

# Dutch Soldiers in Their East Indian Empire

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**T**JIMAL, Java, Aug. 27.—(Special Correspondence of The Bee.)—I have come to Tjimal to tell you something about the Dutch colonial army. This is one of their chief garrisons. It already includes 1,000 soldiers and more will be added until this becomes one of the chief fortified places of the East Indies. It is situated six hours from the coast, about 2,000 feet above the sea and nature has built natural fortifications about it. The camp lies in a plain several miles wide, walled by mountains which rise in blue gradation until they are lost in fleecy white clouds. The place is a natural amphitheater walled by extinct volcanoes and roofed by the sky. It is easily reached by magnificent roads and the trunk line of railway from Batavia to Soerabaya also goes to it.

I have been much interested in the Dutch soldiers whom I have seen in different parts of Java. The Hollanders among them are magnificent fellows, tall, straight and well formed. They are especially well dressed and are gentlemen. I have talked with them about the army and I find that there are only 42,000 soldiers in the Dutch colonial empire of the East Indies and of these only 16,000 are Europeans. We have several times that many Americans in the Philippines and this notwithstanding the Philippines have about one-fourth as many people. The native population controlled by Holland is 31,000,000. It embraces natives of every variety found in the far east. There are savages as wild as the hill tribes of Mindoro and Mindanao and there are also half-educated farmers like our Filipinos of Panay and Luzon. The Dutch have more tribes to control than we have and they understand how to use their soldiers so well that they need only one European to every 2,000 souls.

It was through the kindness of Lord Van Benthem van den Berg that I was admitted to this encampment. I came in a carriage behind a team of Sandalwood ponies from Bandung. The whole way was through a beautiful park lined with cottages of woven bamboo filled with little brown people of all ages and sexes. Now we went by a

finished and are at the same time airy and clean.

Walls of this kind are nailed to studding which upholds roofs of galvanized iron. The floors are of stone and the buildings are cool and comfortable. Each building is about thirty feet wide and perhaps 150 feet long. There is an aisle through the center in which the guns are stacked and on each side of this are the beds of the soldiers. Each bed has a good mattress, over which is a rug of woven straw for coolness. The petty officers have rooms to themselves apart from the soldiers and the commissioned officers have houses as comfortable as anyone could possibly wish.

#### Every Soldier Has a Native Wife.

General Otis and other of our officers have decidedly objected to the wives of our soldiers going to the Philippines. Here in Java the men are encouraged to choose wives from among the natives. I do not know that the arrangement is a permanent one. It is probably not when the men go back to Europe, but it holds good during their stay here. There is a quarter of the camp which is devoted to the wives of the soldiers. Here they sleep with their children and here are their quarters while the men are on duty. Many of the women live with their husbands in the barracks, but the children are always kept outside. The food for the women and soldiers is all cooked in the garrison kitchens, but the men must pay for the rations.

I went through the kitchens and sampled the food. The cooking is done in great cauldrons and it is served out at cost. I am told the expense of feeding a man or adult is less than one cent a day, and that a child can have enough rice and soup to last it five days for less than two cents. I spent some time in the women's quarters making photographs. The women were not at all averse to posing and they stepped out into the sun in front of the camera. They were all clad in Javanese costume. Nearly all had children; many had babies at the breast or astride their hips.

#### Dutch Army School.

The Dutch officials take good care of the wives of the men and see that their chil-



THERE IS A CHINESE SECTION IN EVERY TOWN.

great deal on amusements for them. Here at Tjimal there is a soldiers' club, called "The Canteen," which would be a credit to any camp of the world. The club house is a large one-story stone structure, which has cost \$15,000 in gold. This represents a sum equal to three times that much at home. The ceilings of this building are twenty-five feet high. It has magnificent rooms looking out upon wide galleries upheld by white Grecian pillars. It has a theater with full stage machinery and a beautiful drop curtain with pictures upon it, sketched in by the officers and painted in oils by the men. The chandeliers are of aluminum and the floors are of marble. The Canteen has billiard rooms, reading rooms and card rooms, and the lawns and flower gardens about it are as beautiful as those of our millionaires on the Hudson.

#### In a Military Prison.

During my stay here I have gone through the military prison. It is more comfortable than Bilibid, our penitentiary in Manila. It is made much the same way as the barracks, save that there is a great wall around it, and the entrances are carefully guarded. The prisoners are forced to work. I saw fifty of them making clothes or the army in one of the rooms, using American sewing machines. In another department were two score shoemakers, and in others there were jewelers, carpenters and workers in iron. The prisoners are paid about 90 cents a week for their labor. They are well fed and well treated. They have books to read from the prison library, and their wives are allowed to call upon them once every week.

#### Dutch and Native Soldiers Mix.

The Dutch and the natives seem to be on an equality in the army. They march together in the same battalions, many battalions consisting of two companies of European soldiers and two of natives, or more often one of Europeans and three of natives. The half-castes are on a footing of perfect equality with the Europeans, but at least half the noncommissioned officers must be Europeans. All the higher officers come from Holland. They are fine fellows, well educated and well trained. Together with the officials, they form the aristocracy of the foreign colony and, as a rule, live in fine style. There is a military academy near Batavia and the military clubs at Weltevreden would be considered fine in any European settlement.

I am told that the natives make very good soldiers, although there is a vast difference in them, according to the tribes and the locality from which they come. The people of the island of Amboina are especially brave and there are now over 4,000 of them in the East Indian army.

All foreign residents are required to serve a certain number of days every month in the militia. The number of days decrease with age, beginning with seven days a month and finally falling to four days. The drill is from 4 p. m. to 6 p. m. It is very severe, but it makes every foreigner, whether he be English, American or Dutch, a soldier.

This regulation is, I suppose, to make the foreign population valuable in case of an uprising of the natives. The Dutch have had such rebellions in the past and although there is little danger of it in Java, in Sumatra and other places the foreigners must be alive for such an emergency. There is a tribe known as the Achinese in northwestern Sumatra which has been in rebellion for generations. The Achinese have about 500,000 people and their country is about half as big as Ohio. They have always been noted for their hatred of foreigners. They fought the English and the Portuguese and they are still fighting the Dutch. It is estimated that more than 10,000 Dutch soldiers and natives have lost their lives in the war which is now going

on with Achin and that that war has cost Holland something like \$85,000,000.

#### How a Rebellion Ended.

There are other parts of Sumatra which are very rebellious. I heard the other day how the Dutch resident of Palumbang frustrated a plot in which the native chiefs conspired to kill him and seize the government. The scheme was to set the city afire in a quarter where it would do little damage, with the expectation that the resident and soldiers would run to it. During the burning the natives expected to capture the fort and kill the resident and his soldiers, including all the Europeans.

The resident, however, was posted by one of his spies and did not go to the fire. Then the chiefs demanded an audience, expecting to kill him when he came to it. The resident consented, but the night before he powdered his face until it was a ghostly white and placed medicines beside his bed. He then called in some of the conspirators and told them he was sick and that he could not possibly meet the appointment. He asked them to have the chiefs come to the palace instead on the following day.

The chiefs then planned to start the revolution at the palace, but when they arrived they were admitted one by one and received at the point of rifles in the hands of the soldiers. The resident came out and ordered that they be put in prison. There were just enough chiefs to fill all the cells except one, whereupon the resident's major domo, a native of high rank, who had secretly been in the conspiracy, said: "There is one more cell, your excellency, who shall that be for?"

"That is for you, you rascal," was the emphatic reply. He thereupon gave a sign to the soldiers and they took the man to prison.

#### Dutch and the Chinese.

I have spent some time studying the Chinese question in Java. The island is full of celestials. It has about three times as many as we have in the Philippines and you find Chinese quarters in every town and in every city. The Chinese own property to the amount of \$5,000,000. They have some of the richest plantations of coffee and sugar and of recent years have leased out 30,000 acres of land. They own more than 600,000 acres of land, which was acquired years ago and would increase their holdings if the Dutch would allow them to buy.

The Chinese hold about the same position here that they do in the Philippines. They are the middlemen of the country, the medium of communication between the natives and foreigners. They go about over the island and buy up the crops and they engage in every business which furnishes considerable profit.

The Chinese quarters are set aside for them by the Dutch officials. The law provides that they must live in such sections and prohibits them from doing business outside them without permission of the officials. The other day the Standard Oil company at Batavia wanted to employ a Chinese as night watchman, but they could not do so until the government gave him permission to leave the Chinese quarter.

In Buitenzorg the Chinese section is one of the best parts of the city. It is fully a mile long, and is lined with one-story buildings heavily roofed. Each building has a Chinese sign at its side, and the merchants within are Chinese. It is the same in Bandung, Soerabaya and in every Javanese city.

#### Holland Protects the Natives.

The government restricts the Chinese to their own quarters in order to protect the natives, for the Chinese are much better business men than the Javanese. They are everywhere money lenders and money makers. If Java was thrown open to them today and the natives allowed to sell their

lands they would monopolize the country and enslave the people, and it is only by careful restriction that they are allowed to remain here and do business. In a talk with one of the resident governors, a man who has many thousands of Chinese under him, I was told that it would not do at all to allow Chinese immigration without certain restrictions, and that in this man's opinion we had done right in excluding them from the Philippines. Here the Chinese pay twice as much taxes as any one else, and they are clogged in other ways. They are subject to police duty and must take their turns as night watchmen on the roads.

The Chinese here intermarry with the natives. They seldom bring their wives with them, and a common sight is a China



HALF-CASTE CHINESE GIRL AND MALAY MOTHER.

market a mile long, where the women were squatting and selling, and we found Javanese houses almost to the very barracks of the soldiers.

#### How the Dutch Soldiers Live.

I have recently been in the Philippines and have seen how our colonial soldiers are quartered. Some of them are in tents, some in bamboo shacks and some in Filipino houses turned into barracks. The Dutch have been experimenting for centuries as to the best accommodations for their soldiers in this tropical climate and their methods can be copied in the Philippines with profit. The buildings of Tjimal consist of vast barracks made of woven bamboo. The bamboo cane is split into strips when it is green and flattened out. Each strip is shaved so that it is as wide as an ordinary lath and perhaps an eighth of an inch thick. Many of the strips are forty feet long. They are woven into great sheets, so big that they form the walls of the barracks. They are rain tight when

dren are educated. The boys are regularly drilled and taught military tactics, with a view to making non-commissioned officers of them when they grow up. I attended one of the schools and found about fifty little yellow Javanese working away. Each was in his bare feet and each wore a turban, a jacket and sarong.

I heard them recite, and they impressed me with their intelligence. There was a piano in one end of the room, and I asked the native teacher if the boys could sing. He replied: "We will try and see." He then called attention and asked the little ones to sing the Dutch national hymn. They did so; not in words, but in the musical notes, singing do, re, me, fa, sol, etc., the teacher starting them with his ein, zwel, drel. Later on I saw the boys go through their gymnastics and drill. I think they are the equals of any of our own school cadets.

The Dutch government believes in keeping the soldiers contented. It spends a



ONE OF THE INFANTRY—A NATIVE JAVANESE.

man dressed in European clothes, with his queue tucked inside his coat, riding along in a carriage beside a brown Javanese girl gorgeously dressed. They treat their wives well and are as fond of their half-caste children as their ancestral fathers were fond of them. Many Chinese marry half-caste girls and half-caste children swarm everywhere in the Chinese quarters.

#### Pawn Brokers of Java.

There are some businesses here which are monopolized by Chinese. Among the chief ones are the pawnbroking establishments which are found by the score in every native city. They are licensed by the gov-

(Continued on Eighth Page.)