

# Vast Possessions of Holland in the Far East



MAIDEN FROM INTERIOR JAVA.

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**B**ATAVIA, Java, July 24.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I have come from Australia to Java to tell you how the Dutch are managing their colonial empire. Their possessions consist of a vast archipelago just south of the Philippine islands. It lies on both sides of the equator and is inhabited by peoples, savage and civilized, who have all the characteristics of our Filipinos. Some of the islands have been governed by Dutch officials for centuries. They have been the scenes of all sorts of colonial experiments and they cannot but furnish valuable lessons to us in the management of our Philippine possessions. But first let me give you some idea of the Dutch East Indies. You know the little country of Holland. It is hardly more than a watery pimple on the broad face of Europe. The Dutch territories here are sixty times as large as their possessions in Europe. They are one-fifth the size of the whole United States, including Alaska, and so large that you could put our Atlantic states and also Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi in them and have room to spare. These territories contain 34,000,000 people, or seven times the population of Holland. They have half as many people as the whole United States had in 1890 and on some of the islands there are more people to the square mile than in any other part of the world.

## Big Islands Owned by the Dutch.

I had no idea of the size of the Dutch colonial empire until I came here. They have islands which are principalities in themselves. Take Sumatra, the soil of which is as fat as that of the Nile, and which has petroleum and undeveloped mineral resources. That island is longer than from New York to Chicago and as wide as from Boston to Washington. It is larger than any of the United States except Texas and it lies right next to Singapore, on one of the chief trade routes of the world. Take Borneo, which is also unprospected. The Dutch own more land there than all New England added to New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Ohio. They have more territory in New Guinea than California, and in the Celebes there is twice as much land as in Indiana. The Timor archipelago, through which my steamer wound its way from Torres strait to Batavia, has an area twice that of Massachusetts and in that journey, which lasted two weeks, it seemed to me I could not get out of sight of islands owned by the Dutch. There were islands all the way and if you will look at the map you will see that they spot the Indian ocean like stepping stones on a straight path as long as from New York City to Salt Lake, all the way from southern Asia to beyond Australia.

## Prince of Colonial Possessions.

All of these islands of which I have spoken are comparatively undeveloped. They are inhabited chiefly by savages and no one knows just what they are worth. It is different with Java, from where this letter is written. This is the capital of Asiatic Holland and it has been the place where the Dutch have made their colonial experiments. They had possession of it when Shakespeare was yet living and they have been ruling it ever since, until they have now made it the garden of the tropics, the Switzerland of the Pacific and the wonder of the world as to colonial management.

Think of an island only as large as the state of New York which is supporting comfortably more than 25,000,000 people. That is Java. It is less than 700 miles long and from 56 to 130 miles wide, but it has more people than all the rest of the archipelago of which it forms a part. It is about as big as Luzon or Mindanao and its soil is of much the same character. I have already traveled through parts of it and I have yet to meet a native who looks hungry. The country is feeding itself and in addition is sending away \$80,000,000 worth of goods every year. It is not only feeding the natives, but it is making for-

tunes for Dutch capitalists. It is covered with plantations of sugar, coffee and quinine and I am told that the Dutch investments in it already amount to more than \$125,000,000. In future letters I shall show where the money is placed and tell you something as to the profits.

## Railroads, Telegraphs and Schools.

The Java of today shows us what the Philippines may be in the future. It is already a land of railroads, telegraphs and schools. You can get as good an education here in Batavia as in the average American city. I can telephone from the hotel where I am stopping to cities and villages all over the country and on the long-distance can be connected with Soerabaya, on the other side of the island, which is as far away from here as from Washington to Cleveland. I expect to travel all over this island on railroads and I could go on a bicycle or an automobile through every part of it. The Dutch have built here the best wagon roads of the world and that notwithstanding the tropical floods and other water problems that we have in the Philippines. It is as cheap to telegraph here as in the United States, and, in fact, there are all sorts of modern improvements.

## In Batavia.

But let me tell you something about Batavia, the city from which this letter is dated. It is next to the largest city of Asiatic Holland and is the capital of Java. The town was founded when Perogrine White, the first baby born in the United States, was making his first squall in his cradle at Plymouth, and it is now a city of 115,000 people, with a vast population of natives in the country about it.

Batavia is situated at the eastern end of the island, at the mouth of the Tjilivong river, and not far from the harbor of Tandjong Priok, with which it is connected by railroad and canal. I landed at the harbor on my ship from Thursday Island and was quickly passed through the customs and came to Batavia in about half an hour by rail. The town consists of two parts, a lower and an upper. The lower, which is Batavia proper, comprises the government offices, the chief exporting and importing houses and all the old buildings. It is not unlike a city of Holland. A wide canal runs through the principal street and the houses along this have white walls and sharp overhanging roofs of red tile. They are just like the buildings in parts of Rotterdam and The Hague, and with their Dutch signs and Dutch merchants would not be out of place if lifted up bodily and dropped down in the Netherlands.

The town has many natives and many Chinese. It is surrounded by small houses and it is very unhealthy.

## In Beautiful Weltevreden.

From Batavia a wide road runs for four miles along the canal, the canal and road being lined with houses on both sides, until it reaches the city of Weltevreden, which is the great residence city of the Dutch in the East Indies. This is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It is a gigantic park in which not only the homes of the people, but even the stores and the business houses have gardens and tropical trees about them. There are public squares containing hundreds of acres, there are great avenues of palms and vast collections of orchids and beautiful flowers and all the surroundings of fairyland.

Take the King's plain, for instance. This is a park a mile square almost in the center of the city. It contains more than 500 acres and it is one vast stretch of velvety lawn. There are roads running around it which are as smooth as those of Central park and back of these, looking out through the trees, are the villas of the nabobs of this Dutch capital. Each of them has grounds about it with so many curious plants within them that it would be a very botanical garden anywhere else. Here the driveway up to the house is between two rows of royal palms, and there it is between an arbor of shade trees so gigantic that you will not see their like outside Java.

The houses are all classic Greek architecture married to the red tiles of the Dutch roofs. They are painted white to represent marble, and each of them has a great veranda upheld by Ionic, Doric or Corinthian columns. The people sit on the verandas but the rooms within are so large and airy that they seem quite as cool. The most of the houses are floored with stone. Many have tables of Italian marble or mosaic. Very few of the residences are of more than one story, but they cover a great space. Some houses have smaller houses away from the main building reached by covered ways. These are guest houses, and are so made that the guests may have a little house to themselves and be independent of their hosts if they wish excepting at meals.

## Luxurious Homes of the Dutch.

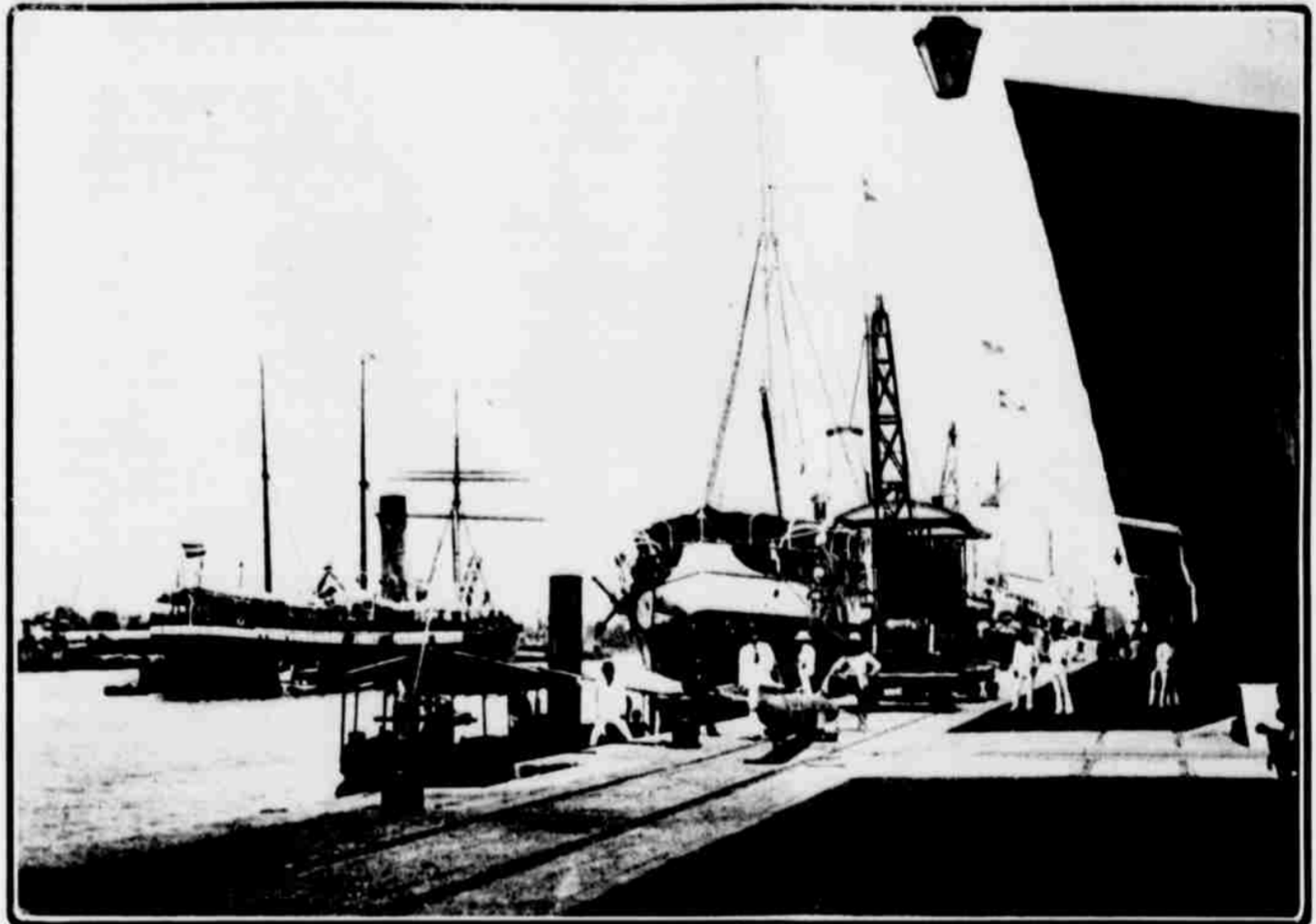
I wish I could show you how some of these Dutch live away down here among the so-called savages on the edge of the equator. I venture if you could see their homes many of you would go to the Philippines and build others like them. Their gardens are better than those of any millionaire in the United States, and President McKinley with his White House conservatories has no flowers for his receptions like those I see here.

There is no lack of furniture. The stores of Weltevreden are supplied by the best establishments of Holland, and you can buy every luxury in the way of books, paintings, notions and furniture. All sorts

of foods made in Europe are sold, and the country raises vegetables and fruits of every description. The place is one where you get lots for your money, but where nevertheless it costs lots to live. Every one lives up to his income and a little beyond it. The Dutch gentlemen dress better on the average than our people at home. They are sticklers for etiquette, and one

ner of eating. There is plenty of food, but the way of serving it is so strange that I fear for my liver. As soon as I awake in the morning my boy brings me a cup of coffee. This I am expected to take in the room or on the pavement outside. I can have it as early as 5 o'clock and even at that hour I always find others drinking. The coffee is served from a

luncheon; it is a mixture of rice with every conceivable meat and vegetable under the sun. You are expected to half fill your soup plate with rice, pile the other things on top and then stir the whole up together and shovel down until the vacant space in your anatomy is filled. I do differently. I take the rice and one or two meats and pass by the rest, so that my



HARBOR AT BATAVIA.

dare not accept an invitation to dinner with out he has a swallowtail suit.

## Night at the Concordia Club.

I put on my store clothes the other night and went to a concert at the Concordia club. Batavia has two swell clubs, each of which has several hundred members. Both have club houses which would be considered fine in New York or Washington and the Concordia has a great garden about it, where every Saturday night its members give a concert to their families and friends. The music is furnished by one of the military bands and it is as good as any you will hear in the great gardens of Europe.

Last Saturday night the band sat in a stand in the open air, while the audience was seated on chairs about the tables in the tropical garden in front of the club house. The light was furnished by hundreds of white-globed lamps, which hung from the trees, and also by the rays of the full moon, filtered through the green palms.

There were, I judge, at least a thousand ladies and gentlemen present, and as we sat there, chatting and drinking, stately native waiters in turbans and livery trotted about in their bare feet and waited upon us. The people at the tables were as well dressed as any European crowd and as fashionably dressed as the average audience of our concerts at home. With the exception of the military officers, who were clad in white duck, with gold lace and brass buttons, the men wore black clothes and the women wore bonnets and well-fitting dresses.

In the intervals I walked through the club house. It was floored with Italian marble and parts of it were walled with great mirrors. It has a library and newspaper room, a large billiard room and halls for dancing and card playing and all the conveniences of the best clubs the world over. Another night I spent at the Harmonie club, where the concert was equally good.

## Queer Hotels These.

I am stopping at the Hotel des Ind, one of the largest in the far east and by all odds the largest in the Dutch East Indies.

It is situated on the right side of the canal on the edge of Weltevreden as you come up from Batavia. It has something like ten acres of gardens about it, all shaded by magnificent trees. There is a banyan tree, covering a good city lot, in front of the veranda and there are palms and other trees in front of my room. The house consists of two long rows of rooms opening out on arcades or cloisters on each side of the grounds, with a parlor and dining room and offices at the back. I don't know how many rooms there are, but they must number hundreds and every one is on the first floor. I have two rooms opening into each other and I also use the pavement in front of my door. It is there I loaf in my pajamas and bare feet from day-break until 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning and also again after my afternoon nap from 3 until 6. I am by no means the only barefooted, lightly clad guest. There is a woman next door who wears only a thin mother Hubbard and toe slippers, without stockings, except when she is dressed for the evening. I see her and her husband trotting by every morning in their bare feet, each carrying a towel, on their way to the bath and they eat beside me in much the same costume.

I don't know that I like the Dutch man-

vinegar cruet, being absolutely cold as it is poured out. It is made by cold filtration and is merely the extract of coffee. The boy puts a spoonful or two into my cup and fills it up with hot milk and the coffee is made. He gives me a couple of lumps of sugar, but no bread nor toast nor anything solid.

The next meal is "ontbijt." You need not pronounce it; it merely means breakfast. It consists of cold meat and fruit, with perhaps soft-boiled eggs, which always come on half cold. The next meal is "rijstafel," or rice table. This is

method of eating is not a fair sample of the custom.

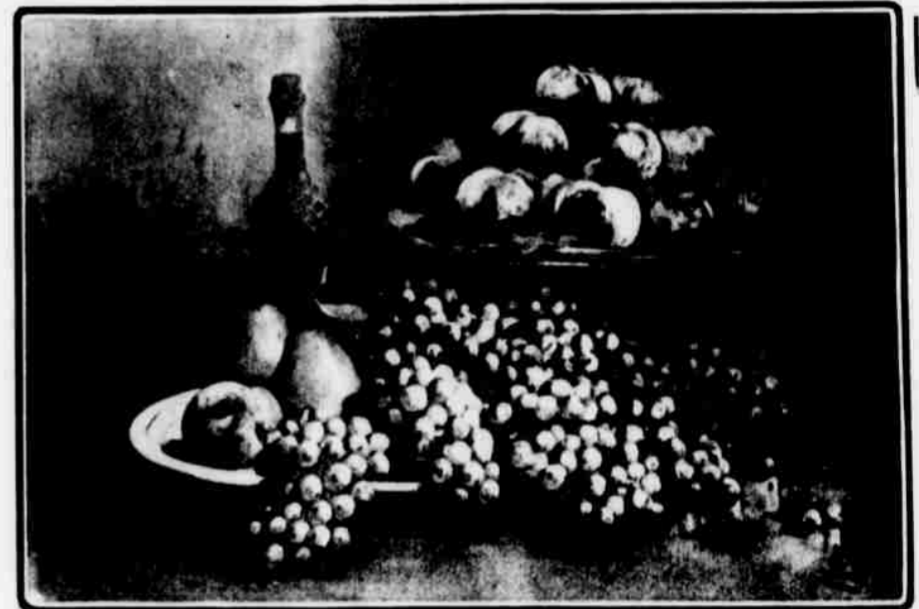
## Meal of a Dutch Maiden.

I can better describe it by telling you what one slender Dutch girl who sat beside me today ate at this meal. As she came in to the table I could see the outlines of her form plainly through her thin jacket and calico sarong, or single skirt, which the women here consider enough except when on dress parade, and had I dared

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