

*On the Progress of Civilization in Northern Celebes.**By* ALFRED R. WALLACE, *F.R.G.S.*

The northern peninsula of Celebes is the only part of that island which is of volcanic structure. A considerable portion of it is elevated 2500 feet above the sea, forming the beautiful plateau of Tondano, in the centre of which is a lake about twenty miles in circumference. Scattered about this plateau are volcanic peaks and ridges 6000 or 7000 feet high. A fertile soil clothes even the mountain slopes of all this region, and, assisted by the abundant equatorial rains and a mild and uniform temperature, supports a vegetation of great luxuriance and beauty. The Dutch have now had possession of this country for nearly 200 years, having taken it from the Portuguese in 1677. The inhabitants, more particularly on the centre plateau, differ from those of the rest of the Celebes. They often approach to the fair complexion of the European, while they retain the straight black hair and general physiognomy of the Malay races. In character they are gentle and submissive, industrious and easily educated. Up to a very recent period they were complete savages, and were almost always at war with each other. They built their huts upon lofty posts to guard against attacks, and decorated them with the heads of their slain enemies. Their clothing was strips of bark, and their religion was a degrading demon-worship. From this state of barbarism they have been raised to comparative civilization in a short time by the Dutch Government. The country is now becoming a garden worthy of its sweet native name, "Minahassa." The villages are almost all like model villages, and the cottages like those one sees upon the stage. The streets are bordered with trimmed turf, and fenced with hedges of roses in perpetual bloom. Near every village are the most beautifully cultivated and productive coffee-plantations, while rice-fields and fruit and vegetable grounds supply abundance of food to the inhabitants. In every village there is a school-house, and in the larger ones a church also. The people are all neatly dressed, and the native chiefs and schoolmasters would pass muster among respectable people in England. On arriving at one of these chiefs' houses, in a principal village, the writer was received by a gentleman in a suit of black; boys nicely dressed and with smooth-combed hair brought water and napkins for him to wash, and he was furnished with a dinner comprising every European comfort, finger-glasses, clean napkins, claret, and beer, along with a variety of well-cooked native dishes. The house was handsome and lofty; the chairs and tables were of fine native woods, and, though made by self-taught natives, were of superior workmanship to any but the very best we get at home; and as he sat in the verandah taking coffee his eye was gratified by the sight of beautiful flowers, which, in this delightful climate, are perpetually renewed. This great change is the result of the introduction of the coffee-plant under Government superintendence, and of the labours of Dutch Protestant missionaries. The native chiefs were induced to further the views of the Government by the promise of a per-centage on the coffee-produce of their district, and the whole system is carried out by them, under the advice and support of the inspectors and Dutch residents. Each family in a village works in the plantations; an account is kept of the number of days' labour each gives, and when the produce is sent to the government warehouses, and paid for at the fixed price agreed upon on the formation of the plantations, the amount is divided proportionately among the inhabitants. The chief and the other head men of the village decide upon how many days a week it is necessary to work at different times of the year, and the villagers are called to labour at fixed hours by beat of gong. This community of labour is a common feature among people in the first stages of civilization, and rarely is any other pressure than public opinion required to insure regularity. Habits of industry have thus been fostered, and a considerable sum of money is realized annually by each family. Under the advice and example of the missionaries and government inspectors, the people build neat houses and adopt European clothing and habits. Their children go to school; the Malay language spreads rapidly, and is superseding the numerous native dialects; and general morality has undergone a vast improvement. No one who sees these people, and inquires as to their former condition, can avoid the conclusion that they are both morally and physically far superior to what they were. But it is said this change has been brought about by "monopoly" and "despotism," and therefore cannot be right.

The author believed, however, that the relation of a civilized to an uncivilized race over whom it rules is exactly analogous to that of parent to child, or of adults to infants, and that a certain amount of despotic rule and guidance is as essential in the one case as it is in the other. The only question is as to the manner in which the "paternal despotism" shall be carried out; and he thinks that the system of upholding and regulating the power of the native chiefs, whom the people are already accustomed to obey, of introducing systematic cultivation under government superintendence, and favouring the exertions of missionaries and native teachers, is a far better plan than throwing open a country to the competition of a low class of European traders and cultivators, which inevitably leads to the degradation of the natives, and a conflict of interests, inducing mutual animosity between the two races. The system of the Dutch, as carried out here and in Java, he considers as most excellent, and especially valuable as a step in the education of an uncivilized race; and he cannot but contrast it with the deplorable results of the free competition of antagonistic races in New Zealand, which can only end in the extermination of a people which it seems probable would, under more favourable conditions, have been capable of improvement and civilization.

On the Increasing Desiccation of Inner Southern Africa.

By JAMES FOX WILSON.

A very noticeable fact has of late years attracted the attention of residents in South Africa—namely, the gradual drying up of large tracts of country in the Trans-Gariep region. The Calabari Desert is gaining in extent, gradually swallowing up large portions of habitable country on its borders. Springs of water have diminished in their flow, and pools, such as that at Serotli, described by Livingstone, are now either dry or rapidly becoming so. A long list of springs and pools now gradually drying up was given by the author of the paper. The great change, however, had commenced, if we may trust native traditions, long before the advent of Europeans, which are corroborated by the existence of an immense number of stumps and roots of acaciæ in tracts where now not a single living tree is to be seen. In seeking to account for this, it was necessary to dismiss from the mind all idea of cosmical changes or earthquakes, of which no trace is visible in Southern Africa. The causes lie in the physical characteristics of the country and in the customs of the inhabitants. The region drained by the Orange river is naturally arid, from the interposition of the Quathlamba mountains between it and the Indian Ocean, whence the chief rain-clouds are derived. The prevailing winds are from the north-east. The clouds, heavily laden with vapour from the Indian Ocean, are driven over Caffraria, watering those lands luxuriantly; but when the moisture-bearing nimbi arrive at the summits of the mountain range which divides Caffraria from the interior country, they are not only deprived already of part of their moisture, but they meet with the rarefied air of the central plains, and consequently rise higher and evaporate into thinner vapour. There are few spots, however, which are wholly destitute of vegetation, and large trees are frequent. There is no district which does not maintain its flocks of wild animals; but the diminution of even one or two inches of rain in the year is most severely felt. The author came to the conclusion, after a careful inquiry into the geological formations of the region and the sources of springs, that much water must lie, throughout wide tracts, deep below the surface of the soil, and that the boring of artesian wells would yield a permanent supply for irrigation. But as a remedy for the growing evil, he laid particular stress on legislative enactments to check the reckless felling of timber and burning of pastures, which has been long practised both by the natives and the European colonists.

The Hairy Men of Jesso. By W. MARTIN WOOD.