

TRAVELLING IN JAVA.—From Kotanopan we have come to Fort Elout, after a journey of more than ordinary danger. For the first five miles our road was very good, but then we found it completely overgrown with tall grass. So long as it was over the level lands there was little danger, but soon it changed to the flanks of a spur, thrown out by the chain that formed the north-eastern boundary of the valley. There it became very narrow, and the tall grass completely hid its outer edge. Besides, our horse was wholly unaccustomed to a carriage, and only half-trained, and every few moments took it into his head to stop so short that we had to hold on to the carriage all the time, or at an unexpected moment find ourselves going over the fender. The road was now taking us out towards the end of the spur, the ravine was growing deeper and deeper with an alarming rapidity, and I began to wish myself out of the carriage, but the inspector was unwilling to stop the horse, for fear we could not get him started again. A Malay was guiding our wild steed by the bit, and away we were dashing at full gallop, when suddenly, as we rounded the spur, the road, which was cut in the rock, was so narrow that the outside wheels of the carriage were just on its outer edge, and from that verge the rock descended in such a perpendicular precipice that I could look from my seat in the carriage down fully two hundred feet, with a boiling torrent beneath me. It was evidently too late to jump then, so I seized hold of the carriage, determined not to go off before my companion, the inspector, who, realising at once our great danger, and perceiving that the only thing that we could do was to keep the horse going at the top of his speed, shouted to the horse, and, in the same breath, threatened to take off the Malay's head if he should let go of the bridle. Some fragments of rock had fallen down into the road, and our fore-wheel, on the inner side, struck these with such violence that I thought certainly we should be thrown off the narrow shelf down the precipice. For two minutes we seemed to hang in the air, and then the road widened. I drew a long breath of relief, and then bounded out over the wheel on to the solid ground, before I could fully satisfy myself that, thanks to a kind Providence and the force of gravitation, I was really safe. The inspector said that he had travelled many thousand miles in Java, in all manners of ways, and through all manners of dangers, but was never so frightened before, and that he would not go back that way in a carriage for 10,000 guldens.—*Travels in the East Indian Archipelago. By Albert S. Bickmore, M.A.*