

The Mahometan religion is professed by the Javanese ; but the spirit of Islam has failed to take possession of this race, and the stranger in Java is astonished at the absence of outward and visible signs to indicate the popular faith of the country. In the centre of every town or large village is the *aloen-aloen*, an extensive grassy lawn, shaded with lofty tamarind trees, and surrounded by the principal buildings, public and private, of the place. Among these is always conspicuous a pagoda-like edifice, which is the mosque ; but few and far between are the worshippers there, while the public performance of devotional exercises, at fixed hours, irrespective of locality, a spectacle so familiar to the traveller in other Mahometan countries, is not practised by the Javanese. The only religious observance witnessed by us among the peasantry was the presentation of coins and flowers as offerings to certain Hindoo idols, relics of the ancient faith, still occupying niches in the ruined temples of Brambanan. The Mussulman priest is an important functionary, and is recognized as such by the Dutch authorities, but less in a religious than in a civil capacity, as the learned expounder of Mahometan law. A certain number of pilgrims proceed from Java to Mecca, and the white turban of a hadji may be seen here and there in the streets among the lacquered and gaily painted hats of Sunda or the peaked caps worn by the Javanese proper, but the probability is that it encircles the head of a Malay or an Arab. Some of the regents are said to be zealous followers of the prophet, and strong objections are entertained by them against the admittance of unbelievers into mosques ; but it must be remembered that the conquerors who introduced Mahometanism into Java were of Malay race, and that many of the present chiefs are descended from those fierce and fanatical vikings of the equator.

Travelling in the interior of Java is particularly agreeable ; the roads are good, ponies are abundant, and light vehicles for posting are easily obtained. At all places of importance there are comfortable hotels, kept by Europeans and subsidized by government. Without a subsidy such hotels could not possibly be maintained, as they are not used by the natives, and European travellers are rare. The Dutch officials, moreover, have the hospitable habits of Europeans in the East, so that it is not easy to see how the hotel-keepers make a living ; yet they seem to flourish.

The light posting carriages are drawn by four ponies, which