

There are few parts of the world of which we know less, but of the beauty and interest of which we have higher ideas, than that remarkable chain of islands stretching across the Indian ocean from the south of the Asiatic continent nearly to the northern point of Australia. By most of us these islands are regarded as presenting in their different parts scenes of almost unequalled grandeur and of the most fairy-like beauty, but of the human inhabitants of this earthly paradise our notions are generally far less favourable, the common impression being that they are for the most part either cheats, thieves, cut-throats, or pirates, from the cradle to the grave. Mr. Wallace, whose eight years' experience in the Eastern Archipelago entitles him to speak with authority, fully confirms¹¹ our popular notion as to the beautiful scenery and the luxuriant abundance of vegetable and animal life presented by these splendid tropical islands; but his account of the human inhabitants is by no means so favourable. His volumes contain a very pleasant if rather gossiping account of his personal adventures and experience, interspersed with many references to natural history subjects, the study of which constituted the principal object of his journey to these "uttermost parts of the earth." It was upon this journey, as is well known to scientific naturalists, that Mr. Wallace arrived at those conclusions upon the origin of species which, when embodied by him in a paper communicated to the Linnean Society, proved to be so near akin to the theory of Mr. Darwin, that the latter great naturalist was urged by his friends to lose no time in the publication of his own views, lest the results of his labours of long years should be forestalled. All, or nearly all the more important matters of natural history treated of by Mr. Wallace bear more or less in the same direction; as, for example, his observations upon "mimicry" in animals which have already been published by him in an admirable article contributed to this *Review*,—his remarks upon the distribution of animals in the two great provinces into which he divides the Indian Archipelago, and his researches upon the magni-

¹¹ "The Malay Archipelago: the Land of the Orang-Utan and the Bird of Paradise." A Narrative of Travels, with Studies of Man and Nature. By Alfred Russell Wallace. Two Vols. 8vo. London: Macmillan, 1869.

ficent Papilionidæ of this region, with their curious representative forms in different islands, and the singular polymorphism which prevails in the sexes of some of them. Of all these matters, which have already been discussed by our author in papers published in scientific periodicals, we find a more popular account in his volumes of travels, as also of some other matters of interest, such as the natural history of the great man-like ape, the orang-utan or mias of Borneo, and the magnificent birds of paradise of the more eastern islands. Mr. Wallace concludes with a chapter on the ethnology of these islands, which contains much interesting information.