

V

TO THE HILLS



ONE'S most earnest desire, in the scorch of Batavian noondays and stifling Batavian nights, is to seek refuge in "the hills" —in the dark-green groves and forests of the Blue Mountains, that are ranged with such admirable effect as background when one steams in from the Java Sea. At Buitenzorg, only forty miles away and seven hundred and fifty feet above the sea, heat-worn people find refuge in an entirely different climate, an atmosphere of bracing clearness tempered to moderate summer's warmth. Buitenzorg ("without care"), the Dutch Sans Souci, has been a general refuge and sanitarium for Europeans, the real seat of government, and the home of the governor-general for more than a century. It is the pride and show-place of Java, the great center of its social life, leisure interests, and attractions. The higher officials and many Batavian merchants and bankers have homes at Buitenzorg, and residents from other parts of the island make it their place of recreation and goal of holiday trips.

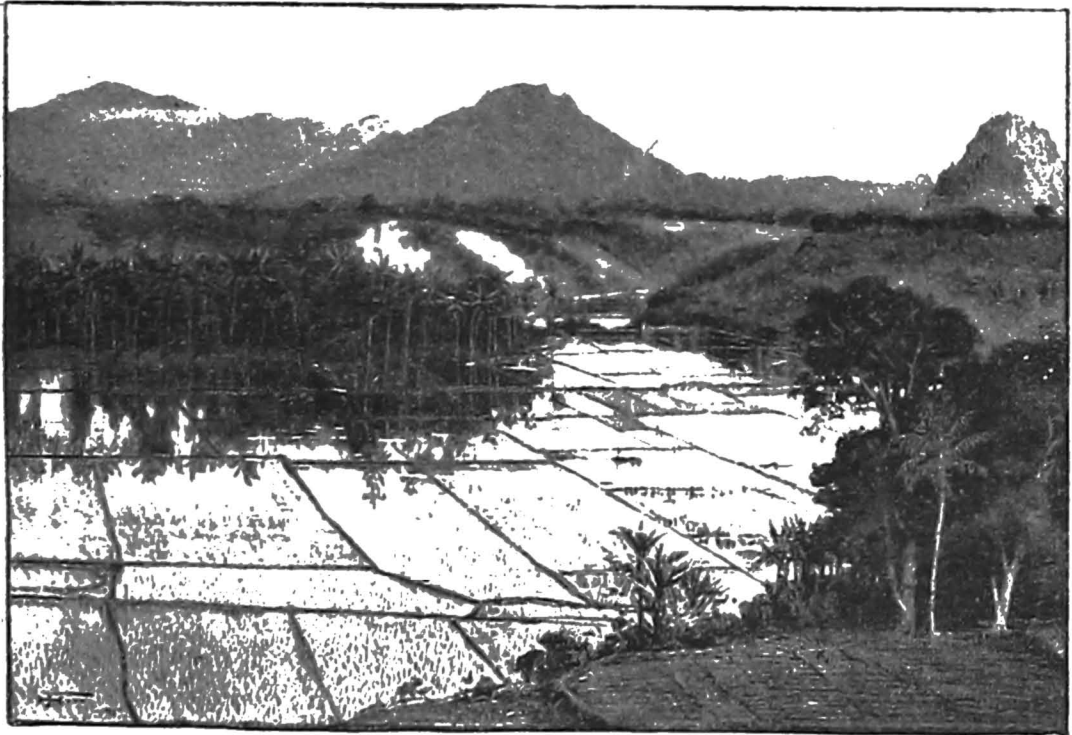
Undressed Batavia was just rousing from its afternoon nap, and the hotel court was surrounded with barefoot guests in battek pajamas and scant sarongs, a sockless, collarless, unblushing company, that yawned and stared as we drove away, rejoicing to leave this Sans Gêne for Sans Souci. The Weltevreden Station, on the vast Koenig's Plein, a spacious, stone-floored building, whose airy halls and waiting- and refreshment-rooms are repeated on almost as splendid scale at all the large towns of the island, was enlivened with groups of military officers, whose heavy broadcloth uniforms, trailing sabers, and clanking spurs transported us back from the tropics to some chilly European railway-station, and presented the extreme contrast of colonial life. The train that came panting from Tandjon Priok was made up of first-, second-, and third-class cars, all built on the American plan, in that they were long cars and not carriages, and we entered through doors at the end platforms. The first-class cars swung on easy springs; there were modern car-windows in tight frames, also window-frames of wire netting; while thick wooden venetians outside of all, and a double roof, protected as much as possible from the sun's heat. The deep arm-chair seats were upholstered with thick leather cushions, the walls were set with blue-and-white tiles repeating Mauve's and Mesdag's pictures, and adjustable tables, overhead racks, and a dressing-room furnished all the railroad comforts possible. The railway service of Netherlands India is a vast improvement on, and its cars are in striking contrast to, the loose-windowed, springless, dusty, hard-benched carriages in which first-class passengers are jolted across British

India. The second-class cars in Java rest on springs also, but more passengers are put in a compartment, and the fittings are simpler; while the open third-class cars, where native passengers are crowded together, have a continuous window along each side, and the benches are often without backs. The fares average 2.2 United States cents a kilometer (about five eighths of a mile) for first class, 1.6 cents second class, and 6 mills third class. The first-class fare from Batavia to Sourabaya, at the east end of the island, is but 50 gulden (\$20) for the 940-kilometer journey, accomplished in two days' train-travel of twelve and fourteen hours each, so that the former heavy expense (over a dollar a mile for post-horses, after one had bought or rented a traveling-carriage) and the delays of travel in Java are done away with.

The railways have been built by both the government and private corporations, connecting and working together, the first line dating from 1875. The continuous railway line across the island was completed and opened with official ceremonies in November, 1894. The gap of one hundred miles or more across the "*terra ingrata*," the low-lying swamp and fever regions either side of Tjilatjap, had existed for years after the track was completed to the east and west of it. Dutch engineers built and manage the road, but the staff, the working force of the line, are natives, or Chinese of the more or less mixed but educated class filling the middle ground between Europeans and natives, between the upper and lower ranks. Wonderful skill was shown in leading the road over the mountains, and in building a firm track and bridges through the

reeking swamps, where no white man could labor, even if he could live. The trains do not run at night, which would be a great advantage in a hot country, for the reason that the train crews are composed entirely of natives (since such work is considered beneath the grade of any European), and the cautious Dutch will not trust native engineers after dark. Through trains start from either end of the line and from the half-way stations at five and six o'clock each morning, and run until the short twilight and pitch-darkness that so quickly succeed the unchanging six-o'clock tropical sunset. These early morning starts, and the eight- and nine-o'clock dinner of the Java hotels, make travel most wearisome. One may buy fruit at every station platform, and always tea, coffee, chocolate, wine and schnapps, bread and biscuits at the station buffets. At the larger stations there are dining-rooms, or a service of lunch-baskets, in which the Gargantuan riz tavel, or luncheon, is served hot in one's compartment as the train moves on.

The hour-and-a-half's ride from Batavia to Buitenzorg gave us an epitome of tropical landscapes as the train ran between a double panorama of beauty. The soil was a deep, intense red, as if the heat of the sun and the internal fires of this volcanic belt had warmed the fruitful earth to this glowing color, which contrasted so strongly with the complementary green of grain and the groves of palms and cacao-trees. The level rice-fields were being plowed, worked, flooded, planted, weeded, and harvested side by side, the several crops of the year going on continuously, with seemingly no regard to seasons. Nude little boys, astride



RICE-FIELDS.

of smooth gray water-buffaloes, posed statuesquely while those leisurely animals browsed afield; and no pastoral pictures of Java remain clearer in memory than those of patient little brown children sitting half days and whole days on buffalo-back, to brush flies and guide the stupid-looking creatures to greener and more luscious bits of herbage. Many stories are told of the affection the water-ox often manifests for his boy keeper, killing tigers and snakes in his defense, and performing prodigies of valor and intelligence; but one doubts the tales the more he sees of this hideous beast of Asia. Men and women were wading knee-deep in paddy-field muck, transplanting the green rice-shoots from the seed-beds, and picturesque harvest groups posed in tableaux, as the train shrieked by. Children rolled at play before the gabled baskets of houses clustered in toy villages beneath the inevitable cocoa-palms and bananas, the combination of those two useful trees being the certain sign of a kampong, or village, when the braided-bamboo houses are invisible.

At Depok there was a halt to pass the down-train, and the natives of this one Christian village and mission-station, the headquarters of evangelical work in Java, flocked to the platform with a prize horticultural display of all the fruits of the season for sale. The record of mission work in Java is a short one, as, after casting out the Portuguese Jesuit missionaries, the Dutch forbade any others to enter, and Spanish rule in Holland had perhaps taught them not to try to impose a strange religion on a people. During Sir Stamford Raffles's rule, English evangelists began work among the natives, but were summarily interrupted and obliged to

withdraw when Java was returned to Holland. All missionaries were strictly excluded until the humanitarian agitation in Europe, which resulted in the formal abolition of slavery and the gradual abandonment of the culture system, led the government to do a little for the Christianization and education of the people. The government supports twenty-nine Protestant pastors and ten Roman Catholic priests, primarily for the spiritual benefit of the European residents, and their spheres are exactly defined—proselytizing and mutual rivalries being forbidden. Missionaries from other countries are not allowed to settle and work among the people, and whatever may be said against this on higher moral grounds, the colonial government has escaped endless friction with the consuls and governments of other countries. The authorities have been quite willing to let the natives enjoy their mild Mohammedanism, and our Moslem servant spoke indifferently of mission efforts at Depok, with no scorn, no contempt, and apparently no hostility to the European faith.

Until recently, no steps were taken to educate the Javanese, and previous to 1864 they were not allowed to study the Dutch language. All colonial officers are obliged to learn Low Malay, that being the recognized language of administration and justice, instead of the many Javanese and Sundanese dialects, with their two forms of polite and common speech. These officials receive promotion and preferment as they make progress in the spoken and written language. Low Malay is the most readily acquired of all languages, as there are no harsh gutturals or difficult

consonants, and the construction is very simple. Children who learn the soft, musical Malay first have difficulty with the harsh Dutch sounds, while the Dutch who learn Malay after their youth never pronounce it as well or as easily as they pronounce French. The few Javanese, even those of highest rank, who acquired the Dutch language and attempted to use it in conversation with officials, used to be brusquely answered in Malay, an implication that the superior language was reserved for Europeans only. This helped the conquerors to keep the distinctions sharply drawn between them and their subject people, and while they could always understand what the natives were saying, the Dutch were free to talk together without reserve in the presence of servants or princes. Dutch is now taught in the schools for natives maintained by the colonial government, 201 primary schools having been opened in 1887, with an attendance of 39,707 pupils. The higher schools at Batavia have been opened to the sons of native officials and such rich Javanese as can afford them, and conservatives lament the "spoiling" of the natives with all that the government now does for them. They complain that the Javanese are becoming too "independent" since schoolmasters, independent planters, and tourists came, just as the old-style foreign residents of India, the Straits, China, and Japan bemoan the progressive tendencies and upheavals of this era of Asiatic awakening and enlightenment; and tourist travel is always harped upon as the most offending and corrupting cause of the changes in the native spirit.

Once above the general level of low-lying rice-lands, cacao-plantations succeeded one another for miles

beyond Depok; the small trees hung full of fat pods just ripening into reddish brown and crimson. The air was noticeably cooler in the hills, and as the shadows lengthened the near green mountains began to tower in shapes of lazuli mist, and a sky of soft, surpassing splendor made ready for its sunset pageant. When we left the train we were whirled through the twilight of great avenues of trees to the hotel, and given rooms whose veranda overhung a strangely rustling, shadowy abyss, where we could just discern a dark silver line of river leading to the pale-yellow west, with the mountain mass of Salak cut in gigantic purple silhouette.

The ordinary bedroom of a Java hotel, with latticed doors and windows, contains one or two beds, each seven feet square, hung with starched muslin curtains that effectually exclude the air, as well as lizards or winged things. The bedding, as at Singapore, consists of a hard mattress with a sheet drawn over it, a pair of hard pillows, and a long bolster laid down the middle as a cooling or dividing line. Blankets or other coverings are unneeded and unknown, but it takes one a little time to become acclimated to that order in the penetrating dampness of the dewy and reeking hours before dawn. If one makes protest enough, a thin blanket will be brought, but so camphorated and mildew-scented as to be insupportable. Pillows are not stuffed with feathers, but with the cooler, dry, elastic down of the straight-armed cotton-tree, which one sees growing everywhere along the highways, its rigid, right-angled branches inviting their use as the regulation telegraph-pole. The floors are made of a smooth,

hard cement, which harbors no insects, and can be kept clean and cool. Pieces of coarse ratan matting are the only floor-coverings used, and give an agreeable contrast to the dirty felts, dhurries, and carpets, the patches of wool and cotton and matting, spread over the earth or wooden floors of the unspeakable hotels of British India. And yet the Javanese hotels are disappointing to those who know the solid comforts and immaculate order of certain favorite hostelries of The Hague and Amsterdam. Everything is done to secure a free circulation of air, as a room that is closed for a day gets a steamy, mildewed atmosphere, and if closed for three days blooms with green mold over every inch of its walls and floors. The section of portico outside each room at Buitenzorg was decently screened off to serve as a private sitting-room for each guest or family in the hours of startling dishabille; and as soon as the sun went down a big hanging-lamp assembled an entomological congress. Every hotel provides as a night-lamp for the bedroom a tumbler with an inch of cocoanut-oil, and a tiny tin and cork arrangement for floating a wick on its surface. For the twelve hours of pitch-darkness this little lightning-bug contrivance burns steadily, emitting a delicious nutty fragrance, and allowing one to watch the unpleasant shadows of the lizards running over the walls and bed-curtains, and to look for the larger, poisonous brown gecko, whose unpleasant voice calling "*Becky! Becky! Becky!*" in measured gasps, six times, over and over again, is the actual, material nightmare of the tropics.

British tourists, unmindful of the offending of their own India in more vital matters, berate and scorn the

tiny water-pitcher and basin of the Java hotels, brought from the continent of Europe unchanged; and rage at the custom of guests in Java hotels emptying their basins out of doors or windows on tropical shrubbery or courtyard pavings at will. There are swimming-pools at some hotels and in many private houses, but the usual bath-room of the land offers the traveler a barrel and a dipper. One is expected to ladle the water out and dash it over him in broken doses, and as the swimming-pool is a cusing-tub for the many, the individual is besought not to use soap. Naturally the British tourist's invectives are deep and loud and long, and he will not believe that the dipper-bath is more cooling than to soak and soap and scour in a comfortable tub of his own. He will not be silenced or comforted in this blissful tropical land, which, if it had only remained under British rule, might be—would be—etc. All suffering tourists agree with him, however, that the worst laundering in the world befalls one's linen in Java, the cloth-destroying, button-exterminating *dhabbi* man of Ceylon and India being a careful and conscientious artist beside the clothes-pounder of Java. In making the great circle of the earth westward one leaves the last of laundry luxury at Singapore, and continues to suffer until, in the substratum of French civilization in Egypt, he finds the *blanchisseur*.

The order of living is the same at the up-country hotels as at Batavia, and the charges are the same everywhere in Java, averaging about three dollars gold each day, everything save wine included; and at Buitenzorg corkage was charged on the bottle of filtered

water which a dyspeptic tourist manufactured with a patent apparatus he carried with him. Landlords do not recognize nor deal with fractions of days, if they can help it, in charging one for board on this "American plan"; but when that reckless royal tourist, the King of Siam, makes battle over his Java hotel bills, lesser travelers may well take courage and follow his example. The King of Siam has erected commemorative columns crowned with white marble elephants, as souvenirs of his visits to Singapore and Batavia, and after the king's financial victory over Buitenzorg and Garoet hotels, the tourist sees the white elephant as a symbol of victory more personally and immediately significant than the lion on the Waterloo column. It has been said that "no invalid nor dyspeptic should enter the portals of a Java hotel," and this cannot be insisted upon too strongly, to deter any such sufferers from braving the sunrise breakfasts and bad coffee, the heavy riz tavel, and the long-delayed dinner-hour, solely for the sake of tropical scenery and vegetation, and a study of Dutch colonial life.