

dressed in antiquated and ill-fitting European garb, worn only on state occasions, paid a visit of ceremony to the ship. Its wearers were evidently ill at ease in their official dress, as they were seen stripping it off on their way to the shore. The picturesque character of the houses of the natives will be seen from the engraving on the preceding page. They have no walls, but the floor is raised on posts to near the roof, apparently to escape the attacks of vermin. The forest scenery is magnificent and varied—feathered palms, festoons of climbing plants, with brilliant-plumaged birds—parroquets, cockatoos, birds of paradise, and one so gorgeous in its attire that the natives name it “God’s bird.”

At Amboyna, the capital of the Spice Islands, the expedition enjoyed the hospitality of the Dutch Resident. Its visit agreeably stirred the stagnation of the sleepy town, which is seldom broken except by the monthly arrival of the mail steamer, or the occasional occurrence of an earthquake. Nearly the entire population was invited to the public reception, to which the *Challenger’s* band gave vivacity, and which was a very brilliant affair. The beautiful nutmeg groves and fragrant clove-trees were objects of great interest. The narrow-minded Dutch Government long ago destroyed all those valuable trees, on many of the islands that they might the more jealously watch over the rest. Dredging in the transparent waters of those sunny seas, teeming with their strange forms of life, was to the naturalists a perpetual delight. Here nature fairly runs riot in tropical luxuriance. The cinnamon, clove, and nutmeg trees perfume the air; the feathery foliage of the palm groves delights the eye; and luscious fruits regale the taste. The volcanic nature of the islands gives a rugged sublimity to the scenery, which is exquisitely softened by the kindly ministrations of nature, veiling the crags with tenderest verdure in rare blending of strength and beauty.

At Manilla, the capital of the Philippines, famous for what connoisseurs consider the excellence of its tobacco, the Government cigar factories were visited. In one factory four thousand women were employed; and our author very ungallantly remarks, that the ears of the visitors were almost deafened by the noise of their chattering. In the accompanying picture, the figure to the right has a cluster of tobacco leaves in her hand.