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Title: From Jungle to Java

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Release date: January 8, 2009 [eBook #27749]

Language: English

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK FROM JUNGLE TO JAVA ***

FROM JUNGLE TO JAVA

THE TRIVIAL IMPRESSIONS OF A
SHORT EXCURSION TO NETHERLANDS INDIA.

BY

ARTHUR KEYSER,

AUTHOR OF

"OUR CRUISE IN NEW GUINEA," "CUT BY THE MESS,"

"AN EXILE'S ROMANCE," ETC., ETC.



THE
ROXBURGHE PRESS,

LIMITED,

FIFTEEN, VICTORIA STREET,

WESTMINSTER.

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FROM JUNGLE TO JAVA

[1]

CHAPTER I.

A SELECT COMMUNITY.

Mr. X., whose impressions and mild adventures I have undertaken the task of editing, has asked me to narrow his personal introduction to such limits as is consistent with the courtesy due to my readers, if haply I find any. He prefers, as his pseudonym implies, to remain an unknown quantity. I need only explain that he is an officer employed in one of the small States of the Malay Peninsula, which are (very much) under the protection of the Colonial Government of the Straits Settlements. The latter, with careful forethought for their ease-loving rulers, appoints officers to relieve them of all the cares and duties of administration, and absolves them from the responsibility of a Government somewhat more progressive in its policy than might commend itself to Oriental ideas, if left without such outside assistance.

As the title intimates, Mr. X.'s duties compel him to make his home in the jungle. The word has many significations in the East, where it is often used to express a region remote from civilization, although perhaps consisting of barren mountains or treeless plains. Mr. X.'s jungle, however, is one realizing what it represents to the untravelled Englishman. It is a land of hill and dale covered with thickly growing forest trees, with here and there by the side of the rivers, which are Nature's thoroughfares, or the main roads made by man, small oases of cultivation. It is a beautiful country, with a climate which those who live in it—and they are the best witnesses—declare to be healthy and agreeable. And the members of the small community who form the European population take a personal pride in the amenities of their beautiful retreat, with its

[2]

perennial verdure, and glory in their "splendid isolation." Criticisms are resented, and suggestions of indisposition due to climatic influence held to be little short of traitorous. So, as may be imagined, it was a matter of no ordinary interest when X. not only complained of being unwell, but also developed signs of a chronic discontent. For X.—no Mr. was necessary in that little round-table club—certainly was unwell. Of this there could be no doubt, and such a condition of body was little short of an abuse of the privileges of the place. But since he could give no real explanation of his feelings, and only sighed vaguely when engaged in the daily preprandial game of billiards at the club, it was thought best to ignore his new departure, and to leave the subject severely alone. [3]

However, the effect of this wise treatment was entirely ruined by the arrival of the doctor, who bore the sounding official designation of the Residency surgeon. This gentleman was wont to be sceptical in the matter of ailments, limiting his recognition only to honest, downright illness worthy of the attention of a medico whose name stood in front of a formidable array of honourable letters, too numerous for him to mention. But even really great people are not always strictly consistent, and occasionally make small lapses from the straight path of precedent—and so this man of science deigned to cast an eye of interest upon the ailment of X. That it should be worthy of notice at all was enough for the companions of the now much-appreciated invalid, but when the great man added to his notice by bestowing a classical name, expressions of sympathy knew no bounds, and the unwonted solicitude was almost more than the sufferer could bear with the dignified attitude of conscious merit fitting to the occasion. Something rather *distingué* had happened to the place, something quite new. A vulgar complaint was a subject for reprobation and not sympathy, as casting discredit on this salubrious retreat, but a malady composed of two words out of the Greek Lexicon conferred a distinction perhaps unknown to, and to be envied by, the larger communities beyond the pass. The matter was most seriously discussed, and the decision arrived at that X. wanted a change. Not exactly that a change would do him good, but because, when he came back, the change, from the place he went to, to his happy home in Pura Pura, would work wonders for his health. As the doctor endorsed the former part of the verdict, rather modifying it by suggesting, that there were few conditions of health when a change would not be beneficial to a hard-worked official, there remained nothing but to select the spot to which X.—his leave once granted—must go. It would never, of course, do that he should go to Penang, or even to Hong Kong or Japan, such an expedition would be too ordinary and commonplace. It was felt that X. should do something worthy of the occasion, and show his appreciation of the place he lived in by going to one as similar in respect of people and scenery as could be found, and so, when the person chiefly concerned, knowing what was expected of him, suggested Java, the idea was accepted, and Java it was settled to be. And that night at the Club there was a long sitting, and Manop, the patient barman, had to record the disappearance of many extra "stengahs," [1] as the matter was discussed in all its bearings. Those of the community who had been to Java recalled their experiences and recollections of that country, rather to the annoyance of those others whose travels, though perhaps more extended, had not led them in the same direction, and thus had to accept the unwelcome rôle of silent listeners. However, goaded by long endurance, one of the party, the scene of whose stories mostly lay in the Antipodes, remarked that certainly when X. returned from Java he must write a book about it, because if he had only half as much to communicate as the present speakers, the book would be full of information. This little sarcasm was entirely spoilt by being taken literally, as it was at once decided that X. must write a book. Vainly he protested that it would be impossible to write a book after only a brief visit to a place, as he could only put into it what was already known to others; his objections were over-ruled, and he was reminded that only the other day, when H. E., the Governor, progressed (which is the official rendering of travelled) through a neighbouring State (known to those present only too painfully well, through many weary days spent in the jungles while exploring and actually constructing the path over which this "progress" was subsequently made), one of the party wrote a book which announced the discovery of a newly found place, and even went so far as to sniff severely at the presumption of those who had undergone these early days of toil, because certain grateful pioneers had named various landmarks after friends who had assisted them in the first months of settlement. "If that State, which we know so well, was discovered so recently," urged one of the speakers, "why not discover Java?" "And as for a fortnight being too brief a time," suggested another—"did the Progress take longer?" And thus, it being an unwritten law in Pura Pura that the wishes of the community should be respected, X. having now returned from leave, has commissioned a chronicler to write about what he saw in Java, though it would be an easier task were the latter allowed to write about the community. But that must not be—at any rate now. Java is the theme—that, and no other. [4] [5] [6]

Footnotes:

[1] Local name for "peg."

THE START.

In the few days which elapsed before the due arrival of official permission for X. to leave the jungle, it might have been observed that he was changed. The hitherto sedate individual became fussy and worried, and members of The Community agreed that he was "journey-proud"—a happy expression used by one of the neighbouring Malay potentates when wishing to describe *his* feelings at a time of emerging from the security of his own retreat. But there was much to do—clothes not looked at since the distant days when they left those cities on the other side of the pass, had to be inspected and all their lapses laid bare—moths had eaten holes in most conspicuous places, and in others rats had, literally, made their nests. The shirts were whitened shams, as they lay, no more than so many "dickeys," in a row, for when unfolded it was found that they had lost their tails, long since the prey of cockroaches or bedding for the young of mice; collars, when severed from their fray, were sadly diminished in height, and the overhauling of the boot department revealed the fact that there was nothing that would bear a more critical eye than that of "The Community." However, the best had to be made of a bad job, and one Bo Ping, a stitcher in leather, certainly did *his* best in the matter. [8]

Then an equal preparation was required for the wardrobes of Usoof and Abu, the two followers selected to accompany X. upon his travels. This entailed many visits from the local tailors, who spent long hours in the back premises, accompanied by all their friends and relations—for in Pura Pura, as amongst many other Eastern peoples, for one person at work there are always ten looking on. Thus the interest in these proceedings was not centred upon X.—to some he played quite a secondary part in the matter, being merely an incident connected with the departure of Usoof, who was going to Java, which was his birthplace—as all the world knew—but which he had left years ago, when little more than a baby in arms. Usoof was going home to find his relations and tell them all about himself, and "Tuan" [2] X. happened to be going too. This being a fact widely reported and discussed nightly far into the small hours of the morning, while friends ate light refreshments of bread and sugar with pink-coloured syrups to wash them down, it is not to be wondered at that X. began at last to feel that it was settled he was going principally to search for Usoof's mother, who was possibly living in a village somewhere in Java, her name unknown; indeed, her still being in the land of the living was a matter of conjecture. This quest, however, which obtained additional interest from the little that was knowable of its object, is alluded to here, so that when it is subsequently related how it led X. from the beaten track of tourists, there may be no surprise, since it can be understood that it would have been impossible for him to return to Pura Pura without some attempt to perform that which was expected of him. [9]

In due time arrived the document permitting X. to leave Pura Pura, and the day of departure was fixed. Usoof and Abu had already gone on ahead in a bullock cart with the luggage, and X. was to leave next morning. Several of "The Community" kindly came to see the start and sat calm and superior over their long "stengahs," while the intending traveller endeavoured to compress into a quarter of an hour the final instructions for the regulation of affairs in his absence. However, after writing various little memos and giving many injunctions to the syces and tenants generally, concerning the care of the horses, sheep, geese, dogs, bears, tame storks, porcupines, and other live stock which belonged to the household, the traveller mounted into his sulky, with that sinking in the region of his heart which comes to all those temporarily about to leave Pura Pura's secluded calm. And thus he drove forth into the great populous world beyond. The first glimpse of it was distant twenty-four miles, and reached after a drive through some of the most beautiful jungle scenery imaginable. This oasis of civilization was the capital of the State at whose port it was necessary to embark. Here X. remained for the night, accepting hospitality from the kind doctor who had looked upon his complaint and so scientifically localised and named it. To one fresh from the jungle, this evening appeared full of novelty and life, from the fact of there being strange faces present. One of the party was a French Roman Catholic priest, known to all in the various States as a man of practical good works and a congenial companion. And there was also a gentleman of title—a visitor fresh from England—who should have been called a globe-trotter had he not, in the course of the meal, thanked Providence that he had come across none of that genus in those localities. This gentleman, who rejoiced at the absence of globe-trotters, was bound for such a variety of places in such a short space of time that X. could only regard him with bewilderment and envy. For while he had only undertaken his journey after the mature consideration of a month, during which time the correspondence concerning leave and medical certificates had assumed proportions of official magnitude, this traveller carried with him all the documents connected with his plans in the form of a piece of paper on which was written exactly where he must sleep, lunch, and dine during the ensuing fortnight. It would be interesting to know if this visitor actually accomplished his task and saw all that he proposed in the time allowed. Perhaps, when he gets home, *his* community—the other titled people—will put pressure on him to write a book, and satisfy our legitimate curiosity. [10] [11]

On the following morning X. boarded the train on the railroad which connects the capital with the sea. He found himself an object of interest to the dwellers in those distant parts, not only as the fleshly embodiment of the personality hitherto known as initials at the bottom of official minutes, but as the champion who had not long since descended from his mountain for the purpose of engaging the railway in litigation, in consequence of his garments having suffered from sparks on the occasion of his last venture in the train.

This case had excited considerable interest, and X. had made a triumphant exit, as he drove away

from the court with portions of charred wardrobe packed in behind. During the present journey there were no sparks, and the coast was reached without any incident which might promise litigation. The party consisting of X., Usoof and Abu, embarked on the s.s. *Malacca*, a fairly comfortable steamship with a kindly captain. The sniff of the sea was delightful to the jungle-wallah, and, freed from official chains, he reclined in a long chair feeling that all his plans and preparations had at least a present good result. The only incident of the voyage that remains in his memory is the fact that a Chinese passenger sitting opposite at dinner drank a bottle of whisky and a bottle of claret mixed, and appeared to suffer no subsequent inconvenience. In the evening the ship lay off Malacca. There are few more suggestive views than this one of twinkling lights, here and there disclosing momentary peeps of that picturesque old town, peeps that conjure forth visions of half forgotten stories of that place of many memories, told, in the jungle by the flicker of the camp fire, by Malays, adepts at relating tales handed down by their fathers.

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Then the cool evening of a tropical climate, the sea glinting in silver moonlit streaks around the ship, which throwing a huge shadow on the water lies silently swinging to her anchor before the peering little red stars of that solitary old-world city. Scenes such as these are some compensation to many a home-sick exile.

Ah, well,—we must not get sentimental and out of tune, though the snores of the whisky-claret Chinaman are particularly discordant. However he passed—as happily passengers do—and so did the night and the early dawn as the s.s. *Malacca* approached the beautiful island of Singapore (does everyone know it is an island?) Ask you another! Well, can my readers say straight off what constitutes the Straits Settlements, and which are islands? but never mind—skip this and hurry on over the bracket, if an answer were really wanted the bracket would not be there.

[13]

Footnotes:

[2] Malay equivalent for Mister = Sahib.

CHAPTER III.

[14]

SINGAPORE.

I see that X. has it in his notes that the first view of this city is the most beautiful in the East—does he mean the approach, the view, or the city. It perhaps does not greatly matter, but it is certain that he recorded the fact that to a poor jungle-wallah like himself it seemed very vast and full of life, as he dressed himself and prepared to re-enter the world from which he had so long been absent. A gharry—a close carriage on four wheels with a dirty-looking driver and a tiny pony—now conveyed, or rather set forth to convey, the traveller to the hospitable house of a certain distinguished general who resides in Singapore.

Singapore is a city in which it is notoriously difficult to find one's way about, as all the roads seem alike—they are all excellent—and so do the houses. Had I not undertaken to tell you how X. went to Java, I should like to stop and relate how once on this account the writer dined at the wrong house—and dined well—while his host, whose name he never knew, preserved an exquisite *sang-froid* and never showed surprise; but such egotistic digressions might possibly annoy X. who has a right to claim the first place in this little history.

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The driver apparently knew where no one as an individual lived, and entirely relied on strange local descriptions known only to the native inhabitants, therefore it was vain for X. to try and explain where he wanted to go. It transpired from interrogations of passers by that no gharry driver or Malay policeman had heard of the General or even that such a personage existed—X. never told the General that—and thus the gharry containing X., and the two which followed with the suite and luggage, drove backwards and forwards puzzling people as they went, for such twistings and turnings argued ignorance of locality, and ignorance of locality meant a globe-trotter, and yet no mail steamer was in, and, again, no globe trotter would be followed by two Malays. And presently he again endeavoured to explain where he wanted to go in forcible Malay—this made the problem more difficult—till the passers by, mostly cooks going to market, gave it up as one too deep, or perhaps too trivial, for solution. The morning drive thus lasted till Europeans early for office appeared in their smart buggies and fast trotting horses, and one of these magnates of commerce coming to the rescue, it was explained to the gharry syce that the Commander of all the Forces occupied a house where Mr. So-and-so used to live, after the celebrated Mr. So-and-so had sold off his racing stud and given up the house—"didn't the driver remember?" "Yes, was not Omed the chief syce" to the gentleman alluded to? At this the driver exclaimed, "of course," and whipping up his pony, with a withering look at his face, which implied "if only he had had the sense to tell me that before," he drove direct to one of the largest and most imposing mansions of the town.

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Saved from the hotels of Singapore, where bewildered travellers grumble and strange-looking jungle-wallahs come down to drink, X. felt all the half-dormant memories of civilization return to him, as, passing the sentry, he entered the spacious hall and received a kindly welcome from his host.

Having, as the books say, removed the traces of his journey, no very palpable ones in this case, since washing is practicable and customary on board s.s. *Malacca*, X. joined his host at breakfast and was informed of the programme of the day—consisting of an afternoon drive, dining out in the evening, and thence to hear the regimental band play by moonlight in the gardens. What a gay place Singapore seemed to X., who nightly dined alone, and to whom the sound of a band was a memory of bygone days—and a band by moonlight too. Yes, that also had memories all its own. On moonlight nights he is wont to sit on the verandah and listen to the drowsy monotonous singing of the Malays who dwell in the villages below his hill. Very agreeable is that chanting sound as it ascends, telling of companionship and content, although for that very reason making the solitary European feel more solitary still. Native servants have given him his dinner and left him to seek their own amusement. He is a duty only, something finished with and put away for the night, left solitary upon the broad verandah, half envying the natives who can enjoy the moonlight in the society of their friends.

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Here in Singapore X. need envy no one, for was he not to go out after dinner and hear a band in the moonlight, and a band played by Europeans? The reality equalled expectation, for moonlight in the beautiful gardens of Singapore, with the *elite* of society sitting in their carriages or strolling along the grass by the lake would have been a pleasant evening even to people more *blasé* than X., nor did that person enjoy it any the less from catching sight of Usoof and Abu standing as lonely amongst this mass of strangers as ever he was wont to feel when brooding in his solitude at home, while they sang songs in the moonlight to their friends.

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The evening ended up with the glorious dissipation of supper at the regimental mess. The immediate result of this outing was pleasure, the subsequent one—probably the addition of another syllable to the compound Greek word with which X.'s ailments had been identified.

CHAPTER IV.

[19]

ON THE WAY TO JAVA.

On the following day, remembering what was expected of him, X. hired a gharry and proceeded to discharge all such obligations as etiquette demanded from one in his peculiar official position. The first and foremost of these was to inscribe his name in a book in the ante-room of the office of the Colonial Secretary. The names in this book would make interesting reading, and, thought X., probably become a source of wealth could one take it into the smoking-room of a London club and lay ten to one that no three people present could locate the places named upon a map. Perak^[3]—or as they would call it in the smoking-room, Pea rack—Selangor, Pahang—called at home Pahhang—Jelebu, Sungei Ujong—also Londonized into Sonjeyajang—and many others of unaccustomed sound.

Official routine over (this should be semi-official routine, suggests X., who fears that he may be held responsible for any error of the writer, which may lead it to be supposed that he is arrogating to himself any real Colonial Office rank)—however, it is difficult to be so observant of nice distinctions—X. next paid a visit to Messrs. John Little and Co. Every one who has been to Singapore has been to John Little's, for it is better known to the dwellers in that city than even Whitely to Londoners. Whitely has rivals, John Little has none. From this famous provider of necessaries and superfluities to the hospitable club is but a step, and there the traveller lunched. This club is the meeting-place of all the prominent merchants in Singapore. The building is a fine one, with a verandah overlooking the sea, and the members always cordially welcome strangers and neighbours from the adjoining peninsula. Having said this much I feel compelled to risk incurring the displeasure of X., who will be credited with having told me, and add that the company is better than the cooking. The quality of the fluids and the quantity are without reproach, but the food!—that is one of the things they manage better in the jungle.

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In the afternoon the General was again as good as his word, and took his guest for a drive, showing to his wondering eyes all the beauties of the new water-works. The China mail had that morning come in, and this favourite resort was dotted over with evident passengers, some of them globe-trotters. What would the titled traveller have said had his hurried steps taken him that way? In the evening His Excellency gave a dinner party to twenty guests culled from the most select circles in Singapore. To sit at table with so many Europeans would at any time have been a new sensation to X., but to suddenly find himself one of such a distinguished company was almost alarming in its novelty. However, being happily situated by the side of Beauty, the situation expanded generally, and had any member of The Community been watching, he might have thought that X. was proving false to the creed that there was no place like Pura Pura for a

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man to dwell in.

That which to the other diners was a matter of every day, to him was both a present pleasure and a glimpse of the past.

It was, of course, quite hopeless to attempt to explain to anyone whence he came, or where he lived, for the very name of Pura Pura was unknown to them, and so it was necessary to pose as a passenger passing through *en route* to Java.

Some amongst the company had been to Java (including the host), and all spoke in high terms of the civility to be found there.

In the morning the traveller took leave of his kind host, who left first at 5.30 a.m. for some early little game of war, a description of which would probably have been as vague to a civilian as would the geographical position of Pura Pura, or the exact official status of X., to members of the company of the previous evening. The great soldier having driven off in full uniform through a throng of salaaming menials of various nationalities, X. entered his humble gharry, and, followed by Usoof and Abu, drove to the Messagerie wharf. The steamer for Batavia was the s.s. *Godavery*, which was in connection with the mails for home. The cost of the passage is, perhaps, for the actual distance travelled, the most expensive in the world. The time taken by the voyage is thirty-six hours.

[22]

Footnotes:

[3] Pronounced Perah.

CHAPTER V.

[23]

BATAVIA.

The voyage on board the *Godavery* resembled similar ones, with the notable difference that the excellent cuisine made X. wish that the time to be spent in transit were longer. The only people who were not contented were Usoof and Abu, for each of whom their employer was paying the sum of three dollars a night. These particular Mahomedans refused to touch the food shovelled out to them, and to crowds of natives of all colour and class—by the rough and ready Chinese servants, and towards the end of the second day, having eaten nothing, they presented a very woebegone and miserable appearance. However, a few more judiciously placed dollars produced them a square meal of bread and tea, after which they smiled.

There is perhaps no sensation so agreeable as the arrival in a strange port. Thoughts and conjectures as to the possibilities that lie beyond the landing place are innumerable, and fancy and anticipation are equally strong. When the *Godavery* steamed into Batavia it was still dark and the rain was coming down in torrents. It all looked miserable enough, but, once alongside the wharf, daylight began to appear and the passengers trooped ashore. The station was more than a quarter of a mile from the place of landing, and this distance the poor people had to hurry along in the rain.

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The unfortunate natives—carrying bundles containing their belongings—were drenched to the skin. Also the European passengers—less objects of pity, as only the portion of their wardrobe actually worn was exposed to the rain—came in for a considerable share of the moisture of that wet arrival. It is true there was a magnificent covered way, but this was hopelessly blocked up with trucks and other railway gear, which were, presumably, more susceptible to cold than the passengers. The luggage was quickly and courteously passed by the Custom House officials, and the travellers entered a luxuriously fitted train—apparently a show train, as X. never met another like it in Java.

Arrival in Batavia town created a good first impression, as there were no pestering crowds, as there are in Singapore, and there were many carriages waiting for hire, all two-horsed and good.

The drive to the hotel was a long one, through the business portions of the town, till the residential side was reached. Here detached houses are situated alongside the principal road, on the other side of which flows a canal, giving to the place an appropriate Dutch appearance.

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The hotel was a most imposing building outside, with apparently countless rooms, but the thing which immediately struck X. as something uncommon was the fact that the floors of the apartments were level with the ground and not raised as is the case in Singapore and the Peninsula, and he felt feverish as he noticed it. The traveller was allotted a fair sized room opening on to a court yard, with other rooms and other openings to the right and to the left, and

in fact all round him, and in front of these rooms sat people in every stage of *deshabille*. There seemed to be no privacy and what, perhaps, under the circumstances was fortunate,—no shyness. X. however had not yet reached that point of his observations, and, entering his room, he shut the door and ordered his first meal in Java. This turned out to be a terrible repast, consisting of a plate of cold clammy selections from the interior of some edible beast, two cold hard-boiled eggs, three small cold fish roasted in cocoanut oil, and something intended to resemble ham and eggs. This first meal is mentioned in detail as it was but a foretaste of an equally trying series. X. thought of Dagonet and that power of description which, when relating dyspeptic woes, will compel the sympathy of the hardest feeder.

It did not take long to skim hastily over the surface of these uninviting viands, and now X. turned his attention to the notices which stared at him from every wall. These in many languages threatened all travellers with penalties if, immediately after their arrival, they neglected to obtain permission to reside in Netherlands India. After reading this, X. lost no time in sending for a conveyance to drive to the British Consulate. The gentleman who received him there was extremely civil and gave him all the information in his power. It appeared that if the traveller was anxious for facts about Java, the officials of that country were equally so in requiring the same from him, and he was obliged to fill in a printed form stating his age, birthplace, residence and occupation, etc., and, when this was done, pay one guilder and a half for his trouble. The next step was to go to the Bank, and nothing could exceed the kindness with which he was received at this place, and the thoughtful manager assisted the stranger to decide where he had better go in order to best see something of the country, and what was most to the point, wrote for him the names of places and hotels which seem outlandish and terrible on first meeting with them. X. learnt to his dismay that the system of obtaining money by cheque was almost unknown, and it would always be necessary to carry money and, when more was wanted, receive it by registered letter through the post. The idea of carrying ready money to a person who had for years followed the customs of the East and depended on cheques and "chits," seemed a new trouble for which he had not been prepared. On the drive back to the hotel through streets sloppy with mud, the first new impression made upon the traveller was caused by the number of natives selling vegetables—good wholesome English looking specimens, especially carrots. This was a refreshing sight after years of seeing no familiar vegetables, except those which passed long periods of imprisonment in tins.

All along the route natives of either sex were bathing in the filthy water of the canal without even a suspicion of that modesty which characterises the Malays. Impression No. 2 was noted to the effect that none of the natives wore boots or shoes, and all plashed barefooted through the mud. He had already had his attention called to this absence of shoes when coming up in the train by the notice (not to say the excitement) attracted by the neatly-booted feet of his followers. Could it be possible that they would also be obliged to go barefooted through the muddy streets? And still worse thought—would it fall to his lot to break it to them? The natives all appeared larger and more strongly built than the Malays of the Peninsula, but, as in Singapore, they were a hybrid lot, and there were also to be seen a variety of other nationalities—Malay nationalities—but, strange to say, no Arabs, and, more remarkable still, no Chinamen. To those readers who may not have visited that part of the world of which I write, it should be explained that Singapore is almost entirely populated by Chinese, and in the native states they materially outnumber the Malays, so that the eye is accustomed to see Chinese everywhere and regard them as the real inhabitants of the country. Their absence in a Malay town strikes anyone coming from the Peninsula as strange. Cf course there *are* Chinese in Batavia, and many of them, as X. soon learnt, but they do not pervade the whole place as is the case in the English colonies over the way.

Reaching the hotel X. was relieved to find that Usoof and Abu had discarded their boots, and were picking their way delicately across the mud of the courtyard. Also they had been provided with an excellent curry. Then he prepared to get ready for his own lunch, and next to bathe. In order to do this it was necessary to run the gauntlet of many eyes, as the bathroom was some distance off, and, to reach it, the entire length of the verandah must be passed. On to this verandah opened the doors of bedrooms, the occupant of each sitting in his long chair in front—exactly, as Abu remarked, like vendors holding stalls in a market. The long chairs were of the luxurious kind, with short seats and long movable arms, and on which latter the occupants extended their naked feet. This of course refers to the men. Ladies also sat there, in what X. subsequently learnt was not altogether considered *deshabille*, namely, the sarong and kabaya of the country. The first-named garment, it may be explained for the benefit of readers in the West, is a close-fitting petticoat such as the natives wear, and the latter a white linen jacket. It required some courage to take that first walk along this verandah, but things seldom continue to seem strange, unless other people look as if they thought them so, and as these reclining rows of visitors lay back doing nothing, not even reading, with an air of unconcern, it was not difficult for X. to assume one too. However, he could not but believe that he helped to fill in that vacant blank in which the sitters sank, as he passed along, himself clad in wondrous garments made of gaudy silks woven by the skilled natives of the Peninsula, while Usoof and Abu followed, bringing the towels and soap. Nor did he entirely deceive himself, since he was subsequently informed by Usoof that the "boy" of a Nyonia, or what in Singapore is called a "mem," told him that his lady had instructed him to discover whether X. had many more of those silk sarongs for sale.

Lunch was perhaps the first real revelation of life in Java, since it introduced the traveller to that which a majority of the people seem to live for (and always sleep after)—the rice-table. This rice-table has been so often described that it need not be done in detail here; but the basis, as it were, of this rice-table is, as may be supposed, rice, and with this foundation in your plate, innumerable

dishes of eggs, fish, meat, etc., are offered by a string of attendants, who expect you to put some of each on the top of it. Probably this is only a literal and exaggerated interpretation of a Malay curry, which is incomplete without the countless little relishes which should accompany it. This particular dish, or rather function, is seen in its fullest development in the up-country places, visited later, and the one in Batavia was scarcely a fair sample, as though X. was unaware of this at the time, its proportions had evidently been toned down and diminished out of deference to the cosmopolitan character of the guests, who, probably like our traveller, had on former occasions given their ignorance away by asking for more plates and taking each dish seriously, as though it were a separate course, sent up before its time, at the risk of getting cold. To a person accustomed to Singapore there was something novel and cheering about the first meal in the vast dining-hall of this hotel. The floor was of marble—scrupulously clean—and the Javanese waiters were dressed in a uniform of white trimmed with red, presenting a pleasing contrast to the slipshod dirty "boy" of an ordinary hotel, whose habit it is to clatter round flapping your face and brushing your food with his long, unclean, hanging sleeves. Though in the native states from whence X. came it is no uncommon thing to see Malays wait at table, yet in Singapore, with the exception of Indian servants, it is very seldom that there are any attendants but Chinese.

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Perhaps the most striking feature of the meal was the absence of bread. This could be procured, when asked for, but was not provided, as it is elsewhere, as a matter of course, and was regarded as an extra. An excellent arrangement of this marble hall was that it was permitted to smoke immediately after lunch. As, availing himself of this, X. smoked his cigarette and meditated contentedly, he noted all the various details which might interest The Community at home. One rather prominent detail was a lady at a neighbouring table dressed only in a sarong and kabaya, with her extremities bare. The lower portion of these were thrust into some loose sandal slippers, the upper turned back as far under the chair as the stretch of the sarong would allow. It was not a costume which, from X.'s point of view, appeared elegant, though, like most articles of apparel worn by beauty, capable of becoming elegant if elegantly worn; still in the present instance more natural elegance would be required in proportion to that of the costume, there being so little of the latter. Returning to the publicity of his apartment, X. was met by Usoof and Abu, both with very long faces and evidently in considerable distress. On being interrogated it transpired that they had nowhere to bathe. Now to bathe, and bathe constantly, is as necessary to a Malay as are regular meals to a European. X., being sadly aware that he would be held responsible for everything that went wrong or did not fit in with the exact views of these children of nature, thought it best to be brave at the commencement of things and affect an indifference which he was far from really feeling, and, therefore, with a jerk of his head towards the canal, replied that that was where people bathed. "Yes, perhaps *people*," said Abu, with meaning, and then for fear X. should not be sufficiently intelligent to catch the tone, added "people who don't mind filth or water like that in a drain." This seemed to need no answer, and as Usoof had reserved his remarks X. knew that worse was to come, and he would be more prudent to wait and reply on the whole question, instead of being drawn into argument as though he were actually to blame for this terrible state of affairs. But as Usoof still kept silence X. rashly thought he had gained an easy victory, and airily added, "All right, you must make the best of it and go to the canal." Then the reserved remarks found vent, "Was the Tuan aware that all the women in the place bathed there?" "Yes," this had to be admitted, since the Tuan himself had noticed it, and, as has been recorded above, not without some comments of his own. "Then how can I bathe there at the same time?" continued Usoof, "I should be ashamed." "Well, if they are not you need not be," rather frivolously replied his master, as he sought escape from further conversation by burrowing in a box full of books. It may as well be recorded here that the couple never did bathe in that canal, and eventually drove some miles into the country, where they performed their modest ablutions by a village well. They also refused to permit any clothes to be sent to the wash in Batavia, and they were not far wrong, since the water of the canal was equally unfitted for washing either clothes or the human body it was their office to adorn.

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CHAPTER VI.

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AN OFFICIAL CALL.

After luncheon X. took a drive. All the most noteworthy features of Batavia are duly set forth in guide books, and it is therefore only advisable to mention those few points of difference from an English colonial town which seemed to the traveller worthy of note. The principal one was that all the residents' houses were built along the side of the high road; there were no secluded mansions standing in their own grounds as in Singapore. All the houses were obtrusively *en evidence*, so much so, that people, socially inclined, take their evening drive and note at a glance, by the lights displayed, who is at home and ready to receive. Those not prepared to entertain sit in semi-darkness. The houses seemed as devoid of privacy as were the verandahs of the hotels. Planted on each side of the road were huge towering trees testifying by their presence that the town was not of mushroom growth. No Europeans were met; this was understood later when it was explained that at this hour of the day they were all asleep. At first it seemed that there were no

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shops, but closer observation discovered them under the same roof as some of the private dwellings, standing detached away from the road. The English Church wore a deserted aspect, closed and uncared for. Possibly the driver libelled the community when he informed the traveller that it was never used. The ordinary carriage is a *dos-à-dos*, a most uncomfortable conveyance like an Irish car turned end on, but excellent carriages are provided by the hotels.

Later our traveller proposed to call upon the Resident—the chief authority in the place—and present his letters of introduction. He had been told that he must not call before 7.30 in the evening, and also that he must wear dress clothes. It seemed an outrageous thing to do, to put on dress clothes in broad daylight in an hotel and to go out about dinner time to call, and when he summoned Usoof to assist him, that grave-faced individual did so with a kind of silent pity for his master compelled to do unaccountable things in a land of strangers.

However, when X. had arrayed himself, as though he were dining out, his heart failed him. He felt it was impossible to go to the house of a stranger like this just at the hour for dinner without appearing as though he hoped he would be asked to stay for that meal. And so he shamefacedly untied his white tie and asked Usoof to provide him with a morning coat. This apprehension might have been spared, however; the call was never actually paid, for, in the drive that led up to the house of the Resident, he met a carriage coming out containing a gentleman and three ladies. This turned out to be the Resident with his wife and daughters. It was an agreeable surprise to find that the carriage stopped, and the traveller had the somewhat difficult task of introducing himself and explaining his appearance in the dark. The Resident, who spoke excellent English, was most cordial and kind. He regretted that he was not at home to receive the intended visit, but he was obliged to attend a reception given in honour of the General, the hero of the Lomboh War. Then the great official expressed a hope that X. had secured his permit, and told him that he must renew it when he reached Buitensug, which was the limit of his jurisdiction. X. noticed that the Resident was not in dress clothes and mentally congratulated himself that he wore none either, or most certainly as the carriage drove away he would have looked like a person disappointed of a dinner.

The hotel was most gorgeously illuminated with electric light, and the marble dining hall was extravagantly lurid. Had X. consulted his convenience he would certainly have worn his black sun spectacles, but actually feared to alarm his followers by exhibiting any further tendency to eccentricity on their first day in a strange country, and so he resigned himself to blink owlily throughout the meal. The absence of a punkah, a necessity to which he was accustomed, was also a trial. However, there was little fear of getting hot by over indulgence at the table, as the chilly cocoanut-oily viands were excellent checks to any imprudent display of appetite. Towards the end of the repast the proprietor of the hotel informed X. that the Resident of Batavia wished to speak to him through the telephone. If there is one place where he exhibits himself in an unfavourable light it is in front of that horrible, muttering, jibbering instrument, when, after the introductory "Who's there?" and information as to who you are repeated *ad nauseam*, there rumble to your ear the most exasperating sounds, so full of meaning and yet conveying nothing, until it seems as though the person at the other end were mocking you, and the tone of his voice gets so irritating that you long to throw down the tubes and make a rush at him. However, on this occasion X. wisely left the whole matter in the hands of the proprietor, who presently informed him that the Resident invited him to an open air concert given at the Concordia Club in honour of the General, then the man of the hour, and, if he would care to come, an English friend would presently call for him at the hotel. The only possible answer to such a welcome invitation was duly transmitted.

X. has, according to his own account, all his life been a most fortunate individual. Wherever he went he has always, as the phrase has it, "fallen on his feet." On this expedition his luck did not desert him, and on the appearance of his fellow countryman which took place (to be exact in speaking of an event now historical) at 9 p.m., there commenced a new departure which forged a first link in the chain of events which was to happily land him in the most beautiful country that he had ever yet beheld. X. has always thought of telephones more kindly since.

CHAPTER VII.

A CONCERT AT THE CONCORDIA CLUB.

The traveller was naturally much impressed with the scene at the Concordia Club. In the beautiful gardens, which were gorgeously illuminated, people were walking about and sitting down as though it were an English summer night. But, as in the East thoughts of health and diet always occupy an extraordinarily prominent place in the minds of all who have dwelt there for any length of time, that which chiefly struck the stranger was the apparently reckless indifference to fever displayed by those *flaneurs* who dawdled about under the trees on this treacherous soil, as though it were the harmless green grass of Hurlingham at home. And it almost relieved him to hear presently from a lady, to whom he expressed this astonishment, that the doctors declared this season of open air concerts was certainly the most busy time for colds

and fever. The Resident and his party were seated at a round table on the top of the flight of marble steps leading to the Club. To each person of this group X. was presented in turn, after which he had the honour of a seat on the right hand of his host and thus full opportunity to enjoy the novelty of the surroundings and the excellent music of the band. As the party gathered round the table included some of the greatest names in the country, people who were in a position to have an intimate knowledge of recent events, the conversation proved interesting and instructive. Thus the Englishman heard the story of the Balineri war—that terrible defeat and massacre of the Dutch troops under the command of the general, who ultimately retrieved the position, and to do honour to whom all were assembled to-night. X. listened as people spoke of the unparalleled treachery of the natives, the sufferings of the troops, and the assistance rendered to the enemy by the importation of arms by a European. And severe remarks were made as to this latter incident, some present insisting that the culprit was an Englishman from Singapore. War was in the air—everyone talked of the war, and such an impression did the matter make upon X., who heard the conduct of the campaign discussed wherever he went, throughout his stay, that it may be of interest to give in a separate chapter the story of what was said about the recent war.

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All those who joined the party on the terrace spoke English, to the relief of X.—and as new guests arrived to join the circle they were formally introduced by name to each one among the company in that precise manner which is the fashion in America. And likewise when any individual rose to leave he would bid good-night to each separate member of the party.

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When I undertook to compile this little account of how X. went to Java, it had been my intention to arrange what he saw and what he heard in some order of sequence, but from the nature of his manner of observation, I find this to be impossible, and therefore must record each impression he received and facts of interest which he heard, just as they came to him, regardless of apparent want of connection. As the chief object of this sketch is to assist others intending to spend a short holiday in that beautiful island belonging to our neighbours, this little originality may pass.

Thus on this occasion the traveller learnt that, contrary to his former ideas on the matter, the Civil Service was much underpaid, and that, though it corresponds with our Indian Civil Service in standard of examination, etc., the scale of pay and of pensions falls far short of its prototype. And it may be mentioned here, as showing what an important part naval officers are expected to play in Dutch East India, that all midshipmen have to pass in the Malay language. The command of the squadron on the waters of Netherlands India is the prize of the service, to the holding of which the most distinguished naval officers look forward. The Governor General of the Dutch possessions in the East is known as His Excellency during his term of office. The admiral who commands there not only has the same title during the years of his command, but is entitled to retain it for the remainder of his life. In the course of conversation the Resident kindly informed X. that he must not be annoyed at being obliged to obtain a permit to travel, since it had been found necessary to insist that even his own countrymen should do so, and he had recently caused notices to be issued and posted in all the steamers and hotels, so that there might be no misunderstanding in the matter. After the concert and the conclusion of a most agreeable evening X. was introduced to the Harmonic Club, where he had supper.

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This, like the Concordia, is a magnificent building with marble pillars and floors, more in accordance with his early ideas of the gorgeous East than anything which the traveller had seen. The Harmonic Club was built during the time when Java was an English possession—and his informant, the Englishman, sighed. It was not long before the new comer also sighed, when, having seen the beauties of this glorious country, he remembered that but for the blindness of some former rulers, unmindful of the advice of those on the spot who should know, another India might have been held for England. But as the natural beauty of the country was enhanced and made complete by the sight of universal prosperity and content, the sound of such a sigh from an English visitor is the greatest compliment the present proprietors could be paid.

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The first day of X.'s stay in Java was now over—a pleasant day enough, as he admitted to himself, after a long seclusion in the jungle—the place on which, after all, his last thoughts rested, that negatively happy jungle and its kindly inhabitants—represented to his immediate view by two inanimate bundles on the floor entrenched behind a barricade of boxes in a corner of the room. These were the faithful Usoof and Abu, long since gone to rest—forgetful of all the troubles of their first day in a new country.

CHAPTER VIII.

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CONCERNING THE LOMBOH WAR.

Lomboh is an island to the east of Java. The Raja of Lomboh did not come to Batavia at a time when it was expected of him, and after some correspondence the Resident of the nearest district was sent to see him. After—in true oriental fashion—promising to give him audience, and then failing to do so—keeping the Resident waiting a week—he finally sent a message refusing to meet

him. Then troops were sent. But their departure was not effected without a commencement of that bickering which marked the whole subsequent course of events. The General in command was junior to the Admiral over whom he was put. A compromise was effected by a second general being appointed. When the expedition reached its destination the Balineri showed great astonishment at this parade of force, and affected to be at a total loss to understand why they had come.

This unexpected turn of events finally ended in a great "chumming up" which developed into social functions and the taking of a photograph, in which the Raja's generals and other chiefs of the expedition were all taken in one large group. This photograph was sent to Buitenzorg—the seat of Government—as a proof of the unreality of the scare, and the diplomatic ease with which the expedition had been able to come, see and conquer.

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The photograph is not now to be purchased. After the festivities and photography the Dutch force camped by the Palace walls, and the general in command reported officially that the matter was settled.

On receipt of this welcome news the Governor General was so delighted that he gave a dinner party that same evening, and after the meal was over stood on the billiard table and made a little speech announcing the bloodless success and happy termination of the affair Lomboh.

The Palace where the troops had camped was a kind of village—a collection of houses surrounded by a huge wall. Each day the Dutch held parades and drill outside the village, and tried to astonish the natives with the wonders of their Winchesters and field guns. At these the people professed great astonishment, examining those modern weapons with intense interest, and asking questions innumerable as to their construction and cost. The latter is almost invariably the first question which occurs to a native mind.

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The Balinese must be clever actors, since all the while they possessed hundreds of Winchesters and many pieces of field ordnance within those deceitful walls. They were deceitful walls, for they were extensively loop-holed, the apertures being cunningly stopped up with mortar. One evening the crisis came. The officers while playing whist—dressed in their lounge clothes of sarong and their feet bare, were attacked and shot down almost to a man. When the poor fellows sought refuge under the walls, hand grenades were fired to dislodge them. A general panic and flight followed. Those fugitives who had managed to effect an orderly retreat, took refuge in a temple about half way between their camp and that of another detachment. It was only then that they realized to the full extent the nature of the terrible disaster, for here they met a poor remnant of that other detachment fighting their way to them for help—they also having been treacherously attacked.

But this was not all, no warning had yet been sent to a third detachment which had been left on the coast. This column, ignorant of any disaster, marched in to the recent camp and had scarcely time to wheel round before the guns in the loopholes opened fire, almost annihilating them, a few only escaping back to the boats.

How deeply affected were the Dutch and their friends, the whole civilized world, at the arrival of this terrible news, is matter of history, and for a time something like consternation reigned in Buitenzorg and Batavia.

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After telegraphic communication with Europe, and the fortunate mislaying of a certain message deprecating any prompt action, the Governor General took a popular step in deciding to send every available man to the seat of war, and to render all possible assistance.

This was done, and the Dutch forces subsequently retrieved their fortunes, in some measure avenging the death of their comrades. But it was at no small sacrifice, since Java—the Government of which place much reliance on military display—was almost destitute of troops. As an illustration of this it is related that during this war the Sultan of Deli elected to pay a visit to Batavia. As only two battalions of troops were left it was considered impolitic that he should know it, therefore the men were marched past him first when he was dining in the capital, and then despatched by train to represent other battalions, and march past him once again on the occasion of his visit to Buitenzorg the following day.

The description of the tears of the aged Sultan of Lomboh at the destruction of his beautiful palace, and the marvellous stories of how jewels and millions of treasure were borne away by the victorious General more resembled a page for the "Arabian Nights" than a record of facts in the present day. On the other hand, accounts of the terrible hardships endured by the brave Dutch soldiers sounded more modern, and were only too easy of belief.

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The seat of the war was only half a day from the Javanese port of Soerabaya, and enough money had been collected in Java and Holland to pay the cost of the entire war, and yet it was so mismanaged that officers had only rice to eat, and nightly camped out on the ground without shelter in that fever-giving climate.

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CHAPTER IX.

BUITENZORG.

On the afternoon of the day of his arrival, a Sunday, having declined a kind invitation to a party for the theatre, X. decided to leave for Buitenzorg. He thought he sniffed fever mingled with the other very apparent odours in his room on the ground floor, while Usoof and Abu not only could not bathe but were unable to send his clothes to the wash. The combination of reasons and of smells was strong.

It may be mentioned here, it being about as *apropos* in this place as it would be in any other, that all functions in Java, from a reception of the Governor General to a performance by a travelling show, take place on a Sunday.

The train left Batavia at 4.30 and X. reached Buitenzorg at six.

So much that is misleading has been written about Buitenzorg—the Washington of Java, that X. was woefully deceived. It certainly is a beautiful place—indeed exquisitely so, but a traveller is scarcely satisfied with the beauties of nature when he pays to mankind for creature comforts which he fails to obtain. The most agreeable feature of the journey to a stranger who has, as it were, been long hemmed in by dense jungles in the Peninsula, was certainly the long stretches of open country reminding him of the pasture lands and fields which fly past the train at home. Cattle and ponies grazing complete the illusion, and X. could scarcely refrain from outspoken exclamations of delight.

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It had been much impressed upon the traveller that he must by all means obtain a room at the Belle Vue Hotel, and if possible, one overlooking the back which governs the famous view. This was achieved by telegram. On arrival a carriage with three ponies conveyed him to the hotel—a poor building on a lovely site, which bristled with possibilities.

The famous back terrace of rooms was at the further side of the courtyard to the entrance, and, once duly installed, X. was delighted with the outlook. Just immediately below the window was the railway line—below that rushed a large, broad, shallow mountain river in which half the native population seemed to be bathing. Beyond these stretched an unbroken view of picturesque villages, whose scattered red-roofed houses peeped here and there from among the palms and other graceful trees. Beyond again, the mountain—with five distinct sugar-loaf tops, tops which had to be watched while counting as they emerged and disappeared in turn from out and in the hanging land of clouds. Yes, the view had certainly not been overrated, and X. was glad he came.

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Usoof and Abu refused to consider anything beautiful, and could only exclaim with horror at the bathers in the river, who evidently shocked their ideas of propriety. Their master was not surprised at their comments, but his own views were broader and his moral perceptions perhaps blunter, and experience had taught him the propriety of the injunction concerning Rome and the Romans. But it was nevertheless quite certain that the most moderate London County Councillor could not have borne the sight of that river without a shock to his system. After revelling in the view from the verandah a black coat was donned for dinner, which the wearer subsequently found rendered him conspicuous, and he then crossed the courtyard to the dining room prepared to dine well off fresh fish, mutton, and other products of the country. Although the soup was on the table cooling, the company sat outside round a little table drinking gin and bitters. Not wanting any, X. as Clark Russell would say, hung in the wind, and then after a few seconds—seeing that dinner was certainly ready—seated himself. This isolated action rendered him almost as conspicuous as his coat, which was also alone in its sombre glory. Presently others followed the stranger's example, and the meal began. Then ensued a period of disillusion. There was no punkah, the glare of the lamplight was blinding, and the food—all of it—coarse, greasy and cold. The soup which had been waiting was of the variety known as tinned, an old acquaintance which X. had hoped to have left in the jungle until his return. This, and other messes, would not have mattered so greatly, had not the proprietor of the hotel, a pompous gentleman (X. afterwards learnt he was President of the Race Club), stood sentry over the door, whence issued the rows of servants with the dishes, narrowly watching what each guest partook of and detecting with an eagle eye the uneatable scraps which the defeated diner had striven to conceal beneath his knife and fork. The most amusing thing during the progress of the meal was the conversation of an elderly English couple, who, in truly British tourist fashion seemed to imagine they were alone, and the people round them but figures of wax who could neither hear nor be affected by anything they might say. "Oh, how they soak the fish in grease," the lady would exclaim; or, "This is good meat, but ruined, yes, positively ruined in the cooking; look, my dear, it is (doubtfully, and sniffing at her plate), it is absolutely *soaked* in grease—oh, what a pity, how can you eat it, dear—but you would eat anything," the speaker continued garrulously, "for yesterday you ate the fish on board that steamer when it was almost rotten—I smelt it from my cabin before we came out, etc," and much more in the same strain. To all these domestic remarks, her companion vouchsafed no reply, but continued his dinner as though accustomed to such an accompaniment.

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It was as much as X. could do to refrain from laughing, and, fearful of hurting the feelings of others himself, he would take another helping when the proprietor was looking, and felt uncommonly "hot" at the conduct of his compatriot. However, worse was to come, for at the end

of dinner, when the "boys" brought coffee made in the way usual to the country—a few drops of cold essence of coffee at the bottom of the cups, which had to be filled up with boiling milk or water—the lady from England could not contain her indignation, but loudly scolded the waiter for such a stingy way of putting so little in the cup, since "coffee should surely be cheap in Java," and then proceeded to empty the contents of all the cups into two, one for herself and one for her husband, while saying with a smile "we like a cup of coffee, not a drop." Then while she sipped her full cup like one on whom there unwillingly dawns the unpleasant consciousness of having made a mistake, the lady further addressed the waiter and asked, "Do they always drink cold coffee in Java?" The waiter, who could only stand passive while this calm robbery was committed—for had not the whole company to wait for a second brew—made reply with the only English of his vocabulary, "yes." X., who had the doubtful advantage of understanding as well as seeing all that was going on, glared fiercely as he saw himself deprived of the only portion of the meal which was at all likely to be good, and could willingly have caused an interruption by using his napkin and bread as a sling and a stone. The "yes" of the native apparently checked the embarrassment which the lady was beginning to feel, and triumphantly she exclaimed, "My goodness, what a country." Then the husband blew his nose with discomfort, and, her attention attracted, his good wife exclaimed, "My dear, you have a cold, let us go to bed," and they went. X., and possibly others, found satisfaction in the thought that people might go to bed after partaking of such a concoction as that couple had done, but that they certainly would not sleep. Nor did they, as the sequel showed. For the lady and her husband also had a room on the terrace suite, and this was divided only by a thin partition from that of X., and though he did not wish to listen, the first words which greeted his gratified ears on the following morning were, "Oh, darling, I have had such a dreadful night; I never closed my eyes." X. heard no more as he delicately buried his head in the pillows, lest he should be dragged too deep in domestic confidences; but he had heard enough—he was avenged. And they knew themselves it was the coffee, since it was noticed that this night after dinner the sleepless couple each firmly declined the brimming cups, which, with kind forethought for the public good, the proprietor had ordered to be handed to them.

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CHAPTER X.

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CUSTOMS AND COSTUMES.

Early in the morning X. went out to explore, and, naturally, his first visit was to those wonderful gardens which are the first in the world, and are the resort of naturalists from all portions of the globe.

In a sketch of this nature it would be presumption to attempt to describe the marvels of this garden, one of the sights of the East, which it is worth while going to Java to see. During his walk the traveller was at every turn astonished at the evidences of wealth amongst the natives, the tiled roofed houses and plentifully stocked orchards and gardens, while goats and sheep browsed everywhere. In the streets everyone appeared to be selling—there seemed none left to buy—and they sold the most attractive looking fruits and vegetables, together with a variety of flowers. The population is large, and for some distance round the town stretched rows and rows of native houses built close together, backs and fronts facing each other in every angle and position, showing that the people must surely live together in unity, *en famille* or rather *en masse*, in marked contrast to the Malay villages, where, as a rule, each house stands in an enclosure of its own grounds. But there they have unlimited space, here apparently they have unlimited people.

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Himself living an isolated life amongst a native race, it was only natural that X. should be more inclined than the ordinary traveller to notice the people of the country and their surroundings. He had heard so many stories of their oppression by the Dutch and the uncomfortable conditions under which they lived, that the actual appearance of the natives came as a surprise, which only increased the more he saw and the further he travelled in Java.

As to higher life in Java, to any one who has been there or knows anything of the country, its social conditions are well known. But however much may have been previously heard of them, it cannot but give the ordinary Englishman a shock, when he is for the first time confronted with them in their reality. Intermarriage with the people of the country is not only condoned, but almost encouraged, and it is no uncommon thing to meet the children of these marriages in the highest society. Cases occur where people, holding great positions, legitimize their children, and after years of unsolemnized intercourse lead their mother to the altar. The mothers of many children being educated in Holland, probably in the future to enter the service of the country, are simply native women still living in their villages. The accident of birth would seldom be considered a bar when ascending official heights, nor is a mixed parentage any obstacle to such distinction.

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Many instances of this were observed by X. during his visit, and, though the state of affairs appeared to him rather strange, he was obliged to own that from a Dutch point of view there

existed many and weighty arguments in its favour, the *pros* and *cons* of such a question are certainly beyond the scope of a book which only purports to note for the benefit of intending travellers such things as merit observation.

So far as I can gather, there were few excursions to be made from Buitenzorg and few sights, but in the afternoon he drove to see a famous stone covered with Hindoo inscriptions, the first indication brought to his notice of the real origin of this now Mahomedan people.

Late in the day X. decided to call upon the official who holds the position corresponding with that of an English Colonial Secretary, and to ask his assistance in obtaining a pass to continue his journey into the interior. Though warned not to call before 7 p.m., just as it was getting dusk, the traveller felt nervous and fidgety, unable to really believe that he would be doing right to make a call so late, and thus six o'clock found him approaching the very modest-looking dwelling in which the great official dwelt. A glance was enough to show that he was wrong and his informant right, since in front of him, at a desk in a room off the verandah, sat his host still clothed in the undress of pyjamas—not having yet made his toilet for the evening. However, though X. felt guilty of a *gaucherie*, the sense of it came entirely from his own consciousness, and not at all from the manner of the gentleman whom he interrupted, for without the least trace of either annoyance or surprise, but as though the untimely appearance of a stranger and a foreigner was a daily occurrence, he bade him welcome with polite cordiality. This official was as agreeable and well informed as anyone the traveller had met, and X. always waxes enthusiastic when speaking of him. With true courtesy he at once abandoned the work on which he was engaged, without that last lingering look at the table which so often ruins the grace of a similar sacrifice, and forthwith evinced the utmost interest in the affairs of his guest. He quickly reassured him concerning his pass, and, on hearing that he was in some way connected with the Government across the Straits, immediately promised to procure for him a special permit which would enable him to travel where he would, and ensure assistance from all with whom he came in contact. Though, at this time relying upon his own ability to manage the order of his going, X. may not have attached much importance to the future part which this permit would play, at the end of his travels he gladly acknowledged that it proved of the utmost utility, and there was more than one occasion on which he felt impelled to record words of gratitude towards him who had so thoughtfully provided it.

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Apropos of the calling hour, it may be mentioned here that this is a social rock on which many English people strike. I use this nautical simile advisedly since, not so very long ago, no less a person than a British Admiral wishing to follow the hours to which he was accustomed paid his official call on the Dutch Naval Commander at five o'clock. The Dutch Admiral, who was not then dressed, and did not intend to dress until seven o'clock, declined to receive him at such an unusual hour, and the question of dress, always one of the first importance in the British Navy, then became rather a burning one, until tactful mediators paved the way for a more successful visit. Whereas, in the East, English people maintain their usual habits and customs—did not our grandfathers wear tall hats when pig-sticking in India?—the Dutch in Java adopt the habits and the clothes they consider most fitting for the climate. It is not intended to imply that both are loose, though certainly the former are somewhat relaxed. No visitor to the country is competent to give a judgment for or against the manners he finds there. X. longed to impress this on more than one tourist whom he met on his travels.

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Few Dutch ladies in Java mind being seen in what to us appears undress—a sarong and kabaya—and frequently, when without guests, it is the custom to dine in this scanty apparel. In consequence there is a dislike to dining out, which involves the wearing of European clothes in all their fashionable tightness, and many a story is told in Batavia of sudden illness amongst lady guests during the evening—illness easily attributable to the unusual compression of garments, worn only on such rare occasions.

There is seldom necessity for dressing since Europeans scarcely ever call in Java—of ladies it may be said they never call—though in the mornings they drive round in covered carriages visiting their intimate friends, clad in the skirts of the country so universally adopted.

CHAPTER XI.

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AN UNTIMELY CALL.

It was this same custom which caused discomfiture to X. on the following day, when having received the promised special permit, a document calling upon all officials to assist him, in the name of the Governor-General himself, he decided that it would be only right that he should present himself at the house of the ruler who had signed it, and in token of gratitude and respect inscribe his name in his book. As the traveller had no intention of seeing anyone or attempting to enter the gorgeous palace which stands in the midst of the famous gardens, there seemed no need to trouble about the time for the call, and therefore it seemed well to make it the excuse for

a walk and fit it in with his afternoon stroll. Accordingly about 5 o'clock found him walking up the broad avenue, on either side of which were browsing deer in great numbers—a very novel feature to anyone who for years had only seen such creatures wild excepting one time when—but no I must withhold the temptation to wander off the broad avenue which leads the visitor up to the stately pile in front of him as, like he did a little further on, I would wish to get it over. For it is not pleasant even to record the admittedly awkward situations in which X., who had always prided himself on his *savoir faire*, now so often found himself.

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As he approached the portico (it reminded him much of Gorhambury, the seat of Lord Verulam, in Hertfordshire) the stranger became aware, rather than actually saw, that there were two figures seated on the main verandah having tea. He almost felt their eyes upon him in wonder and amusement, and, as he gradually neared the steps without in any way looking up, it was in some mysterious manner conveyed to him that these figures were ladies, and their dress, the sarong and kabaya! What was he to do. He could not turn and fly, nor could he diverge from the broad path and wander across the grass like any common trespasser—and, even while he wondered, his steps took him deliberately on, feeling self-conscious in the most literal understanding of the word—and inexorably each moment took him nearer, though in the endeavour to put off the evil moment he had, perhaps unknown to himself, slowed down his previously deliberate saunter until his feet were now doing little more than marking slow time. However, the visitor gazed alternately at the tops of the trees and the roof of the palace, as though things of absorbing interest were there taking place, and at last he was obliged to realize that he had reached the lowest step of the imposing staircase.

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X. assures me that it is a fact, he never once lowered his eyes or focussed the little party before him, although ultimately the tea table could not have been more than a few yards off. There stood the stranger with a vacant expression which would have made the fortune of a performer in a waxwork show, and hoped and almost prayed that a servant of some kind would appear, receive his signature or his card and allow him to return to the comfortless obscurity of his hotel. There was no bell, and no servant came, and the silence at length became unbearable. Relief came at last from the tea party for the voice of a lady suddenly fairly shrieked for a "boy." After this explosion the tension of the situation was relieved, and there was a sound as of chairs hastily pushed back and the patter of little feet and the rustle of sarongs, which led X. to infer that there had been some sort of a retreat. Then a flurried native appeared, he seemed a kind of gardener hastily fetched from his duties, possibly the mowing machine, and pouring forth words in a strange dialect he pointed wildly to another flight of steps and another door. Following this menial, a veritable *deus ex machina*, X. was led down those palatial steps and up another flight round the corner. There the gardener threw open a door and seemed disposed to resign his custody of the stranger, preparing to return again to his machine. But X. steadily declined to enter alone into that vast hall, nor would he even stay to look for a book in which to write his name, for he felt that the hasty retreat he had heard was not carried beyond the nearest pillars, and each moment he tarried, the fugitives were wondering what he could be doing while, alas, their tea was getting cold. And so he thrust his card, his only guarantee of good faith, into the soiled hand of the solitary attendant of this Eastern palace and fled—but fled he hoped with dignity. As he walked down the avenue with conscious and deliberate steps—admiring the view on the right of him and the view on the left of him—never looking back, though the desire for one glance was so overpowering that the nape of his neck actually ached, he conquered, and finally emerged from those great gates without any further satisfaction to the curiosity aroused by his first involuntary glimpse. But so long as he remained in Java he never paid another call before dusk, a more convenient time, when such *contretemps* are not likely to occur.

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CHAPTER XII.

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A MODEL ESTATE

X. was informed that the proper journey from Buitenzorg was by carriage *via* Poentjuk to Sindanglaya, where a stay should be made at Gezondleid's establishment after securing an upstairs room. The next stage in the traveller's journey is to Tjandjoer and thence to Garvet. And after a week at Garvet on again to Djoedja, Solo, Semarang, etc., but the traveller had already had sufficient of hotel life in Java, and so determined to at once avail himself of a kind invitation he had received to stay on an estate, not many miles from Soekaboemi. After a few hours' rail in a first-class carriage (this fact is worth recording as it was very seldom that such accommodation could be had, even if a first-class ticket had been issued), he duly reached the station where he had been instructed to alight. Here his host had sent two ponies to meet him, one for himself and one for his servant, as well as several coolies to carry his luggage. So, Abu being left at the house of the stationmaster in care of the rest of the luggage (a terrible quantity, the cost of its transport almost equalled the first-class fare of its owner), X., followed by Usoof, started on the ten mile ride which led to their destination. The path was a very rough one, and for the first portion of the distance the way was through an open country planted with padi as far as the eye could reach.

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The little ponies cared nothing for the stony path, and went gamely along as though accustomed to canter on a hard high road. After crossing the valley the route began to ascend the range of hills, at the summit of which, 2,000 feet high, the estate was situated. For almost the entire length of this ascent the view was so glorious that the traveller continued to exclaim in wonder to his companion to stop and look. Usoof who, as has been related, was a native of the country, affected to gaze at it with the unconcern of a proprietor, merely reminding his master that he had always said, that his was a very fine country. For miles below the padi fields stretched away narrowing in the distance, and here and there amidst this expanse of emerald green were dotted little clumps of green of a darker shade, these being the trees surrounding the clusters of houses inhabited by the fortunate owners of the land. And every now and again athwart the green carpet, stretched out below, glittered belts of water sparkling like silver in the sun. The hills, which were also all planted with padi, looked like grassy slopes with a back-ground formed by terraces of hill-tops. One above the other they lay in ranges, until, in the furthest distance, mountains of noble height towered like giants above them all. It surely was a view worth going far to see, a wealth of green such as an untravelled eye could not even dimly realise. No troubles of travel, no greasy cookery or breadless meals could matter one jot if this was the reward. The view repaid the enterprise even if the path by which it were approached led only to a wayside inn of the most unpretentious type, but its joys were enhanced by the anticipation of a visit to a couple well known for their hospitality to strangers. The host being a fellow-countryman who had had the good fortune to marry a Dutch lady of most distinguished family. Almost at the summit of the hill, about eight miles from the station, stood a little halting house bearing the English-looking signboard with the legend of the "Pig and Whistle." Here refreshments awaited the travellers, and then the journey was continued along a jungle path which shortly emerged on to the cultivated slopes of the estate. These slopes were covered with cinchona trees, which X. afterwards learnt were in process of being rapidly replaced by tea-plants. Presently at a dip in the road the first glimpse was caught of the house below. A little English cottage, it appeared, nestling cosily in a hollow, close beside a mountain stream. A nearer approach revealed that the cottage was covered with blue convolvulus and other creepers, and that the verandahs were enclosed with glass. It all reminded him somehow of a well-known cottage by Boulter's Lock, and there came a curious thrill of home memories at the sight of a typical English home. On the further side of the stream stood a little detached pavilion, kept exclusively for guests, after the fashion of all Dutch houses in the East. This annexe is generally considered the house of the elder son, but it is more usually built and used for the accommodation of guests; an excellent arrangement in a country where both entertainers and entertained wish occasionally to repose in attire, whose lightness is best suited to the climate. A rustic bridge connected the two buildings, and just above it was the bath room, into which a portion of the stream had been diverted, so as to form a natural shower bath. The stream and bridge and cottage, with their back-ground of hills and fore-ground of roses, combined to make such a picture that X. longed to be able to sketch it and take it away and keep it. The interior of this cottage was as cosy and home-like as the outside promised it would be, and, wonder of wonders! it had real wall paper on the walls. This almost unheard of luxury in the East was a triumph of the skill of the hostess, and had so far successfully defied the ravages of mildew and damp. The chief characteristic of the house was that it looked like a home, its tasteful decoration and contents indicating that the inhabitants had come to stay. Most houses in the East have an unmistakable air of being mere temporary shelters, where the owners are lodging till they can get away to their household goods now warehoused "at home."

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This was only the second house X. had seen in this part of the world, where the owners looked as if they lived in it (the other was in Selangor). In this ideal spot it was the good fortune of the traveller to spend some days—days pleasantly spent in riding about the estate—which he soon grew to covet, and in watching the planting of the tea, which, it was hoped, would eventually enable the kind host and hostess to return with wealth to their native land. The climate at this elevation was delightful, cool, and invigorating, and it was possible to follow English hours and habits. Instead of getting up at 5 a.m. to go for a ride, as was the custom in Pura Pura, X. found himself starting for a ride after breakfast, about ten o'clock, without fear of the sun, and this total change lifted his spirits, and he recorded silent thanks to The Community who had suggested Java for his jaunt.

As may be imagined, during his stay in the hills the visitor was able to learn much about the country, and hear many things that not only interested him, but excited his admiration for the administration of the precise and order-loving race who owned this beautiful island. Contrary to what he had been led to believe, chiefly, perhaps, by a book which had given currency to the impression, he found that the planters were greatly assisted by the Government officials, who endeavour to work with them, and, whenever possible, to meet their wishes. The coolies certainly all appeared happy, when X. got accustomed to seeing them crouch servilely in the ditches when he or his host passed by. English officials in the native states of the Peninsula are accustomed to pass their lives amongst the Malays, to listen to and help them in their troubles, and to be constantly surrounded by them as followers or companions, and the inmates and affairs of each household are known, much as those of the cottagers on his estate would be to a home-staying country squire in England. It can then be understood how strange it seemed to X. to ride amongst people of the same race and see them crouch down as he passed, not even daring to lift their eyes, as it is counted an offence should they meet the gaze of one of the ruling race. What could the latter really know of these people, he wondered, when knowledge had to be obtained from across such a social gulf as this. He could not conceal the disagreeable impression made upon him, but many reasons were afterwards given to him as to why this state of things should exist, and some of them were, he was compelled to admit, good ones. The chief and foremost was,

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perhaps, that all Javanese customs and manners are full of exaggerated formality and etiquette. These the Dutch adopted as they found them, including all outward tokens of respect for those of superior rank, deeming that all Europeans should be treated with the same ceremony as the native headman.

One of the other reasons given was that the Dutch, being a small nation and unable to keep a large force in the country, must rely upon keeping the natives down in their proper place—under foot—for the continuance of the supremacy they had achieved. X., as others would do, can only hope that this view, though heard from several sources, was given to him "sarcastic like," and that it was expected he would duly appreciate the irony. And perhaps he did, seeing that he came from a country where, without the presence of a single soldier, the widely scattered, and in many cases isolated, officials can act as the friends and advisers of a native race without the least fear of any loss of dignity or position, both accepted as so much a matter of course as to make any question regarding them impossible.

Java is, perhaps, the most governed country in the world. This phrase is not the writer's; he merely quotes an opinion to be found in books on Java, written by men entitled to judge, and frequently expressed by people our traveller met in that island. The people are united by what might be described as chains of officials, and each link in each chain submits periodically precise reports on everything and everybody within his charge. The system sounds flawless, and the head of all, the chief official in the country, has thus pigeon-holed in front of him more detailed and readily-found information about his subjects than is, perhaps, possessed by any other ruler in the world. This is a matter which might excite admiration, and there is no doubt that it in some respects merits it, and the contrast presented to our own system of government in the adjacent mainland is worthy of examination. But it would be out of place in a book which professes to do no more than describe a pleasant tour, and X.'s opinion upon a question of such gravity, even though formed after a lengthy sojourn amongst the Malays, and no little personal experience of the life and manners of an Eastern people, may be omitted. It may be recorded, however, that the question made him ponder, and he wondered if the officials who knew everybody also knew everything, and whether many matters worthy of record did not find themselves washed on one side as the stream of reports wound its way from one native official to another, then to the subordinate European officials (sometimes married to native women), and then once more on to the pigeon-holes of the central authority. As I write I have before me a list of fifteen titles of native officials given to X. by one of themselves. There is no need to enumerate them here, though allusion to them may suggest the possibilities of the various stages of the journey to the final pigeon-holes.

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Natives themselves have evidently formed opinions on these matters, since in some of the native states of the Peninsula it was always the custom of the people to invite a raja from another country to come and rule over them, experience having taught them that a man with interest and relations in the country might not always be sufficiently impartial; in the same manner the native Mahommedan priest is always selected from another nationality. However, to return to the place where we left X. riding along amongst the young tea plants. When the coolies were not running away from him or crouching to avoid the shock of meeting his imperial glance, he was bound to admit that they were apparently happy and contented, and, seeing the circumstances under which they lived, it would have been strange had they not been so. These people were provided with ample work within easy reach of their homes, which lay among the surrounding hills. It seemed an earthly labour paradise to an official, accustomed to hear the complaints of planters lamenting losses due to their labourers, imported coolies from India, China or Java, running away. Not only is the lot of the coolies in Java more conducive to content than those in the Peninsula, but the planter is also happier in the current rate of wages; 20 to 25 cents a day (Java cents) and for women 15 cents. On this estate, as on most others, there was a festival fund for the coolies, that is a certain sum of money is spent annually on their recreation, providing for musical instruments and paying for travelling shows, etc. X. felt that he had had the best of shows provided for him, a show estate, where the supply of labour was cheap and unlimited, and the people well cared for without any elaborate legislation being required for their protection. Here at any rate was a positive result of the administration of the Dutch, and a confutation of the stories of down-trodden peasants in Java; and the traveller made up his mind that if possible he would one day be a planter and that his plantation should be in Java.

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CHAPTER XIII.

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AMONG THE ROSES.

Life was so smooth and even in this little cottage by the river that days flew by with that pleasant rapidity which leaves nothing to record except a general sense of restful enjoyment. One expedition, however, might be described, a visit paid to a neighbouring estate which had been advertised for sale, as giving a glimpse of a typical phase of up-country life. The call was paid about noon, and after riding down a steep hill, where natives were busily engaged in planting tea,

the two Englishmen came upon a little square white house half hidden in a bend in the stream. This building had a deserted, untidy look which was intensified by the state of the garden which surrounded it; even at some distance from the house the scent of roses was perceptible, and in the garden itself, if such a wilderness deserves the name, the odour was almost overpowering. The place was a miniature forest of rose-bushes, loaded with lovely blossoms, roses such as X. had not seen since he left his native land. Everything looked untidy and ragged and ruined; the house, the creepers, the rose bushes, the grass, the pigeon lofts all spoke of neglect and want of money to put them straight, a want caused by the fall in the price of cinchona, a misfortune which had involved many a fair estate and reduced it to the desolate and unkempt condition exemplified by the one now visited. But even unkempt and uncared for, what a picture it made! It was the realisation of a poetic death—the victim smothered by roses beside the singing waters of a brook. It was a long time before any one came, and the two visitors sat in the verandah feeling rather shy and uncomfortable, for this was the neighbour's first visit, and the native, who had ushered them in, vanished, sending weird cries around the tangled garden paths as though to summon his master home.

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At length, after long waiting, the silence and suspense, and the wonder of who would come, from which direction, and when, grew almost unbearable, and the absurd situation so wrought on their nerves that both visitors gave vent to little gasps of laughter, brought on probably by the same nervous sensations which compel children to misbehave in church—direct promptings of the evil one, inducing a desire to do that which we know we should not do. At length, after it had been debated in hurried whispers whether a departure could not be effected, the lady of the house appeared upon the scene. She was a tall, large lady, in appearance typically Dutch. She wore the usual white linen jacket and skimpy sarong, and her legs were bare. She gave a cordial greeting in Dutch, at least to X. it was Dutch, for he knew nothing whatever of the language. This his friend carefully explained, so he surmised, as the lady gave vent to various guttural exclamations of astonishment and turned to gaze at him as though he were indeed a strange person to behold.

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The conversation between the two then continued glibly, and X. was quite forgotten, and he felt neglected and grew fidgety, realizing that he extremely disliked this novel sensation of being ignored, without the possibility of attracting any attention to himself by a remark. He was soon to learn however, that those trifling inconveniences of which we are cognizant are generally less unpleasant than those we do not know, for presently there was a stir and a general rising from seats as the husband of the good lady emerged from the house on to the verandah. This gentleman was tall and dark, with a pointed grey beard like an American in a caricature. He was clothed in a strange *deshabille*, which ended in bare feet thrust loosely into carpet slippers, and when the eyes of the visitors reached thus far they realized why his complexion was so dark. After the first greetings the host—who X. afterwards learnt had once held high office under Government, which he gave up for planting—turned towards him and proceeded to harangue him without full stops. There is no other way to describe what took place, as he continued to pour language at his guest without the least apparent desire for reply. To say that the visitor felt uncomfortable would be to mildly describe his feelings—he had wished for recognition, and surely had it now. What would his host think of him, if he allowed him to continue to talk and never informed him that he could not understand one word of Dutch? Again and again he endeavoured to stem the torrent of words and explain both in English and in French, and this being of no avail, at the risk of appearing rude and inattentive, X. turned to his friend and begged him to make the matter clear. The friend said something in Dutch, but he must, it seemed, have said the wrong thing, since it had not the slightest effect, and the host continued his talk, probably all about the advantages of the estate he wished to sell. Then, regarding the situation as hopeless, X. fixed his expression into one of intelligent attention and waited for him to stop. But he was not so attentive that he did not presently hear the good lady say something to his friend which caused him to exclaim as though astonished, and with a suppressed click of a laugh he turned to X. and said, "It's all right. Madame has just told me he is stone deaf and can't hear a word, so it's no use my saying anything, he would understand you as well." "But can't the lady tell him I don't know Dutch?" exclaimed X. almost desperately—but too late, for by this time his friend was again deeply engaged in conversation with his hostess, and there was nothing to be done but once more give his assumed attention to his host. A pleasant situation truly, to go to a man's house for the first time and so conduct yourself that you feel certain he will presently believe that it was your intention to deliberately insult and make a fool of him. X. will never forget that quarter of an hour. At last the conversation ended by its appearing that the lady had suggested, and her visitor agreed to, a walk round the estate. When he gathered this, X. eagerly seconded the proposition, but it took all joy out of it to find that the verbose proprietor insisted upon accompanying them himself to do the honours of the place. It was in vain that X. endeavoured to plant him on his friend, for his prolonged assumption of intelligent interest had apparently been so successful, that his host was flattered and never left his side. However, a few climbs up slippery by-paths—I fear deliberately chosen—soon dislodged the slippers, and the poor man was compelled to heed what, it is hoped, he interpreted as polite entreaties not to put himself out for his visitors and return to the house. Then ensued a tour of the estate, which had once been of great promise and now, alas, was overrun with undergrowth and weed. After their walk the Englishmen found that the most hospitable preparations had been made for their entertainment, and, more, that these had evidently been seen to by a daughter whose presence had not before been observed. Would I could describe this young girl as she appeared to X., who has confessed that he found it quite impossible to find words with which to paint a picture which could do her the scantiest justice. Simply attired in the same costume as her mother, but oh, how becoming that costume can be! This charming apparition carried round the glasses and offered

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wine to the visitors, while X. wished heartily that the dear old host would harangue him ever so long that he might keep silence and watch—watch this dainty, dark-eyed maiden, who looked as if she had stepped out of some old picture to render those little domestic services after the custom of days gone by; and as he received his glass from the charming attendant, he endeavoured to think what it was this kindly service most called to mind, and in his memory he found it in those hospitable houses in New Zealand beyond the Bay of Islands where once he visited, and all the daily life was like a glimpse of a century that had passed. But though visiting was good, X. was soon wanting to improve his position and show that he was capable of taking a more active part in the conversation than he had hitherto done, and so reckless of his host's disgust at a sudden lack of attention, he rose and went to the side table to sniff at the beautiful flowers and peep at the sample sacks of coffee which lay piled in the corner of the room. But such little wiles to obtain speech with the modest maiden were of small use, when one party spoke English and the other Dutch, while neither of them knew both. It is true that X. could have carried on a conversation in Malay, and he was sure that that language would be well known to all the family, but he had been warned that people in Java did not like to be addressed in a language they considered fit only for a medium of communication with their servants. An invitation to stay and lunch was refused—in Dutch—and the planter friend afterwards explained that he had done so, as he thought X. would not have liked to go without bread, since in such establishments up country bread was never found. As if—under the circumstances—X. would have cared whether he ate bread or rice, provided the rose-nymph had handed it to him; and so alas! they rode away beyond the fragrance of the roses and through the neglected grounds, carrying with them a new memory of home life which it will be hard to forget. The shabby, neglected house—the sacks of coffee and flowers run riot—the deaf, courteous ex-official, perhaps proud of his descent from some great Makassar chief—the kindly lady, embodiment of perfect health, who long ago had left her home in Europe for life in a distant land with the husband of her choice—and last but not least of all these impressions of that day—their child—reared in a glorious country unspoilt by contact with civilization—simple, unaffected, a picture from the past.

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CHAPTER XIV.

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GARVET.

After leaving the cottage on the estate X. started for Garvet. The view from the train, as it reached its destination, was certainly one of the most beautiful that could be imagined. Long reaches of padi fields, backed by hills in a high state of cultivation, and the whole watered by little gushing torrents that looked cool and refreshing in the all-surrounding sun.

It is impossible to describe the scenery as it appeared to the traveller, or in any way to do it justice. It is altogether new and unlike anything seen in other countries, with the exception, perhaps, of Ceylon or Japan, and it is worth a journey from Europe to see.

The hotel at Garvet proved to be a combination of little buildings, scattered about in the gardens surrounding the main buildings, or across the road in enclosures of their own. X. obtained one of these cottages, and felt that he would be fairly comfortable, till an inspection of the bathing arrangements made him shudder.

When dinner time arrived, *table d'hote* also served to dispel illusions. There was the same absence of punkah, the same glaring light, and succession of half-cooked clammy dishes. There were only a few diners, apparently mostly residents of the place who boarded at the hotel. These gentlemen had put on black coats, and made a kind of toilet for the evening meal. But the penance they thus endured was brief, as, after hastily disposing of sufficient of the viands to satisfy their individual wants, they retired to their verandahs, where X. soon saw them reclining in all the comfort of pyjamas and bare feet. Apparently the coating of civilization was not sufficiently thin to be congenial.

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In the morning the traveller went to pay his respects to the Assistant-Resident, who received him very kindly, and gave him all the information he required. This rather interrupted the work of the office as, whenever the Assistant-Resident turned to any employee to ask how far such and such a place might be distant, or the tariff of carriages, etc., the person so addressed, no matter how engaged, would, before reply, immediately flop on to his knees. The Regent was also calling on the representative of the Government, and to him the Englishman was introduced. This native functionary was fat and well-looking, but did not seem to exactly bristle with intelligence.

The Assistant-Resident very kindly conversed freely with his visitor about matters affecting the natives, and gave him much information, which, from the nature of his own work in Pura Pura, interested him greatly. To those whom the subject interests, the land system in Java is too well known to need comment here, but there were a few facts learnt by X. which should remove any idea amongst those who have not studied the question, that the laws were either harsh or

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intricate. Indeed, they seem to attain that brevity and simplicity which are the great desideratum when dealing with a native peasantry. Thus, a man need pay no rent until his land is in bearing. Coffee is the only product whose sale to Government is compulsory. All land is classified and subject to a fixed rent, there is therefore a safeguard that the fruits of an owner's industry will not be taxed. Anyone can complain if he thinks his land is rated too high, and should be in a lower class, and the complaint receives immediate attention. Though the population is large, there is seldom any trouble about boundary marks in the padi fields. Owners are content with long custom and local knowledge, and their reliance on their host of native officials never fails. All new land must be fenced round, if it is contiguous to Government land, and on all plantations people must themselves plant trees as boundaries and upkeep them. And one register of titles with columns filled in and signed, according to its cultivation and classification, answers for all. Lastly, let it be mentioned that there is a golden rule, that a native cannot sell his land to anyone but his own countrymen, neither to European, Arab or Chinese. Thus no individual, tempted by the speculation, can by his selfish action, cause harm or annoyance to his neighbours. This one register of titles, mentioned above, is gradually filled in and signed as the land is brought into cultivation, and an exact record is thus kept of the actual present condition of each native holding. When finally signed, and the land yields produce, rent is demanded. The advantage of simplicity can only be realized by those whose lot it has been to pose as the bringer of glad tidings, and expound the advantages of the last new land code with its many paragraphs to an ignorant native population, who, unreasoning, tenaciously cling to the title which they already hold and think they understand, obstinately refusing, speak the speaker never so plausibly, to exchange it for the very newest that can be given to them from the most up-to-date land code in existence.

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After his interview with the courteous official, X. departed, pondering on all he had heard, and bearing with him a memo, on which was written the various places of interest which he had been recommended to visit in the neighbourhood. On his return to the hotel the traveller passed what appeared to be the local club.

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The first thing an English official in an outstation in India or the Peninsula will do for a stranger arriving with introductions, is to offer to put him up for the club, and unless there seem strong reason against it, he will most probably ask him to dinner. Apparently this was not the custom here, and so X. was free to wander about the little town and explore, with nothing more exciting to look forward to than a repetition of last night's gruesome meal in company with the suffering tenants of the prandial coats.

CHAPTER XV.

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BATHS AND VOLCANOES.

Garvet seemed to boast of an enormous population for there were endless rows, or rather groups of houses, crowded together, face to face, back to back, and side by side, giving the idea of a casual conglomeration of several villages. All these were scrupulously clean and neat, and fenced round with little bamboo rails. Nearly every house had a tiled roof, and all were of a superior class to the majority of those up country in the Peninsula. The streets were little short of marvellously swept and clean, and it was decided by X. during that walk that Garvet was the cleanest Eastern town he had ever seen—the capital of Pura Pura of course excepted. Much had been talked of about the hot baths at Tji Panao, and so the traveller determined to make that his first excursion. Hiring a conveyance drawn by three ponies abreast—reminding him of his early youth when he would wonder at a smart turn-out in the Park at home—three ponies abreast driven by a well known leader of society and fashion, before the days of two-wheeled pony carts and bicycles, X. told the driver to go to Tji Panao, and looked forward to spending a delicious half hour lying in warm water like that of the springs in New Zealand, which send the bather forth invigorated and refreshed. Another disillusion was in store for him, however, in this country where nature has done so much and man—for comfort—so little. The baths were located in a shed on the side of a hill. This shed had three partitions. In each partition was a shallow brick hole in which it was possible to sit. The hot water was conveyed into these holes by means of pipes, one at the head of each. The floor all round the bath was dirty, and the only furniture was one cane chair. The depth of the water in the baths was about three inches, and in this on slimy bricks the bather had to sit miserably, with the lower portion of his body immersed in warm water while the upper remained high and dry in the comparatively cool air above. X. had made preparations for a prolonged stay in the water, and came provided with literature to pass the time, but a very brief dip under the circumstances proved enough, and he soon unhitched his clothing from the back of the chair and prepared to depart. Close by these baths was a building containing four rooms, apparently a Government Rest House, very well furnished and comfortable, so it was evident that people came there on purpose to make use of the baths. The hot water springs possess great capabilities, and with a little trouble and expenditure of money they should become both enjoyable and a source of revenue.

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There were one or two other excursions to be made from Garvet, but the only one worthy of mention was that which was made to the volcano at Tjiseroepan. One morning, together with Usoof and Abu, for X. was growing tired of sight seeing all alone, having obtained permission from the kind Assistant-Resident to use the Government Rest House, he drove to Tjiseroepan. The road was excellent and the route, needless to say, lay through a beautiful country. Here, as everywhere else, all well-to-do natives were riding ponies. The distance was thirteen miles. Tjiseroepan is a little village in the hills at the foot of the mountain which it was proposed to ascend on the following day. The traveller was received by the Assistant Wodena, a native official who had been riding suspiciously behind and before the carriage during the last two miles. After reading the credentials of the stranger and finding that he could converse in Malay, the local magnate became quite cordial, and made X. free of the Government Rest House. This was well furnished with beds and tables, etc., but glass and crockery were not provided.

The Assistant Wodena conducted the visitor round the village, which was a model of neatness. Each house stood in a garden, growing coffee, vegetables, and strawberries. The head of the village and a few others live in very good houses, and there seemed to be ponies without number. The village perched on a slope and the cultivated hillside bore some resemblance to a scene in the South of Italy. The usual signs of prosperity and content reigned everywhere, and neither in this village, nor elsewhere, where X. conversed with the natives could he find anything to explain the commonly accepted view that the people of Java are inimical to their rulers. [92]

The Rest House proved comfortable, X. had brought his own provisions, which his servants cooked, and for once he enjoyed a hot and palatable meal. There was plenty of opportunity for conversation with the Assistant Wodena, who was quite willing to discourse on the customs of the country, and he gave a most interesting account of the elaborate etiquette of Javanese Rajas, and of the extraordinary deference paid by commoners to rank. He in his turn asked many questions concerning Malacca and the Malay Straits, about which his interlocutor was able to give him all the information sought for.

The next morning the sightseer and his followers ascended the mountain on ponies to see the volcano. This was a kind of inferno with wicked mouths which looked like ventilators from the bowels of the earth spitting and hissing blinding steam.

The whole face of the mountain was yellow with sulphur, and the air was sickening from its smell. Usoof and Abu were not a little terrified by this awful experience, and grasped their Tuan by the arm entreating him not to venture near what, they evidently thought, were the gates of hell. [93]

I feel that I have paid sufficient deference to my instructions in recording the impressions the scenery made upon the traveller, and shall therefore omit all mention of what he saw while descending the mountain. He described it as wonderful, and those of my readers who have arrived thus far will be prepared to admit the accuracy of the description.

The party reached Garvet in time to catch the two o'clock train to Tassikmalaja, and thus make a start for Tjilatjap.

CHAPTER XVI.

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THE QUEST FOR A MOTHER.

To start for Tjilatjap was such an unusual departure that it merits a chapter all to itself. No one had apparently left Garvet for Tjilatjap for years, since it had been pronounced to be one of the most unhealthy places in the island. The correct thing for every traveller to do is to go to Tassikmalaya for the night and proceed from thence to Djoeja by train, go by carriage to Beroboeddoer, where a halt for the night can be made at a Government Rest House. The drive is twenty-five miles. The next morning the traveller should drive ten miles further to Magelang, while his luggage goes by train or bullock cart. From Magelang Amberawa is reached by another drive of twenty miles, and from here the railway can be taken to Semerang or back to Djoeja, and from there to Solo, a three hours' journey.

X. was informed that everyone took this route, but he persisted in starting for Tjilatjap, notwithstanding that the lady who presided over the hotel assured him that it was the most fever stricken port in the country. Had he known then as much as he subsequently learnt of the evil reputation of the place it is probable that the traveller might have changed his plans. As it was, he only replied that he was inured to fever and did not mind. At that time he had no particular reason for going to one place more than another, and therefore the one which drove him in this direction was good enough to serve his purpose. Usoof desired to commence the search for his mother. He had no recollection of the village where he was born, but believed it to be somewhere near the coast which, considering the country was an island, was somewhat a vague indication. After assisting his Tuan to study a map he exclaimed that the name Tjilatjap sounded familiar to him, and sure enough it was a large town on the coast. Now, he argued, it could not be familiar [95]

unless he had heard it before, and that could only have been when he was in Java, and as he was then little more than a baby, only the names of places in the neighbourhood of his birth place could have been familiar to him. It mattered little to X. where he went, the further away from the beaten track, the more opportunity for studying the natives and learning something of their lives. So he readily agreed to go to Tjilatjap. It was only after all plans had been settled that its evil reputation for fever was heard of.

The first stage of the journey was to Tassimalaja, and, leaving Garvet at two, they arrived there in time for dinner. So far as could be judged from a very brief stay during the dark hours and early morning, this seemed a pretty little country town, but the train left early and there was little time to look about. The first important stop was at Maos, where a change had to be made. Among the passengers was an Englishman whom X. had met some ten years before in New York. He was going the orthodox round to Ojoedja and Semarang. The two Englishmen, both experienced travellers, exchanged views as to their respective impressions of Java, and both agreed that, wherever they went, the courtesy and assistance received equalled if they did not exceed any they had met with in other portions of the globe they had trotted over. At Maos their ways separated, though fate brought them together again on board the steamer to Singapore. [96]

Another companion of the journey was a versatile young Dutchman who spoke many languages and proved to be very good company. This gentleman apparently had no great admiration for his fellow-countrymen, as he saw them in Java. He abused with equal impartiality the food and the manner of life, and declared that the Dutch in Java were devoid both of digestion and energy. They were in fact half dead from bad food and too much sleep. This communicative companion also gave his views on the civil service, which had gradually grown from the stage, when anyone could be pitchforked into it, to its present condition, when both brains and interest are required to achieve the entry to its rank. Let a man once get in (the views are those of the communicative Dutchman), his fortune was made, if he only kept quiet and was satisfied to slip along in the common groove. He must implicitly follow prescribed rules and obey his immediate superior blindly, sinking all individual conscience and identity. Should he have views for his own self-advancement or to assist the people, should he economize Government money and reduce the number of road-coolies or police, who actually officiate in the household as cooks, gardeners, or grooms, should he try to set a good example and relinquish perquisites, "that man" exclaimed the speaker "is lost, and had better return to Holland forthwith." Such were the views of his travelling companion, but what opportunity he had had for forming them, and whether they were justified by actual facts, X. did not know, or greatly care, so long as he found his company amusing, which he did until their arrival at Tjilatjap. Here his opinion was somewhat modified, when his voluble companion, profiting by superior experience, annexed the only decent room in the hotel and exulted over the ruse which secured it for him. [97]

When X. first announced in the train that he was bound for Tjilatjap there was a chorus of exclamations, and his companions evidently thought him eccentric. Had he also explained his reason for going, there would have been little doubt on the subject. It was then he learnt that Tjilatjap had formerly been a garrison town, but it had been found necessary to abandon it on account of the high rate of mortality among the troops. It was not till after the change at Maos that the young Dutchman acknowledged that Tjilatjap was also his destination, being probably unwilling to appear eccentric in the eyes of his fellow-countrymen who remained in the Djoedja carriage. [98]

CHAPTER XVII.

THE QUEST CONTINUED—TJILATJAP.

Tjilatjap was reached at midday. The town had an imposing appearance, all the streets being planted with avenues of large trees. X. drove at once to the hotel, where he was given a room like a horse-box with the sun streaming into it. As mentioned above, he subsequently ascertained that his travelling companion had managed to secure the only decent room in the hotel, and X. did not feel any love for the stranger, who had taken what he felt to be an unfair advantage of his local innocence. He only wished he could hand him over to the tender mercies of the most muscular and irritable member of the civil service, after relating how he had libelled it. There was lunch lying ready spread on the table and its appearance was satisfactory. Next day he noticed that this meal was laid hot at 9.30 daily, and left cooling until far on in the afternoon. Being hungry, the distant view of the table looked inviting, and X. prepared for a hearty meal. But his joyful expectation gave way to something like disgust on discovering, what a nearer approach revealed, that each article of food was firmly congealed in its own gravy. But no one else seemed to mind, and a party opposite—father, mother and daughter—ate of these provisions as though they were delicacies hot from the kitchen of the Savoy or Bignon's. Strolling out a little later to smoke a cigarette and try to persuade himself he had lunched, the visitor spied the proprietor of the hotel, his family and some favoured guests, enjoying cakes, and what appeared to be Madeira, and fruit in the verandah. As sleep in that sunbaked oven of a room was impossible, the traveller sent for a [100]

carriage and went for a drive. The appearance of all the houses that he passed gave the idea that every one inside them was asleep, but their stillness was counterbalanced by the busy crowds of natives going to and fro along those avenues of wonderful trees.

Later in the day X. sallied forth to call on the Assistant Resident. He had been informed at the hotel that this official was not visible between the hours of 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.—rather a long period of retirement.

As it was growing dark X. walked up to the house, a far superior residence to the one at Garvet. The lady of the house and her family were starting for the evening drive, not daring to venture out before this late hour. The Assistant Resident, apparently a very young man, received his visitor with great cordiality and gave him all the information in his power, promising his assistance if he wished to go further up country. It should be stated that, arrived at Tjilatjap, Usoof's memory received a filip, and he recollected that the town of Jombang, not far off, had been the chief place near his "kampong." On hearing this, the Assistant Resident promised to send a letter to the Wodena or native magistrate of the village, who lived at Soempioet and could let him stay in his house. This exactly met the wishes of X., who had been only wanting an opportunity to see more of the native life in Java, away from the track of hotels and tame curio sellers, who differed but little in one town from another. While the traveller was paying this call, another visitor arrived. This was no less a personage than the President of the Landraad. After they had left, he hospitably invited the Englishman into the club, where they played billiards. The great man made himself most agreeable and was quite ready to impart to his companion all he might wish to hear about the duties of the local government officers. He learnt that the Assistant Resident exercised a very limited jurisdiction as magistrate, and all cases, excepting the most trivial, are brought before the Landraad. The post held by this cheery official was evidently most congenial, and he explained with much satisfaction how he had to be frequently travelling, and what a liberal allowance he could draw while doing so. It need be liberal, thought his hearer, to compensate for a course of feeding in Java hotels. But sympathy on this point was wasted, as the President of the Landraad alluded to the one, at which it appeared they were both staying, and spoke of it as comfortable. Billiards over, it was time to return to the hotel for dinner. This meal, probably more owing to the lamp-light than to any inherent superiority, seemed an improvement on the last one, had not the diners made it unnecessarily uncomfortable by treating it as though it were a hurried snack at the counter of a railway refreshment room. For instance, three or four times during the progress of the meal callers came to see the courteous President, who cheerfully left the table to interview them, returning with equanimity to the discussion of the chilled dishes at whatever stage of the feast he chanced on when he returned. The table was not cleared away after the sorry farce of dinner was over, and X. noticed, as late as ten and even half-past ten o'clock, late diners strolling in to feed on the ever less appetising remains. X. recalled the words of his companion in the train, and thought he at least had some justification for his remarks on the digestions, or the want of them, of his fellow-countrymen in Java.

The chief thing for intending travellers in Java to recollect is the difficulty of obtaining money, since no one will look at a cheque, as people in that country do not use them. It is necessary, therefore, to take ready money and rely upon periodical remittances sent by registered letter from the bank. At Garvet X. had his first experience of pecuniary trouble through having placed confidence in his cheque book, backed by the special permit signed by the Governor General of the Netherlands India. He had invested in some Java ponies and thus outrun all calculations as to expenditure. The hotel people would not look at his cheque, though they certainly looked at the owner of it with the careful scrutiny born of suspicion. Very troubled, he had called at all the chief shops and places of business in the town asking assistance, and assuring merchants of his *bona fides*, as they scanned his cheque and passed it from one to another as a curiosity such as none of them had ever seen before. At length good fortune appeared in the shape of a Mr. Schmidt. One of those who had endeavoured to grasp some meaning from the cheque, explained that he believed this kind of thing was seen in Europe, and they had better call Mr. Schmidt, who not only had been there within the last two years, but also spoke a little English. X. eagerly seconded the suggestion, and Mr. Schmidt appeared. His verdict was anxiously awaited, but especially by the owner of the cheque, whose future movements must depend on the decision, and his relief was great when the good, the discerning, the up-to-date Mr. Schmidt pronounced in his favour. He declared that, certainly he had seen such cheques before, and generously offered to cash it himself. Thus the situation was saved, and the stranger was able to carry out his arrangements and pay his debts. Good Mr. Schmidt! that stranger remembers you with gratitude. Here, in Tjilatjap, X. was again threatened with penury, for, though he had telegraphed for money, the little registered packet had so far not appeared. Perhaps his bankers could not really credit that he had gone to a place with such a reputation as Tjilatjap. But it was because of this reputation that X. was unwilling to prolong his stay there beyond what was actually necessary, and, therefore, sending off the Malays with the luggage, remained behind, relying upon the arrival of the money by the morning post. He utilised the opportunity of this enforced stay to visit the hospital. The hospitals in the Native States of the Peninsula are perhaps the chief signs of the civilization, of which their Government may be proud, seeing that in them natives of all nationalities are splendidly housed and have the best of medical attendance free. It was, therefore, interesting for the Englishman who hailed from that Peninsula to see how, in a large town like Tjilatjap in Java, these things were done.

He had the good fortune to be most courteously shown over the building by the doctor in charge. It was somewhat of a surprise to find that there were few patients in the hospital, notwithstanding the reputation of the place for fever, and to learn that the average number of

sick amongst the natives was not noticeably in excess of other towns.

The whole building was a picture of neatness and cleanliness. The walls were made of bertam (a kind of plaited reed) so as to be easily destroyed and replaced in case of infection. The floors were of cement and raised off the ground. This hospital has only been started two years, and, at the present time, possesses fifty beds. The bathing places in particular merited attention, the floors being tiled, while large tanks of brick and cement contained the water supply—baths are provided for feeble patients. The most elaborate building was the dead-house, where all the latest improvements were to be seen. There was, and is, a European ward where patients can be treated for three guilders a day. Another building, standing a little apart, was for Europeans of a better class who could afford to pay six guilders a-day, "but," the doctor added, "they never come." The hospital is free for all natives, and, contrary to what is frequently the case elsewhere, the authorities seem to experience no difficulty in inducing them to go there. The doctor has one assistant to help him in managing the hospital. He spoke very highly of the native dressers, and said that they frequently turn out well. To X., accustomed to see similar hospitals crowded with Chinese, it was curious only to find one in the whole hospital, and he was the cook.

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After his visit to the hospital the traveller went to the post office to ask if his registered letter had come, and was considerably depressed to find that, though the post had arrived, there was no letter by it for him. There was nothing to be done but to accept the information and return to the hotel and think it out. He was alone—servants and luggage had gone, and some ten guilders of money only remained. Where could he find a local Schmidt. The landlord suggested that perhaps the people at the Factory might change his cheque. X. was not certain, but believed the Factory to be the name for the offices of the chief trading firm in Java. Acting on this advice, he took a carriage and drove there. The haughty young gentleman who presided behind the counter received him suspiciously, and at once disdainfully and very firmly refused to have anything to do with the cheque, which he turned over and over in his fingers as though it might bite him, and then returned to its owner.

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Bowed out and baffled, the traveller returned to his hotel. The situation was now growing serious, for the train to Soempioeh went in half-an-hour, and, after paying his bill, there would be no money for the fare, even could he start penniless. As a forlorn hope X. sallied forth in the sun to pay one more visit to the post-office. This building was closed, and the hard-worked officials had retired to their private apartments in the back premises. Bold to desperation, the visitor skirted round the post-office and peered into the privacies beyond. Seeing an open door he walked in, and found the chief official in his shirt sleeves partaking of his midday meal. With profuse apologies for his intrusion, X. stated his anxiety about his remittance, and rather feebly asked the officer if he were "quite sure" the letter had not come. "Quite sure," grumbled the official in excellent English, "but to satisfy you I'll let you come and look yourself." X. almost begged him not to take what surely must be superfluous trouble, but, luckily, refrained, and accompanying the officer into the post-office, walked towards a pile of papers stacked in pigeon-holes. "There," exclaimed his guide, "see—see for yourself"; and he did, for on the top lay a blue envelope duly registered and addressed to himself.

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Thus the hotel bill was paid, and he caught the train to Soempioeh. There he was met by Abu and messengers from the Wodena, who accompanied him to that officer's house.

CHAPTER XVIII.

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THE QUEST SUCCESSFUL—THE WODENA'S HOUSE.

The Wodena's house was a comparatively large building made with alang-lalang walls, [4] and the floor on a level with the ground. The entire front of the house was open, though the overhanging eaves of the roof kept out the glare. In the foreground three tables with corresponding chairs were ranged stiffly, as though in a hotel verandah. In one corner was a little cupboard kind of compartment, which X. found was his bedroom.

There was no attempt to cover the floor of bare earth with mats, as would have been the case in even poor Malay houses. At the back of the one large sitting room stood an imposing long table. The outlook of the house was on to some untidy waste land covered with long grass—rather an unusual sign of slovenliness in a country of such universal neatness. Close by a new house was in course of construction for Government use. This building had the somewhat strange combination of alang-lalang walls and a tiled roof. The host who welcomed X. to his house was, as has been said, the Wodena, or local head native magistrate. A Malay in such a position would most certainly have had a courteous manner and have probably been an agreeable companion. This official, though he evidently intended to be cordial, was awkward and seemingly stupid. He also spoke bad Malay, and seemed an ill-educated man for such a position. He wore a terrible old sun-helmet on his head, and presented a grotesque appearance.

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After having tea his host took X. for a walk round to show him the place, and all the people

crouched on the ground as they passed. The followers in uniform walked after them, occasionally shouting at those who did not promptly go to earth, while hurrying their movements with insinuating prods from the poles of office. The few Chinese who were met, bowed low like ladies to a royalty, which was a somewhat startling experience to X., so recently from Singapore, where Chinamen jostle Europeans from the side walks and puff bad tobacco in their faces as they pass. *Apropos* of this it might be mentioned here that a high Dutch official in Java stated that he considered that the way the Chinese in Singapore were allowed to treat the Europeans was "nothing less than a disgrace to civilization." In the Singapore local press at the time of writing there is now appearing a series of indignant letters from a Chinaman in Selangor who signs himself as "Speaking Pig Tail." This scribe complains to "Mr. Editor" that he has not the same rights as a European. I wonder what "Speaking Pig Tail" would say to the above-mentioned Dutch official.

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However these particular Chinese in Soempioeh bowed many inches low to the Wodena, while X. with bland self-consciousness appropriated a certain length to himself as the only white man in the place.

This walk at Soempioeh was full of interest, and the Wodena kindly replied to the best of his ability to all the questions asked. The whole country round was one vast expanse of padi, valleys and hills alike so far as the eye could reach, and it seemed to X. that no population could be sufficiently dense to consume such an apparently unlimited supply, but the Wodena assured him that none was ever exported. The town presented a busy scene of great activity, as there was evidently a country fair in full swing, and rows of people lined the roadside selling quaint cakes and fruit, and here and there a stall was gay and sweet-smelling with little heaps of gathered rose leaves and yellow blooms of fragrant chimpaka. The Wodena and his visitor called on the chief Chinese of the town, of which race he informed him there were two hundred all told. These people scarcely resembled the Chinamen as known to X., since they had all been born and bred in the neighbourhood, and not one of them had experience of life beyond the island of Java. The head Chinaman produced various curios—so considered—for inspection, these being sent for from the pawn-shops close by. The Wodena volunteered the information that large quantities of opium were consumed in the district. This meant, as there were no Chinese, the habitual use of this drug amongst the people. After this walk the little procession wended its way back to the Wodena's house. Dinner that night proved a weird meal, as Usoof, who cooked, had gone to the neighbouring village of Tambak, where he found his mother dwelt, and Abu, who had never cooked anything more complicated than rice, tried his 'prentice hand. The next day was Sunday, and the weekly fair was at its height till twelve noon. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people were packed tightly together, line after line, under little sheds, selling sarongs and cloths of every conceivable colour, with hats, mats, and native ornaments of all descriptions. It was an animated scene, and one not easily forgotten, and this was the first time, if the Wodena was to be believed, that any white man had seen it. Be that as it may, or perhaps as it may not, X. allowed himself the satisfaction of believing that it was the first time that any Englishman had seen it.

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After the fair the traveller returned home, and there received a visit from Usoof and his mother. He had found her, and the object of his journey to Java was accomplished. It appears that he had met her while walking along a path by the river, which his awakened memory recalled would lead him to his home. And she, noting his unusual dress and stranger-like appearance, stopped to ask whether he had any news of her son who many years ago had gone away to Singapore, and to whom she had so frequently written, receiving no reply. She feared he was dead, but as the kind stranger came from foreign parts it was possible that amongst the colony of Javanese in Singapore he might have heard of her long-lost son.

Such was the meeting, and a dramatic and successful climax to what had seemed a somewhat forlorn quest. Had I the pen of a Swettenham or a Clifford, those sympathetic spinners of delightful tales of a race whose childish faith so lends itself to story, I might here find material for pages of a charming romance. But in reality there was little romance about Usoof, rather a sturdy honesty and affection, as he brought his poor mother in her humble attire and presented her to his Tuan, who, at that moment, bored to death by his kind host, who would not cease to entertain him by sitting by him in attentive silence, would have welcomed any diversion as a boon.

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But the poor lady, according to the custom of the country, could only prostrate herself outside the house nor venture nearer than some dozen yards, probably regarding her new-found son, who stood upright, as some knave who courted death.

This system of obeisance had been rather embarrassing to X., since all the retainers of his host stooped low and crept about while his own attendants had maintained their usual attitudes with occasional lapses from the perpendicular. For there had been intervals over night when, realizing his conspicuous position, Abu had wandered about awkwardly doubled up, and offered cigarettes and liquid refreshment from somewhere among the legs of the table, startling his master by his sudden cat-like appearance in unexpected places, while there was that in his eye which said, "Do not expect this sort of thing to continue when we get you home."

Footnotes:

[4] Plaited grass.

CHAPTER XIX.

A VILLAGE HOME IN JAVA.

To Usoof and his mother the great Wodena was kindness itself, and conversed with them in Javanese with much affability. X. wishing to see a real country village, and obtain speech with its people, away from the all-subduing eye of the local authority, promised to go that afternoon and visit the good lady in her ancestral home, and a few hours later he took the train for the next station, Tambak. No European had ever done such a thing before apparently, and there was quite a fuss at the station to find a first or even a second-class ticket. And during the search the railway officials displayed the most naive curiosity, and questioned the traveller without restraint. Arrived at Tambak X. descended, and immediately the station-master hurried forward and politely assured him that he had made a mistake, since Gombong, the large town, was the next station but one. He obviously could not believe it possible that any European should get out at Tambak on purpose, and regarded the polite insistence of X. that he knew where he wanted to go as evidence of some sort of sanity, to be passed over as harmless. Gesticulating and ejaculating, the worthy gentleman collected quite a little crowd of gazers as the white man, followed by Usoof, sauntered out of the station. Once out of sight, the station-master would have been intensely gratified to see X., who did not really in the least know where he was going, turn round and ask his follower the way. So they branched off to the left and wended their route along the banks of a noisy river, beneath the shade of huge trees which formed an avenue by the side of the water. On their right lay the endless padi fields of early green and ripening gold, all equally shimmering in the sun. This combination of ripe padi, side by side with newly sown, forms a striking feature of Javanese agriculture. While gazing upon this warm picture, and congratulating himself that someone had had the forethought to plant this pleasant row of trees, the voice of Usoof from the rear announced that they must now turn to the right. To turn to the right naturally meant to go across that sunlit plain. The hand of X. involuntarily went up to his stiff stand-up collar, and though he could not see the face of his attendant, he was aware through his back that he smiled. So climbing a rustic stile they branched off to the right and walked across the padi, where the lurid light was zigzagging above the corn. Presently the red roofs of a village were in sight, and once more the voice of Usoof spoke to introduce his birthplace. This was interesting, as was the additional information that the little river they had now to cross was the boundary of his ancestral land. The house they had come all this way to see was deep in the shadow of countless fruit trees, over which towered palms of considerable age. The green turf so scrupulously neat, and the little group of buildings set round the central house, all combined to make a picturesque scene.

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In the front of these cottages, on the green turf, was the reception house—a square building, surrounded by benches with a table in the middle.

Here the stranger was escorted by a crowd of Javanese, cousins and sisters and brothers and aunts, without number—for it seemed less of a family than a tribe which had come together to do him honour. Then the guest was seated in the place of state, and fruit of many kinds in large brass dishes was set before him. It was truly a pleasant spot, and there was additional satisfaction in the thought that with so little to guide them they had been able to light upon it without lengthy search. Then ensued a conversation, during which the visitor learnt and imparted many things. Amongst the former he heard that once before, when the railway was being made, a white man had been seen in the neighbourhood, but the present occasion was the first, when the village had beheld one close. And this stranger told them of the Malays and his life amongst them, and how their houses and customs resembled theirs, while Usoof, alone venturing to remain upright, acted as interpreter as a swarm of young brown relations clasped his hands and ruthlessly robbed him of his watch and chain, his brass buttons, and all the loose coins in his pockets. Then X., who has a material mind, asked to see the title deeds of their lands, which were produced and inspected, and they were instructed how to proceed, so that when the time came the absent Usoof, as the eldest son, should obtain his fair share of the inheritance. Then, as the shadows were lengthening, and the zigzags on the padi had given way to a soft and mellow light fanned by an evening breeze, X. gave the signal to depart and announced that farewells must be made. Hurrying over his own, he wandered towards the river so that he might not witness the anguish of the mother bereaved anew of her long lost son, but he could not escape hearing the sounds of sobs which arose behind him. And the little procession of two—the European with his limp collar, and the Javanese bereft of all his finery—started once more across the plain. But the procession grew and grew, as one by one the fond relations hurried after it for one more glimpse or one more word for the departing brother. Then the traveller began to feel as near a brute as ever in his life before, and suggested to Usoof that he should bid him good-bye and return for good to the bosom of his weeping family. But this he declined to do, and at the rustic stile the actual parting came. Arrived at the train, the good station-master was still on the look-out and walking around as though something unusual had happened, but, tired and hot, X. parried his questionings with some abruptness. But the interviewer was as persistent as if he were on the staff of a London evening paper, and after producing an inverted wheelbarrow, which he offered X. as a seat, went to his house for a whisky and soda—called by the natives "Dutch water." After

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that walk in the sun, his whole physical and nervous system disorganized by the deglutition of strange fruits and condiments, and by witnessing heartrending family farewells, an unexpected whisky and soda, when such a restorative had seemed as unobtainable as the very moon which was beginning to appear, was welcome indeed. The station-master was at once the master of the situation, and the hitherto taciturn Englishman, his thirst assuaged and his limbs at rest, became as communicative as a star of *the* profession, and answered all questions as fully and docilely as a willing witness in the hands of his own counsel.

CHAPTER XX.

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BACK TO THE JUNGLE.

Arrived at the house of the Wodena, the traveller had to submit to more pumping, nor would his host rest until he knew, or was persuaded he knew, each word which X. had written in his letter of thanks to the Assistant Resident at Tjilatjap. That night it was very hot, and it was borne in upon the sleepless traveller that he had exhausted the resources of the place. Therefore at an early hour next morning his miscellaneous fairings were packed, the cost of his entertainment liberally repaid, and accepted without demur, and the visitors, after earnestly commending the picturesque little village at Tambak to special official protection, departed for the station. X. had intended to now perform the usual round and visit the temples at Djaokjakerta, Solo and Semarang, but when almost in the act of asking for his ticket, a spirit of revolt infected him, and he rebelled at the thought that he must go here and there just because all others did, when his inclinations really called him elsewhere, for his inclinations were bidding him go back to the cottage in the hills, where the tea and coffee grew. And so without hesitation he took his ticket and sent a telegram to announce his intended return. Bandung was to be the first halting-place, which meant travel in that crawling train from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., and stopping at twenty-eight stations on the way. There was no first-class compartment and the seats of the second-class were hard and narrow, and the cramped space after the first few hours became almost unbearable. Things looked brighter, the guard flattered the hopes of passengers by asking who would buy tickets for lunch at some halting-place further on, so that he could telegraph for the meal to be prepared. Hope is eternal, and experience of Java hotels had not yet robbed the traveller of the fond pleasure of anticipation. The Swindon of the line was reached, and there, sure enough, was a table spread with food. After the first bite of the first dish X. realized sadly that he had been done, since it would have been impossible to make any impression on that meat with aught less forcible than an axe. Thus, with reluctance, his portion, albeit paid for in advance, was relinquished, to be again paid for probably and again to flatter and deceive some other passing and hungry stranger. The remainder of the journey proved agreeable, thanks to the companionship of a young officer who, invalided home from the Lomboh war, was *en route* to Buitenzorg, where he lived. This poor warrior had undergone a time of much hardship, and related how he and his men had slept shelterless on the wet ground and for nights had nothing but rice to eat. And this only half a day's journey from the principal port in Java, and with as much money collected for aid to the soldiers as would have, if necessary, paid for the whole cost of the war. This companion told many interesting anecdotes of the war, and related some almost incredible tales of the treachery and ingratitude of the natives.

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The Englishman also availed himself of this opportunity for hearing something of social etiquette in time of peace, and the unwritten rules which guided those attending entertainments where Dutch and natives met. As for instance, when the Sultan of Djoedja gives a ball, each official must stand upon a step, high or low, in proportion to his rank, while the Resident is met and escorted to the same lofty altitude as the Sultan, on the top.

To the Governor-General, however, the Sultan must do obeisance.

This might be a convenient place to mention the great regard officially paid to caste. Reverence for rank amongst the people is fostered and aided by their rulers, and if a man of position is ever suspected or accused so that inquiry becomes necessary, it must take place with closed doors and in private.

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That night the party lay at Bandung (fresh from reading the "Red Cockade" its language seems the most descriptive). The train reached that considerable town at dusk. Here the traveller had the good fortune to again meet his friend the President of the Landraad, and was introduced by him to the Club. Being introduced to the Club meant being separately introduced to every member then in it, with that punctilious formality which X. had observed in Batavia. The hotel at Bandung was the best which the traveller had yet visited, and, contrary to expectation, dinner was warm and comforting. The others of the party, however, Usoof and Abu, were not so fortunate, for they had no means of getting anything to eat. It was not permitted them to go out after dark without lights, and they could not get lights. Added to this it was raining hard. The hotel apparently could not supply natives with food at such an hour, and it was necessary for them to go and look for it. This sad story greeted X. when his own dinner was done. But the kind

President of the Landraad cut the knot of this dilemma and soon provided a caterer, protector, and guide for the hungry pair.

As usual next morning, the time fixed for the train to leave was very early, and other trains were starting too, and of these Abu selected the one on the point of departure for Maos in which to stow all the portable luggage—no small amount—and this was only rescued as the train was actually on the move. This, of course, necessitated hurried action, making those who hurried hot. Then the scene at the ticket window was scarcely to be described. For a country where, in public, such a gulf is fixed between Europeans and natives, it is a strange thing to find the one aperture for the purchase of tickets, besieged by a serging clamouring throng of both races, and no one had any idea of waiting his turn. X. attempted to force his way to the little window, but as he stopped to observe the rules of the game, as played in civilized countries of the West, he was each time passed over, when the tickets were almost in his grasp. At length, disgusted at having to take part in such a scene, he retired. Then Usoof, with much insinuation of elbows and words in Javanese (words such as his mother may not have approved), managed to obtain tickets just in time to catch the train. This train duly landed them at the familiar little station, where, as before, the ponies waited them to carry them up that hill of wonderful views. At the station the traveller parted with his companion, the invalid officer, after accepting a kindly invitation to lunch with him at Buitenzorg on his way through to Batavia.

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No need to repeat myself in describing those few extra days spent at the cottage in the hills. And they also resembled the last ones in that they went too quickly.

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The hearty welcome received was, the visitor liked to think, rendered even warmer by the fact that he was able to assure his busy host that the young tea plants had most certainly grown a little in his absence.

The day soon came when X. was nearing the limits of his leave and must start for Batavia. The always early train reached Buitenzorg in the morning, and there, where on his first visit he had felt so lonely, the traveller was met by his soldier friend and driven by him to the home of his *fiancée*. That reception, and its pleasant sequel of a home-like lunch, is one of the most agreeable of the recollections which X. now preserves of the town. Though he felt inclined to take the welcome all to himself, yet in his heart he knew that it was in great manner due to the fact that he was even remotely connected with the safe return of one whom the household considered as a son.

After lunch the host, bravely clad in uniform, took his guest to see the barracks. These buildings seemed as clean and comfortable as could be expected in a tropical climate. The extreme youth of some of the men was so noticeable that the visitor could not but observe it, and he learnt that this was accounted for by the fact that they could enlist at the age of sixteen. Another item of information was that one-third of the army in Java was composed of people of other nationalities. In the native corps there is never any difficulty in obtaining recruits.

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After inspecting the barracks a visit was made to the gaol. This over they drove to the Club for the much-needed refreshment of "Dutch water" with something in it. The Club was a fine building, but there was no time left to enjoy its luxurious lounges, and in a very short time X. was bidding farewell to his good friend and steaming once more towards Batavia.

Arrived in the capital, the traveller thought it best to widen his experience by driving to an hotel other than the one of electric light. This was also a huge building at the end of a regular street of rooms, all looking out on to the main verandah. As this look-out provided the only light, the majority of the occupants kept open both doors and windows, and a walk along the verandah was like some panorama of dressing in all its stages.

The chief points about this hotel were the usual ones—indifferent food, absence of privacy, and horrible bathing arrangements. In Eastern countries it is usual to find a bath-room attached to the bedroom. In Java hotels people—ladies as well as men—burdened with sponges and towels, and some with soap, must cross a public court-yard and wait their turn outside the bath-room door. In this particular hotel the ordeal was especially trying, since the bathrooms were outside the office, and in the centre of a regular street where people drove past arriving and departing or calling on friends, and must perforce gaze upon that little forlorn group of scantily-clad humans on cleanliness intent. However, this hotel remains to X. one of blessed memory, since it was while there he was, through the knowledge of the language, able to render some slight service to two charming American ladies who were courageously going round the world alone. On the following day these ladies were passengers on board the s.s. *Godavery* en route for Hong Kong, Shanghai, Japan, Havaü, and all the places in the world apparently, excepting, alas! that little one of Pura Pura.

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That last evening there happened to be a performance of an English circus, and X. went there and laughed at the jokes of an excellent clown—a cheery being whose like he had not seen for many a long year past. Fancy a clown in the jungle!

The next day he reluctantly bade farewell to the country where such a pleasant three weeks had been spent, and embarking on board the s.s. *Godavery*—his impedimenta increased by three ponies—the traveller steamed again for Singapore. The day after his arrival there he started for home, and some thirty-six hours later was once more seated in his verandah, listening all alone to the chanting songs of his Malay neighbours in the plain below. The moon was bright, and Pura Pura kept high revelry.

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Those readers who have had the patience to follow my friend through his short holiday may leave him there—sighing perhaps with contented discontent—an excuse for grumbling—while all around is beautiful, and body and mind can revel in long chairs and books galore. There is a world perhaps, he thinks, where all are up and doing, but—like his dreams—it is very far away. Has he been to Java—he asks himself—has he ever been anywhere beyond the edge of this green turfed hill—to which are now ascending sounds of happiness from poor villagers who live among the padi fields, away there across the river, dimly seen now when the moon is high? And has he helped to make them happy?—did they always sit singing there before he or others came, or did they have to watch with Krisis ready, for fear of stealthy foes—foes who crept to stab beneath the raised bamboo floors. Perhaps he, too, has aided with his mite—perhaps—who knows? And as this thought occurs, the discontent will fade, while content alone remains.

Long years has this exile lived in Pura Pura, and then when he left it for a space—to redeem a promise—he asked me to relate all that he did and saw while thus away. From Jungle to Java have I therefore followed him as a faithful chronicler and my commission is ended. But it should not be so, since there are tales of the jungle and tales of Pura Pura all worth the telling if what I think be true. For there, where life moves slowly, the incidents, which make it dwell, dwell so long that those who watch may note and read. And though that which they read, being of nature and mankind, is necessarily an old, old story, yet is the framework new, and thus with an interest all its own, able to impart a lesson to those who sit at home and speak with vague pity of peoples far away. Perhaps our traveller—to whom such a name must have seemed irony indeed—will one day ask my assistance to relate certain chapters of that life, brief glimpses of which have been afforded the reader in this little sketch.

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Trancier's Notes:

Inconsistencies in the hyphenation of words preserved. (bathroom, bath-room; courtyard, court-yard; foreground, fore-ground; lamplight, lamp-light; stationmaster, station-master)

Pg. 96, "Ojoedja" possibly refers to the town "Djoedja" (short for Djoedjakarta) which is mentioned elsewhere in the text. However, the original text has been preserved.

Pg. 99, "civi service" changed to "civil service". (irritable member of the civil service)

Pg. 124, "attemped" changed to "attempted". (X. attempted to force his way)

Pg. 125, duplicated word "a" removed. (sequel of a home-like lunch)

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