

among whom they counted first the heathen Batta tribes and afterward the Dutch rulers. A seventeen-year war followed, and the Dutch government took the last stronghold of the zealots, but their propaganda did not cease with defeat on the field of battle. Even to-day the struggle is on between Christian missions and Islam for the conquest of the remaining heathen tribes in Java and Sumatra. The missionaries write (1906) that their chief task now is "to bring into the Church the mass of pagans as yet untouched by Islam and, *while there is yet time, to send workers to regions which are in danger of being brought over to Mohammedanism.*"¹ So we see that the spread of Islam is not past history, but a present peril in the Malay Archipelago as well as in western Africa. Of the more than three million inhabitants of Sumatra nearly all are Moslems, while in Java alone Islam has twenty-four million adherents.

Christianity's
Earlier
Opportunity

Had the Christian Church entered upon the struggle for these island possessions earlier, who can tell what the result might have been for the kingdom of Christ? The spread of Islam in three continents for well-nigh twelve centuries was due to the power of the sword *and to the low moral standards of the new faith,*² but was

¹ Simon, in *The Mohammedan World of To-day*, 232.

² Haines, *Islam as a Missionary Religion*, Chap. VI.