sea, and must accumulate there, displacing an equal bulk of the salt water. As the water in the lower part of the great sponge-like coral mass rises and falls with the tides, so will the water near the surface; and this will keep fresh, if the mass be sufficiently compact to prevent much mechanical admixture; but where the land consists of great loose blocks of coral with open interstices, if a well be dug, the water, as I have seen, is brackish.

After dinner we stayed to see a curious half superstitious scene acted by the Malay women. A large wooden spoon dressed in garments, and which had been carried to the grave of a dead man, they pretend becomes inspired at the full of the moon, and will dance and jump about. After the proper preparations, the spoon, held by two women, became convulsed and danced in good time to the song of the surrounding children and women. It was a most foolish spectacle; but Mr. Liesk maintained that many of the Malays believed in its spiritual movements. The dance did not commence till the moon had risen, and it was well worth remaining to behold her bright orb so quietly shining through the long arms of the cocoanut trees as they waved in the evening breeze. These scenes of the tropics are in themselves so delicious that they almost equal those dearer ones at home, to which we are bound by each best feeling of the mind.

The next day I employed myself in examining the very interesting yet simple structure and origin of these islands. The water being unusually smooth, I waded over the outer flat of dead rock as far as the living mounds of coral, on which the swell of the open sea breaks. In some of the gullies and hollows there were beautiful green and other colored fishes, and the forms and tints of many of the zoophytes were admirable. It is excusable to grow enthusiastic over the infinite numbers of organic beings with which the sea of the tropics, so prodigal of life, teems; yet I must confess I think those naturalists who have described, in well-known words, the submarine grottoes decked with a