

fire the land is wonderfully productive, and large crops are raised of such rich tropical products as pepper, nutmegs, sugar, coffee, tobacco, rice, gutta-percha, etc.

As a whole, the islands are exceedingly fertile and beautiful with a gorgeous beauty unknown outside the mid-tropics. The waters amid which they sit are mostly shallow, and the deep-green tints of the shallow ocean, the perennial verdure of the islands, the opaline tints on the lofty mountain-tops, and the glowing azure of the oftentimes cloudless sky present to the eye of the admiring traveller such a scheme of color as the earth can scarcely duplicate.

On these islands lives an estimated population of thirty-six millions of people. These are for the most part of two races, the Malay and the Papuan. The former, an Indo-Chinese, differentiated from the parent stock by centuries of residence in their island homes. In some respects inferior to their continental progenitors, in others they are superior. In the main truthful, brave, kind to their families, capable of friendship, though subject to terrific gusts of passion, and, when aroused, unreasonable and obstinate, the Malay race, in all its subdivisions, ought certainly attract more general attention from the Christian churches of England and America. A wave of Islamic conquest has swept over these islands during many centuries, and the large bulk of the Malay races own fealty to the Arabian prophet. The chief propagators of Islam have been the Arab traders, who, by marrying with the Malay chiefs' daughters and by superior commercial sagacity, obtain ascendancy in Malay communities. The Dutch officials, too, who rule the more populous islands of Malaysia, have too often been the friends and helpers of the Moslem propaganda. As it was in British India years ago, so it has been till recently in the Dutch East Indies. Godless men in the military and civil employ of the Government, disliking the Christian missionary's standard of morals, and preferring the looseness of Mohammedanism, have covertly, if not openly, thrown their influence on the side of the false prophet. As yet, however, of large sections of the Malay peoples it may be said they are but veneered with Mohammedanism. The old nature worship is yet strong with them; and I have seen in parts of Java, nominally Moslem women carrying offerings of flowers just as their heathen ancestors did. There has, however, of late years been a very large increase in the number of Malay pilgrims to Mecca. The steamboat companies advertise widely, and the honor put upon the returned pilgrim or "Hadji" is such as to induce thousands to brave the perils and discomforts of the journey. The effect of this pilgrimage is, in the main, to deepen Moslem fervor. The pilgrims have suffered for their faith, and it becomes of larger worth. Their devotion brings them great honor in their own community, which is further reason why they should be devout. The Dutch Government begins to perceive that the deepening hold of Mohammedanism is likely to breed mischief. Whatever else the "Hadji" may or