

THE MALAY ARCHIPELAGO; THE LAND OF THE ORANGOUTANG AND THE BIRD-OF-PARADISE. A Narrative of Travel, with Studies of Man and Nature. By ALFRED RUSSEL WALLACE, etc. New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers. 1869.

Mr. Wallace is one of those Englishmen who, to reach his point, would build

an iron boat at Birmingham to float in a lava crater of some South Sea island, and then, hiring a packet at Liverpool to carry it across two hemispheres, would import, if necessary, a drove of tamed lions from South Africa, to drag the same boat up the steep mountain-side, and then and there would launch the craft and sail in flame and sulphur across the crater, to have his way, or to study some matter of physical science involved in volcanoes. It is this plain English pluck which maintains England in a great eminency wherever sons like Mr. Wallace go.

What he has done, as shown by his book, is this: After careful preparation, he has gone alone in among the barbarous races that people the islands of the Indian Ocean, and for six years in a villainous climate and among very disagreeable savages, exposed to numberless hardships, and often sick, he has hunted in almost every accessible forest and field for rare and curious creatures, from beetles up to orangoutangs. In these years he collected and brought for the English museums and the scientific world, 125,660 specimens of natural history, all of which were skinned, stuffed, dried, and bottled under his own direction. Many of these specimens are new to science, and are for the first time seen in England. Then, when he came home, he took six years, he tells us, to write this book, and therefore we find it contains a rare collection of facts about the very singular and rare creatures which inhabit the Indian Islands. As a scientific man he follows Darwin, to whom he dedicates his book, and therefore his theories sometimes need as many grains of salt as his specimens. But after every fair detraction, this is a book to make the world wiser about its more solitary and singular children, hid away over the seas. Where there is so much novelty and value, it is hardly fair to specify any part as of most value. But certainly no man can begrudge the price of this book, after having read its story of the ways and nature of the birds-of-paradise,—those bird-angels, with flaming wings of crimson and gold and scarlet, who twitter and gambol and make merry among the great island trees, while the Malay hunts for them with his blunt-headed arrows, and the little boy stands under the tree, bag in hand, to pounce upon the stunned bird when it falls, to be stuffed for some such famous Nimrod as Mr. Wallace. In short, here is a fresh, accurate, and valuable record of the nature, life, history, and customs of a remote and romantic land. A very minute map of the southern part of the Malay Archipelago accompanies it.