

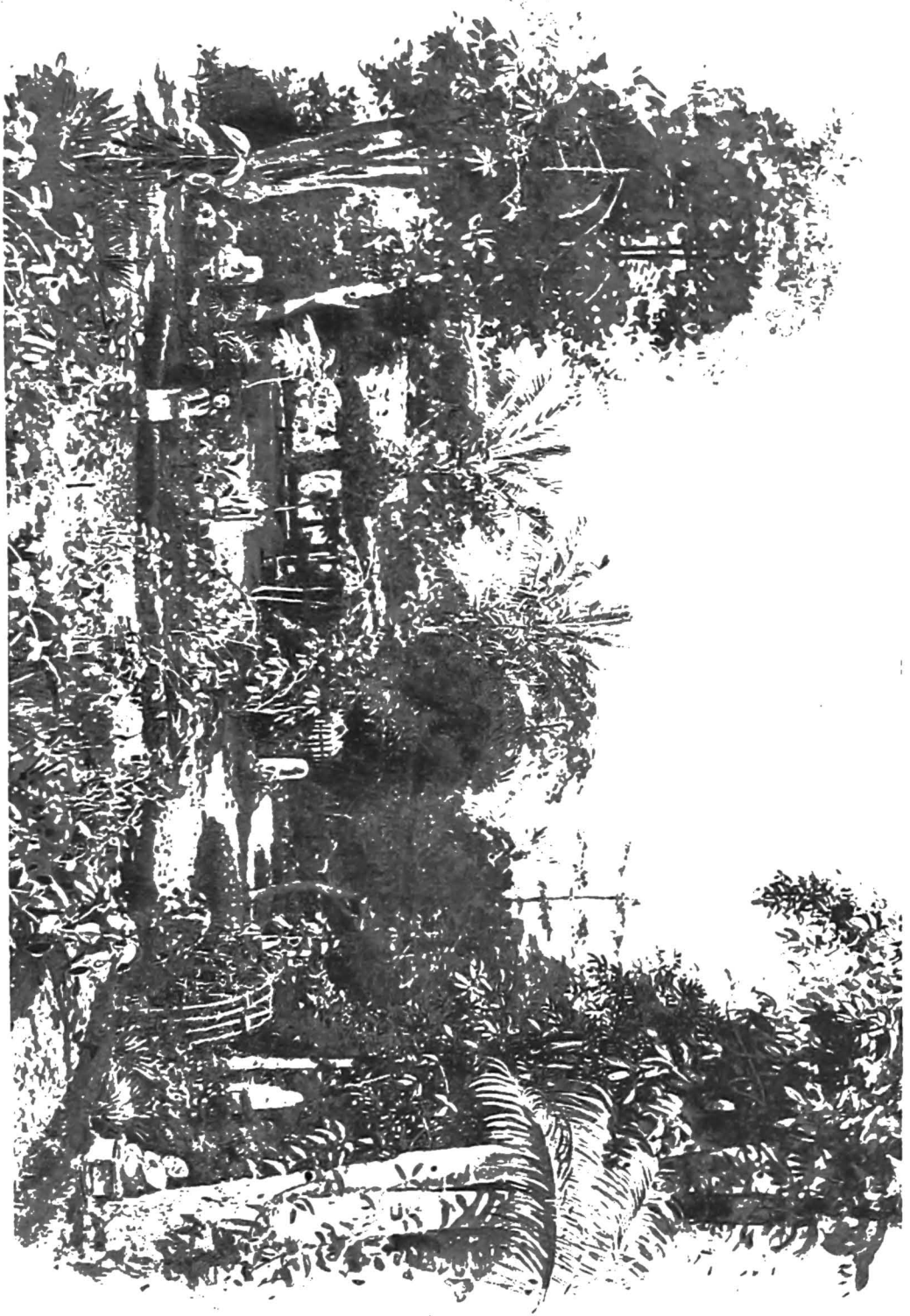
VI

A DUTCH SANS SOUCI



AT daylight we saw that our portico looked full upon the front of Mount Salak, green to the very summit with plantations and primeval forests. Deep down below us lay a valley of Eden, where thousands of palm-trees were in constant motion, their branches bending, swaying, and fluttering as softly as ostrich-plumes to the eye, but with a strange, harsh, metallic rustle and clash, different from the whispers and sighs and cooing sounds of temperate foliage. As stronger winds threshed the heavy leaves, the level of the valley rippled and tossed in green billows like a barley-field. There was a basket village on the river-bank, where tropic life went on in as plain pantomime as in any stage presentation. At sunrise the people came out of their fragile toy houses, stretched their arms to the sky and yawned, took a swim in the river, and then gathered in the dewy shade to eat their morning curry and rice from their plantain-leaf plates. Then the baskets and cooking-utensils were held in the swift-flowing stream,—such a fastidious, ideal,

MOUNT SALAK, FROM THE RESIDENT'S GARDEN, BUTIENSZORG.



adorable sort of dish-washing!—and the little community turned to its daily vocations. The men went away to work, or sat hammering and hewing with implements strangely Japanese, and held in each instance in the Japanese way. The women pounded and switched clothing to and fro in the stream, and spread it out in white and brilliant-colored mosaics on the bank to dry. They plaited baskets and painted sarongs, and the happy brown children, in nature's dress, rolled at play under the cocoanut-trees, or splashed like young frogs in and out of the stream.

While this went on below, and we watched the dark indigo mass of Salak turning from purple and azure to sunlit greens in the light of early day, the breakfast of the country was brought to our porch: cold toast, cold meats, eggs, fruit, tea or the very worst coffee in all the world—something that even the American railway restaurant and frontier hotel would spurn with scorn. Java coffee, in Java, comes to one in a stoppered glass bottle or cruet, a dark-brown fluid that might as well be walnut catsup, old port, or New Orleans molasses. This double extract of coffee, made by cold filtration, is diluted with hot water and hot milk to a muddy, gray-brown, lukewarm drink, that is uniformly bad in every hotel and public place of refreshment that a tourist encounters on the island. In private houses, where the fine Arabian berry is toasted and powdered, and the extract made fresh each day, the morning draught is quite another fluid, and worthy the cachet the name of Java gives to coffee in far countries.

Buitenzorg, the Bogor of the natives, who will not

call it by its newer name, is one of the enchanted spots where days can slip by in dateless delight; one forgets the calendar and the flight of time, and hardly remembers the heavy, sickening heat of Batavia stewing away on the plains below. It is the Versailles of the island, the seat of the governor-general's court, and the social life of the colony, a resort for officials and the leisure class, and for invalids and the delicate, who find strength in the clear, fresh air of the hills, the cool nights, and the serenely tempered days, each with its reviving shower the year round. Buitenzorg is the Simla of Netherlands India, but it awaits its Kipling to record its social life in clear-cut, instantaneous pictures. There are strange pictures for the Kipling to sketch, too, since the sarong and the native jacket are as much the regular morning dress for ladies at the cool, breezy hill-station as in sweltering Batavia, a fact rather disproving the lowland argument that the heat demands such extraordinary concessions in costume. But as that "Bengal Civilian" who wrote "*De Zieke Reiziger*; or, Rambles in Java in 1852," and commented so freely upon Dutch costume, cuisine, and Sabbath-keeping, succeeded, Mr. Money said, in shutting every door to the English traveler for years afterward, and added extra annoyances to the toelatings-kaart system, budding and alien Kiplings may take warning.

The famous Botanical Garden at Buitenzorg is the great show-place, the paradise and pride of the island. The Dutch are acknowledgedly the best horticulturists of Europe, and with the heat of a tropical sun, a daily shower, and nearly a century's well-directed efforts, they have made Buitenzorg's garden first of its kind

in the world, despite the rival efforts of the French at Saigon, and of the British at Singapore, Ceylon, Calcutta, and Jamaica. The governor-general's palace, greatly enlarged from the first villa of 1744, is in the midst of the ninety-acre inclosure reached from the main gate, near the hotel and the passer, by what is undoubtedly the finest avenue of trees in the world. These graceful kanari-trees, arching one hundred feet overhead in a great green cathedral aisle, have tall, straight trunks covered with stag-horn ferns, bird's-nest ferns, ratans, creeping palms, blooming orchids, and every kind of parasite and air-plant the climate allows; and there is a fairy lake of lotus and *Victoria regia* beside it, with pandanus and red-stemmed Banka palms crowded in a great sheaf or bouquet on a tiny islet. When one rides through this green avenue in the dewy freshness of the early morning, it seems as though nature and the tropics could do no more, until he has penetrated the tunnels of waringen-trees, the open avenues of royal palms, the great plantation of a thousand palms, the grove of tree-fern, and the frangipani thicket, and has reached the knoll commanding a view of the double summit of Gedeh and Pangerango, vaporous blue volcanic heights, from one peak of which a faint streamer of smoke perpetually floats. There is a broad lawn at the front of the palace, shaded with great waringen-, sausage-, and candle-trees, and trees whose branches are hidden in a mantle of vivid-leaved bougainvillea vines, with deer wandering and grouping themselves in as correct park pictures as if under branches of elm or oak, or beside the conventional ivied trunks of the North.

It is a tropical experience to reverse an umbrella and in a few minutes fill it with golden-hearted white frangipani blossoms, or to find nutmegs lying as thick as acorns on the ground, and break their green outer shell and see the fine coral branches of mace enveloping the dark kernel. It is a delight, too, to see mangosteens and rambutans growing, to find bread, sausages, and candles hanging in plenty from benevolent trees, and other fruits and strange flowers springing from a tree's trunk instead of from its branches. There are thick groves and regular avenues of the waringen, a species of *Ficus*, and related to the banyan- and the rubber-tree, a whole family whose roots crawl above the ground, drop from the branches and generally comport themselves in unconventional ways. Bamboos grow in clumps and thickets, ranging from the fine, feathery-leafed canes, that are really only large grasses, up to the noble giants from Burma, whose stems are more nearly trunks easily soaring to a hundred feet in air, and spreading there a solid canopy of graceful foliage.

The creepers run from tree to tree, and writhe over the ground like gray serpents; ratans and climbing palms one hundred feet in length are common, while uncommon ones stretch to five hundred feet. There is one creeper with a blossom like a magnified white violet, and with all a wood-violet's fragrance; but with only Dutch and botanical names on the labels, one wanders ignorantly and protestingly in this paradise of strange things. The rarer orchids are grown in matted sheds in the shade of tall trees; and although we saw them at the end of the dry season, and few

plants were in bloom, there was still an attractive orchid-show.

But the strangest, most conspicuous bloom in that choice corner was a great butterfly flower of a pitcher-plant (a *nepenthes*), whose pale-green petals were veined with velvety maroon, and half concealed the pelican pouch of a pitcher filled with water. It was an evil-looking, ill-smelling, sticky thing, and its unusual size and striking colors made it haunt one longest of all vegetable marvels. There were other more attractive butterflies fluttering on pliant stems, strange little woolly white orchids, like edelweiss transplanted, and scores of delicate Java and Borneo orchids, not so well known as the Venezuelan and Central American orchids commonly grown in American hothouses, and so impossible to acclimate in Java.

Lady Raffles died while Sir Stamford was governor of Java, and was buried in the section of the palace park that was afterward (in 1817) set apart as a botanical garden, and the care of the little Greek temple over her grave near the kanari avenue was provided for in a special clause in the treaty of cession. The bust of Theismann, who founded the garden and added so much to botanical knowledge by his studies in Java and Borneo, stands in an oval pleasure called the rose-garden; and there one may take heart and boast of the temperate zone, since that rare exotic, the rose, is but a spindling bush, and its blossoming less than scanty at Buitenzorg, when one remembers California's, and more especially Tacoma's, perennial prodigalities in showers of roses. In 1895 Professor Lotsy of Johns Hopkins University, Balti-

more, was called to assist the learned curator, Dr. Treub, in the management of this famous *Hortus Bogoriensis*, which provides laboratory and working-space for, and invites foreign botanists freely to avail themselves of, this unique opportunity of study. Over one hundred native gardeners tend and care for this great botanic museum of more than nine thousand living specimens, all working under the direction of a white head-gardener. The Tjiliwong River separates the botanic garden from a culture-garden of forty acres, where seventy more gardeners look to the economic plants—the various cinchonas, sugar-canes, rubber, tea, coffee, gums, spices, hemp, and other growths whose introduction to the colony has so benefited the planters. Experiments in acclimatization are carried on in the culture-garden, and at the experimental garden at Tjibodas, high up on the slopes of Salak, where the governor-general has a third palace, and there is a government hospital and sanatorium.

Theismann's famous museum of living twig- and leaf-insects was abandoned some years ago, the curator deciding to keep his garden strictly to botanical lines. One no longer has the pleasure of seeing there those curious and most extraordinary freaks of nature—the fresh green or dry and dead-looking twigs that suddenly turn their heads or bend their long angular legs and move away; or leaves, as delusive in their way, that detach themselves from a tree-branch and fly away. These insects bearing so astonishing a resemblance to their environment may be purchased now and then from Chinese gardeners; but otherwise, if one asks where they can be found or seen, there comes

the usual answer, "In Borneo or Celebes,"—always on the farther, remoter islands,—tropic wonders taking wing like the leaf-insects when one reaches their reputed haunts.

All Java is in a way as finished as little Holland itself, the whole island cultivated from edge to edge like a tulip-garden, and connected throughout its length with post-roads smooth and perfect as park drives, all arched with waringen-, kanari-, tamarind-, or teak-trees. The rank and tangled jungle is invisible, save by long journeys; and great snakes, wild tigers, and rhinoceroses are almost unknown now. One must go to Borneo and the farther islands to see them, too. All the valleys, plains, and hillsides are planted in formal rows, hedged, terraced, banked, drained, and carefully weeded as a flower-bed. The drives are of endless beauty, whichever way one turns from Buitenzorg, and we made triumphal progresses through the kanari- and waringen-lined streets in an enormous "milord." The equipage measured all of twenty feet from the tip of the pole to the footman's perch behind, and with a cracking whip and at a rattling gait we dashed through shady roads, past Dutch barracks and hospitals, over picturesque bridges, and through villages where the native children jumped and clapped their hands with glee as the great Juggernaut vehicle rolled by. We visited the grave of Raden Saleh, a lonely little pavilion or temple in a tangle of shrubbery that was once a lovely garden shaded by tall cocoa-palms; and we drove to Batoe Toelis, "the place of the written stone," and in the little thatched basket of a temple saw the sacred

stone inscribed in ancient Kawi characters, the original classic language of the Javanese. In another basket shrine were shown the veritable footprints of Buddha, with no explanation as to how and when he rested on the island, nor yet how he happened to have such long, distinctively Malay toes. Near these temples is the villa where the poor African prince of Ashantee was so long detained in exile—an African chief whose European education had turned his mind to geology and natural sciences, and who led the life of a quiet student here until, by the exchange from Dutch to British ownership of Ashantee, a way was opened for him to return and die in his own country. There is a magnificent view from the Ashantee villa out over a great green plain and a valley of palms to the peaks of Gedeh and Pangerango, and to their volcanic neighbor, Salak, silent for two hundred years. Peasants, trooping along the valley roads far below, made use of a picturesque bamboo bridge that is accounted one of the famous sights of the neighborhood, and seemed but processions of ants crossing a spider's web. All the suburban roads are so many botanical exhibitions approaching that in the great garden, and one's interest is claimed at every yard and turn.

It takes a little time for the temperate mind to accept the palm-tree as a common, natural, and inevitable object in every outlook and landscape; to realize that the joyous, living thing with restless, perpetually threshing foliage is the same correct, symmetrical, motionless feather-duster on end that one knows in the still life of hothouses and drawing-rooms at home; to realize that it grows in the ground, and not in

FRANGIPANI
Many flowers of the dead.



FRANGIPANI AND SAUSAGE TREE

Sausage Tree

a pot or tub to be brought indoors for the winter season. The arches of gigantic kanari-trees growing over by-lanes and village paths, although intended for triumphal avenues and palace driveways, overpower one with the mad extravagance, the reckless waste, and the splendid luxury of nature. One cannot accept these things at first as utilities, just as it shocks one to have a servant black his shoes with bruised hibiscus flowers or mangosteen rind, or remove rust from kris- or knife-blades with pineapple-juice, thrusting a blade through and through the body of the pine. The poorest may have his hedge of lantana, which, brought from the Mauritius by Lady Raffles, now borders roads, gardens, and the railway-tracks from end to end of the island. The humblest dooryard may be gay with tall poinsettia-trees, and bougainvilleas may pour a torrent of magenta leaves from every tree, wall, or roof. The houses of the great planters around Buitenzorg are ideal homes in the tropics, and the Tjomson and other large tea and coffee estates are like parks. The drives through their grounds show one the most perfect lawns and flower-beds and ornamental trees, vines, and palms, and such ranks on ranks of thriving tea-bushes and coffee-bushes, every leaf perfect and without flaw, every plant in even line, and the warm red earth lying loosely on their roots, that one feels as if in some ornamental *jardin d'acclimatation* rather than among the most staple and serious crops of commerce. Yet from end to end of the island the cultivation is as intense and careful, entitling Java to its distinction as "the finest tropical island in the world." It is the gem of

the Indies, the one splendid jewel in the Netherlands crown, and a possession to which poor Cuba, although corresponding exactly to it geographically and politically, has been vainly compared.

There were often interesting *table d'hôte* companies gathered at noon and at night in the long dining-room of the Buitenzorg hotel. While many of the Dutch officials and planters, and their wives, maintained the wooden reserve and supercilious air of those uncertain folk of the half-way strata in society everywhere, there were others whose intelligence and courtesy and friendly interest remain as green spots in the land. There was one most amiable man, who, we thought, in his love of country, was anxious to hear us praise it. We extolled the cool breezes and the charming day, and said: "You have a beautiful country here."

"This is not my country," he answered.

"But are you not Dutch?"

"Oh, yes."

"Then Java is yours. It is the Netherlands even if it is India."

"Yes; but I am from East Java, near Malang"—a section all of three hundred miles away, off at the other end of the island; but a strong distinction—an extreme aloofness or estrangement—exists between residents of East, West, and Middle Java, and between those of this island and of the near-by Sumatra, Celebes, and Molucca, all Indonesians as they are, under the rule of the one governor-general of Netherlands India, representing the little queen at The Hague.

Often when we spoke of "India" or "southern

India," or referred to Delhi and Bombay as "cities of India," the Hollanders looked puzzled.

"Ah, when you say 'India,' you mean Hindustan or British India?"

"Certainly; that is India, the continent—the greater India."

"But what, then, do you call this island and all the possessions of the Netherlands out here?"

"Why, we speak of this island as Java. Every one knows of it, and of Sumatra and Borneo, by their own names."

The defender of Netherlands India said nothing; but soon a reference was made to a guest who had been in official residence at Amboyna.

"Where?" we inquired with keen interest in the unknown.

"Amboyna. Do you in America not know of Amboyna?"

Average Americans must confess if, since early geography days, they have not remembered carefully that one tiny island in the group of Moluccas off the east end of Java—an island so tiny that even on the school atlases used in Buitenzorg it is figured the size of a pea, and on the maps for the rest of the world is but a nameless dot in the clustered dots of the group that would better be named the Nutmeg Isles, since the bulk of the world's supply of that spicy fruit comes from their shores.

Then, away down there, out of the world, I was taken to task for that chief sin and offending of my country against other countries—the McKinley Bill of so long ago.

“Why, *we* could n’t make any money out of tobacco while such a law was in existence,” said one Sumatra planter.

“But we are concerned with the prosperity of our own American tobacco-growers. It is for the Dutch government to make laws to benefit the tobacco-planters of Sumatra.”

“Ah! but you have new and better laws now since that last revolution in the States, and we are all planting all the tobacco we can. We shall be very prosperous now.”