

THE INDIAN ARCHIPELAGO; BICKMORE & WALLACE.*
[SECOND ARTICLE.]

MR. WALLACE has already communicated to the public, in various shapes, so many of the results of his travels in the Eastern Archipelago (he mentions in his preface having written since his return eighteen papers for scientific societies and twelve articles in periodicals), that if the present work had never been composed, he would still remain one of those who have added most to our knowledge of a little known region. The work, however, is none the less welcome on that account, and must be reckoned one of the most agreeable as well as one of the most instructive records of contemporary travel. Nor is its interest diminished by the somewhat prior publication of Mr. Bickmore, nor yet by the greater recency of the latter's observations, although only begun after the close of those of Mr. Wallace. The seeing eye, the facile pen, the true spirit of adventure give a marvellous superiority to the earlier over the later observer, and whilst the veracity of the American traveller's testimony seems fully confirmed by that of the Englishman, the experienced self-possession of the latter shows more than once on what slender data the conclusions of the former are founded. Our readers may recollect the dread of head-hunters under which Mr. Bickmore laboured, and the way in which it disturbed his slumbers during the only night he spent on the coast of Ceram, although under the protection of a Dutch governor, in whose yacht he had come, and of his escort. Mr. Wallace—under no official escort, partly in his own "prau,"—visited at least nine ports of the island (including Wahai, which gave the nightmare to Mr. Bickmore), and crossed it in its shorter dimensions. He dwells calmly, here on the attempts which are made by the Dutch to christianize the natives, there on the preparation of sago, and altogether never whilst on the island seems to have had the slightest awkward feeling as to the safe connection between his head and shoulders. And whilst Mr. Bickmore was content with eight days of forest life at Buru, Mr. Wallace seems hardly ever to have been satisfied unless he could take up his quarters within, or rather upon, the border of the virgin forest, and stayed on one occasion incapacitated for some time by illness in the interior of one of the Aru Islands for over six weeks, surrounded by none but wild Papuans, to whom at the time he left he had "fully intended to come back."

The interest of Mr. Wallace's observations is so varied that it is impossible to do them justice under all their aspects. As respects the ethnology of the Eastern Archipelago, his main doctrine is that two great races only divide that region among themselves, reddish-brown Malays (amongst whom he includes not only Bugis and Tagals, but Dyaks), and sooty-black Papuans; that not only the tribes known variously as Alfuros, Harafuras, &c., but the Polynesians generally, although often lighter even in complexion than the Malays, are Papuans, and not Malays, as the Polynesians at least have been generally considered to be hitherto. He thus sums up the masterly description of the characteristics of the two races:—

"The Malay is of short stature, brown-skinned, straight-haired,

beardless, and smooth-bodied. The Papuan is taller, is black-skinned, frizzly-haired, bearded, and hairy-bodied. The former is broad-faced, has a small nose, and flat eyebrows; the latter is long-faced, has a large and prominent nose, and projecting eyebrows. The Malay is bashful, undemonstrative, and quiet; the Papuan is bold, impetuous, excitable, and noisy. The former is grave and seldom laughs; the latter is joyous and laughter-loving;—the one conceals his emotions, the other displays them."

It should be added that Mr. Wallace, whilst admitting that "in the affections and moral sentiments" the Papuans "seem very deficient," and in particular "are often violent and cruel with their children," with whom "the Malays are almost invariably kind and gentle," yet, strange as it may seem to most readers, is inclined to rate the Papuan intellect

"Somewhat higher than that of the Malays, notwithstanding the fact that the Papuans have never yet made any advance towards civilization. . . . The Papuan has much more vital energy. . . . Papuan slaves show no inferiority of intellect compared with Malays, but rather the contrary; and in the Moluccas they are often promoted to places of considerable trust. The Papuan has a greater feeling for art than the Malay. He decorates his canoe, his house, and almost every domestic utensil with elaborate carving, a habit which is rarely found among tribes of the Malay race.

In geology Mr. Wallace adopts the view first propounded by Mr. Earl, that the Eastern Archipelago divides itself into two sub-regions, one connected with Asia, the other with Australia, and a map annexed to his work indicates the boundary line between what he terms the "Indo-Malayan" and "Austro-Malayan" divisions (that between the Malayan and Polynesian or Papuan races running somewhat more to the east). The great islands of Java, Sumatra, and Borneo, which are separated from each other, and from Malacca and Siam, by seas so shallow that ships can anchor in any part of them, since they rarely exceed 40 fathoms in depth, also "resemble in their natural productions the adjacent parts of the continent." On the other hand, "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." The contrast becomes most striking in the islands of Bali and Lombok, which are only separated by a deep strait 15 miles wide. The former has the barbets, fruit-thrushes, and woodpeckers of the western region, scarcely a few cockatoos; Lombok has none of the three former types, but abundance of cockatoos, honey-suckers, and brush-turkeys, all but the first unknown in Bali, and all unknown further west. Mr. Wallace therefore holds that all the islands east of Java and Borneo form part "of a former Australian or Pacific continent, although some of them may never have been actually joined to it." And he insists greatly on the fact of a shallow sea "always" intimating "a recent" (*quære*, or an approaching?) "land connection."

Mr. Wallace's experiences among the orang-utans were all in Borneo. Nothing is more curious than his account of the demeanour of a little baby "mias" which he was able to keep alive for three months. Mr. Wallace disbelieves in the existence of the larger orang, which have been reported to reach six and even seven feet in height, and seems to consider that there is no satisfactory evidence of their exceeding four feet and a few inches. His account of the birds of paradise has far more novelty, he being, as he says, as far as he is aware, "the only Englishman who has seen these wonderful birds in their native forests;" yet even he, in "five voyages to different parts of the district they inhabit, each occupying in its preparation and execution the larger part of a year," was only able to procure "five species out of the fourteen known to exist in the New Guinea district." He believes indeed that all the rarer species are now more difficult to find than they were twenty years ago, not because they are being exterminated, but (a curious economic anomaly) because of the increased demand for them from the Dutch, pressed through the Sultan of Tidore, who (or whose officers) endeavour to obtain them for little or nothing from the head men of the coast villages, who having themselves to purchase them from the mountaineers, find it no longer worth their while to do so.

Mr. Wallace's merits as a naturalist are, however, so well known, that we may with the less reluctance pass over the portions of his work which specially relate to the subject, merely commending to our readers that curious novelty the "flying frog," the inimitably grotesque plate of the baby hornbill with his mamma, and a singular instance of mimicry among birds between a honey-sucker and an oriole. The record of his "prau" voyages (which, on the whole, were not prosperous) is full of relish, were it only through the contrasts of experience which it offers. At the close of the first, whilst he was only a passenger, he "was inclined to rate the luxuries of the semi-barbarous prau as surpassing those of the magnificent screw steamer." But in an

* *Travels in the Indian Archipelago.* By Albert S. Bickmore, M.A., F.G.S., London (&c., &c., &c.), with Maps and Illustrations. London: John Murray. 1868.

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, Author of "Travels on the Amazon and Rio Negro," "Palm Trees of the Amazon," &c. 2 vols. London: Macmillan and Co. 1869.

evil hour he bought one himself, and here is the summary of his first voyage in his own boat:—

"My first crew ran away; two men were lost for a month on a desert island; we were ten times aground on coral reefs; we lost four anchors; the sails were devoured by rats; the small boat was lost astern; we were 38 days on the voyage home, which should not have taken twelve; we were many times short of food and water; we had no compass lamp, owing to there not being a drop of oil in Waigiou when we left; and to crown all, during the whole of our voyages, occupying in all 78 days, or only twelve days short of three months (all in what was supposed to be the favourable season) we had not one single day of fair wind. We were always close braced up, always struggling against wind, tide, and leeway, and in a vessel that would scarcely sail nearer than eight points from the wind."

Some of Mr. Wallace's observations are pregnant with grounds for reflection to the politician and the economist. Can there be a more remarkable fact than the one recorded in the following passage, relating to Dobbo, the emporium of the Aru Islands?—

"We were here 1,000 miles beyond Singapore and Batavia, which are themselves emporiums of the 'Far East,' in a place unvisited by, and almost unknown to, European traders. Everything reached us through at least two or three hands, often many more; yet English calicoes and American cloths could be bought for 8s. the piece, muskets for 15s., common scissors and German knives at three-halfpence each, and other cutlery, cotton goods, and earthenware in the same proportion. The natives of this out-of-the-way country can, in fact, buy all these things at about the same price as our workmen at home, but in reality very much cheaper, for the produce of a few hours' labour enables the savage to purchase in abundance what are to him luxuries, while to the European they are necessaries of life."

So that the result of the competitive system would seem to be that naked savages at the other end of the world are supplied with the products of our industry at the same price as the producers themselves, whilst Trades' Unions' Commissioners are gravely inquiring whether it should be lawful for these latter, without special let or hindrance, to combine for refusing to take less, or for asking more, for the labour of production.

But here is another marvel:—

"I dare say there are now near 500 people in Dobbo of various races, all met in this remote corner of the East, as they express it, to 'look for their fortune,' to get money any way they can. They are most of them people who have the very worst reputation for honesty as well as every other form of morality—Chinese, Bugis, Ceramese, and half-caste Javanese, with a sprinkling of half-wild Papuans from Timor, Babber, and other islands—yet all goes on as yet very quietly. This motley, ignorant, bloodthirsty, thievish population live here without the shadow of a government, with no police, no courts, and no lawyers; yet they do not cut each other's throats, do not plunder each other day and night, do not fall into the anarchy such a state of things might be supposed to lead to. . . . I sleep in a palm-leaf hut, which any one may enter, with as little fear and as little danger of thieves or murder as if I were under the protection of the Metropolitan Police."

And the conclusions expressed by Mr. Wallace in the last few pages of his work will be startling to most readers. Having lived "with communities of savages in South America and in the East, who have no laws or law courts but the public opinion of the village freely expressed," where "each man scrupulously respects the rights of his fellow, and any infraction of those rights rarely or never takes place," he believes "it is not too much to say that the mass of our populations have not at all advanced beyond the savage code of morals, and have in many cases sunk below it," and that

"Until there is a more general recognition of this failure of our civilization,—resulting mainly from our neglect to train and develop more thoroughly the sympathetic and moral faculties of our nature, and to allow them a larger share of influence in our legislation, our commerce, and our whole social organization,—we shall never, as regards the whole community, attain to any real or important superiority over the better class of savages."

It should indeed be added that, by what seems to us an odd inconsistency, Mr. Wallace, for all the high character he gives to self-governed savagery, is yet an apologist for the compulsory culture system and trade monopolies of the Dutch.