

*The Malay Archipelago: the Land of the Orang-Utan and the Bird of Paradise. A Narrative of Travel, with studies of Man and Nature.* By Alfred Russel Wallace. Two vols. London; Macmillan & Co. 1869.

MR. Wallace's "Malay Archipelago" is one of those books to which it is impossible to do justice in a brief notice. The subjects of which he treats are so various and of so peculiar an interest in this country, that we can only hope that it may be in our power to present our readers in the next number with a more worthy review of his labours than can possibly appear in this. Mr. Wallace is one of the most eminent naturalists of the day, and is chiefly distinguished for his connection with what is known as the Darwinian theory. His present work gives the account of his wanderings among the numerous islands of the Malay Archipelago; and we may safely affirm that a more interesting book of travel has not reached us since the appearance of Palgrave's Arabia, and the publication of Sir Samuel Baker's Explorations of the Nile. In the eight years during which Mr. Wallace was absent from England, he estimates that he travelled about 14,000 miles, visiting besides the larger islands of Borneo, Java and Sumatra, the Timor group, Celebes, the Moluccas, the Ké, and Aru islands, and even the inhospitable shores of New Guinea. Within that period he collected upwards of 125,000 specimens of natural history, his attention being mainly devoted to insects and birds; and the six years' delay which has taken place in the publication of the record of his travels is to be attributed to the labor of identifying and classifying these copious collections, and of working out the difficult problems of variation and geographical distribution, of which they afford the evidence. Mr. Wallace was not a mere pleasure-hunting traveller with no more serious object in view than the search for adventure or excitement; he claims to have his book judged as the production of an earnest, enquiring and scientific mind.

Mr. Wallace divides the archipelago into five groups of islands, *viz.*, the Indo-Malay islands, the Timor group, Celebes, the

Moluccas, and the Papuan group. This arrangement is at once, in a manner, geographical, geological and ethnological, and it saves the reader the monotony of traversing the same regions several times. Of these five groups the Indo-Malay islands all lie within comparatively shallow water ; and it is probable that they were once connected with the Malay peninsula. On the other hand, the Papuan group, comprising New Guinea, the Aru Islands, and some others, were probably at one time connected with Australia. The other groups are situated in the deep sea. But with respect to the physical geography of these islands, Mr. Wallace presents us with some interesting scientific conclusions, based mainly on the distribution of animal and vegetable life. Indeed, one of the most remarkable inferences which he draws is that "the whole of the islands eastwards beyond Java and Borneo do essentially form a part of a former Australian or Pacific Continent, though some of them may never have been actually joined to it,"—and that a strait of only fifteen miles in width separated this great continent from another great division of the earth differing as essentially in its animal life, as Europe does from America. He says:—

"Turning our attention now to the remaining portion of the Archipelago, we shall find that all the islands from Celebes and Lombok eastward exhibit almost as close a resemblance to Australia and New Guinea as the Western Islands do to Asia. It is well known that the natural productions of Australia differ from those of Asia more than those of any of the four ancient quarters of the world differ from each other. Australia, in fact, stands alone ; it possesses no apes or monkeys, no cats or tigers, wolves, bears, or hyenas ; no deer or antelopes, sheep or oxen ; no elephant, horse, squirrel or rabbit ; none, in short, of those familiar types of quadruped which are met with in every other part of the world. Instead of these, it has marsupials only, kangaroos, and opossums, wombats, and the duck-billed platypus. In birds it is almost as peculiar. It has no wood-peckers and no pheasants, families which exist in every other part of the world ; but instead of them it has the mound-making brush-turkeys, the honey-suckers, the cockatoos, and the brush-tongued lorries, which are found nowhere else upon the globe. All these striking peculiarities are found also in those islands which form the Austro-Malayan division of the Archipelago.

"The great contrast between the two divisions of the Archipelago is nowhere so abruptly exhibited as on passing

from the island of Bali to that of Lombock, where the two regions are in closest proximity. In Bali we have barbets, fruit-thrushes and wood-peckers. On passing over to Lombock these are seen no more, but we have abundance of cockatoos, honey-suckers and brush-turkeys, which are equally unknown in Bali or any island further West. The strait is here fifteen miles wide, so that we may pass in two hours from one great division of the earth to another, differing as essentially in their animal life as Europe does from America. If we travel from Java or Borneo to Celebes or the Moluccas, the difference is still more striking. In the first, the forests abound in monkeys of many kinds, wild cats, deer, civets and others, and numerous varieties of squirrels are constantly met with. In the latter, none of these occur; but the prehensile-tailed cuscus is almost the only terrestrial mammal seen, except wild pigs, which are found in all the islands, and deer (which have probably been recently introduced) in Celebes and the Moluccas. The birds which are most abundant in the Western Islands are woodpeckers, barbets, trogons, fruit-thrushes and leaf-thrushes. They are seen daily, and form the great ornithological feature of the country. In the Eastern Islands these are absolutely unknown, honey-suckers and lorries being the most common birds, so that the naturalist feels himself in a new world, and can hardly realize that he has passed from the one region to the other in a few days, without ever being out of sight of land."

Such being the case with regard to the zoological kingdom, it was only to be expected that two distinct races of human beings should be found to inhabit the Archipelago. And accordingly Mr. Wallace's observations and researches—continued, as he repeats, for eight years—convinced him that there are two forms or types—the Malay and the Papuan—under which the whole of the peoples in this Archipelago may be classified. The line of demarcation is somewhat more eastward than the zoological line above referred to; but this is naturally enough explained in the following way:—"Man has means of traversing the sea which animals do not possess; and a superior race has power to press out or assimilate an inferior one. The maritime enterprise and higher civilisation of the Malay have enabled them to over-run a portion of the adjacent region, in which they have entirely supplanted the indigenous inhabitants, if it ever possessed any, and to spread much of their language, their domestic animals and their customs

far over the Pacific, into islands where they have but slightly, or not at all, modified the physical or moral characteristics of the people."

One of the most fascinating charms about Mr. Wallace's book, is the spirit of cheerfulness and good temper in which it is written. We in India can perhaps appreciate some of the difficulties and inconveniences attendant upon foreign travel, but even we can have but an imperfect conception what it is to sail on mid ocean in a native prau or to live for months together among barbarous savages without the sight of a European, not to say an English, face. But whatever seemed to be against him, Mr. Wallace seems to have maintained his equanimity and to have been thoroughly content. He has to cross a hundred miles of open sea in a little boat of four tons burthen, without an ounce of iron or a foot of rope in any part of its construction, with a mat sail and a rattan cable; and he tells us that the voyage was made "in comparative comfort." If he speaks of the centipedes, spiders, and scorpions, among whom his lot was cast, it is not to exaggerate the horror of the circumstance; but in order to add that "all combined are not so bad as the irritation of mosquitoes or of the insect pests often found at home."

"It sometimes amuses me," Mr. Wallace writes, "to observe how, a few days after I have taken possession of it, a native hut seems quite a comfortable home. My house at Waypoti was a bare shed with a large bamboo platform at one side. At one end of this platform, which was elevated about three feet, I fixed up my mosquito curtain, and partly enclosed it with a large Scotch plaid, making a comfortable little sleeping apartment. I put up a rude table on legs buried in the earthen floor, and had my comfortable rattan chair for a seat. A line across one corner carried my daily-washed cotton clothing, and on a bamboo shelf was arranged my small stock of crockery and hardware. Boxes were ranged against the thatch-walls and hanging shelves, to preserve my collections from ants while drying, were suspended both without and within the house. On my table lay forks, penknives, scissors, pliers, and pins, with insect and bird labels, all of which were unsolved mysteries to the native mind." Of course Mr. Wallace was set down as a conjuror by these simple people; his pursuits were far beyond their comprehension, and they could only arrive at the conclusion that he carried away his collections to bring the animals to life again in his own country, wherever that might be.

Mr. Wallace is perhaps least interesting when he is disposed to moralise, but he is not the first man of whom this remark has been made without disparagement. Mr. Wallace is a believer in the system of colonisation—the paternal despotism—pursued by the Dutch, with whom he was naturally brought much into contact. He describes the happy and contented life of many of the savage tribes, and he expresses doubts as to the influence of a higher civilisation upon them. In fact, he seems to think that there are wild communities in the Malay Archipelago who realise the perfection of social existence far more fully than can possibly be attained in a more highly civilised society.

It is somewhat remarkable that, considering the close connection which undoubtedly existed between India and the Malay Archipelago in former times, and the facilities which offer for such intercourse in the present, so little should be known in this country of that portion of the world. Its history is a perfect blank to us; with the exception of a few spices, its productions are equally unknown; its fauna and flora are almost entirely unrepresented in our museums. And yet the Hindu religion once extended over a large portion of this Archipelago, and is maintained even at the present day in Bali and Lombock. The Brahminical ruins in the island of Java, as represented by Sir Stamford Raffles, are some of the finest architectural curiosities in the world, and may yet do much to throw light upon the dark passages of early Indian history. To naturalists, philologists and historians alike, to all in fact who are interested in the cause of science, Mr. Wallace's book cannot fail to impart new desires and aspirations; it cannot be that the *savans* of this country, with such splendid opportunities, will not do something to increase our knowledge of this wonderful and enchanting region of the globe. It cannot be that the Indian Museum will be allowed to remain much longer conspicuous for its utter poverty in the productions of the Malay Archipelago.

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