

THE
PRISON OF WELTEVREDEN;
AND A GLANCE
AT THE
EAST INDIAN ARCHIPELAGO.

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ILLUSTRATED FROM ORIGINAL SKETCHES

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the air, as she said, den zee, den zee; and saying, with a questioning look and tone, Flirt? Minto? tin? I shook my head, to say that I did not come to Minto with my vessel for a cargo of tin. Java? Koffy? said the lady. Another shake of my head. Then she held up her right hand to her mouth, with the thumb and forefinger almost touching at their tips, seeming to bite at something small and pungent, which caused her to put out the tip of her tongue, draw up her face, and half close her eyes, saying, Sumatra? as she did this. But I showed by another shake, that I came not to seek pepper in Sumatra; and to all the attempts of my questioner to know what had brought me to the East, I smiled, and looked a negative.

What had taken me to the East?—a question wonderingly asked by so many since, by curious friends, and by those who had the power to question. What had, indeed, caused a man to go with a small ship into regions of spices, flowers, and placid tropic seas?—where none came but with great ships, to be quickly laden with bitter berries, a nauseous weed, and foul drugs, rejected of all beasts of the forest and fowls of the air, to pamper the vicious stomachs of the temperate zone.

What had brought me to Java, Sumatra, or Borneo, if I came not for coffee, pepper, arrack, and tobacco? What was in their woods and groves—even the many-trunked banyan or waringin, pillared, aisled, and vaulted, like fitting temples for Jehovah on earth; or the graceful tamarind, with arrowy leaf; or the tough, dark teak, noblest timber for ships; and mysterious, deadly upas: or what was there of fruits—the fragrant mango, the mild, pulpy dookoo, and delicately luscious mangosteen: or what of flowers—the many parasitic pendants of evergreen boughs—the odorous champaka, and pigeon flower, and the kumbang melati, the richly fragrant flower of love; or of beasts—the great

elephant, the fierce tiger, the rhinoceros, tapir, and exquisite little musk deer: or winged creatures—the huge vampire bats of Java, stupefying the senses with their musky wings; the swallows, casting out from their throats the glutinous nests, the so much prized stimulant of sensual Chinese: and then those bright bodies of mingled glistening hues of gold, ruby, silver, and turquoise, floating in the balmy air, and justly called the birds of paradise;—what was there in all these, unfit for freight or traffic, that a man should risk so much, and come so far to see?

And what could I come to learn about the eleven millions of docile, and industrious people, of the famed land of Madjapahit, and Matarem, once faithful subjects of Rajahs, and Susunans, and now of Governors General, ever laboring for all their cruel and unrighteous masters with childlike zeal; or the four millions of Sumatra—the wandering, fighting, romantic Malays—the Scandinavians of the East, and vikings of modern times: or the three millions of Borneo, the frank and loyal Dyaks, yet bloody hunters of human heads; or the two millions of Celebes, famous for adventurous trade and female rule: or the one million of Bali, brave little Bali—that dot on the eastern seas, that had twice victoriously withstood the power of Holland: what was there in all the twenty-five millions of human beings of the East Indian Archipelago, in all the wonders of its islands and seas, that I should come for, if I came not with calico and cutlery, for coffee and tobacco?

What could I come for? said the dull Dutch guardian of tin at Minto; and, as he said, plain, trading Hollanders would, like himself, wonder to learn. What did I see, to make such a cruise to pay? many an American friend wanted to know; and what, said the fingers and eyes of the graceful young Dutch Creole, could bring you here, if coffee and pepper did not?