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THE KAMPONGS



THE *Tjina*, or China, and the Arab *kampongs*, are show-places to the stranger in the curious features of life and civic government they present. Each of these foreign *kampongs*, or villages, is under the charge of a captain or commander, whom the Dutch authorities hold responsible for the order and peace of their compatriots, since they do not allow to these yellow colonials so-called "European freedom"—an expression which constitutes a sufficient admission of the existence of "Asiatic restraint." Great wealth abides in both these alien quarters, whose leading families have been there for generations, and have absorbed all retail trade, and as commission merchants, money-lenders, and middlemen have garnered great profits and earned the hatred of Dutch and Javanese alike. The lean and hooked-nosed followers of the prophet conquered the island in the fifteenth century, and have built their *messigits*, or mosques, in every province. The Batavian *messigit* is a cool little blue-

and-white-tiled building, with a row of inlaid wooden clogs and loose leather shoes at the door; and turbaned heads within bow before the mihrab that points north-westward to Mecca. Since the Mohammedan conquest of 1475, the Javanese are Mohammedan if anything; but they take their religion easily, and are so lukewarm in the faith of the fire and sword that they would easily relapse to their former mild Brahmanism if Islam's power were released. The Dutch have always prohibited the pilgrimages to Mecca, since those returning with the green turban were viewed with reverence and accredited with supernatural powers that made their influence a menace to Dutch rule. Arab priests have always been enemies of the government and foremost in inciting the people to rebellion against Dutch and native rulers; but little active evangelical work seems to have been done by Christian missionaries to counteract Mohammedanism, save at the town of Depok, near Batavia.

In all the banks and business houses is found the lean-fingered Chinese comprador, or accountant, and the rattling buttons of his abacus, or counting-board, play the inevitable accompaniment to financial transactions, as everywhere else east of Colombo. The 251,325 Chinese in Netherlands India present a curious study in the possibilities of their race. Under the strong, tyrannical rule of the Dutch they thrive, show ambition to adopt Western ways, and approach more nearly to European standards than one could believe possible. Chinese conservatism yields first in costume and social manners; the pigtail shrinks to a mere symbolic wisp, and the well-to-do Batavian Chinese

dresses faultlessly after the London model, wears spotless duck coat and trousers, patent-leather shoes, and, in top or derby hat, sits complacent in a handsome victoria drawn by imported horses, with liveried Javanese on the box. One meets correctly gotten-up Celestial equestrians trotting around Waterloo Plein or the alleys of Buitenzorg, each followed by an obsequious groom, the thin remnant of the Manchu queue slipped inside the coat being the only thing to suggest Chinese origin. The rich Chinese live in beautiful villas, in gorgeously decorated houses built on ideal tropical lines; and although having no political or social recognition in the land, entertain no intention of returning to China. They load their Malay wives with diamonds and jewels, and spend liberally for the education of their children. The Dutch tax, judge, punish, and hold them in the same regard as the natives, with whom they have intermarried for three centuries, until there is a large mixed class of these Paranaks in every part of the island. The native hatred of the Chinese is an inheritance of those past centuries when the Dutch farmed out the revenue to Chinese, who, being assigned so many thousand acres of rice-land, and the forced labor of the people on them, gradually extended their boundaries, and by increasing exactions and secret levies oppressed the people with a tyranny and rapacity the Dutch could not approach. In time the Chinese fomented insurrection against the Dutch, and in 1740, joining with disaffected natives, entrenched themselves in a suburban fort. The Dutch in alarm gave the order, and over 20,000 Chinese then within the walls were put

to death, not an infant, a woman, nor an aged person being spared. In fear of the wrath of the Emperor of China, elaborate excuses were framed and sent to Peking. Sage old Keen-Lung responded only by saying that the Dutch had served them right, that any death was too good for Chinese who would desert the graves of their ancestors.

After that incident they were restrained from all monopolies and revenue farming, and restricted to their present humble political state. An absolute exclusion act was passed in 1837, but was soon revoked; and the Chinese hold financial supremacy over both Dutch and natives, trade and commerce being hopelessly in the hands of the skilful Chinese comprador. The Dutch vent their dislike by an unmerciful taxation. They formerly assessed them according to the length of their queues and for each long finger-nail. The Chinese are mulcted on landing and leaving, for birth and death, for every business venture and privilege; yet they prosper and remain, and these Paranaks in a few more generations may attain the social and political equality they seek. It all proves that under a strong, tyrannical government the Chinese make good citizens, and can easily put away the notions and superstitions that in China itself hold countless millions in the bondage of a long-dead past. The recent exposure of Chinese forgeries of Java bank-notes to the value of three million pounds sterling has put the captains of Batavia and Samarang kampongs in prison, and has led to wholesale arrests of rich Chinese throughout the island.

Native life swarms in this land of the betel and

banana, where there seems to be more of inherent dream and calm than in other lands of the lotus. The Javanese are the finer flowers of the Malay race—a people possessed of a civilization, arts, and literature in that golden period before the Mohammedan and European conquests. They have gentle voices, gentle manners, fine and expressive features, and are the one people of Asia besides the Japanese who have real charm and attraction for the alien. They are more winning, too, by contrast, after one has met the harsh, unlovely, and unwashed people of China, or the equally unwashed, cringing Hindu. They are a little people, and one feels the same indulgent, protective sense as toward the Japanese. Their language is soft and musical—“the Italian of the tropics”; their ideas are poetic; and their love of flowers and perfumes, of music and the dance, of heroic plays and of every emotional form of art, proves them as innately esthetic as their distant cousins, the Japanese, in whom there is so large an admixture of Malay stock. Their reverence for rank and age, and their elaborate etiquette and punctilious courtesy to one another, are as marked even in the common people as among the Japanese; but their abject, crouching humility before their Dutch employers, and the brutality of the latter to them, are a theme for sadder thinking, and calculated to make the blood boil. When one actually sees the quiet, inoffensive peddlers, who chiefly beseech with their eyes, furiously kicked out of the hotel courtyard when mynheer does not choose to buy, and native children actually lifted by an ear and hurled away from the vantage-point on the curbstone which a pajamaed Dutchman wishes for

himself while some troops march by, one is content not to see or know any more.

These friendly little barefoot people are of endless interest, and their daily markets, or *passers*, are panoramas of life and color that one longs to transplant entire. Life is so simple and primitive, too, in the sunshine and warmth of the tropics. A bunch of bananas, a basket of steamed rice, and a leaf full of betel preparations comprise the necessities and luxuries of daily living. With the rice may go many peppers and curried messes of ground cocoanut, which one sees made and offered for sale in small dabs laid on bits of banana-leaf, the wrapping-paper of the tropics. Pinned with a cactus-thorn, a bit of leaf makes a primitive bag, bowl, or cup, and a slip of it serves as a sylvan spoon. All classes chew the betel- or areca-nut, bits of which, wrapped in betel-leaf with lime, furnish cheer and stimulant, dye the mouth, and keep the lips streaming with crimson juice. In Canton and in all Cochin China, across the peninsula, and throughout island and continental India, men and women have equal delight in this peppery stimulant. The Javanese lays his quid of betel tobacco between the lower lip and teeth, and so great seem to be the solace and comfort of it that dozing venders and peddlers will barely turn an eye and grunt responses to one's eager "*Brapa?*" ("How much?")

Peddlers bring to one's doorway fine Bantam basketry and bales of the native cotton cloth, or *battek*, patterned in curious designs that have been in use from time out of mind. These native art fabrics are sold at the *passers* also, and one soon recognizes the con-



PAINTING SARONGS.

ventional designs, and distinguishes the qualities and merits of these hand-patterned cottons that constitute the native dress. The sarong, or skirt, worn by men and women alike, is a strip of cotton two yards long and one yard deep, which is drawn tightly around the hips, the fullness gathered in front, and by an adroit twist made so firm that a belt is not necessary to native wearers. The sarong has always one formal panel design, which is worn at the front or side, and the rest of the surface is covered with the intricate ornaments in which native fancy runs riot. There are geometrical and line combinations, in which appear the swastika and the curious latticings of central Asia; others are as bold and natural as anything Japanese; and in others still, the palm-leaves and quaint animal forms of India and Persia attest the rival art influences that have swept over these refined, adaptive, assimilative people. One favorite serpentine pattern running in diagonal lines does not need explanation in this land of gigantic worms and writhing crawlers; nor that other pattern where centipedes and insect forms cover the ground; nor that where the fronds of cocoa-palm wave, and the strange shapes of mangos, jacks, and breadfruit are interwoven. The deer and tapir, and the "hunting-scene" patterns are reserved for native royalty's exclusive wear. In village and wayside cottages up-country we afterward watched men and women painting these cloths, tracing a first outline in a rich brown waxy dye, which is the foundation and dominant color in all these batteks. The parts which are to be left white are covered with wax, and the cloth is dipped in or brushed over with the

dye. This resist, or mordant, must be applied for each color, and the wax afterwards steamed out in hot water, so that a sarong goes through many processes and handlings, and is often the work of weeks. The dyes are applied hot through a little tin funnel of an implement tapering down to a thin point, which is used like a painter's brush, but will give the fine line- and dot-work of a pen-and-ink drawing. The sarong's value depends upon the fineness of the drawing, the elaborateness of the design, and the number of colors employed; and beginning as low as one dollar, these brilliant cottons, or hand-painted calico sarongs, increase in price to even twenty or thirty dollars. The Dutch ladies vie with one another in their sarongs as much as native women, and their dishabille dress of the early hours has not always economy to recommend it. The battek also appears in the *slandang*, or long shoulder-scarf, which used to match the sarong and complete the native costume when passed under the arms and crossed at the back, thus covering the body from the armpits to the waist. It is still worn knotted over the mother's shoulder as a sling or hammock for a child; but Dutch fashion has imposed the same narrow, tight-sleeved *kabaia*, the *baju*, or jacket, that Dutch women wear with the sarong. The *kam kapala*, a square handkerchief tied around men's heads as a variant of the turban, is of the same figured battek, and, with the *slandang*, often exhibits charming color combinations and intricate Persian designs. When one conquers his prejudices and associated ideas enough to pay seemingly fancy prices for these examples of free-hand calico printing, the taste grows, and he soon shares

the native longing for a sarong of every standard and novel design.

The native silversmiths hammer out good designs in silver relief for betel- and tobacco-boxes, and exhibit great taste and invention in belt- and jacket-clasps, and in heavy knobs of hairpins and ear-rings, that are often made of gold and incrustated over with gems for richer folk.

There are no historic spots nor show-places of native creation in Batavia; no *kratons*, or *aloon-aloons*, as their palaces and courtyards are called; and only a sentimental interest for a virtual exile pining in his own country is attached to the villa of Raden Saleh. This son of the regent of Samarang was educated in Europe, and lived there for twenty-three years, developing decided talents as an artist, and enjoying the friendship of many men of rank and genius on the Continent, among the latter being Eugène Sue, who is said to have taken Raden Saleh as model for the Eastern Prince in "The Wandering Jew." In Java he found himself sadly isolated from his own people by his European tastes and habits; and he had little in common with the coarse, rapacious mynheers whose sole thoughts were of crops and gulden. "Coffee and sugar, sugar and coffee, are all that is talked here. It is a dreary atmosphere for an artist," said Raden Saleh to D'Almeida, who visited him at Batavia sixty odd years ago. He has left a monument of his taste in this charming villa, in a park whose land is now a vegetable-patch, its shady pleasance a beer-garden and exposition-ground, and the sign "*Tu Huur*" ("To Hire") hung from the royal entrance. The exposition of arts and

industries in these grounds in 1893 was a great event in Java, the governor-general Van der Wyk opening and closing the fair by electric signal, and the natives making a particularly interesting display of their products and crafts.