

noon anchored off a low sandy spit. Immediately after we were visited by the Malay officials in their gay and pretty state dresses, their prahs being decorated with numerous flags, and their approach announced by the sound of the tom-tom and shouts of the rowers. Others who came on board afterwards looked and seemed remarkably awkward and out of their element, probably because they felt dressed up for the important occasion; for every one, it seems, holding a government appointment (under the Dutch) *must* appear in a black suit when paying official visits. It was with the utmost difficulty we kept from laughing when it was expected we should look very solemn at their reception, for some of our visitors appeared in costumes apparently of the last century, in long-tailed coats which trailed on the ground, for which they had never been measured, or with sleeves so long that the tips of their fingers could scarcely be seen. But their hats were the treat to see, for each sported a chimney-pot of some distant age, which was, in some cases, three or four sizes too large for the wearer, and to make a fit, a large pad of paper or rag had been introduced. After fulfilling their mission on board, they were glad to hurry away, and could be seen stripping off their official dress on their way to the shore.

These islands are situated on the south-west coast of New Guinea, quite out of the track of all European trade, and are inhabited by black mop-headed