

while we must admit the very great importance of the information we have received from these papers, we cannot but contrast the knowledge which we now possess with that which we enjoyed before this expedition went forth.

Fourteenth Meeting, June 27th, 1859.

THE EARL OF RIPON, PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

PRESENTATIONS.—*S. W. Silver and Christian Hellmann, Esqrs., were presented upon their election.*

ELECTIONS.—*The Earl of Airlie; Major Henry Cracroft; the Earl of Elgin; Captain Philip D. Margesson, R.A.; the Hon. Robert Marsham; the Duke of Newcastle; Sir Hercules G. R. Robinson (Governor of Hong Kong); and George Barclay; Frederick W. Bigge; H. Austin Bruce, M.P.; R. A. Osborn Dalyell (Consul at Erzerúm); George H. Fitzroy; William Fryer; Charles P. Grenfell, M.P.; W. Vernon Harcourt; and William H. Smith, Esqrs.; were elected Fellows.*

EXHIBITIONS.—Several drawings and photo-lithographs illustrating the scenery and physical geography of the highest parts of the Himálayas, by the Messrs. Schlagintweit; and a Mechanical and Magnetic Compass, invented by Mr. N. D. Maillard, were exhibited.

ACCESSIONS.—Sir John Rennie's work on the 'Plymouth Breakwater,' presented by the author; Humboldt's 'Travels,' 'Cosmos,' and 'Aspects of Nature, etc.,' presented by H. G. Bohn, Esq., F.R.G.S.; Dr. Lange's Map of the Mediterranean, and Stanford's Library Map of Australasia, were among the late accessions to the Library and Map Rooms.

The Papers read were—

1. *Notes on a Voyage to New Guinea.* By ALFRED R. WALLACE, Esq.,
F.R.G.S.

THERE is only one place in New Guinea where the natives have become accustomed to the presence of European and Mohammedan traders. This place is Dorey, and it was there that Mr. Wallace has been residing for three months. He describes the whole northern peninsula of New Guinea as exceedingly rugged and mountainous. A continued succession of jagged and angular ranges stretches away far into the interior; while an unvarying forest of somewhat stunted appearance spreads over the whole country. He considers there are absolutely no other inhabitants than Papuans in the main island. During Mr. Wallace's stay at Dorey there was almost continual

rain or drizzle. When these were absent there was often a dull haziness in the air, very different from our usual notions of the sunshine of the tropics. The last month of his stay was nominally in the dry season, but the rain-fall was in reality increased. The winds also were abnormal. According to theory, he would have gone to the island in the west monsoon and returned in the east; but, each way, the winds were contrary, and interspersed with dead calms. Dorey is not a good station for starting on excursions into the interior. It is also very unhealthy: Mr. Wallace and his servants suffered constantly from fever and dysentery, and one of them died. The Dutch Government has taken possession of New Guinea up to 141° E. long. from Greenwich. An active and exclusive trade is carried on between that coast and the Moluccas, under their flag. The beautiful series of maps of the Dutch possessions in the East, by Baron Melville von Carnbee, are particularly remarked by Mr. Wallace. A Dutch steamer was surveying the coast of New Guinea while Mr. Wallace was there, in search of a good place for a settlement. He understood that Dorey would, probably, be preferred on account of its harbour and naval position, though in other respects unsuitable.

MR. J. CRAWFURD, F.R.G.S.—I have never visited the island of New Guinea, but I have paid much attention to the subject, and ought to know something about it. It is a monster island, and, although beyond doubt God created nothing in vain, it appears to our narrow view that New Guinea was created for no earthly good purpose. It is nearly twice the size of the United Kingdom, is universally covered with forest, and inhabited throughout by a peculiar negro race—a race which commences at that island and extends all the way to New Caledonia and thence up to the Fiji Group, where it ceases. This race strongly resembles the African negro, but still it is not the African negro: it differs very materially from it. It has the general African features, but the hair, especially in its texture, differs in a very singular manner. Instead of being woolly, like the head of the ordinary African, it grows in tufts so long that it stretches out to an enormous extent—two or three feet right across—a circumstance which has obtained for the Papuans the name of “mop-headed Indians.” Everywhere this race is intellectually inferior to the brown-complexioned people, as I am afraid it must be said of the negroes of Africa, that they are inferior to all the fairer people in their neighbourhood, even those on the continent of Africa itself. A remarkable example of this inferiority is given in Dorey Harbour and a considerable part of the coast in its neighbourhood. The people are subject to the government of a very small island, a mere rock in the sea—the island of Ternate, containing a comparatively active and industrious population of the Malay race, who, in consequence, have been put in early possession of some wealth and power, and been enabled to conquer and hold in subjection a considerable portion of the population of New Guinea. The inhabitants of New Guinea are in a very low social condition, inferior, indeed, to that of any other people that I know of, except perhaps the inhabitants of the Andaman Islands. New Guinea produces some very remarkable objects. It produces the true aromatic nutmeg, some very singular birds, and, among these, the Birds of Paradise, which are peculiar

to that country, and which seem to be good for nothing except to produce fine feathers to adorn European ladies and Chinese mandarins. There are ten or twelve different species of this beautiful bird, which, after all, is but a kind of crow. The island also produces a monster pigeon, almost as big as a turkey—a most beautiful bird, of which there are, I believe, two species. Living specimens of these are to be seen in the Zoological Gardens. Dampier gave an exceedingly good description of New Guinea about 170 years ago.

DR. G. KINKEL, F.R.G.S.—I should not address this meeting if there were any gentlemen present who had visited New Guinea, but since it is a country which we know almost exclusively from books, I may be allowed to say a few words on some new points in the report before the meeting. The first point is—and I think it is an entirely new one—that there is only one race of people in this island. We have been accustomed to believe that there were two different races: a Malay race in the interior, and a black race skirting the coasts. This relation of the two races would indeed make the island an exception to all maritime countries in that quarter of the world. It appears, however, from the paper of Mr. Wallace, that there is in the interior an agricultural race, whose dwelling-places would seem to be somewhat different in construction from the huts of the outlying tribes along the coast, who bear the especial name of Arfaki; and although Mr. Wallace does not enter fully into the subject, it yet appears that this theory of two races—one black, a trading class, and another more agricultural, in the interior—is not entirely exploded by his observations. The second point seems to me to be of some importance: it is that this island is not favoured with the clear tropical sunshine which we might expect. The very height of the mountains of New Guinea, which in some parts near the coast attain an altitude of 9500 feet, must, in a warm climate, and in the midst of a really steaming ocean, of necessity cause heavy rains; still more the amount of vegetation in this large and wonderful island, although stunted in its growth, must of necessity produce a vast amount of precipitation. The great point, however, to which I would call attention is the irregularity of the monsoons mentioned by Mr. Wallace, which, I think, is very important to navigators. This irregularity is not difficult to explain. New Guinea lies at the outskirts of the Indian monsoons; the monsoons are produced, as every wind upon the globe is, by the heating of certain parts of the great continents. The enormous heating in the central parts of Asia during our summer causes a stream of air from cooler and more southern latitudes to flow over them, producing the south-west monsoon; and the north-east monsoon is attracted in the same way by the great heating of Southern Africa in the contrary season; consequently, these eastern islands, like New Guinea, can only be considered as lying on the outskirts of the monsoons, and the absence of great continents around them will account for the greater irregularity of their periodical winds. The influence of the monsoons by this different heating of great continents is no longer powerful enough to keep off a current of cooler air from the ocean in these parts. This, I believe, will explain Mr. Wallace's observation, which, as I said, is of very great importance to navigation. As to the discovery of New Guinea, the Dutch certainly are the principal investigators of this island. They were the first to discover the existence of a narrow channel between the small island to the south-west, called "Prince Frederick Island," and the main land. They were also the first discoverers of the great bay, and, finding a quantity of yellowfinches there, they called it "Geelvink," or "Yellow Finches' Bay;" a name that has been given to it since in all our charts. The Dutch claim half the island up to the meridian of 141°, and it is under their flag and from their dominions in Dutch India that the principal trade is carried on in these islands. And as we owe to them almost all we know about this island, it

seems but fair that they should obtain the credit and also the profit (if there be a profit, which I much doubt) of its possession.

MR. CRAWFURD.—I should like to say a few words in reply to the gentleman who has just spoken. Perhaps he is not aware that there are two distinct classes of monsoons. The south-east monsoon and the north-west monsoon, which blow to the south of the equator, are totally different from the monsoons with which we are better acquainted, namely, the north-east or monsoon of the winter solstice, and the south-west or monsoon of the summer solstice. The first are the monsoons that prevail in New Guinea, and I believe that they are perfectly regular: there is no irregularity at all that I have heard of, any more than in those which prevail north of the equator. With respect to an agricultural people inhabiting New Guinea, I have never heard of them or of any kind of agriculture beyond the poor one described by Mr. Wallace. I believe no agricultural people to exist in the island, and that its inhabitants throughout are rank barbarians and savages. Dr. Kinkel must not suppose that New Guinea is the only island inhabited by negroes: there are several others exclusively inhabited by this race. New Caledonia, for example, is entirely inhabited by a robust race of negroes; New Ireland is inhabited solely by them. With respect to the discoveries of the Dutch, I ought to mention that they have in recent times made very considerable ones. The original discoverers of New Guinea, however, were not the Dutch: the island was discovered nearly 100 years before the Dutch had even made their appearance in India. The original discoverers were the Portuguese, and a very considerable portion of the island was after them discovered by our own truly illustrious countryman Dampier. The more modern discoverers are certainly the Dutch; they made three distinct voyages to that country. They discovered Prince Frederick Island, which had previously been supposed to be a headland. Their first voyage was made, I think, in 1828, and their last in 1835, when they attempted to form a settlement; but they found the country so unhealthy, so rude, and so sterile, that they were obliged to give up the settlement. With respect to their claim to half the island, the Dutch are perfectly welcome to every inch of it. No Englishman would dispute it with them or think of forming a settlement in a land so unpromising: I wish the Dutch well, and therefore I wish them safe away from New Guinea.

MR. T. SAUNDERS.—The discussion having been directed to New Guinea at large, I think allusion should be made to the recent discovery on this island of the great river Rechussen or Ambernoh entering the sea by an immense deltoid mouth on the north-east of Geelvink Bay, nor in speaking of recent discoveries ought we to forget the share the English have had in them towards the south-east, where mountains, rising in some cases more than 13,000 feet above the sea, have been measured in altitude by our own nautical surveyors.

It may be added that the north coast of New Guinea was not long since examined by Sir Edward Belcher, in H.M.S. *Sumarang*, and the present Curator of the Society, Mr. George, was in charge of the observatory. The proximity of New Guinea to Northern Australia, and the extension of the Australian settlements in that direction, may also be alluded to as a probable means of increasing our knowledge of the unknown interior of New Guinea.

THE PRESIDENT.—In proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Wallace for his very interesting Paper, I would only say that I think the glimpse which we have had of the geography and natural features of New Guinea must leave an impression upon our minds that it is very desirable to have more information in reference to that island; and I venture to express a hope that Mr. Wallace will renew his explorations in that country, and may be able to favour us at some future period with further information respecting it.
