

It is laid down in the constitution and regulations of Netherlands India, that the special duty of European officials is the protection of the natives, and from the governor-general downwards all are bound by oath to "protect the native population against oppression, ill-treatment, and extortion." This oath is probably not kept by all to the very best of their ability, but at least the charge of pecuniary corruption is not brought against the Dutch Civil Service; this distinguished and honourable body of men being blamed only for lack of energy and courage in denouncing injustice in which they themselves have no share. Still it is the condemnation of the judge when the guilty are absolved, and an omnipotent governor-general must be held responsible for the shortcomings of his subordinates as well as his own.

Mahometanism is the religion professed for three centuries by ninety-nine per cent. of the Javanese, but these centuries have not produced a single edifice or work of art to tell their tale to posterity. Mosques, palaces, and tombs in other lands are the enduring monuments of Mahometan wealth, energy, and architectural skill; but in Java these are wanting alike in beauty of form, richness of material, and solidity of structure. This is especially remarkable in the case of imperial and royal tombs, which are in Hindostan the most magnificent and permanent of all Mussulman edifices, and in Java are mere wooden booths, without painting, carving, or any other decoration. In moist tropical climates the most formidable destroyer of buildings is the vegetation, which forces asunder and throws down the largest blocks of masonry, and has inflicted no little damage upon the Hindoo ruins of Java; most literally does "the wild fig-tree split their monstrous idols." Dutchmen do not exhibit the same energy as Englishmen in exploring or discovering picturesque and interesting localities, and are wonderfully fond of the steamy flats near the sea, to the neglect of hill sanatoria. The European troops are quartered principally in the low country, and the splendid military hospital of Batavia loses half its utility from not being at an elevation of three thousand feet above the sea, which in so moist a climate is considered to be the most salubrious height. The present war minister is in favour of following the British example, and transferring a larger proportion of the Europeans to inland stations; but it is clear that Netherlands have a weakness for level plains and canals, which remind them of home.