

"IMPERIAL DEMOCRACY."

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American occupation of Manila very forcibly brings to our attention the question of reputed benefits accruing to Orientals in the appropriation of their lands and the enslavement of their peoples by European powers. The advocates of expansion, who, by the way, are actuated more by motives of prospective pecuniary gain than by sentiments of loyalty to our republic or solicitude for the Filipinos or Cubans, cite for strikingly convincing arguments the Dutch as "peaceful colonizers," and their gem possession, Java.

Dutch Colonizers in Malaysia.

While in the Orient last spring among other books of travel I came upon one descriptive of Java by Miss Scidmore, containing many facts concerning the alleged civilizing influence of Dutch rule, a few of which I think may not be uninteresting, considering the mad craze for expansion, so-called imperialism, now prevailing in the United States.

The history of Netherlands India—the Dutch colonies in Malaysia—is a light and shadow picture. Its bright side depicts the wealthy plantation owner in Europe surrounded by every luxury of his home land, annually in receipt of millions of guilders from his East Indian plantations. The contrast is found in the humid tropic lands, where some 30,000,000 patient, cowed Malays, working under the harsh supervision of agents, produce the wealth that rightfully is theirs, because earned by them on lands which have been wrested or tricked from them and held by the foreigners at the expense of thousands of lives annually among the white troops sent out to maintain a usurped supremacy, gained gradually over the unsuspecting and friendly natives by false pledges, broken promises and ultimately by force of arms.

The story of Netherlands India is told in that of Java, the garden of the East, the finest and most fascinating tropical island of the world—best known because more frequently visited than Amboyna, Borneo, the Celebes and Sumatra, the other island possessions to which the Dutch lay claim. The population of Java, 24,000,000, is greater than the total of all the other islands in the Indian ocean, and it has a total area equal only to that of New York state. Early in the last century it was a source of yearly remittances of millions of guilders to Holland. In addition to this the colony was drained to pay enormous sums to defray the cost of extravagant local administration, the Dutch governor receiving a yearly salary equivalent to \$100,000, and additionally \$60,000 for expensive entertainments. Twenty-six local governors were each paid \$10,000 a year and given liberal allowance for incident-

tal expenses. Besides this an army of 30,000, one-third of whom were foreigners recruited in Holland, was thrown upon the support of this little island, not larger than New York state. Think of it!

When it becomes necessary to levy some new tax, the native is asked for proof of title to his land and for a declaration of its producing capacity; also how much he thinks he ought to pay. The unsophisticated Javanese usually replies ten per cent, and he is assessed accordingly and must be contented, for he named the tax himself. The Dutch official sits daily in the shade of the cement portico of the tiny town hall, watching the natives, who from their palm-leaf bags build up piles of copper and silver in payment of their taxes.

Javanese Characteristics.

The Javanese rank after the Japanese, as the most attractive, gentle and innately refined people of the Far East. They are the finer flower of the Malay race and incline to Moslemism, if anything, but take their religion lightly, and are so lukewarm in "The Fire and Sword" faith that they would easily relapse into their former mild Brahmanism if Islam's power were withdrawn. The Dutch have always prohibited pilgrimages to Mecca, because those returning with the green turban were viewed with reverence and accredited with supernatural powers, which made their influence a menace to Dutch rule.

The language of these people is soft and musical—the Italian of the tropics—their ideas are poetic and their love of flowers, perfumes, music, dancing, heroic plays and emotional art of every description proves them highly esthetic. Their reverence for rank and age, coupled with an elaborate etiquette and punctilious courtesy to one another, marked even in the common people, when contrasted with their abject crouching humility before their despotic Dutch masters, are themes for sad reflection and arouse just indignation. The sight of quiet, inoffensive peddlers, who beseech chiefly with their eyes, being furiously kicked out of a hotel courtyard or any other public place when Mynheer does not choose to buy, causes the casual looker-on to recoil; but to see little native children actually lifted by the ear and hurled away from a humble vantage point on the curbstone to make way for a pajamaed Dutchman who wishes to view some troops that may be marching by, makes one sick at heart.

Said a Dutch official to a visitor: "I noticed you looked at the whipping post in the jail. Yes; we sometimes flog them lightly. If a man on parole does not return to the jail in time a gendarme generally finds him in his hut and brings him back, when, as he expects, he gets a few lashes. We don't punish severely—they would never forget that."

Query: Can they ever forget the indignity of a single lash, which though lightly laid on yet stifles or destroys the spirit of manhood?

The colonists (I quote liberally) do not welcome or encourage tourists. The Dutch brain is slow and suspicious, and they firmly believe that no stranger comes to Java on errand friendly to the colonizers. Within twenty-four hours after arrival the colonial authorities insist upon knowing the object of his visit. All returning travelers dwell upon the conditions due to the acts of the rapacious and merciless Hollanders who have gone to the tropics, 9,000 miles away from home, to acquire an empire by enslaving a race and inflicting their hampering customs and restrictions even upon casual visitors.

The School System.

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 Sudanese dialects, with their two forms of polite and common speech. The few Javanese, even those of the highest rank, who acquired the Dutch language and attempted to employ it in conversation with officials were brusquely answered in Malay—an implication that the superior language was reserved for Europeans only. This helped the conquerors to keep the line of distinction between them and their subject people clearly and sharply drawn and while the Dutch could understand what the natives were saying they have their own talk always without reserve in a tongue foreign to servants or even Malay princes.

Dutch is now taught in the schools maintained for natives by the colonial government. Two hundred and one primary schools were opened in 1887, with an attendance of 39,707 pupils. The higher schools of Batavia have been opened to the sons of native officials and such rich Javanese as can afford them. Conservatives lament the "spoiling of the natives" by all that the government does for them. They complain that the Javanese are becoming too independent since schoolmasters, independent planters and tourists came. The "Samarang Handelsblad" newspaper comments as follows:

"The Javanese can no longer be led and driven with facility as a flock of sheep, however much we may deplore this change in their disposition. They now come freely into contact with Europeans, the education given them has had an effect, and communication has been rendered easy. They do not fear the Europeans as they formerly did. The time is past when the entire population of a village could be driven with a stick to a far-off plantation—the prun-