

Among the Natives of Holland's Best-Managed Colony

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BANDONG, Java, Aug. 21.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I am delighted with Java. It shows what we might do in the Philippines and Porto Rico. The Dutch have made this island a very Garden of Eden. It is a paradise of the tropics, and is, I believe, the most beautiful spot on God's green earth. It is of the same character as many of the Philippine islands, and its mountains are not unlike those of Porto Rico, although they are grander and higher.

Java is nearer the equator than any of our colonial possessions, but a great part of it has a good climate, and the Hollanders there thrive. It is not true that Americans

and flower gardens in doing your shopping. This is so all over Java; it is delightful. **They Live Well.**

As far as I can see the foreigners live better here than at home. No city in Holland compares with Bandung for comfort and I doubt whether there are any in which the children are more healthy and the people more prosperous. The Dutch girls are plump and fat babies abound. The children enjoy themselves. I have met many parties of girls riding bicycles and have seen several automobiles flying along over the excellent roads of the island. You can buy anything you want in the stores and the living is as good as that of Europe.

How would you like a hotel which furnishes its guests gin cocktails free twice a

state of New York and its 25,000,000 people live in villages. You see no houses scattered over the landscape. There are no barns in the fields and no buildings whatever outside the towns, excepting on the tobacco, sugar and indigo plantations. There are sometimes sheds on high poles in the rice districts, but these are used merely as watch houses to keep the birds away from the crops. The people walk long distances to their work. They labor in gangs and are often paid a share of the crop, bringing the sheaves of rice home with them from the harvest. Almost every house has a rice granary connected with it. This is something like a corncrib, sloping outward as it goes up and ending in a thatched roof, which makes it quite picturesque. The rice is stored away in the shed and threshed out as needed by the women with pestle and mortar.

Many of the houses have pigeon coops on poles erected beside them, miniature editions of the houses below. The Javanese breed many pigeons. They have strings hanging from the pigeon houses to the ground, by which they communicate with the birds.

The government keeps a record of the villages as well as of the houses. The gate to every street has a number on it and, I venture, the officials can tell just exactly how many people live in each street and house.

Mohammedanism in Java.

I visited the great Mohammedan mosque here at Bandung and had a chat with some of the priests in charge of it through my interpreter. The mosque is a beautiful white building with many white columns upholding its porticoes and with a little moat of water separating it from the country about. It is deep enough, however, to necessitate that all who go in shall take off their shoes. I was told that I could enter if I would come in bare-footed and it was thus that I paddled through the moat and tramped up the wide steps of this shrine of Mahomet. Here I met an old fellow in a long gown and white turban who walked with me through the mosque. We walked up the steps into a room about 200 feet square, lighted from the top by heart-shaped windows covered with a wrought-iron grating. The floor was of black marble and at the back was a pulpit of white and gold, where the Imam stood and called out the prayers. There were mats before this pulpit and upon them several bare-footed Javanese were rising and falling in their devotions. I am told that the pious Mohammedans here pray five times a day. They begin at daybreak and pray again at noon, at 3:30 p. m., at 6 and at night.

Like Filipino Mohammedans.

The mass of natives are very loose as to their religious observances. The men seldom go to the mosque and their Mohammedanism is of a character more like that of our Sulu islanders than that of Arabia and Turkey. The head of the religion is the Sultan of Solo, a state of interior Java. This man has a similar position to our Sultan of Sulu. The people look up to him and have faith in his divinity. Their respect for him increases, however, in proportion to the distance they live from him. The Mohammedans of Solo being more lax even than those of West Java.

Among other features of Javanese Mohammedanism is an abhorrence of pork. The people will not eat this meat, for they consider it unclean. Not long ago a native chief had a Mohammedan killed. He was supposed to be a saint. After his death the people defiled him and began to pray over his grave, whereupon the chief buried a hog in the grave and the people prayed there no more.

The Dutch officials tell me they have more trouble with the Mohammedan fanatics than with any other class of natives, and for this reason they discourage the pilgrimages to Mecca which are now and then made by the Hadjis. It is found that the people look up to such men after their return. They think they have supernatural powers, and the Hadjis use this feeling to

create trouble with the government. In fact, nearly every rebellion in Java has been fomented by these men. Every Javanese village has its priest who acts in some matters as judge. He has to do with marriages, divorces and funerals, and also with the circumcisions which are common in many parts of the country.

Native Chiefs and Nobles.

I find that there are distinct ranks of society in Java. The country has its rich and its poor, its aristocrats and plebeians. The lower classes respect the upper and allow them to rule, and the Dutch have taken advantage of this by working entirely through the chiefs. Right next to the mosque is the home of the native regent of

some of it. It is a mile track with a fine grandstand and hundreds of bamboo sheds or shelters on poles nearby. In these sheds the natives sit cross-legged to watch the races. The grandstands are largely given up to the rich, the nobles and the Europeans. At the races the chief purse is 1,000 guilders, and horses from all parts of the island take part. Some of the native chiefs have their own stables, especially the sultans of Solo and Djokja. There are often 50,000 people present at the meetings. The horses are Australian horses and ponies from Java and the surrounding islands. The ponies are found best for ordinary travel and they are largely used by the army. They can travel over the rice lands where the heavier horses will sink through.



COOKING IS DONE OUTSIDE THE HOUSES.

cannot live in the tropics. The highlands of the Philippines are healthy, and Bandung, from where I date this letter, would be a health resort if it could be dropped down upon the United States.

This country is a land of mountains. There is a range running through it from one end to the other, and it has more volcanoes to the square mile than almost any land on the globe. I wish I could show you the mountains through which I rode coming here. On all sides of me were extinct volcanoes covered with green almost to their tops. The lower slopes were terraced with rice fields, and above them pines and forests extending on and on until lost in the clouds. Now we crossed plains as fertile as the Nile valley upon which water buffaloes and fat cattle fed; now we shot through groves of coconut trees and wound our way about through the rice terraces. In places the rice was flooded and the trees which bordered the fields were doubled, making other trees turned upside down in the water. We passed hundreds of villages of huts made of plaited bamboo, went by tea plantations and coffee plantations and on past forests of quinine trees, and at last came to this town on a beautiful plateau twenty-five miles in width surrounded by mountains.

In the Heart of Java.

Bandung has about 20,000 people, and of these 1,500 are Europeans. The remainder are Javanese with a sprinkling of Chinese and half castes. The city is a very botanical garden. The homes of the foreigners are shaded by the grandest trees of the tropics. They are surrounded by lawns as velvety and as well kept as those of old England and the wide drives which lead up to the more pretentious homes are between rows of royal palms, some more than a hundred feet high. The foreigners live in villas, with walls and porticoes of snow white roofed with red tiles. Many of the houses are large. They are all of one-story and exceedingly comfortable.

Even the stores are villas. They are set back from the streets, with yards in front of them and palms and tropical flowers ornamenting their verandas. There is one just opposite my hotel shaded by a tree whose wide-spreading branches cover about one-fourth of an acre, while on its great trunk scores of orchids are growing. At the base of the tree are tropical plants in pots of red clay, and as you go into the store it is by some curious dwarf palms growing in tubs on the veranda. That is a jeweler's shop. A little farther on is a drug store in a similar garden and if you would buy groceries, clothing or books you will have to walk through palm trees

day? That is what I got at the Hotel Homan here in Bandung. The big bottle is set out on the table on the hotel veranda, with bitters beside it, and you take as much as you please. The bottle contains Holland gin so old and so hot that two table-spoonfuls would give a cigar Indian an appetite. The cocktails are drunk by both women and men, and they are, I am told, furnished free at all the hotels. In addition, the living is good and exceedingly cheap. Here at Homan's I pay 5 guilders, or about \$2 a day, and everything is included. This gives me also my bath morning and evening. There are swings and teeter boards on the lawns for the children and all sorts of gymnastic conveniences. The hotel has a billiard room and reading room, and every guest has a sitting room and bedroom on the ground floor.

Amongst the Natives.

The natives of Java live very simply. A few of the chiefs and nobles have houses like the Europeans, and the regents have palaces which are largely kept up by the government, but the great mass live in huts of woven bamboo, thatched with palm leaves. The walls of many of the houses are just like basket work; they are woven in great sheets and sold by the yard. I frequently see a pair of brown, bare legs trotting along carrying the wall of a house. The wall is bent double; it entirely conceals the man within, and looks much like the cover of an emigrant wagon moving along upon legs.

The native part of Bandung is outside the foreign section. It is a bamboo village and contains about 30,000 people. It is divided up into streets and alleys, each hut having its little garden about it. The houses are all numbered and the government keeps a record of every family. Nearly all the houses are small, on the average not more than fifteen feet square, and so low at the front that you have to stoop to enter them. The thatched roofs overhang, covering the verandas in front of the houses and sometimes the seats around the sides. The ordinary house contains but one or two rooms, a recess in the rear forming the sleeping place for the family. The poorer houses have no beds, for the people sleep on the floor. The cook stove is a clay bowl with a draft below it. The cooking is done outside the house except in wet weather, and as the stove is portable this is easily arranged.

Country of Villages.

The houses in different parts of Java are much the same. The island is as big as the



NATIVE REGENT AND SERVANT.

Bandung, a Javanese who receives from the government 1,200 guilders, an amount equal to \$10 of our money per month, as well as many presents from his own people. I don't know how large his total income is, but it must be great. He has the disadvantage, however, of having to support all his relatives. Whenever a native gets a fat office or makes a rich strike of any kind his poor relations from everywhere come and squar down upon him. This is so in many other parts of the far east. It is especially so in China, where a rich man often has to support hundreds. In Canton, for instance, I met one millionaire who was keeping 100 of his sisters, cousins and aunts and their little ones, and gritting his teeth as he did so.

The regent of Bandung has a large colony of buildings about his house for his relations. He gets as many of them as he can in the government service, thus relieving himself. He lives well and, I venture, spends the greater part of his income.

There is a race track outside the city which probably enables him to get rid of

It may be that we shall have to use ponies in the Philippines for the same reason.

Finest Roads in the World.

And this brings me to the roads of Java. They are by all odds the best of any country of the world, and that notwithstanding Java is on the edge of the equator in one of the rainiest parts of the globe. What is needed more than anything else for the development of the Philippines and Porto Rico is good roads. The Dutch in Java and the Philippines are now. They organized a system of road building and forced the natives to carry it out. A certain amount of labor had always been given to the chiefs by the natives. This labor was applied to road building. Each man was required to work so many days a year on public improvements and the result is the good system of highways found in Java today. Most of the roads are macadamized. They are ballasted with broken stones ground to the size of a nut and rolled smooth with heavy iron rollers. Each side of the road has its gutter in

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IN JAVA TWENTY-FIVE MILLION PEOPLE LIVE IN VILLAGES.