

but was no doubt in error. The island, which belongs to the Dutch, lies almost exactly on the equator. Separated from it by a narrow strait is the somewhat similar cone of Tidore. The lower slopes are planted with nutmegs, cloves, pepper, cocoa trees, and a profusion of fruits.

The mountain is unquiet, and there were said to occur on an average three or four earthquakes every week; I had great hopes that I should have an opportunity of feeling one, but was disappointed. The Dutch keep up a Government staff at the island, very much to the benefit and happiness of the people, but I believe at a considerable financial loss.

The Governor or Resident of the island at the time of the visit of the "Challenger" was an accomplished naturalist, S. C. J. W. van Musschenbroek; he received the Expedition with the greatest kindness and hospitality, and even got up a ball on the shortest notice. The musicians were Malays, who were indefatigable, but knew only one tune.

The Resident presented a fine collection of Snakes and Corals to the Expedition, and gave the greatest assistance and information on all natural-history matters. There are a large number of Chinese in the population of the island, and the Captain China, or head of the Chinese under the Dutch, according to their well-known method of Government in East Indian Colonies, was one of the notables present at the ball.

The Chinese have been for hundreds of years in the island, and I was astonished to learn that some of them have, in the course of generations, entirely lost the knowledge of their own language, and now speak only Malay. I was told that it was even possible that the Captain China himself might be in this condition. I had thought this quite impossible in so strongly conservative a people, and indeed had not realized the fact that numerous generations of Chinese are born, die, and are buried in these islands under Dutch rule.

At Amboina, the large and costly tombs of the Chinese form a feature in the landscape on the hill-sides,* and there is a large Chinese graveyard at Ternate, with many tombs of great age. I had fancied that all dead Chinese were carried to China to be buried, at all events if rich. The English seem to be the only civilized migratory people who never lose their language.

Instances of such loss by all other European races are to be found in the United States.

Malay collectors are sent every year to New Guinea from Ternate, to collect Birds of Paradise and other birds, and a

* Similarly at Timor, the costly Chinese tombs at which island are figured in Peron and Leseur's "Voyage," published 1807.