garlands, and shaded from the sun by a tiny awning of palm leaves, whilst the stalks round about are cut off.

Now the dukun, the owner of the field and his family, and all those who

have in any way helped in preparing the 'Sawah,' or planting the rice, sit down to a 'Slamettan,' a repast which is, at the same time, a sacrifice to the gods, and a further celebration of the marriage just contracted, and, at the end of the banquet, the dukun, rising up, solemnly declares that the hour of the harvest has come.

Now, it is the kindly custom of Javanese land-owners to invite to the harvest-feast all who, during the past month, had taken any part, however slight, in the cultivation of the Sawah. And, as, under so elaborate a system of agriculture as is demanded by the growing of rice, these are necessarily many, the Pari Penganten is a feast for the whole 'dessa' as well as for a single family. The men leave their work in the shops or the market, the women lay down the sarong-cloth on which for weeks and weeks they have been patiently tracing elaborate patterns with wax, and blue, red, and brown pigment;

and all, in holiday attire and with flowers wreathed in their hair or stuck into a fold of their head-kerchief, repair to the ripe rice-field.

The dukun-sawah is the first to enter it; and, as he does so, he in this wise greets the spirits of the field:

‘Oh! thou invisible Pertijan Siluman! do not render vain the labour I have bestowed upon my sawah! If thou dost render it vain, I will hack thy head in two! Mother Sri Penganten! hearken! do thou assemble and call to thee all thy children and grandchildren! let them all be present and let not one stay away! I wish to reap the rice. I will reap it with a piece of whetted iron. Be not afraid, tremble not, neither raise thine eyes! All my prayers implore thy favour and gracious protection. Also, I propose to prepare a sacrificial repast, and dedicate it to the spirit that protects this my sawah: and to the spirits that protect the four villages nearest

to this our village: and also to Leh-Saluke and Leh-Mukalana!’

Having pronounced this invocation, he cuts off the ears which represent the Rice-Bride and Bridegroom and their four companions: and the reapers begin their work. The implement they use is best described as a cross-hilted dagger of bamboo, having a little knife inserted into the bottom of the handle: the reaper, holding the hilt in the fingers of his right hand with the thumb, presses the rice-stalk against the small knife, thus severing the ear, which he gathers in this heft hand: and thus he cuts off each ripe ear separately with a gesture as delicate as if he were culling a flower. The whole rice-harvest of Java is reaped in this manner.

The loss of time may be imagined. And the Government has, again and again, tried to introduce the use of the sickle and more expeditious methods. But in vain. In all things, the Javanese love to do as their fathers did before

them: and, in this particular matter of the reaping of the rice, their attachment to ancestral customs is still further strengthened by a religious sentiment. The Dewi Sri herself, they believe, having assumed the shape of a gelatik or rice-bird, that broke off the ripe ears with its bill, taught mortals the manner in which it pleased her that her good gift, the rice, should be gathered. And, accordingly, her votaries to the present day do gather it thus, culling each ear separately. In their opinion, to use a sickle would be to show wanton disrespect to the goddess, and a contempt of the precious grain, as if it were not worth gathering in a seemly manner: a sacrilege which the outraged deity would not fail to punish with famine and pestilence. On the other hand, what would they gain by departing from their ancestors' honoured custom, and adopting in its stead the manners of the men from Holland? 'Time,'

these men say. But then that means nothing to a Javanese. He no more wants to 'gain time' than he wants to 'gain' fresh air or sunlight. It is there: he has it, he will always have it: it seems absolutely absurd to talk of gaining it..... The idea of time as an equivalent for a certain amount - the greatest possible - of labour performed is essentially occidental. A Javanese not only does not understand it, but he shrugs his shoulders and smiles at the notion. He does not see what possible relation there can be between a day, and what these white men call a day's work. He works, undoubtedly, in a quiet, deliberate fashion - for just so long as he thinks pleasant, or fit, or, when the monsoon threatens his fields, necessary: and then he stops: and, if the task be not quite finished, well, it may be finished some future day. There is no cause why any ado should be made about it. Everything in time: and let us remember that

haste is of the evil one.

At last, however, the harvest is reaped: and the hour has come for the Rice-Bride and Bridegroom to repair to their new home. The two reapers, on whom the honourable office of conducting them thither devolves, don their very finest clothes for the occasion, and daub their faces with yellow boreh-unguent. Then to the strains of the gamelan, and followed by all the reapers, men and women, in solemn procession, they carry the garlanded sheaves to the house of the owner of the field. He and his wife meet them in the doorway; and, in answer to their question, inform them that the house is swept and garnished, and that all things are ready for the reception of the Rice-Bride and Bridegroom. These are then taken to the granary, where a small space, surrounded by screens, and having a clean new mat upon the floor, represents the bridal chamber. The Bride and Bridegroom

and their 'maids and youths of honour' are introduced into this miniature room; the other sheaves are then brought into the 'lumpang;' (store-house) and when the entire harvest is stored, the dukun-sawah pronounces the prayer to the goddess Sri: 'Mother, Sri Penganten; do thou sleep in this dark granary, and grant us thy protection. It is right that thou shouldst provide for all thy children and grandchildren.'

Then the door of the 'lumpang' is locked. And, during forty days, it may not be opened again. At the end of that time, the honeymoon of the Rice-Bride and Bridegroom is supposed to be over. The owner of the field comes to the granary, unlocks the door, and, in set phrase, invites the couple to an excursion upon the river, saying that the boat lies ready, and that the rowers know how to handle the oars. Taking the sheaves, he lays them in the hollowedout tree-trunk, which serves as a kind of mortar for husking the rice in: and

the women, bringing down their long wooden pestles in a rhythmic cadence, pound the grain. And this is the end of the Wedding of the Rice.

In the Hill Country.

AMONG other Western ideas and institutions, the Hollanders have imported into Java that of health-resorts. Erstwhile lonely hills now bear hotels and 'pavilions' upon their disafforested summits: pincnies are held in glades where, a few years ago, the timid antelopes fed: and Strausz's waltzes have reduced to silence the noisy cicadas. In the country south and east of Batavia, in the Gedeh-hills; and, in the Preanger district, there are several of these hill-stations. There, the air is pure and cool, save in the months when the hot east monsoon scorches the plains.

There are Tji-Panas Tji-Bodas, Soekaboemi, Sindanglaya, Tjandjoer the country round about Bandung, and, somewhat farther east, Garoet, all of which places are easily accessible from Batavia. The hotels are generally airy, roomy, and clean, if not elegant; the food is fairly good, and the charges moderate, about four dollars a day, the average rate throughout Java.

The Preanger district, in which Garoet, Bandung, and Tjandjoer are situated - the 'Garden of Java' as it is fitly named - in more than one respect reminds the traveller of the Italian hill-country. There is the same clearness in the profiles of the mountain-ranges; the same transparency of the air, which causes distant objects to appear quite near, and reveals their contour rather than their modelling; the same jewel-like sparkle in the colouring of the landscape, in the clear-viewed green of valley and hill-side, in the changeful hues of the water, and in the blue opal and

reseat violet of the distances under an azure sky. The thin pure air is as cool as well-water; in the early morning, one has to walk briskly in order to keep warm: and walks of several hours cause neither heat nor fatigue in this bracing climate, which makes even natives quicken their naturally slow movements, and which tinges their brown complexions with a flush of healthy red. In the fields, corn is seen instead of rice, and, in places, golden wheat waves. The gardens are fragrant with mignonettes heliotropes, and carnations: moss-roses flourish, and, also, velvety pansies, geraniums, fuchsias, phlox in all tis countless varieties of brilliant colours, and the tender forget-me-nots of northern brooksides. Strawberries, along with clusters of the blue and white grape show between the dense foliage of the vines. At certain seasons of the year, the hills are purple with the blossoms of the rasamala tree, - a magnificent growth which throws out its first branches at a height

of a hundred feet, and the summit of which reaches an altitude of a hundred and eighty feet. The most splendid orchids are found in the woods, and, also, mushrooms of extra ordinary dimensions some of three feet in diameter, and of strange and brilliant colours. On all sides, too, there is a sparkle of living water as limpid as the air itself, leaping down the rocky hill-sides in innumerable cataracts and shining in broad tranquil lakes that mirror the encircling hill tops and the clouds sailing overhead. As one reaches higher levels, from about four thousand and upwards - the changes in the landscape become more and more marked. The Flower of the Forest, the kambodja, the champaka, and all the countless host of large flowered trees, characteristic of the tropics, disappear. The type of the foliage changes: it is less fantastic in shape, less luxuriant, and differently tinted from the leafage of the lowland forests.

To the sombre green of the plains, which, under the glaring sunlight, assumes tones of an almost blackish blue, succeeds a vivid emerald, touched with tender yellow. Then come dense forests of 'tjemara' a camphorous tree, the grim greyish foliage of which resembles a drift of autumnal mist: and, bye and bye, trees of the oak and chestnut kind appear, and then the maple that balances its fanlike leaves on bright red stalks. Violets open their purple chalices in mossy hollows: other flowers nod among the grass. On the cloudy mounta in heights of Tosari, one may gather flowers such as grow on the Alps. The scenery here is grand beyond description - a landscape of vast hill-ranges, cataracts, and precipices, and heaving seas of cloud. The temperature is almost too chill: big fires are kept burning all day in the hotel, through the verandahs of which the clouds float past. The one thing that still reminds the traveller of the tro-

pies is the wonderful splendour of the orchids that grow here. In the fourth zone, at an altitude of from seven thousand to ten thousand feet, the orchids, too, disappear. A European vegetation covers the summits of the mountains, and also the chill 'plateau' of the Djeng, where four wonderful lakes of green, and blue, and yellow, and pure white water sparkle in the sunlight, and the nights are frosty.

These wonders of the Javanese hill-country are well known, from the descriptions of many able pens, and from the enthusiastic reports of travellers. But, here and here, in the folds of the lower hills, there are pleasant nooks and corners, all but ignored by the multitude, and hardly inferior in beauty to these famous sites, albeit beauty of a very different character. And, among these places, the idyllic grace of which has not yet been marred by railroads and hotels, few can surpass in comeliness the country round about the Tjerimai,

where it was my good fortune to spend several pleasant days, last June.

The Tjerimai, a spur of the lofty Preanger range, is situated on the confines of the Preanger Regencies and the Cheribon district, the broad green plains and marshy coast of which its finely-shaped summit dominates - a landmark to sailors.

From Batavia, the way thither leads through some of the loveliest scenery in Java - past Buitenzorg and Bandung, straight across the Preanger. Rantjaekkek, a village in the vast plain which begins an hour or so east of Bandung, is the last railroad-station on the route. There, the noise, the hurry, and the bustle of western civilization leave us, as if arrested by some invisible barrier: and the traveller enters the real Java, the Java of the Javanese, the tranquil land of plenty, the inhabitants of which lead their leisurely lives without much more thought of the morrow than do the tall gandasoli lilies of their fields. -

When we, two, the friend whom I accompanied to run home among the hills, and myself reached this stage of our journey, the day was still young. The summits of the hills, which bounded the plain on the west, had already assumed their sober day colours - greyish brown and dark green. But the distant eastern range stood out in violet gleam against a sky of crimson and orange: and the intervening plain was a lake of whitish waving mist. The air had a peculiar, sweetish taste - like an insipid fruit which reminded me of early autumn-mornings at home. It was cold, too. Our natives went with heads and shoulders wrapped up: and the breath of the ponies waiting for us at the station became little clouds about their heads. We were grateful for the plaids which we found in the carriage.

The road lay straight before us - a long white streak through the soft misty dull green of the plain. As we drove along, a pink sheen, which rested on a

hazy hill-side to our left, like a handful of scattered roses, began to spread and glide down into the valley, kindling as it flowed, until the whole vast vapoury plain was suffused with purple. The mist began to dissolve, and float upwards in little crimson drifts. Suddenly, the great golden sun leaped up from behind the eastern summits, and day streamed in upon us. The country-folk had already begun the labours of the day. Children met us on the road, driving powerful grey buffaloes before them: in a hamlet which we passed, the women were pounding rice, breaking the silence of the morning with the rhythmic click-clack of the wooden pestles. And, here and there, groups of labourers moved through the rice fields, weeding. Overhead, larks were soaring and singing; it was the first time I had heard their sweet shrill note in Java. After a while, a partridge flew up with a whirr of hurrying wings, almost from between the hoofs of the horses. They

are plentiful in this neighbourhood, At certain seasons of the year, large parties of sportsmen assemble there to shoot them.

On starting from the railway station, I had thought that, in half an hour or so, we would have reached the hill-range, which bounded the plain in the north. But the clear atmosphere has a perspective of its own, confusing to eyes unaccustomed to it. After about two hours of rapid driving we were still in the valley - on either side of us, were immense tracts of soft bluish green, full of the thousand lights and shades that form the peculiar beauty of these terraced rice-fields; and, all around, the circling summits which seemed no sensibly nearer than at first.

At every turn of the road, I expected to reach the base of the hills. And, again and again, they appeared to recede as we advanced, until the fancy was stirred at the idea of some magic wall still environing the captive, whiter-so-

ever he may turn: and the wish to find an exit out of this hill-bounded plain grew almost to a fever. At length, we reached it - a narrow defile between two steep green heights: and the road began to climb. Here, in the deep glens and valleys, the air was notably cooler than on the sunlit plain. Where the road broadened, it was shaded by tall njampoeng trees, which strewed the ground with their white transparent blossoms: and their faint fresh odour, which reminded one of the scent of March violets, perfumed the breeze.

Meanwhile, we had changed horses at a 'gladak' - a nondescript wooden shed, stable, barn, and hostelry for native wayfarers in one, with a spacious thoroughfare leading right through it. And our shaggy ponies trotted along with a right good will, until they came to a sudden stand at the bottom of a hill. 'Gladakkers,' as these ugly little animals are called, are notorious for freakishness and perversity, and often, without any

apparent reason, will stand stockstill in the middle of the road, and refuse to move another step. But this time, as I soon found, they were moved by no such perverse whim; they knew their duty, and that the dragging of carriages up this particular hill was in a way a part of it. And, when the syce had unharnessed them, they turned aside, and began to crop the dewy grass by the way-side, as if work were over for that day. Presently, their substitutes, a pair of powerful grey buffaloes, appeared goaded on by their owner. Slowly, the majestic brutes descended the hill, bending a broad splendidly-horned head and an enormous neck under a sort of triangular bamboo yoke, and sending forth the breath in clouds from their large nostrils. They drew the carriage uphill without any apparent effort, still moving onward with that same slow, strong, steady gait, which neither the impatient shouts of our syce, nor the goad which their owner plied, could

make them accelerate one whit. At the summit, they halted of their own accord; and, as soon as they felt their neck free of the harness, they turned and went. As they passed me, the curved horn of one just grazing my shoulder, they seemed to me the personification of resistless strength, unconscious of its own power, and patiently subservient. their large beautiful eyes had a look of weakness most pathetic in so tremendous a creature.

After this steep hill, the ascent became easy and gradual, and the ponies trotted on at a good round pace. The road still kept zig-zagging between steep hill-sides, densely overgrown with nipah-palm, banana, and dark-leaved brush-wood, which shut out the view of the landscape. And I remember no note-worthy incident, except the passing of a native market, a 'passar,' in a spot where the road broadened a little, and where an impetuous brook, that came bounding down the hill-side, spouted

from a sort of primitive aqueduct, made of bamboo. Half a score of naked children were bathing themselves under the icy 'douche,' whilst their parents stood bargaining and chaffering at the narrow booths that adhered to the steep hill-side like swallows' nests to a house-wall. As we approached, the whole company, men, women, and children, squatted down with one accord, as if they had been so many puppets pulled by a string. One very fat baby, his fists and his mouth full of sweetmeats, stood staring at us in round-eyed surprise; but his mother managed to catch him and draw him down to his little haunches, just in the nick of time; and the whole company remained in this crouching posture until our carriage rounded the bend of the road.

At Batavia, where the manners of the natives have suffered a change - a change for the worse, as some maintain - by contact with Europeans. I had never witnessed this peculiar mode of

salutation. And I confess I was painfully impressed by it, the more so as my friend warned me that native etiquette forbade my acknowledging the humble greeting by so much as a nod. I do not know whether it was the abjectness of their semi-prostration, or the seemingly gratuitous insolence of our thus ignoring it, that I felt as the more acute humiliation to human dignity. But, after all, the only way to rightly judge the manners and customs of a country is to look at them from the point of view of the natives; and, to a Javanese, there is nothing undignified in a salutation which impresses us as slavish. He squats down, just as a European rises, in the presence of a superior. It is a token of respect: nothing more. And the superior's apparent unconsciousness of this greeting means no more rudeness than the familiar nod with which a European might answer a labourer's or artisan's raising of his cap. 'The way of the land, the honour of the

land,' as the Dutch proverb puts it.

On the point of etiquette, the Javanese, however, are infinitely more punctilious than any western people of our period. I believe they might even be said to surpass the Spaniards of the time of Philip II, in the elaborateness of their code of manners and in their strict adherence to its requirements. Every possible circumstance and occurrence in life have been foreseen, and the appropriate conduct noted down in these unwritten laws of the 'adat' - the attitude, the gesture, and the set phrase, are all prescribed, down to the smallest detail. Nor is it a question of phraseology only: the very language is subject to the regulations of the adat, which distinguishes three separate and altogether different kinds of Javanese, according as a man speaks to his superior, his equal, or his inferior. For speech to one higher in rank, there is the 'Kramo;' commands to a sub-ordinate are given in 'Ngako;' friends

familiarly converse in a third idiom into which elements of the other two enter. The theory of these three kinds of Javanese is a science by itself, and one not easily acquired by a westerner. At the same time, it is imperatively necessary to him, if he would gain the esteem of the natives; for the use of a Ngako word when a Kramo term should have been employed, would mark the offender with an indelible brand of vulgarity and ill-breeding. When the Bible was being translated into Javanese, this peculiarity of etiquette proved a considerable difficulty; and the missionaries had to consult countless authorities and compare a thousand precedents, before they could settle the question whether Christ should address Pilate in Kramo or in Ngako, or in the third idiom. A solecism would have fatally injured the 'prestige' of the new religion: and its ministers could not have escaped the accusation of being 'korang adjer,' which is the native term for ill-breeding.

The expression, which, literally translated, means 'one that has not eaten enough vegetables,' requires some explanation. It is the custom, at the birth of a child, for the parents to offer a feast to their friends and relations: and, at this banquet, the dishes of 'atjar' should be as numerous as possible. It is believed that every individual dish of vegetable ensures a mystically-corresponding quality or virtue to the babe in whose honour the feast is given. Thus, if a person in later life show a lack of courage, generosity, or, above all, of courtesy, which is regarded as the virtue par excellence, the inference is that his parents and friends must have neglected to give him his due allowance of vegetables at the birth feast: and he is pronounced to be 'koerang atjar,' 'short of vegetables.' It was in order to avoid strictures upon our manners that my friend and I saw the country folk at the 'passar' squat down in the dusty road, and passed on,

without so much as looking at them.

Towards eleven o'clock, we reached the highest point of our journey - a ledge upon the mountain-side called Njadas Pangeran. Here, the hills on the right suddenly fell away, and the broad green plains of Cheribon lay disclosed, dazzling with sunlight and living water. At our feet, away far below, lay a brown hamlet in the midst of sawahs, like a lark's nest in a field of clover: and the hills through which we had threaded our way, since dawn, hung in the western distance like massy clouds, changing from brown to violet, and to an exquisite, pale, half-transparent blue. We paused here for some minutes, to rest the horses, whilst we gathered armfuls of a splendid orchid which grew in profusion on the hill-side - great shiny snow-flakes of blossoms, with a touch of carmine on the curling petals - and resumed the journey along a road which steadily sloped to the bottom of the valley. A muddy river runs

through it, which we crossed on a primitive kind of ferry - the carriage, horses, and all standing on a raft, which a score of natives dragged and pushed across the shallow water. On the other bank, the road began to ascend again: we had reached the base of the Tjerimai: and a drive of some two or three hours more, along a smooth road that passed by prosperous sugar-cane plantations waving in the breeze with thousands of glossy green streamers, brought us at length to our destination - the little bamboo cottage upon the hill-side, whither my fiends repaired for a spell of coolness and a breath of mountain-air, when the heat rendered the sojourn on their estate in the plains unendurable. It was about four in the afternoon when we entered the garden-gates, and the air was as fresh as in the early morning. The breeze rustled through the tall flower-laden njamploeng-trees on the road-side; there was a smell of water and moist stones in the

air: I heard the murmur of a brook over its rocky bed. This was the country of which hot dust-stifled Batavia was the capital. The thing seemed scarcely credible.

A 'Dessa.'

BATAVIA folk have a habit of alluding to the interior of the island as 'Java,' very much as if it were some far and foreign country with which they and the town they live in had no concern whatever. 'Such and such is the custom in Java,' they will say, when describing native institutions. During my stay on the Tjerimai, I began to understand the meaning of such seemingly senseless phrases, which are geographically absurd but ethnically true. Batavia is no more part of Java in the real and proper acceptance of the term, than the white-washed rafters of its houses are part of

the green and living wood. Nor are the Javanese syces, artisans, and clerks one encounters in the streets true representatives of a race, agricultural in all its instincts and habits, and at home only amidst its rice-fields and palm-groves. Whoever would see the country and the people as they really are must live for some time in a 'dessa,' such as the one on the hill-side near which our bungalow was situated.

The plan and general appearance of these native villages are about the same, it would appear, throughout the length and breadth of Java. A cluster of bamboo huts, all standing in their own grounds, surrounded by a quickset hedge: a main road, from which numerous by-paths diverge, leading across; in the centre, an open space or square, shaded by waringin-trees, where the mosque, and also the habitation of the village chief stand; and, surrounding the whole, like a lofty green rampart, a dense plantation of bamboo trees, which

completely hides the village from sight. Around, stretch meadows, rice-fields, and plantations of nipah-palm, which, in many cases, are the property of the community.

Where this particular form of proprietorship obtains, the village authorities assign portions of the communal fields in usufruct to such inhabitants of the *desa* as will pledge themselves in return to pay certain taxes, and to perform certain duties entailed by the possession of landed property, the principal of which are keeping the roads and irrigation works in repair, and guarding the gates or patrolling the streets at night.

They are obliged to observe the prescriptions of the 'adat,' and such regulations as the village authorities may deem proper to make, in the cultivation of their fields. Very strict supervision is exercised in this matter, so as to prevent the occupier from exhausting, either through ignorance

or neglect, the field, which at the expiration of his lease, will be allotted to another member of the community. Disobedience to the commands of the village authorities is punishable by forfeiture of the right of occupation. In most districts, this communal right alternates with private proprietorship.

According to the ancient custom, which has been ratified by the Colonial Regulations, whosoever, of his own free will, reclaims a piece of waste ground, by that act acquires the possession of the same, and the right to transmit it to his heirs, the 'hereditary individual right,' as the legal term is, and any native, desirous to obtain land on these terms, can apply for permission to the Government, which, having taken the place of the ancient Sultans, is considered as the 'Sovereign of the Soil.' This permission is never refused. So that, under the communal regime as under the system of hereditary individual ownership, anyone who has the

will to work is sure of being able to earn a sufficiency for himself and his family. There need be no unemployed: there are no paupers in our sense of the word. Moreover, the interests of Labour are protected against the encroachments of Capital - which, in this case, means against the machinations of Chinese and Arab usurers, and eventually, against the enterprise of great landowners of the dominant race - by the Colonial Regulations forbidding natives to sell land to non-natives. but for this wise law, the Javanese, who gladly sells his standing crops at a-half or even a-third of their value, if by doing so he can obtain some ready cash with which to buy new clothes or give a 'slamettan,' would long since have lost every parcel of his native soil to the speculating foreigner. At the bottom, this clause of the Colonial law is nothing but an extension of the principle that pervades the native customs in the matter of landed pro-

perty; to wit, that the claims and interests of the community are in every case paramount, and override those of the individual. The Colonial Regulations consider the entire nation as a community, whilst the native law regards the *desa* as such, and to its interests subordinates the claims and rights of individuals far more expressly than do the Colonial Regulations by the prohibition to natives of selling land to non-natives.* For, not only has the native law a corresponding enactment in the prohibition to the householders and landowners of one *desa* to sell their property to the inhabitants of another, save under restricting conditions and subject to the approval of the village authorities, but it even empowers the

* There are certain exceptions to this law, however, by which *existing* communities or estates are allowed, subject to the approval of the governor-General, to buy land from natives; but only where this is not needed for the support of the *desa* to which it originally belonged.

‘chiefs and elders’ of the *desa* to dispose of ground, belonging to the inhabitants, for the purpose of constructing new habitations for immigrants upon whom they have conferred the rights of citizenship. Measures like these are not felt to be tyrannical or unjust by the Javanese of the *desa*, born and bred in the conception of his individual dependency on, and solidarity with, the community of which he is a member. In him, the inherited communistic sentiment is so strongly developed, that he but rarely, if ever, avails himself of the facilities, afforded him by the Government, of converting his right of usufruct under the system of communal possession of the ground, into that of hereditary individual property; he prefers that the *desa* should remain the owner of the land.

This sentiment of solidarity makes itself more or less felt in all the manners and customs of the Javanese. Private festivities, with them, become matters

of public concern. In the dedication of a house or a field, in the 'slamettan' given at the birth of a child, in the solemnities of a burial, in the rejoicings at a wedding, the entire population of a dessa participates. During our stay on the Tjerimai, we had occasion to convince ourselves of this. A marriage was being arranged in the neighbouring village, between a good-looking youth and a pretty maiden, who had made each other's acquaintance in the usual manner, during the long days of common work and play in the ripe rice-fields. The village scholar, consulted as to the young couple's chances of happiness, had declared the cabbalistic signification of their added initials to be 'a broadly-branching waringin-tree,' which is the symbol of health, riches, and a numerous progeny. Thus reassured as to the future of their children, the parents had discussed the dowry, and, after a great deal of haggling and protesting, at last agreed upon a sum

about half-way between the amount originally offered by the bridegroom's parents and the demanded by the father of the bride. In due course, then, the youth had sent the customary presents of food, clothes, and domestic utensils to the house of his bride. And now he was busy preparing himself for the great day. He had had his teeth filed almost to the gums, and blackened till they shone like lacquer, so that his enthusiastic mother and sisters compared his mouth to the ripe pomegranate, in which the black seeds show through the red flesh. And, day by day, he went to the village-priest to recite to him the words of the marriage-formula, which he did, sitting up to his chin in the cold water of the tank behind the mosque, the priest standing over him, Koran in hand. The bride, on her side, had been living on a diet of three teaspoonfuls of rice and a glass of hot water per diem, so as to lose flesh and - according to Javanese notion - gain

beauty for the important day: and, to the great satisfaction of her family, she was now so thin that they could almost see the flame of the oil-wick shining through her.

Meanwhile, the entire population of the *desa* was busy with preparations for the marriage-feast. The women might be seen all day long, under the pent-roof of the bride's house, at the rice-block, in the kitchen, pounding rice, boiling vegetables, shredding cayenne pepper and all manner of condiments, for the innumerable dishes which figure at a festive Javanese repast. And the young men were chopping fire-wood and carrying water, as if for their livelihood. On the wedding-day, these youths formed the escort of the bridegroom on his way to the mosque, where the marriage-contract was concluded between him and the representative of the bride, and from thence they conducted him in solemn procession to the bride's house. Afterwards, they acted as bearers of the

litter in which the bride and her maidens sat.

These young men and the girls who had been so busy with the cooking of the meal, all belonged, as I was told, to a society, or village-club, established for the purpose of conducting festivities, private or public. This club possesses mats, crockery, kitchen utensils, and other requisites; the necessary money is obtained by fines levied on such of the members as neglect the duties assigned to them, and the membership is compulsory on landowners and their families. Societies of this kind are found in every community. As might be expected, the principle of solidarity, which pervades all these laws and customs, manifests itself even more strongly in the domestic life of the dessa-folk. The ties of kinship (though not those of marriage) are much respected by them. Parents are so absolutely sure of the love and filial piety of their children, that they often, as they grow older, abandon all their

property to them, content to live for the remainder of their days as their sons' and daughters' pensioners. And, even the most distant relation, who, like the nearest, is termed brother or sister, may count, in case of need, upon assistance and hospitality. Parents are free to bequeath their property as they like; and they sometimes give everything to the first-born son or daughter, without any of the other children protesting. But, just as frequently, the heritage is left to all the descendants in common, when the paternal house is enlarged, so as to afford room for all the married sons and daughters and their families, and the produce of the fields is equally divided amongst them, just as they equally divide the labour and the toil. Thus, through all chances and changes, the communistic principle is still maintained in the small community of the family, as just as it is in the greater one of the *desa*. And indeed, it might be said that the *desa* is but the enlarged

paternal house of the Javanese. All the inhabitants of it are his kinsfolk and nearest of blood, whose interests are his own, whose prosperity or misery is bound up with his, and who are his natural allies in defending the common inheritance against the stranger. The bamboo enclosure which defines and defends the dessa, and the environing fields - the common possession of all - are symbols and outward visible signs of this.

The colonial policy of the Dutch - which is based upon the principle that the natives should be governed through the intermediary of native chiefs, and as much as possible after the spirit of native institutions - has recognized the peculiar character of the Javanese dessa, by granting it an almost absolute autonomy in all strictly local matters. The affairs of the community are managed by the village-chief, chosen by popular vote from among the landowners of the dessa. He is confirmed in his office by a decree of the Government, sanction

being withheld only in case of unfitness on account of bad conduct or mental or physical debility. The village-chief is assisted by a council, likewise chosen by the inhabitants of the *desa*, and, in some places, he shares his authority with the elders of the village. Between them, they manage the daily affairs of the *desa*. They distribute the communal fields; assign to each landowner the labour he is to perform for the *desa*, and his share in the taxes and the service-duty imposed by the Government; fix the dates for the preparation of the fields, the sowing, transplanting and reaping of the rice, and for the public festivals celebrated on these occasions; decide quarrels; impose fines; and control the village school. The official in charge of the district, to which the *desa* belongs, and the relation between whom and the native chiefs is expressed in their official denominations of 'elder and younger brother,' abstains from all direct interference in these

matters. He controls 'his younger brother' in the use he makes of the authority entrusted to him, in the double capacity of protector of his *desa* and agent of the Colonial Government. He forbids such measures only as would infringe upon established rights, or are contrary to the public interest. Thus, the village-chief is left free to govern his *desa* according to the prescriptions of the 'adat,' the immemorial unwritten code, which to the Javanese is supreme.

The colonial policy of the Hollanders has respected many of these peculiarities, which as government less liberal in its conceptions and with a bureaucratic zeal for uniformity would long since have obliterated. Local colour and romance are all the better for it: and so, it would seem, is the native population. If, at least, I may be allowed to judge from impressions gained during visits to *dessas* in several districts of Java - impressions, I grant it, necessarily superficial and incomplete - I would

venture to say, that the people of the villages lead a happy life.

I shall never forget my last glimpse of one of these hill dessas - the village road, clean and trim like a garden path, with the neat brown huts on either side; the rice-barns, in shape like a child's cradle full of sweet new rice, and the stables, where small dun-coloured cattle stood patiently chewing the cud. The men were all out in the fields; but plump, merry-eyed children were playing in the road, and, here and there, under the pent-roof of a house, a woman sat at her loom, or was painting with gandy colours the white sarong cloth. The brown monotony of bamboo walls and roofs was broken, in places, by the green of banana groves, by clusters of fruit-laden palms, and by the dark verdure of jambu trees, which dyed the ground purple with falling blossoms. My road lay through the stubbly dessa-fields, golden in the setting sun, where the labour for

the new harvest - the second the year, which would be followed by a third - had already begun. A pair of powerful grey oxen, yoked to a plough, were drawing a straight furrow through a field, slowly but surely: the owner's little son, sitting perched on the handle of the plough, directed them. That night, long after the last cricket had eased his song, the thin clear notes of the gamelan resounded from the heights.

Epilogue.

As I write these lines - adding a last touch to the slight sketches in which I have endeavoured to render my impressions of the country - the shrill whistle of steam and the thudding and panting of powerful engines and in my ears, and I see the radiant sky blackened by volumes of smoke. The 'campaign' had begun in the Cheribon plains. In endless file the lumbering, buffalo-drawn 'pedatis' [carts] creaking under the load of sappy green sugar-cane, jolt along upon the dusty road, on their way to the factory yonder, - a great square ungainly building, all around which there are a

stir and bustle of dark figures, like the swarming of ants around an ant-hill. The gate is thrown open wide; tall black shapes loom through the semidarkness of the interior: and, now and then, the sudden flare from a furnace reveals the bulging sooty-black mass of a boiler, or the contour of the gigantic wheel slowly revolving. The nauseous smell of the boiling syrup taints the air.

I went to the mill, one morning, to watch the transformation of the beautiful tall reeds, which, only a few hours ago, so gaily fluttered their pennon-like leaves in the wind and sunshine without, into a shapeless pulp, and a turbid viscous liquor. The 'mandor' showed me the first sugar-bags of the season. I looked at them with some interest, beyond that which they deserved by themselves. We were to be companions on the journey westwards, and already the steamer which was to convey us hence, was riding at anchor in the roadstead of Cheribon.

Last impressions, it is said, are the strongest, and are those which ultimately fix the mental images. If so, I will remember Java, years hence, not as the fairy-land it seemed to me only yesterday, in the sylvan solitudes of the Tjerimai, but as a busy manufacturing country, prosperous and prosaic.

I will remember a rich soil, an enervating climate, alternating droughts and inundations and fever-breathing monsoons; a mode of life, comfortable and even luxurious, but monotonous in the extreme, which taxes to the utmost both mental and physical energies. I will think of white dusty towns by yellow muddy rivers; of hills, and vales, and marshy lowlands overgrown with thick, sprouting rice; of admirable irrigation works; of a system of political administration, apparently wise and equitable and conducive to the well-being of a prosperous native population. And, I will be at a loss how to reconcile all these hard solid facts about Java

with the airy fancies, the legends and the dreams, which must still, as with the splendours of zodiacal skies, illumine my thoughts of that beautiful island.

It seems impossible that both should be true. And, yet, I know that the fancies are every whit as real and living as the facts, that the poetry and the romance are as faithful representations of things as they are, as the highest praise could be.

Even now, whilst, in the factory yonder, fires roar; engines pant; and human beings sweat and toil to change the dew-drenched glory of the fields into a marketable commodity - some hamlet in the plains is celebrating the Wedding of the Rice with many a mystic rite. Some native chief, festively celebrating the birth of a son, welcomes to his house the 'dalang,' the itinerant poet and playwright, who, on his miniature stage, represent the councils of the Gods, and the adventures, in war and love,

of unconquerable heroes, and of queens more beautiful than the dawn. Finally, - in the sacred grove of Sangean, on the Tjerimai, the green summit of which dominates the southern horizon, some huntsman, crouching by the shore of the legendary haunted lake, invokes the Princess Golden Orchid, and her saintly brother, Radhen Pangloera, who live in a silver palace deep down in the shining water, and who shower wealth, honour, and long life upon the mortal who pronounces the names the spirits of the lake know the by.

And, better still - on this very estate, amid the smoke of factory-chimneys, the mythical fancy of the country-folk has enthroned a 'danhjang,' tutelary genius of the field, in the branches of an ancient waringin-tree. On their way to the mill, men and women pause in its shade, to hang on the leafage little paper fans, or deposit on the humble altar; jessamine blossoms, yellow 'boreh' unguent and new-laid

eggs in homage to the agrestic god.

Now, the waringin tree stands in a field of sugar-cane, where its wide spreading roots exhaust the soil, and its broad shadow kills the young plants within an ever-expanding circle. Clearly, it should be cut down. But the owner of the estate, warned by recent events, wisely forbears. He chooses to put up with these inconveniences, rather than expose himself and his property to the revenge which the votaries of the Danhjang would undoubtedly take, if a sacrilegious hand were laid on his chosen abode. And so, the Sacred Waringin thrives and flourishes in the midst of the plantations of sugar-cane, a fit symbol of the romance which, in this island, pervades all things, even those the most prosaic in appearance.

It is this, I believe, this constant intrusion of the poetic, the legendary, the fanciful into the midst of reality, which constitutes the unique charm of Java. This is the secret of the unspeakable

and irresistible fascination by which it holds the men of the north, born and bred among the sterner realities of European civilisation. A spell which becomes so potent as to countervail ills which otherwise would prove unbearable; and to temper, with a regret and a strange sense of want, the joys of the exile's home-coming.

And this, too, is the reason why, to me as to so many who have beheld Java not with the bodily eye alone, it must still remain a land of dreams and fancies, the Enchanted Isle where innocent beliefs and gladsome thoughts, such as are the privilege of children and childlike nations, still have their happy home.