

by Sloane to make webs so strong as to catch birds. At Little Ke Island Von Willemoes Suhm actually found a strong and healthy "Glossy Starling" (*Calornis metallica*) caught fast in a yellow spider's web, and he took the bird out alive and brought it on board the ship to be preserved.

The Banda Group, September 29th to October 2nd, 1874.

From the Ke Islands the ship proceeded to the Banda Group, famed for its nutmegs. On the voyage, which consumed three days, a small island named Bird Island was passed, from which at one spot smoke was issuing from amongst rocks covered with a white incrustation. The smoke was evidently a volcanic fumerole.

Banda Island was reached on September 29th. The ship anchored in a harbour, shut in by three surrounding islands. On one of these was the town, the old fort built by the Portuguese, and the residences of the Dutch Officials. Another island is the small active volcano of the group called Gunong Api (mountain fire); the Malay equivalent of the word volcano. On the third island (Great Banda) are the principal nutmeg plantations. I accompanied a party which ascended the volcano, which is 1,910 feet in altitude only. It appears to be very seldom climbed, either by Dutch residents or natives. The mountain is a steep simple cone. The ascent was made on the east side. The cone is covered with bushes up to within about 700 or 800 feet of the summit, and with the help of these climbing is easy though arduous. Above the limit of the bushes there are steep slopes of loose stones, wearying to climb and constantly falling. Above these, again, the surface of the cone is hard, the fine ashes and lava fragments of which it is composed, being cemented together so as to form a hard crust. This is roughened by the projection of fragments, but still smooth enough to require some care in the placing of the feet on the part of men wearing boots. The Malay guides with naked feet stood with ease upon it anywhere.

The inclination of the slope is about 33° ; and to a man who easily becomes giddy no doubt would be rather formidable in descent. An American traveller, who had probably never been up any other mountain before he ascended the Banda Volcano, has written a most appalling account of the danger which he encountered in descending. To a man with an ordinarily good head there are no difficulties in the ascent or descent.

At the summit the fragments of basaltic rock were undergoing slow decomposition under the action of heated vapours issuing in all directions from amongst them, and were softened and turned white, like chalk. Any of these fragments when broken showed part of their mass still black and unaltered,