Photo: C. C. Woolley

THE HEAD-HUNTERS

Both are wearing *chawat* loin-cloths. The lad in the tree tiger-skin is carrying a head in its wrappings. The other is armed with a *sumpitan.*

TWENTY YEARS IN BORNEO

Charles Bruce

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by Charles Bruce

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To
NICKEN

FOREWORD

THE stories in this book are intended to record the lighter side of life in the tropics. They have one virtue, that of accuracy in substance.

The photographs are reproductions from a collection which was started in my first month in Borneo, and is still growing. My own efforts contributed to the collection, but the bulk of it is the result of importunity and the kindliness of fellow-photographers. In cases where I am certain of the origin of a photograph, I have made acknowledgment; in others, a faulty memory, and not discourtesy, must be my excuse for the omission. In all cases I tender my deepest gratitude.

C. B.

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TWENTY YEARS IN BORNEO

CHAPTER I

JOURNEY TO SINGAPORE—ARRIVAL AT SANDAKAN

TOWARDS the end of 1901 I heard casually that there was a vacancy for an officer in the Armed Constabulary of North Borneo. My career up to this time had included a year serving articles in a solicitor's office, some months variously employed in Canada as a "chore-boy" on a farm, as a cook in a lumber camp and as a paper-seller on a train, and, finally, some six months as articled clerk to an accountant. I had, it is true, been a member of the Rugby School Cadet Corps and had held a commission for a year in a volunteer battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, but the sum total does not sound like very adequate preparation for the profession of arms. However, nothing venture nothing have, and in October, 1901,I presented myself before the Court of Directors of the British North Borneo Company and was shipped off within a fortnight, nominally as a "general utility" cadet in the Company's service, but actually destined for duty with the Constabulary of the State of North Borneo.

The intervening fortnight was spent in a hectic chase for funds to pay my passage-money, the collection of a very moderate amount of kit, and the acquisition of a vague idea of the whereabouts of Borneo. The geography of Biblical Palestine and of the Greece and Italy of the classics had been drummed into me at school, but I was not very clear whether one proceeded east or west to find Borneo. I was, it was pleasant to find, not alone in my ignorance. A friend, on the eve of my departure, sent me a letter of introduction to a cousin of his resident in Buenos Ayres and wished me all good fortune in my new life in South America. I kept the letter for a long time, hoping that some day I might be able to present it.

There were five of us being dispatched to Borneo, and in due course we forgathered at Southampton, only to be told that the good ship *Prinz Heinrich* of the North German Lloyd line was two days late. This, as far as I was concerned, was a blow, as in the state of my finances two days at an hotel was likely to create a deficit. My spirits rose when the N.D.L. agent assured us that his company would foot the bill, everything, he emphasized, except drinks. I had a lively ten minutes with him at the end of our stay when he demurred at the entry in my bill for baths. I assured him that baths were an integral part of my board and lodging, that he had undertaken to pay for everything except drinks, and that, on my honour, I had washed in and had not drunk these baths.

In due course we boarded the *Prinz Heinrich* and

set out by sea on our month's voyage to Singapore. The trip was not devoid of incident, including a heavy blow in the Gulf of Lyons which we heard had shifted our cargo a bit, a fire, and finally a duel between two ardent Teutons who coveted the attentions of a lady in the third class proceeding to Shanghai to serve as barmaid. Our small party was more or less under the tutelage of the German Vice-Consul for North Borneo, a rotund little gentleman, almost commonplace in mufti, but more than awe-inspiring in his official rig. He owned an agency business in Sandakan, the capital of North Borneo, and had just sold out to Behn Meyer, the eastern representatives of the N.D.L. and one of the biggest firms in Singapore.

After our recent disagreement with the Hun it is not fashionable to sound his praises too loudly, but anyone who has travelled, even second class, on an N.D.L. ship finds himself comparing the attention, treatment and accommodation in no unfavourable light with that afforded him on other lines. The long list of *verboten* things, most of which were more or less punctiliously enforced on our fellow-passengers, was on this and every other voyage I have made by that line a dead letter as far as the small community of Britishers was concerned. We used the first-class deck with fair frequency, we had our own table reserved for us in the smoking-room, and we kept that haven open almost as late as we wanted. Contrast that with some of the red-tape, take-it-or-leave-it and get-out-and-walk attitude on some lines, and one is inclined to agree with an Irishman who prayed

earnestly at the beginning of the war for two Germans to be left alive, one to run the North German Lloyd and the other to keep an hotel in Singapore. Contrast it with the attitude nowadays of the skipper of a small coasting steamer under the British flag who resents actively and in well-chosen nautical terms a stray cigarette-ash on *his* deck, who turns off the electric light and the fans at 11 p.m., and whose fiat closes the bar at hours when the ordinary human yearns to quench a tropical thirst.

Talking of Huns, we had on board a score or so of German lay brothers who were going to German New Guinea to take up missionary work. They were, as they admitted frankly, of no high origin, but they were real good fellows who were earnest but unobtrusive Christians. They spoke very little English, but I managed with my equally broken German to get on with them conversationally. They were allowed as pocket-money one mark a week, and though we were not overburdened with cash, it was a pleasure occasionally to get three or four of them together and treat them to a pot of the excellent German lager on tap. They appreciated it so thoroughly and were so sincere in their thanks that one could not grudge the drain it caused on one's fast vanishing cash. They sang folk songs most charmingly, and we were very touched when, a day or two before we arrived in Singapore, they clubbed some of their exiguous pocket-money, stood us each a glass of beer and gave us a charming concert of part-singing.

The whole atmosphere about these men was a welcome and refreshing contrast to the bigoted

narrow-mindedness of the band of British missionaries on board, who looked askance at any sort of amusement and finally sent in to the captain a formal protest against music and dancing on deck in the evening on the grounds that it interfered with their singing of hymns. The captain was firm and was just. He refused to interfere, and pointed out that both parties were, within reason and up to the authorized hours, entitled to make the noises that pleased them. He added, unofficially, his personal request to the dancing people to make a point of dancing every night, and arranged for a nightly supper of sandwiches and salads to mark his encouragement. It was, one hoped, a lesson to these busybodies to live and let live.

We at long last arrived in Singapore a few days before Christmas to find that the connecting boat to Borneo had just sailed and that we had about a fortnight to wait. It was a gloomy prospect. Finances were low, it rained incessantly, and we knew no one. It seemed likely to be a merry Christmas.

Even nowadays Singapore is not the place one would select for a fortnight's sojourn, though electric light, cinemas and improved hotels have made life more tolerable in the town, while motors and the railway have made it easier to relieve the monotony by taking trips to pastures new. To people raw from England, without a friend and almost penniless, it was in 1901 a dismal introduction to the East.

As far as I was concerned the *deus ex machina* worked his miracle, and in the middle of a more than depressing game of billiards in a rather squalid hotel

an entirely strange man, to whom friends of mine had written, descended on the hotel in a gharry and wafted me to a most cheerful bachelor mess in the Tanglin suburb of Singapore. I felt a certain sense of guilt in deserting my fellow-transportees, but abstinence on my part would have done them little good, and I succumbed to temptation. It *was* a cheerful mess, but as some of the members of it have since achieved considerable distinction, I will be discreet and proceed to Borneo.

We accomplished this part of the journey on a craft called the *Chieng Mai*, which was running a special trip largely for the benefit of our little Vice-Consul to enable him to hand over his business on the first of January. The voyage interested us little. The *Chieng Mai* rolled, she pitched, she stank to heaven; she had iron decks, and she was full of coolies and cockroaches. Her only grace was that she delivered us safely at our destination, Sandakan.

With the exception of Victoria, the capital of the little island colony of Labuan, Sandakan was the first small eastern town we had seen, and we were all early on deck to get the first sight of our future home. The entrance to Sandakan Harbour has often been described, but there is no doubt that the sheer sandstone cliffs on the north side, with their mauves and their pinks contrasting with the green of the jungle crowning them, are very impressive and fully deserve all that has been said of them. We were, however, more interested in the town. In those days a gaunt three-storied building was the first to meet one's eye, standing alone near the small cape which

hid the rest of the town. This striking erection was the main prison of the State, a rather chilling introduction to a new country. Nowadays the immigrant is not subject to the same depressing shock, as the lunatic asylum has been built nearer to the mouth of the harbour and so leads up to the crescendo of the gaol.

A straggling wooden wharf led to the Chinese town, most of which was built up on piles over a mud flat, the source at low tide of a most striking combination of smells. Behind, on terraces cut out of the steep hillsides, were the bungalows of the Europeans, not uncomely at a distance by day with their thatched roofs among the tropical foliage and at night a sparkle of lights. Government House stood out on the promontory which formed the other horn of the crescent of hills enclosing the comparatively flat land on which stood the shops and a recreation ground.

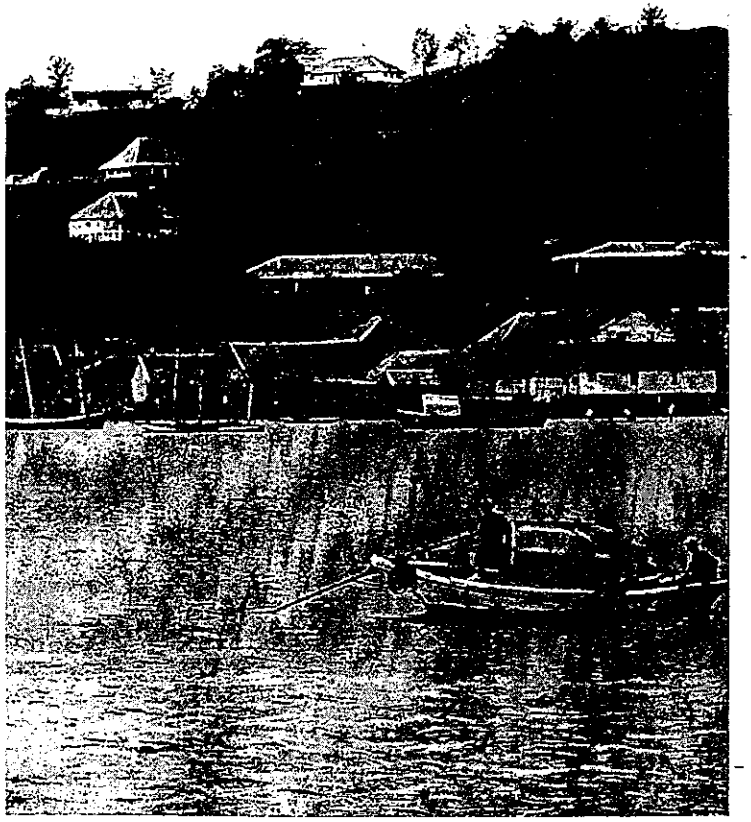
Whatever one did and wherever one went in Sandakan there was always a hill to be negotiated, and a round of afternoon calls was an undertaking which one regarded with some dread. There was one point of vantage whence it was possible to get a clear view of the tennis club grounds three hundred feet below one. There we used to halt on our afternoon rides, and after noting carefully the ladies who were watching or playing tennis, it was a simple matter to trot round to their various bungalows and with adequate expressions of regret at their absence drop the necessary cards. For this sort of calling any kit served, and one was saved an undue wear and

tear of one's stock of linen collars and European clothes.

The social amusements were riding parties, bathing-picnics and dinners. Bridge was hardly known, and the supply of ladies was hardly sufficient for a dance. We youngsters played a good deal of football, in which natives, Indians and Chinese took part, while cricket matches were fairly frequent. The community was small and held together well, though at times one suddenly realized that one lady was not "playing speaks" with another and one had to walk warily to ensure one's position as a neutral.

Sandakan was then the capital of the State, and was also the headquarters of the constabulary, to which, as anticipated, I was posted as "cadet attached." The commandant and the sub-commandant were my immediate superiors, but the former proceeded almost immediately on leave and the latter reigned in his stead. After cautious inquiries as to my knowledge of drill, I was directed to take the next morning's parade and told that I was billeted in a mess of junior Government officers, overlooking the barracks and harbour and situated at a discreet distance from the residential part of the town.

The mess was a cheery little commonwealth, consisting of four and sometimes five members under a president. The president was just sufficiently senior to the rank and file to give him a modicum of authority without making him an autocrat. The rules were few and simple :



SANDAKAN IN 1902

1. Provide your own liquor.
2. Be punctual at meals or starve.
3. No credit.

We had a common dining-sitting-room, and each a bedroom and private veranda. It was an ideal arrangement under the circumstances, and was probably the only way to make our scanty pay (£11) suffice. It kept us together and, incidentally, kept us—the more or less noisy and riotous element in the small European community—out of sight and hearing of the rest. We each managed to keep a pony, were members of the club, and generally took a small part in the social and athletic world.

The total ages of the four permanent members of the mess were under a hundred years, but at one chance moment temporary absences from the State raised each of us to the acting rank of head of a department. The chance was not to be missed. We stole a pole from somewhere, and forthwith flaunted a banner with the strange device H.O.D.M. The first fly to walk into our trap was an elderly, rather supercilious district officer whom none of us liked. He had come to pay the mess a formal but rather patronizing call, and in consequence pretended to be rather shocked to find us, as usual, in sarongs, the *négligé* of the tropics. He thawed over a cup of tea, and was moved to inquire what our flag meant. There was quite a competition to explain that they were the initials of the "Heads of Departments Mess."

The absence of the acting-commandant on business in Singapore and the fact that the only other

subaltern was stationed on the other coast left me in charge of the constabulary. I had been in the country only a couple of months, and my Malay was still a very sketchy performance. My only commissioned assistant at headquarters was the Sikh jemadhar. Our mutual efforts to communicate with one another in a tongue foreign to both of us must have been amusing, but did not tend to accelerate the work of the department. We had at times to call in the Chinese chief clerk, who spoke, of course, in addition to his own and other dialects of Chinese, both English and Malay, to act as intermediary and to cut the Gordian knot in which we were involved.

The inauguration of my command was not very auspicious. The office was approached by a narrow foot-track, and the office guard had to perform its ceremonial welcomes to the commandant on a patch of grass alongside the path at the foot of the office steps. I had forgotten the heights to which the absence of the C.O. had carried me, and, riding up to the office the first morning after his departure, I was just loosening my grip on the saddle preparatory to dismounting, when the guard blared forth into the full ritual of "the present," complete with noise on the bugle. This effusive and unaccustomed welcome so upset my mount that he shied over the edge of the path and deposited me in a recumbent position on the grass immediately in front of the guard. The whole episode was a credit to the discipline of the force. A smile would have been resented, while a broad grin would have been only a very natural expression of emotion. The bugler finished his little

tune and the guard returned to the "order" without even a tremor on any face, and then the sergeant advanced to assist his C.O. to a more dignified attitude. It was a painful incident at the moment, and my steed ever after regarded these demonstrations by the guard with the gravest suspicion. In fact, before the acting commandant returned to duty it became quite impossible to get the beast to approach the office.

We were wise enough to attempt no entertaining at the mess. Our cuisine and attendance were of the homeliest. The only approach to the mess was by a narrow and very slippery path round a sheer cliff eighty or ninety feet high. We came to the conclusion that our prospective guests and our pockets would be better pleased if we refrained. We made, however, an exception at the time of King Edward's coronation, when we burst out into a banquet to which we bade all the local society. Everyone accepted and everyone came. It rained in torrents, but even the ladies manfully climbed to our hermitage, possibly moved to do so by curiosity as to the truth or otherwise of the whispered stories of the households of some of the members. The only recusant was the jovial sub-commandant, who, arriving late for the feast, was unhorsed half-way up the hill by a salvo of rockets with which dinner was announced. He was very peevish about it, and retired in high dudgeon to take his dinner at the club out of a glass.

Even now I blush to remember that dinner. We had gathered together a miscellaneous collection of servants, and, as was the custom in those days, every

guest brought his own butler. It is always the case when there is a crowd of "boys" that each waits for the other to make a move, and then the force of example fires them all at the same moment. The result is a series of spasms. Two courses are hurled on to the table practically simultaneously, and there is then a deadly hiatus, followed by another "mad minute" of two or more lots of food. Our guests were all people with real homes, accustomed to decent meals decently served, but they took it all in excellent part and were very merry and cheery. My partner elected to drink claret and water. It was poured out for her, but was "rather strong," and so further dilution was ordered. She still complained, and again and again the butler watered the priceless vintage. About the fourth time, when the mixture had become a very anæmic pink and yet was too strong, a horrible thought struck me, and I seized the carafe containing the alleged water. Gin! Pure gin!

The meal ended, and our guests departed thanking us profusely (and, I believe, quite sincerely) for a "jolly dinner." It was certainly amusing and a change for most of them from the respectable banquets to which they were accustomed.

Our mess dissolved at the end of 1902 when three of the members departed to out-stations. Efforts were made later to start other cadets' messes, but one and all fizzled out. Their failure seems to have been due to incompatibility of temperament on the part of the inmates and to an apparent inability to agree on any code of rules, even one as simple as ours. It was a pity, because there are undoubted

advantages in these congeries for beginners in the East, pecuniary and otherwise.

However, to resume my tale, I was ordered to take a parade, and at the usual grisly hour of 6 a.m. I started down towards the barracks. My descent was one of trepidation. The parlously slippery path did not tend to equanimity, but that was not the worst. I was very conscious of knowing no Malay, and I was not certain whether my English words of command would "go." However, having recently been through a course at Chelsea, I put on a chest and swung on to parade like a Guards R.S.M. to find myself in front of a mixed company of Sikhs, Pathans, Dyaks, and Malays. My first three words of command got there all right, but the fourth missed, and in three seconds I was in command of a parade that was thoroughly "clubbed." As I racked my brains for the easiest method of restoring equilibrium I heard a long and fluent speech in an unknown tongue, punctuated at very frequent intervals by the adjuration "bluddi pool" ("f" and "p" are almost interchangeable to most Orientals), and, hey presto! my company reformed. I felt that here was one person, at any rate, with whom I shared part of a common dialect, and I investigated. I found a very tubby Sikh, who in his many years' service had won his way to the rank of jemadhar, and during the process had acquired a certain amount of English. I do not wish to characterize the English form of the phrase he used as anything but personal abuse of the coarser sort, but its use was in some ways a tribute to our language. No Oriental language seems to have

any reasonable expletive, and all nationalities seem to fall back on the English cuss when they want to give way to refined passion. You can, in the Eastern tongues which Natha Singh knew, call a man a "beast," "pig," or "naughty fellow," but having done so you are not much better off. At any rate, I always found him addicted to a fluent use of the expressions he had acquired after years of contact with Englishmen in the perils and tribulations of the tropics.

This and one other parade, some six months later, remain in my memory. The sub-commandant was a whale for ceremonial. I, of coarser clay, was all for making the men sweat across country. I had marched them out early one morning some four miles, detached an opposing rearguard force, and proposed to fight my way back to barracks with the rest of the company. I spent half an hour explaining the scheme, set out my "point," connecting files, advanced guard, all according to Cocker, and sounded the "advance." We had hardly started when up rode "Raffles" on his patient little pony and asked: "Where is the band?" I told him that they were acting stretcher-bearers in the rear of the column. To my horror he sent for them, put them in front of my point, and made them play us back to barracks. Luckily, the enemy were gentlemen, and did not snipe us. It was certainly *magnifique*, but by no means *la guerre*.

Raffles was an incomparable host. His house was always "open," and always full of guests and food and drink. He loved them all, and was happier

when entertaining than at any other time. He was fortunate in his household staff. I have often partaken of one of his famous Sunday curry tiffins, and, walking down to the club with him after tea, heard him tell his boy: "Two only to dinner at eight o'clock." We have arrived back at nine, or even ten, with four, six or eight others, to find in ten minutes a perfectly cooked dinner ready for everyone, including probably a mutton chop, more than a luxury in those days.

Shortly after my arrival I was ordered to take charge, for the first time but by no means the last, of the picket on duty at an execution. These functions used to take place at 6.30 a.m., not a pleasant time to have to watch the blotting-out of a fellow human. On this occasion the wretched man, who had been sentenced for a most brutal and cold-blooded murder, struggled and screamed every step of his way from the condemned cell at the top of the building on to the very drop. It was a hot morning, and inside the high walls of the yard there was not a breath of wind. I do not know whether it was that or whether it was the effect of watching the furious and revolting struggle between the condemned man and a posse of warders, but five of the picket, great stalwart Sikhs and Pathans, fainted and had to be carried out. Each casualty involved two of his comrades to lift him and one to carry the rifles of all three. At one time I began to wonder whether I should in the end be left alone in my glory.

The nauseating business ended at last, and the man was carried up the steps of the scaffold appar-

ently exhausted. The "drop" in those primitive days was manipulated by a party of prisoners, tailed on at the end of a rope, pulling away the supports. The noose was on the man's neck and two warders were holding him up when he made one last despairing effort. The word, however, had been given, and the struggle was cut short by death. One of the warders holding him lost his balance and went down with the body, but was not hurt.

I found that the only way to stomach these proceedings was to read the notes of the case. The extreme penalty was never inflicted except in circumstances of really brutal homicide or of murder by a rebel. It was a moral support to one to realize that the punishment was fully merited, but it did not make an unpleasant duty even tolerable.

This was the only instanee within my experience when a real fight for life took place. The Malayan races have a horror of any display of emotion, and that, combined with the fatalistic sentiment of the East, particularly among Moslems, usually leads them to meet death without bravado, but coolly and calmly.

I was partly in charge of the civil police duties in the town, and at one time was specially delegated to investigate a series of losses in the post office. After some trouble we traced the mischief to one of the clerks in the office, and on arresting him and searching his quarters we found hundreds of letters which he had abstracted. The ladies of Sandakan were as prone as ladies are said to be elsewhere to communicate nutty little bits of gossip to their friends, and

it was amusing to be tackled on the tennis lawn and elsewhere by some of the reputedly most energetic scandalmongers with anxious inquiries, first, whether I should have to peruse the letters found, and, secondly, whether they would also be presented in court at the hearing of the case and read out publicly in evidence. I caused a lot of consternation and not a little anxiety by saying casually that of course I should have to read every word and that the whole bundle would form part of the record of the case. As a fact, of course, we only selected a few of the letters which had contained money or other valuables for purposes of the trial, and returned to the senders or the addressees the rest of the seizure after tendering them in court merely as evidence of the extent of the breach of trust. From one or two sentences which met my eye during a hasty examination of some of the documents for evidence of misappropriation of their contents, I should imagine that the libel actions which would have followed a full disclosure of all the contents would have kept the courts of the State busy for years; but we managed to get through without touching the more explosive missives.

We used to have a lot of trouble from the police point of view when ships of the American Navy came in. The American "blue" was then a tough proposition, and, coming from a port where things were "dry," he used to break out "some" in Sandakan. Not unnaturally, he resented being handled by our Indian police, and I usually had to go down and take a hand when ships were in, unless a picket had been landed to keep things straight. There was a bad

outbreak one evening when a party of them started to make things hum in a Japanese "house." There was luckily a picket ashore, which gathered in and took off the still active members of the assaulting party, but left us to deal with three men who, without a stitch of clothing on, were dead to the world, from a surfeit of Japanese beer, in the veranda of the house. We could not find their clothes, and so, borrowing sarongs from the landlady, we carted these lads to the wharf and got them off to their ship. I was asked to go off next day and see the skipper, who was very apologetic and asked me to lunch. He was due to play tennis that afternoon at Government House and to stay on to dinner there, as was I. I cadged a lift ashore in his gig when he went, and was rather amused to recognize among the crew some representatives of last night's party, still a bit "fresh." "Bow" was more markedly under the weather than the rest, and was only getting his blade in about one stroke in seven. The captain turned to his cox, who was a bit bleary in the eye but quite sober, and said: "Say, what's the matter with bow?" Bow immediately took up his cue and started the old ditty: "What's the matter with the 'old man'?" Chorus, by the crew: "He's all right." Bow: "Who's all right?" Crew: "Why, the old man." A British post-captain would have exploded, but Democracy only turned to me and said: "The boys always get a bit fresh in Sandakan."

After dinner I was detailed to escort the skipper to the wharf and to see him on board his boat, which he had ordered at 11 p.m. We arrived about a

quarter-past and found no boat. We did find, however, a rather beery "blue" who was waiting for the next "leave boat," and were told by him that the skipper's gig had been in at eleven, but that, as he was not there then, the crew was jiggered if it was going to wait around all the blooming night for any blooming officer, and had gone off to the ship. The conversation was repeated to us *literatim*, much to my embarrassment, but the captain did not apparently shrink from hearing himself freely characterized by the proverbial "term of endearment used by sailors." The dinner at Government House had been official, and we were both in uniform, but we had to swallow our pride, and I took the skipper off to his ship in a Chinese sampan full of children and smells.

The fire brigade was another branch of my duties. There was no machinery other than a very decrepit truck carrying a pump and a few lengths of hose, which usually split when one managed to find any water to put in it. The personnel of the "brigade" consisted of any police one could find at the moment. The general fire call was for jungle fires on the hillsides, and then a yelling babel of police in very miscellaneous mufti would set on the flames with branches and beat them out. The only fire that might have done damage during my time in Sandakan was taken in time without the police knowing anything about it. A violent thunderstorm broke over Sandakan about half-past seven one evening and pinned us all in the club. I was sitting talking to Mrs. George, the wife of the leading merchant in

the place, whose office was next the club, when a very naked and very wet Chinese rushed in, hurled a sack full to the brim of notes into her lap, uttered the one word "api" (fire) and disappeared. He was followed by a procession of others who shouted the same mystic warning, dropped the ledgers they were carrying, and bolted out again. Two or three of us followed them to see what was causing all this display, and found that the telephone exchange, which was on the first floor of the next building, was on fire. The door of the exchange was locked, but the repeated application of about forty stone to it effected an entrance, and we found the double planking of the wall near the "lead-in" of all the wires was blazing furiously. We got hold of a ladder, a coolie or two and some buckets of water, and the question then came as to the priority for mounting that ladder and extinguishing the fire. There is an adage that lightning never strikes in the same place twice, but the storm was still crashing overhead, and we were dealing with the absolute focus of fifty potential conductors in the shape of the wires, and the fire had burned out all their connexions to "earth." It seemed a hundred to one chance that another flash must strike one of the wires, and so the wretched man on that ladder whose job entailed him pushing the buckets one by one through the burning wall, among all the loose ends of the wires, and trying to extinguish the battens of the partition. We held a hurried discussion, and by two votes to one I, as head of the fire organization of the city, was elected to the post. I made an address to the

electors deprecating my fitness for the honour they were conferring on me, but, as they were bigger men than I, I mounted slowly to the top of the ladder and put out the fire. We found afterwards that the flash had hit the roof, travelled through the iron bedstead in the flat above—luckily, not occupied at the moment—broken up and set fire to the exchange board, and so to earth. With the exception of one storm which fused eight electric lights in my house in Jesselton and frightened me out of my bath in a very sketchy costume, that was, I think, the worst storm I have met in Borneo.

Talking of fires, I was much amused by the wails of a district officer whose town had been practically razed to the ground by a fire. He had, of course, held an inquiry into the occurrence, and in the course of it had received statements from the Chinese and other traders as to the losses which they had suffered. "I never knew before that my chits for goods supplied were regarded as practically gilt-edged securities. All the Chinese claim to have lost thousands of dollars in currency notes, but not a single man has lost one of my chits."

Much of my spare time was spent in an earnest endeavour to learn Malay. Not only was one handicapped at every turn by the lack of a medium of communication, but the passing of one's examination involved a comparatively substantial increase in one's pay.

Malay serves as a lingua franca in North Borneo. It would perhaps be fairer to say that the lingua franca is a language which bears a very distant resem-

blance to decent Malay. The tongue spoken in the Malay peninsula is liberally sprinkled with specialized words denoting minute variations in actions apparently similar to one another; it has a distinct mixture of Arabic and a complex system of suffixes and affixes differentiating the various applications of any root word. There are a quarter of a million inhabitants in North Borneo, and among them there are probably not more than a round hundred to whom Malay is mother-tongue. The remainder, if they ever acquire it, do so from necessity, and not unnaturally blend in with what they are pleased to call Malay a large proportion of their native language and its characteristics. The Chinese cannot mouth an "r," and so give one an "l" in place of it; the Japanese reverse the substitution, and make all their "l's" into "r's," while at least one native race as often as not pronounces a word like "seluar" as "serual." The British Indian reverses subject and object in a sentence at random, to the confusion of his audience, and every other tribe pronounces Malay with its own distinctive intonation. The Dyak, for instance, clips his words in a staccato manner; the indolent Bajau slurs most of his syllables, while the European, and more particularly the American, disregards accentuation, and, revelling in the flat English "a" which so inexpressibly ruins a really musical tongue, will without shame speak of "Sarry-wack" instead of Sarawak.

For some reason the constabulary, the medical profession and the railway staff have invented three separate brands of language which they euphemis-

tically term Malay. The result is that the subordinates are faced with the alternative of learning both Borneo Malay and the departmental dialect or of remaining isolated specialists among the other inhabitants. A railway engineer wished to ask whether some cement work had set, and fluently inquired: "Cement sudah (has) set?" A distinguished police officer, Stanley by name, had occasion to reprimand one of his men on parade, and convinced the culprit that he was no longer fit to encumber the earth in the following oration: "Look here, sergeant. Just bilang (tell) this man he is a fool—a fool, you know, sergeant," and then in a flight of oratory: "Bodoh, you know, sergeant."

It was at one time ordained that police recruits should not draw full pay until they were able to speak a modicum of Malay. The examinations were usually conducted at headquarters before a recruit was sent elsewhere for duty, but on one occasion special circumstances led the adjutant to send me three or four Indians of only a few months' service. One of these applied to me shortly after his arrival to be allowed to stand for his "pass degree," and I was asked to invigilate his examination. I asked the native officer at my station what sort of standard I was expected to adopt. His reply was not very illuminating. He said: "Oh, they are always passed so long as they can understand Captain Stanley and he can understand them." The age of miracles is, we are told, past, and I disliked the idea of this wretched young Sikh eking out his life on a pittance of nine dollars a month in default of his accomplish-

ing such an impossible task, so, adopting a line of my own, I examined him in the rudiments of the tongue, and rejoiced his money-grubbing soul with the coveted extra dollar.

Malay is a language where the omission, addition or variation of one letter in a word will change its meaning utterly, sometimes in a way which is embarrassing to the hearers if not to the unconscious speaker. It is amusing sometimes to warn the novice of these horrible dilemmas and watch him as he approaches one of these linguistic hurdles. One can plainly see the mental gymnastics which gradually bring his not yet facile tongue to a halt before the awful possibilities facing him, and then, gathering all his courage, he jumps—nine times out of ten—right into the mud. Unfortunately, the classic examples do not bear repetition, but I remember a cadet who wanted his boy to fetch a barber and used the following phrase : " Chari sa'orang potong rumput." The boy appeared next morning accompanied by a forbidding person, not over-cleanly, bearing a full-sized scythe. Rumput is the Malay for grass, while " hair " is " rambut." The youth's face as he contemplated the apparent shipwright with the implement presumably in local use was eloquent of a resolution formed there and then to make a career for himself where the tonsorial art was less crude in personnel and material.

CHAPTER II

GAOL DELIVERY—PRISONERS AND THEIR WAYS

SHORTLY after my arrival I was appointed A.D.C. to the Governor, and enjoyed the cheery and sporting atmosphere which he created everywhere.

The year 1902 brought us, in common with the rest of the world, the coronation of King Edward, and preparations were made for a real celebration. A British gunboat and several American men-of-war came in, the latter bringing quite a number of American army men from the Philippines, accompanied by their charming wives and their charming—oh! so charming—daughters. There was a week of delirious entertainment and enjoyment, which culminated in an evening " at home " with fireworks in the grounds of Government House. It had been my job as A.D.C. to do the decorations, and the scheme had been to have fairy lamps on all the bushes in the garden. We had no electric light in those days, and they were filled as an illuminant with cocoanut oil. This, for the benefit of the uninitiated, is a most pungent and cloying liquid, largely used by native ladies as a hair unguent. Raffles, who had " done " the week thoroughly, arrived rather late, rather vague, and arrayed in a police mess-kit which

he had invented for wear in Europe when on leave. Shortly described, it was a mass of gold lace with a slight background of blue cloth. Some of the fairy lamps had gone out, and as he steered his genial but devious way among the guests with his cheery "Ha! ha! dear boy!" he upset more than one of these unlighted containers over himself, a liberal libation of oil which, in Biblical phraseology, ran over his head unto the hem of his garments. At such a time and in his mood, *lèse majesté* mattered nothing to him, and he proceeded with calm but determined mien to the Governor's dressing-room, where with the sacred towel and hair-brushes he endeavoured to wipe away the offence of the oil.

At 6 a.m. next morning I cantered up to Government House to start picking up the pieces of the night before. I had served an apprenticeship in Canada, but I had never heard there anything approaching the wealth of expletive with which His Excellency was saluting the happy dawn, having just awakened to the fact that his towels, his sponge, his hair-brushes, his soap—in fact, his entire *batterie de toilette*, reeked of this unhappy lubricant with all its unfortunate and intriguing associations. It is not given to many to watch a Governor, Chief Justice and Commander-in-Chief, literally dance with rage at the end of a telephone clad only in a tartan calico petticoat. I have, and value the experience beyond rubies.

One of the "star turns" of the coronation festival was a "gaol delivery," when a dozen or so prisoners were to be released on pardon. The Governor,

attended by his staff and a large concourse of distinguished visitors, moved in stately procession to the prison. The ceremony had been well staged by the superintendent of the gaol. In the central yard was a guard paraded, and before an imposing array of chairs stood the twelve ex-convicts clad in the reach-me-downs of freedom. The Governor took his seat and made a speech in Malay explaining at length the reason for the wholesale clemency which he was about to exercise. Personally, having heard in English what he was going to say, I knew what he had said in Malay, but I was, I think, the only person there who did. His Excellency was one of the leading Malay scholars in the Malay States and a fluent speaker in the language. He was, however, apt to forget that the local variation of the tongue that he knew so well was crudely and severely bald, and that to a Borneo audience undue refinement of language was as unintelligible as stilted legal phraseology in English would be to a kindergarten student. The prisoners were certainly a little doubtful. The scaffold was there in full view to remind them that the yard was at times the scene of other ceremonies, and really there was no knowing what form a European celebration might conceivably take. As the polysyllabic peroration died away into silence I heard one prisoner whisper nervously to the warder next him: "Apa dia bilang?" (what does he say?) Whether the hefty nudge in the ribs which was the only response to his anxious query reassured him or not I do not know, but I think that our departure without having called for any sacrificial offering was

greeted with twelve sighs of relief. Hanging, at any rate, was not on the programme for that morning.

I stayed behind while the released men were handed their formal pardons and checked off the books of the gaol. One man who had served the greater part of a long sentence seemed to think that his abrupt discharge was a reflection on his character and on the performance of his duties, and for some time he refused to accept the precious document. "Have I not eaten the Government's rice for eight years without a single complaint against me? Why then am I turned adrift like this?" It was no avail. The law had ordered his imprisonment and it was so. The law now ordained his release and it had to be so. "Pergi" (get out) was the benediction from the Sikh warder, and with lagging and unwilling steps he "got."

I was, late one night, going my rounds as "officer of the day," and found wandering about the barrack yard a prisoner in prison clothes. This was a very gross breach of discipline, and I turned on the orderly sergeant and asked him what it all meant. The prisoner, a "trusty," would wait for no vicarious explanation, but, evidently feeling aggrieved, started on a long complaint against the gaol authorities. It seemed that he had been employed on some extra-mural job at a distance from the gaol, and had arrived at the gaol after the roll of prisoners had been called and the wards locked up for the night. He had applied for admission, but the sergeant of the guard, with a puritan regard for the letter of his guard "orders," which forbade

prisoners to pass the threshold of the gaol after roll-call, had refused him admission. "A nice thing, sir, is this!" was the tenor of the convict's story. "A man is locked out of his home just because he is a few minutes late in returning." I soothed him and the sergeant, who finally consented to waive his conscientious scruples and to allow, for once, a prisoner to pass the gates after hours.

It sounds a little quaint, but the fact is that, especially in earlier days, gaol life was not a hardship. The discipline was easy, and there were a lot of outside jobs to which a "trusty" could aspire after a few months of probationary rigour. Some of these jobs were gang-work under surveillance, but some were detached jobs which gave a man every chance of getting a smoke, the one deprivation which really hurt the ordinary prisoner. For the rest, Government provided good food, good clothing, and good accommodation. It is true that a certain amount of work was expected of a prisoner, but then in his jungle home he had to work, and work hard, to keep the home fires burning and the rice-pot full. No wonder that some of the convicts were averse to any mistaken idea of a clemency which would turn them out into a cold and unsympathetic world where people lived by the sweat of their brows unless they were really lucky and lived by the sweat of their wife's.

Our mess numbered among its inmates the superintendent of the gaol, and we had, practically attached to our domestic staff, a gang of prisoners who carried out all our odd jobs. They used on occasion to take us on picnics to an island at the

mouth of the harbour, and, as far as one could see, enjoyed the outing as much as we did.

There were, of course, instances where a convict made a bolt for liberty. One of these promised to be exciting. We had just returned to the mess one evening from a ride when an excited warder rushed up to the house and reported that one gang had returned to the gaol short of one prisoner and the sentry deficient one rifle, one belt, and ten rounds of ammunition. The gang had been working at a stone quarry about a mile from the gaol, and the sentry over them, feeling that he could give a more undivided attention to watching the work if he reclined, put down his rifle, belt and pouch, and stretched himself under a tree. One of the prisoners said to him in a chaffing tone: "That's right. I'll do your job for you," and put on the belt, took up the rifle, and began a lively caricature of a sentry on duty. He gradually prolonged his "beat" until he was out of reach, and then murmured, "Well, so long. I'm off, and you can tell your Tuan that I know how to use a rifle and I'm out to shoot if there is any pursuit." This little incident had occurred about three in the afternoon, but the sentry had kept his gang out until the regulation hour, so that the news was three hours late. We got our revolvers and galloped out to the quarry, but there was, of course, nothing to be seen, and we could not pick up any tracks. I put sentries out during the night in case the fugitive elected to come into town, and next morning took out a company and extended across the peninsula to try to drive him forward into

the sea. I had only about fifty men, and it would have taken five hundred to quarter that jungle properly, but there was a sporting chance. It seemed likely that the prisoner would try to make his way overland, and I took out a patrol that night to lie in wait on the telegraph track, which was the only open trail through that part of the country. Beyond the fact that a rhinoceros came and looked at us and about a hundred and fifty thousand mosquitoes played with us all night, nothing happened, and we returned weary and disappointed. To everyone's relief a small fishing-boat rolled up during the morning and dumped ashore the missing rifle, ten rounds of Martini S.A.A., and a bundle of rope from which in due course they extracted the prisoner. It seems that he had hailed them and demanded a passage across the bay. They had consented, owing to the persuasive way in which he handled the rifle; but when he was safely in the boat they patted him on the head with a paddle and trussed him up. I never saw anyone so thoroughly tied before. There must have been yards of rope round him, and he was, when we finally unravelled him, too numb to stand. Later, when the law had taken its course with him, he was too numb in his hinder parts to sit.

Having completed our programme of festivities, the telegraph line, which wended a circuitous course through some hundreds of miles of jungle, where its supports served as rubbing-poles for the wild elephants, suddenly regained consciousness and informed us that His Majesty had been and was still seriously ill. The coronation which we had celebrated

with such éclat and enthusiasm had not taken place. One cannot uncelebrate or decelebrate a celebration, and so we could only say we were sorry and start our recovery with the promise of a second celebration later.

Meanwhile, our American visitors were urgent that we should return their call and celebrate the Fourth of July with them at Zamboanga, the capital of the Southern Philippines and the seat of government for the Moro Province. A representative party consisting of H.E., two A.D.C., the judge and several ladies set forth, calling on the way at Jolo to pick up a cavalry band and several American officers and their wives. It was more than a celebration. Breakfasts, lunches, teas, dinners, dances, suppers, sports, cockfights, tennis followed one another without intermission, irrigated by cocktails. The Governor stayed at Government House, while we A.D.C. were billeted in a mess of grass widows of officers who were fighting up-country. I do not personally remember that we ever went to bed during our stay, but I do remember that the only way to the only bathroom led through the dining-room, and that the grass widows invariably fed when I wanted a bath. Our modesty was so affronted by this obstacle that Stanley and I were reduced to retiring to the Governor's yacht, at a cost each time of one good dollar, whenever the bath thirst overtook us.

Only three incidents stand out from the general haze. One is a tiffin at the Army and Navy Club, when a distinguished British naval officer, who wore a

long row of medals, exuberantly presented them after lunch to a very charming American lady. She pretended to take the gift *au grand sérieux*, and our compatriot's efforts to recover his baubles without appearing ungracious or ungallant were a lesson in Chesterfieldian politeness.

On our way to Zamboanga we had picked up the band of the cavalry regiment in garrison at Jolo. Jolo was a "dry" town; Zamboanga was quite otherwise. The band had started to make its year's hay crop as soon as it set foot in Zamboanga, and the results, at an official dinner at Government House that night, were noteworthy. The big drum was only mellow and had managed to remember his part, with the result that we drank all the loyal and patriotic toasts, "The King," "The Star-Spangled Banner," etc., to a magnificent big-drum solo. However, the sentiment was there even if the tune was not.

The evening before our departure there was a big ball at the club. Next morning Stanley and I, not feeling our best, struggled into full uniform and marched over to Government House. Our liege lord explained, without displaying any marked affection for us, that he had had to carry his own dancing-pumps home the night before (or early that morning), that he resented having had to do so, and also that he had lost both his pumps and his hat, "somewhere between the club and here." This represented a distance of about half a mile of public road, bordered by a rather smelly canal, which we, he intimated, could search for the errant gear. Patent leather half-

wellingtons, a sword, a red silk sash and a spiky helmet are imposing, but as the kit for a search party, emphatically No. Duty, however, is duty, and we went off to make what, as far as I was concerned, was a very perfunctory search. We returned after a decent interval and, with the most disarming salutes, reported the vagrants still absent. Rumour has it that half the garrison was turned out to do what we had failed to do and succeeded, but how and where is quite another story.

We set sail from Zamboanga after the most cordial *entente* that I have ever experienced. We were credibly informed that the only alcoholic drink left in Zamboanga until the next store-ship arrived was one bottle of brandy which the provident M.O. had locked in his safe in case of emergency.

On our way home we called at Jolo, where a visit had been arranged to the Sultan of Sulu, the native potentate who owned nominally a large portion of North Borneo and received rent therefor from the Chartered Company. The Governor landed to pay an unofficial call on the local governor, who was, incidentally, the colonel commanding the cavalry regiment in garrison. We got to Government House, and had a rather apt example of the difference in methods of administration. The tour of duty for an American regiment in the Philippine Islands was two years, and in that time it was not possible, and for the matter of that not worth while, for the officers to learn the language of those whom they ruled. The result was that they had to rely entirely on interpretation. We were

received in the Governor's anteroom by an A.D.C., who asked us to wait a moment as the Governor was engaged, and we spent the time chatting in Malay to a dozen natives who were waiting there. Presently we were ushered in and welcomed by the colonel. In the course of conversation he mentioned that his only interpreter had gone off that morning on a cruise to some outlying island in a gunboat, and that, pending his return, he could not communicate with any of his subjects. My Governor offered our services to deal with the folk who were waiting, and in a short time he and I were busy restoring the short-circuit between ruler and subject. The incident was suggestive and went a long way to explain why the Sulu archipelago so long held out against the American troops. There can be no sympathy with or knowledge of a subject race without some common dialect or easy means of intercourse, but the system of short tenure of the administrative posts rendered this factor impossible and inoperative.

Our return to Sandakan was utterly and absolutely unpleasant. The yacht, on which six Europeans, including two ladies, were travelling, was really a glorified launch with one cabin. It was not a craft for anything but the most placid sea, and it was our misfortune to get into the tail end of a typhoon. It was pitch dark, there were no lighthouses, but there were reefs and there were currents which ran north or south, apparently at random, at rates varying from one to six knots. At one period during the night I heard the old Malay skipper reporting to the Governor that he had no idea where we were and

that, for all he knew, we might go ashore any minute. Personally, I prayed that we should, but the calmer light of after days has led me to think that all that happened to me during that journey home was probably the correct treatment for a patient who had undergone both a coronation and a Fourth of July.

CHAPTER III

TENOM EXPEDITION—EXPEDITION AGAINST GUNTING AND LANGKAP

MY next job was something rather more military. The natives of the far interior had been unduly recalcitrant, and a durbar was ordained at which a substantial force of police was to be in attendance to show the flag. The whole show was not devoid of humour. Our progress commenced with sixty miles over a railway which was officially closed to traffic. We got through without mishap, though the truck in front of the guard's van (in which we travelled) was at one stop seen to be blazing violently, and there was a rush to remove from it ten cases of dynamite with which it was loaded.

After the rail journey and a short day up the Padas river by boat, we had a jungle trek of about fifteen miles. I have and always have had a predilection, even on short trips like this one, for "jungle-slogging" in the comfort of shorts, a shirt, a double soft felt hat, and stockings. Stanley, who was O.C. the expedition, was more correct, and paraded in a much more martial panoply, including helmet, leather leggings, etc. I can only say that I finished with the kit in which I started, while his orderly on arrival seemed to be wearing Stanley's entire kit except his vest and his breeches.

The durbar was interesting as giving one a chance of seeing a fresh and very uncivilized lot of natives, but the only amusing part of it was the effect on Stanley. The natives present, who had only lately "come in," had already acquired the odious habit of shaking hands every time they met one. Many of them suffered from skin diseases of a repulsive nature. Stanley resented this, with all its possibilities of contagion, and his abrupt dashes in the midst of a solemn discussion to a bowl of diluted permanganate to disinfect his hands was always too much for my gravity.

My next journey was really active service. I was given a party of native police and told off to go and arrest two rebels who were reported to be at two different points on the west coast. One was a harmless little man named Gunting, who was, however, distinctly a potential danger as a focus for other outlaws; but the other, Langkap, was bigger game as the last surviving lieutenant of Mat Saleh, North Borneo's De Valera.

I was given twenty police and told to report myself to Allen, a district officer, who was to be my "political" on the trip. In due course we set off, marching light to keep ahead of native news. At our first halt I had to reprimand severely several of the native police who had been home with the coronation contingent and had been treated with more intimacy than was quite desirable by some of the women they had met at home. That was *fait accompli* and could not be mended, but it could serve as a warning for future occasions. The discussion, with a wealth of detail, of their amours with white women in the hear-

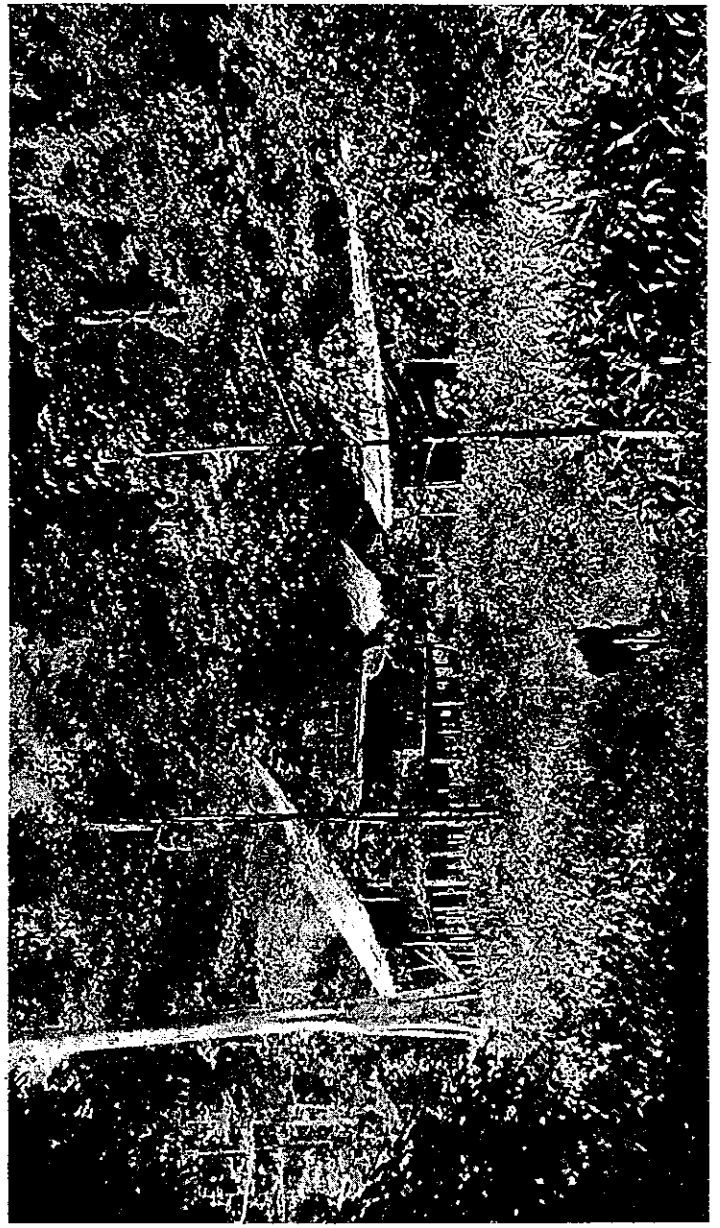


Photo: G. C. Woolley

A Rest-House on a Jungle Bridle-Path

ing of white men was, however, something that could not be tolerated, and was not.

From our first halt we made a rapid night march to surprise our rebel friend in his mountain village. It was a vile trek, four hours over native hill-paths simply bristling with leeches, and finishing with two hours up a mountain torrent in spate. About 4 a.m. we emerged into a steeply sloping rice field of four or five acres with a hut in the middle of it, in which were seated five men round a fire. I reconnoitred the place with the guide, who decided that, though they were members of the band, Gunting himself was not among them. I decided to rush the hut and capture the inmates with the object of finding out where he was. We crawled back to the police, and I explained my tactics. "No shooting, crawl up and surround the hut, and then, following me, rush it and capture the men. *No shooting.*" We crawled up within fifteen yards of the hut unperceived. I then gave the word and rose. I never dropped quicker in my life. Every one of my police was firing for dear life, and a .450 Martini bullet makes a very nasty noise and a nastier hole. Luckily, like most natives in a panic, they fired high, and so I escaped; but so did our quarry, who bolted without ceremony. The police were quick on their tracks, and one man was wounded and captured. He pointed out the track to Gunting's village, but said that it was a precipitous approach and plastered with bamboo spring-traps and caltrops. We had fired some fifty rounds, and it seemed hardly possible that we had not awakened every living soul for miles round, so

we sat down by the fire, with a sentry or two out, to wait for daylight. When the dawn broke I extended my force across the field and went on towards the village. At my end of the line we saw nothing, but on the right the corporal in charge saw a man and a woman leave a smaller hut at the edge of the field and bolt into the jungle. When he reported to me later I asked him why he had not fired at the man. His reply, "I had no orders to fire," after the unordered "rapid" of the earlier hours, and in spite of the fact that we were in enemy territory, was amusing but foolish and annoying. I heard later that the fugitive was Gunting himself on his honeymoon with his second wife. One decently aimed shot that morning would have saved me many a weary hour of search for the little man in the succeeding years.

We swept the rice-field and found nothing else of interest, but were then faced with the climb to the village. This was a narrow, slippery jungle-track up a steep ridge, the undergrowth on either side bristling with the local equivalent of barbed wire in the shape of sharpened bamboo. We started with a Dyak corporal and two Dyak privates as a "point," followed by my orderly and the guide and then myself. One by one the leading men of the party dropped out "to do up their putties," and left the guide and me to enter the village alone. I felt convinced that it must be deserted after all the noise, and I clambered up the apology for steps of the nearest of the four huts. As I got to the top, some ten foot from the ground, there was a shout from

inside and a spear was thrown, piercing clean through my shirt where my waistcoat should have been, and hitting the bamboo wall of the hut with a tremendous thud. It pinned me for a moment, but I wrenched myself free, emptied my revolver over an angle of ninety degrees round the hut (which was pitch dark), and dropped to the ground to reload. As I dropped three figures came, base foremost, through the wall of the hut at the far end. The police had by that time surrounded the hut, and the first figure as it fell and before it reached the ground was cut through from the right shoulder to the left thigh, a wonderful blow through bone and sinew. The second man was wounded, and pursued and captured, while the third got away untouched. The other houses were empty. Why these folk had waited we could not guess, and the wounded man died before we had time to get more than a few words out of him.

After the excitement was over, I got hold of the "point" and my orderly, all Dyaks, and asked why representatives of a race reputedly so brave had fallen by the wayside when we approached the lair of an enemy. They explained to me without a blush that in that sort of attack the first, the second, and even the third man got the benefit of any trouble that was coming, either from spring-traps or from the enemy, and they had therefore resigned their leading positions in my favour. A year or so later I was in charge of another similar show, and was leading with the guide and a corporal (not a Dyak). Every other step we found and set off a spring-trap, and watched with interest the spear flash across the path

waist high or in some cases downwards from the top of a tree and lengthways of the path. Presently we found one of the rattan trip-lines which communicate with the triggers of these traps, and gently prodded it to release the spear. There was, as far as we could see, no response, but in a second there was a howl from behind us. The trap was a new type, and was led back ten or fifteen yards along the path. My orderly had taken the spear in the ankle and thought he was very badly treated. It was unpleasantly barbed, and to clear it we had to cut off the shank and push the barbs through. As I performed this delicate operation with a not over sharp pocket-knife, I gave way to the temptation of enlarging on the dangers of leading the line on these occasions and the immunity afforded to those who lagged behind.

Our attempt on Gunting had not been a great success except in so far as it showed him that we could get at him, and woke the natives up to the disadvantage of having a rebel living in too great proximity to them. We were, however, a weary and disappointed crowd as we worked our way downstream by easy stages preparatory to going after the bigger game, Langkap.

I was rather amused, when I sent in my report on this show, to be asked solemnly whether I had proclaimed martial law before the attack. I replied in the negative, and asked, for future guidance, what my procedure should have been. It seems that I should have posted a proclamation, "quoting my authority, for the information of those concerned." As Gunting had been in open rebellion for ten years, and not a single soul within fifty miles could read any script of any sort, Malay or English, there seemed to be no reply possible beyond the hackneyed "noted," but I should have loved to argue the point.

Langkap, the other rebel, was reported to be hiding in some villages about seventy miles off at the other end of the district. It did not appear that he had more than one or two followers, but that fact, in jungle, made tracking and arresting him all the harder. One can follow up a band, but one or two men are as difficult to find as the proverbial needle. I went to the headquarters of the district to consult the district officer, and on the evening of our arrival was not pleased to receive excited messages from the managers of estates in the district to say that large parties of natives were moving about their estates. We roused out the police, and started on a weary tramp along the knee-deep roads to protect these good Dutchmen. The danger seemed to grow less the nearer we got to the source of the rumours, but we knocked up the most perturbed manager and claimed a billet for the police and supper and bed for ourselves. I must admit that he responded nobly.

There were rumours meanwhile of an intention on Langkap's part to surrender, and to accelerate his ideas on the subject I moved a day's march towards his hiding-place. Whether it was *post hoc* or *propterea hoc* deponent knoweth not, but news came the next day from a trusted chief that Langkap was actually "in" and with him. I sent over a corporal and guard with a pair of handcuffs and a chain.

Langkap had already been guilty of one treacherous murder, and I was running no risks. About 10 p.m. I heard a party approaching the camp, and a bunch of natives appeared and marched in, followed by my guard. Each native as he came in shook me warmly by the hand, none more warmly than a magnificently attired stranger at the end of the procession. Most of them I recognized as chiefs, but I saw no one in handcuffs, and I came to the conclusion that Langkap had bolted. After the usual interval of small talk which orientals consider decent, I asked gently, "Well, what about Langkap?" and found that the magnificent stranger was he. Contrary to all orders, the corporal had brought him over six miles of jungle path, in his own stamping ground, in the dark, without any form of restraint. It came off all right, but it was a piece of luck. I was not inclined to strain my luck too far, and Langkap spent the remainder of his time in the best security I could arrange.

Langkap was duly tried on charges of armed rebellion and of murder, in the most cowardly fashion, of an envoy under flag of truce. He was convicted and sentenced to be shot. The place appointed was a hill in the Tempasuk district, his own country and the scene of many of his exploits, a district renowned for its turbulence. I had by then been appointed district officer of the Tempasuk, and I was deputed to arrange for the execution of his sentence, death by shooting. It was a gruesome performance. A coward in life, he was a coward in his death. He was sent up under escort by launch, and having for some weeks refused to eat anything but bread, he suddenly

demanded a curry. This dish takes three or four hours to prepare, a fact upon which he had evidently reckoned. It happened, however, that the crew of the launch had a curry ready cooked. This was offered to him and refused. He then made a testamentary disposition of his alleged property, taking nearly an hour to recite over and over again a list of property which he knew he did not possess and we equally knew to be non-existent. The whole thing seemed a mockery, but one had to let him go on. When the time finally came he refused to have his eyes bandaged, but at the last minute, when the firing party had picked up their arms, he suddenly asked for a bandage. It was, of course, very problematical whether the firing party, strung up as they were by the delay, would recognize the unexpected order to ground arms and would refrain from firing. However, all went well, and Langkap passed finally to his rest.

CHAPTER IV

THE DISTRICT OFFICER

THE term "district officer" probably conveys little or nothing to the generality of my readers. Those who know India or of India will use the analogy of a district commissioner, and picture an elderly satrap of a province as large as England presiding over a staff of deputies and assistant-deputies and underlings of all sorts. Even in these advanced days the resemblance is very remote. In the early nineteen hundreds a district officer in North Borneo had to assist him in his job probably one Malay-speaking clerk and twenty police. With this staff he had to administer an area of possibly two thousand square miles and a population of perhaps ten thousand.

He was to all intents and purposes the untrammelled king of this realm. Although hardly out of his teens, the bounds to his sway—at any rate in the remoter districts—were mainly theoretical. Various codes of law were there to guide him in court, it is true, but their provisions were not too rigidly followed, and custom tempered with common sense played a prominent part in the administration of justice. A monthly report was expected, but more as a pious hope than as a really serious obligation.

It was usually submitted sooner or later, but I am not prepared to state that it always conveyed the whole truth, though it always was the truth and nothing but the truth. The district officer was expected to use his initiative, administer his district, and not talk too much about what he had done. The red-tape fetters of centralization had not then begun to bind him.

The disposal of his time was in his own hands, subject to his producing a satisfactory result in the shape of a quiet and prosperous district. In those days he had a chance on his journeys of deviating from his direct route and sojourning a while in places where deer or wild cattle, pigeon or snipe were to be found. Nowadays it is not so easy, but still possible in moderation, especially if the Resident takes a broad and understanding view of such relaxation. He very seldom has to take any view of it, because it does not apparently appeal to the district officer of to-day in the same degree as, for instance, dancing.

The station was usually in telegraphic or telephonic communication with the outer world, and there was probably a small coasting steamer making irregular calls or, inland, a bridle-path to give access to it.

In addition to the monthly report, the district officer was expected to forward a monthly cash account showing his financial transactions on behalf of the Government. No one seemed to itch for returns of any sort, and all that was definitely asked of one was to run the district decently, to get in touch and keep in touch with the inhabitants, and

to administer justice. During my four years in the Tempasuk I had one visit from the Governor and one from my Resident. The result was that one spent one's time travelling the district and getting to know the natives, their customs, their wants and troubles and their language in a way that the modern district officer, from lack of time, simply cannot.

The administration of justice is now cribbed, cabined and confined by a meticulous observance of the codes of penal and civil law; the district officer and an enlarged staff spend their time compiling an endless series of returns and reports; a Resident feels that he is neglecting his job if he does not visit each district at least once a quarter; while peripatetic departmental personages are an ever-present visitation. The net result is that a district officer's travelling is reduced to hurried flits along the easier tracks in his district, and he has no chance of absorbing that intimate knowledge which engenders sympathy with his subjects; nor does his life tend to expand that initiative which was demanded of his predecessors.

The pioneer methods were no doubt rough and ready, and probably, while suitable for the social and political condition of the State in those days, would not quite fit in with the conditions of to-day. One cannot, however, help wondering whether the endeavour to inflict modern methods and systems of administration has not been too vehemently enforced and the progress made a little too pronounced. After all, the tribes of North Borneo are still centuries behind the rest of the world, and are really more fitted for a benevolent autocracy, a patriarchate,

with the district officer as, more or less, the local personification of Justice and Government, a friendly, understanding, sympathetic despot, than for all the hampering commandments of red-tape and the four corners of the law.

Be that as it may, in days of yore "Tuan bilang," "he himself hath said it," meant only one person, the district officer. Looking back with, as far as possible, an unprejudiced eye over my four years in the Tempasuk, I can see very few instances where, in the light of riper knowledge and experience, I should have acted differently or given a different order. For four years, except for infrequent visitors and a very occasional trip to Jesselton, I was alone, and my only amusement was the study of the native. I could speak Bajau and Dusun, the native dialects, with fair fluency and could get at the real thoughts of the inhabitants without that chilling and formal barrier which even the best interpretership must import. There were few bridle-paths and few halting-houses. On one's tours, therefore, one camped in native houses and spent the evening chatting with the natives. There was no *mauvaise honte* about our relations, and one used to find oneself the recipient of many confidences. The only office was in the veranda of my bungalow, and I have even been pursued into my bathroom by an importunate applicant for some concession or other. One cannot blame the modern district officer entirely. His sojourn in any district is never very prolonged, and the eternal hustle which centralization inevitably brings in its train does not give him time for anything but the most superficial

acquaintance with the nearer and more accessible parts of his territory. He cannot afford the time to listen to the garrulity of an old native chief in the hope that he may in time get some news worth the hearing. The monthly returns are due to go off to-morrow, and so he has to cut the old man short just when he has got half-way through his long-winded "introduction" to the news he wants to impart or the question he wants to ask. It has often been my lot to sit until the grim grey hours of the dawn listening to old Kabong of Kiau spinning his endless yarns of olden days or his folk-tales of the Dusun race, and at the last moment to pick up the information I wanted. It took a steady head to sit through the night and drink coco-nut beer with Kabong, but it was worth it. In those days one's report or one's accounts could wait a day or a week or, on occasion, a month. In these days an hour's delay means "reasons in writing." Hustling the East is proverbially a fool's game, but the modern district officer has to try to do it if he does not want a black mark on his record of service.

The one and only visit from the Governor was in some ways not without amusement. I was up-country, a three days' journey from the station, when a perspiring messenger handed me a telegram which in effect announced that His Excellency would arrive at my station the next morning. I got together the few things that were essential and started home with my "boy," who for the time being was also my cook and so essentially part of my household for the next day. We tramped until midday, when we met ponies

LOWLAND DUSUN WOMEN

sent out to meet us, and we finally reached home at 9 p.m., not, however, to sleep. The cook had to make bread, while I and the orderly did the housemaid's work. My sergeant had luckily had the sense to kill a calf, so that meat was available, and my neighbouring district officer—a pearl among men—had dispatched a swift runner with two dozen bottles of soda water. Soda was not a jungle diet in those days, but he had realized that Governors are sometimes thirsty folk and that at the right moment a drink often works wonders. I snatched an hour's sleep, and then rode down five miles at 5 a.m., with a mounted guard of honour, to the landing-place, where in due course His Excellency landed with his party and rode up to breakfast.

Under my contract I was entitled to quarters "plainly furnished," but an acrimonious correspondence with the director of public works had only resulted in his emphasizing the fact that he had already overspent the furniture vote for the current year and that I must trust to my luck for getting something next year. It was only February, and all I had to furnish my house, court and office was two tables, one chair, one long chair and two lamps. The opportunity was too good to miss. I hid the chair, and when breakfast was announced I ushered the Governor into a dining-room chastely furnished with a table and five packing-cases. The deficiencies by the time breakfast was over had become so obvious and had so impressed themselves on His Excellency, both mentally and fundamentally, that he positively shouted for pen and paper in order to tell the Director

of Public Works what he thought of him and to direct that harassed official to send up by the return boat a *double* outfit of furniture complete down to the last stool.

I did not absolutely lack visitors. There were occasional more or less surreptitious visits from neighbouring district officers "to discuss inter-district matters," and the station being on the easiest and most direct route to Kinabalu, the highest mountain in Borneo, every few months would bring an orchid hunter, a geologist or a "height merchant" who simply wanted to get up the mountain.

After a Dane and two Americans had honoured me with their company and climbed the mountain, I had an easy for a bit, and was ready for the next visitor, but rather hoped that for a change he would be British. After a long day in court I wanted some exercise, and, girding up my loins in a sarong, I took a hoe and was busy in the garden. I heard a footstep behind me, and turned round to find a European standing beside me. I said, I hope without showing my surprise at this apparition, good evening and explained that, though at the moment I might not look the part, I was the district officer, and offered him the usual drink. As mine was the only European house for forty miles, it was obvious that he had come to stay with me for, at any rate, the night. I noticed that he seemed rather reticent, and put it down to the fact that he had just finished a twenty-mile squashy tramp through the swamps up from my port. However, one hoped that he was a normal being and that a whisky and water would

have its usual beneficial effect. It did, but it only brought to both of us the conviction that the story of Babel was founded on fact. He was a Dutchman, who spoke, I gathered, fluent Spanish as well as his native Dutch. I was the usual Briton who spoke nothing but my own tongue and, because it was obligatory, Malay. I could have written questions in French for him to answer as to the whereabouts of the pen of the gardener's wife, but that seemed indelicate, and I could have asked him to have *noch ein grosse* of beer, but I had no beer. We discovered at last that he knew a bit of Malay, and we discussed the news and everything else in that not very flexible tongue. It seemed that he was an orchid hunter who wanted to be sent up-country to supplement his collection. We spent two lugubrious days while I got him some coolies, and I sent him off. When I heard that he was on his way down again, I sped off to the other end of the district and left a note in Malay asking him to make himself at home in my bungalow. I arranged with my sergeant to give him every facility for catching the steamer and to let me know when he had left. I could not face another evening of small talk in Malay.

It is wonderful how people set out for the back of beyond without any preparation or qualification. Here was this man travelling in a wild country, and yet almost unable to make himself understood by anyone. In the same way a lady who was conducting a scientific exploration arrived, and was detained for some time by weather. I was discussing with her one day the various methods I had of discounting

some of the trials of jungle travel when I discovered that she lacked some of the most essential articles. In fact, the list of her deficiencies grew to such lengths that I persuaded her to let me hold a sort of "kit inspection" of all that she proposed to take with her, and we finally made out a list of missing things which was quite amazing. Soap, towels, cutlery, lamps, oil and milk are some of the things that I remember were on it. I suppose she would have got through without them, but there seems little point in being thoroughly uncomfortable when a little forethought will halve the hardship.

On the whole, however, one lived in solitary grandeur, mitigated by a nightly chat on the telephone to one's next-door neighbour, two days' journey away. The chat depended, of course, on our both being at home and the telephone being "up."

The solitude was moderated by occasional, very occasional, trips into Jesselton, the local seat of government. This relaxation meant three or four days wasted in travelling in addition to the days of leisure in the town itself. The celebration of one's arrival, of one's sojourn, and, finally, of one's departure, usually resulted in hypertrophy both of one's liver and of one's club account. The only tangible reward lay in the fact that a too ingenuous and trusting public works department had dumps of the most coveted material in the way of paints, nails and corrugated iron in convenient proximity to the wharf. The homing district officer, after being seen off at midnight to his boat by a cheery concourse of host and fellow-guests, would usually manage to

acquire a stock of such material as his district for the moment lacked. Thomas, my neighbour in Tuaran, earnestly desired some green paint, but was in the unfortunate position of having no vote from which to purchase this commodity. A trip to Jesselton with its consequent piracy seemed to offer a solution. I had some similar need, and we arranged to pay our half-yearly visit together and to organize a full-dress raid on our last night. We had a very festive farewell dinner, and at a dim hour in the morning we proceeded wharfwards. Search as we might, we could find no green paint. There seemed to be every other colour, but no green. I had the greatest difficulty in preventing Thomas from returning a weary mile to the quarters of the wretched fellow who was responsible for the dump to lodge a solemn protest as to the deficiency. I persuaded him that blue and brown, both of which I wanted, would mix into green, loaded several tins of both into *my* boat, "and so home."

This sounds slightly immoral, but was only robbing Peter to pay Peter, both the paint and the houses to which it was applied being Government property, and it was only symbolic of the desire that one's district, its station, its wharves or anything else that it contained should not be found wanting.

The rôle of *laudator temporis acti* is never a comfortable or a popular one, but one finds it hard to imagine a latter-day district officer deliberately engaging in organized looting for the benefit of his district. It is true that the ratio of supervision by his seniors has increased, that his tenure of any one

post is, owing to frequent transfers, very insecure, that his time is more fully occupied with the refinements of administration in the shape of reports and returns, and that he is usually on the end of a telephone wire, which puts him in the position of being able to ask for (or to receive unasked) instructions and directions as to his course. The net result, to a great extent, is a loss of the feeling that the district *is his*, and consequently a loss of pride in it as a more or less personal possession.

Against all these disadvantages one must set the assets which attend the modern district officer. He is far better housed and equipped, he has a larger and infinitely better-trained staff, his communications are better, he is better paid, and he gets considerably more opportunity of intercourse with Europeans. And yet it is no uncommon thing to hear a youngster grouse at being sent to an out-station, and I even heard one boy bemoan the fate which sent him to a station only twenty miles by rail from the capital, with another European officer and some twenty other Europeans in the district, " because it was so lonely." This, admittedly, was an extreme case, but the general tendency throughout the young recruits is the same, and one wonders whether the rising generation is of a different and softer, or—shall we say?—more sensitive fibre.

Aforetime one went off to a district the envy of all who were retained at headquarters. Part of this may have been due to mere ignorance on their part, analogous to that of a certain personage who expressed his surprise that district officers while on tour

drew a pittance called travelling allowance. He had always found that youngsters enjoyed a picnic, and failed to see why young men in the tropics should be given a solatium for what was after all a prolonged picnic. It was my privilege once to travel with an Irishman who had been a sailor, and so was well equipped for pungent criticism. We were easing our overworked lungs half-way up a very bare and very hot and very precipitous mountain on the divide between our two districts. My companion, as soon as he had regained sufficient breath to give him scope, entered into a liturgy, precise but lurid, of what he would do with " Dog-biscuits," as the commentator was scurrilously nicknamed, if only he would come out East. " It would be a blinking picnic for him."

The district officer in the days of yore went into his district and found himself practically cut adrift from any tutelage, in a makeshift dwelling with makeshift furniture, if any, an exiguous salary, but the world before him. He had a whole country to explore and its population to win. He had, as often as not, to plan and establish a station, to trace and construct bridle-paths; he was, in fact, the potter whose thumb was to mould the general shape of the vessel. If he really found himself " stuck," he could, if he wanted, " refer " the knot for his Resident to untie; but he felt it almost an admission of failure to have to do anything so derogatory to his own initiative. He felt he was an Atlas supporting his district, and the gist of the whole matter was that he made his district share that feeling. Orders which would have made a Secretary of State's hair stand on end were

given and willingly obeyed; sentences in court, which from the point of view of a lawyer were grotesque, were passed, carried out and welcomed by everyone, even by the accused, as "patut" (fair and correct).

A Bajau, who spoke Malay, Dusun and Bajau fluently, came into court and swore under the Koran that he could only understand or speak Bajau. The magistrate, who had often conversed with him in Malay and had heard him talk Dusun, ordered him to stand down and, designating an unshaded spot on the gravel in front of the court house, to wait there until he was recalled. In something under ten minutes this perjured ruffian called out in the most fluent Malay that his feet were scorching and that he would speak Malay. Now, the alternative was to commit the offender to another magistrate two days' journey away. Both the perjurer and the crowd treated the utterly illegal procedure as justice coloured with a certain humour. What, one wonders, would have been Solomon's procedure if he had been hampered under the Indian criminal (or civil) code when the ladies came along with the baby? Under which section of the law could he have justified his order to cut it in half?

The answer, probably, is that he was, even at that period in Jewish history, a patriarch dealing out primitive justice to a primitive people. The modern district officer has behind his magisterial chair the appeal court and the revisional court, and he feels that unless he can justify his verdict under some section of one of the codes it will probably be reversed

and his prestige will suffer. He plays for safety and compromises. Equally so in non-judicial matters.

This theory explains some of the present antipathy to out-station life, but it does not explain the real horror of the novice cadet who is appointed to an out station. Twenty years ago his prototype would have given a large order for stores, entertained lavishly all his friends, and set sail on the next steamer blessing his good fortune. Nowadays the appointee makes his will, pays all his debts, and endeavours to wangle a medical certificate that he is unfit.

Why?

I simply do not know.

CHAPTER V

TEMPASUK—THE BUFFALO—THE NATIVE PONY

EARLY in 1903 I was seconded from the constabulary to take over the Tempasuk district as district officer and to organize the mounted police detachment which supplemented the foot-sloggers in that district.

The Tempasuk is, in the opinion of most officers who have reigned over it, the most pleasant district in the State. Geographically it consists of a vast plain bounded by the sea, a belt of foot-hills, and, inland, a mountain country which culminates in Kinabalu, the highest mountain in Borneo. Kinabalu's slopes will some day provide a hill station where recuperation in a cool climate will be possible, but meanwhile they afford the district officer good exercise and a select health resort for his own private use.

There is, perhaps, no harm in confessing now that I used to make every effort to spend two days or so every month in Kiau, a village on the hills just under the southern end of Kinabalu. The village stands about 3,500 feet above the sea, and from the ridge above the "main street" of the village one looked across a couple of miles of valley to the precipitous cliffs of the mountain. It was in many

ways an ideal spot for a week-end. Chilly, even cold, at night, replete with scenery of a soul-satisfying nature, well stocked with provisions (including oranges, which, though green when ripe, reminded one of the succulent Jaffa fruit), Kiau was a boon and made up for much that was wanting in one's life. Government halting-houses were then things of the future, and I always used to camp in a corner of the veranda in Kabong's house. Kabong was headman of the middle one of the three villages which made up the "city" of Kiau, and he was also chief of the village as a whole and of the country-side around. He was then a man of well over sixty, a good age for a native, and had accompanied St. John during his ascent of Kinabalu in 1858.

At Kiau I usually reversed night and day. I spent the day in loafing and snatching a little sleep to make up for the wakeful nights which were devoted to rapt and attentive listening while the old man, suitably but not too liberally lubricated, contributed story after story, historical and mythical. Some of the latter were more than broad and were sometimes almost unintelligible owing to his chuckles over the grossest of the improprieties. I used to test his accuracy by leading him back to yarns that he had told me on previous occasions, but he varied by hardly a syllable however often he repeated a story. Kabong, alas! is dead. He was almost the last of the Dusun *jongleurs*, the more sophisticated modern youth neither knowing nor caring much for myths and folk-lore. I only recorded a few of his stories, and memory after twenty years is apt to prove

treacherous, but I retain a vivid recollection of those night sittings, a gum torch or the wood fire on the open hearth lighting the scene dimly, and a shadowy, ever-changing background of faces as people came and went.

Kabong and I became great friends, and at one interview he suggested that we should "drink blood" together and so create an artificial brotherhood between us. I was a little afraid of some ulterior motive, of some hidden villainy which he would later disclose and endeavour to screen behind our blood pact. He disclaimed any such idea and said that I was the first European who, speaking his tongue, had appreciated his fables, and he was sure that we were spiritually kinsmen.

It was well after midnight, but he was so pleased with the idea that he aroused everyone in the house, and the ceremony took place there and then.

The fact belies the name, which savours of Fee Fo Fum. The blood brothers prick their arms and draw a drop of blood. This is placed either in a cup of rice-beer or on the palm-leaf wrapper of a native cigarette. The other party then drinks the beer or takes a puff at the cigarette which has been doctored with his "brother's" blood. To make assurance doubly sure we did both. A sup of the beer and a pull at the cigarette satisfied all requirements, and I became a full-fledged member of the Dusun community while Kabong presumably became a Briton.

The event was celebrated next day by a buffalo fight, the only one I have ever seen. Just outside Kabong's house was a small natural amphitheatre,

into which were led two enormous bull buffaloes and a cow. I had been hopefully expecting some wild and rugged encounter, but the whole fight was one long clinch with no referee to walk between the combatants and "break" them. After ten minutes one buffalo had had enough, and left the ring through the stalls and pit, pursued for a short distance by the other, who quickly returned to make sure that the "lady in the case" had not left by the stage door. Her part was a very small one, and was only to rekindle the ardour of the combatants if it waned. The vanquished animal left at such a pace that no blandishments of the cow had time to work upon him.

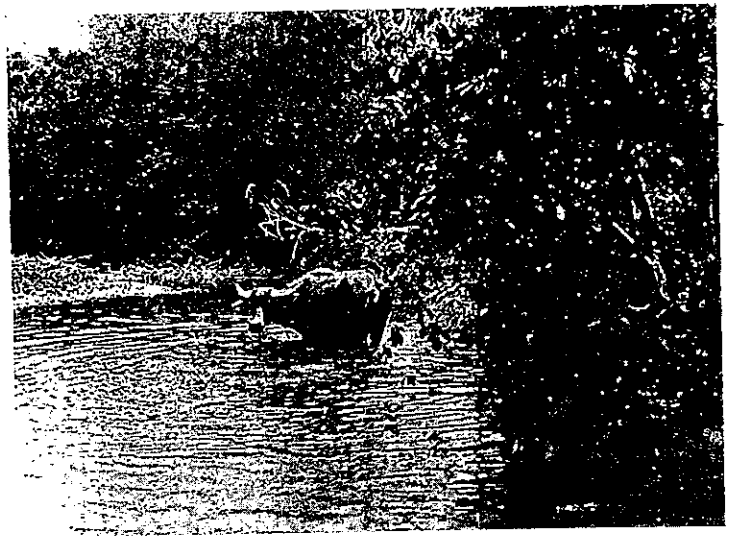
The natives of the district are Dusuns, in the uplands, and Bajaus and Ilanuns, in the plains. The Dusun race, the most considerable ethnological factor in North Borneo, is, generally speaking, rather bucolic, heavy and uninteresting; but the Dusun of the Tempasuk district twenty years ago was a bright, not unintelligent type, a fair sportsman, and easy to handle. Civilization has not done him much good, and the present-day Dusun is in appearance, and I rather fear in character as well, a degenerate specimen.

The Bajau and his cousin, the Ilanun, are the modern representatives of the pirates who a hundred years ago made the coasts of Borneo notorious. The modern Bajau of the west coast is, except for the few who live in decrepit shacks near the sea shore and make their living by fishing, no seaman. He is, when Providence ordains that he shall take a sea trip,

usually on his way to or from the central prison, most unromantically sea-sick, and looks and, one gathers, feels the absolute antithesis of a pirate. The Tempasuk Bajau, on good firm land, has all the old vim of his forbears. Many of the rebellions have been engineered by Bajaus, and the crime statistics of the district are as a rule considerably in excess of those of any other district. The plains and foot-hills afford excellent grazing, and the native wealth and the most important industry (a euphemism which will serve) lie in cattle and water-buffaloes. Add to this a reasonably good breed of pony and you have all the material ready for the transformation of a sea-sick pirate into a cattle-lifter.

In any district where buffaloes are at all numerous it is only a question of time before the district officer gets to hate the very name or sight of the beast. The damage they do to bridle-paths and fences never seems commensurate with the undoubted value of their share in the agricultural and mercantile problems of the native. A track which is used by buffaloes soon degenerates into a no-man's-land passable only by these cumbersome brutes. They have, apparently, an absolutely standard pace, and step with accuracy worthy of a better cause in the footprints of previous passers-by. A buffalo track, after short usage, consists of an endless series of narrow gullies athwart the track, with intervening ridges of slippery mud about ten or twelve inches wide. Submerge the whole under a skim of muddy water, and you have a section of country impassable to man or beast other than the buffalo. The buffalo, though

The Buffalo at War



The Buffalo in Peace

confined through the blessings of Providence to the tropics, is not a lover of heat, and spends the hotter hours of the day in any pool that he can find, the muddier the better. If he can find a drainage ditch alongside a path or road, nothing pleases him better. He wallows in it with increased vigour, and what was but yesterday a trim square-cut ditch carefully graded to carry off superfluous water is to-day a glorious mud-bath in which the buffalo spends a luxurious *dolce far niente*. A flick of an ear or of a tail is the only thing that proclaims the fact that the grey soup is providing him with a soft couch for his siesta, unless and until he arises a viscid, dripping malformity, and successfully terrorizes the passing pony.

At other times he reverts to a pristine state of wildness, and has been known to hold up traffic on paths for days, until some exasperated European or policeman has put an end to his tyranny with a bullet. The buffalo which has gone wild has apparently a double gift of cunning and obstinacy, and there is no wild inmate of the jungle who is not preferable as an antagonist. One one occasion I had left my party and was making a side-trip with a native chief to visit a small village en route. For some two miles we were followed, at about fifteen yards distance, by a wild two-year-old buffalo who appeared just, and only just, to lack the courage to charge. It was thick jungle, and, being friendly country, neither of us had anything more lethal than a small jungle-knife. Our friend only gave up the chase when we reached a ford and, having crossed,

maintained a heavy barrage of stones, the splashes keeping him on his own side of the stream. His departure was hailed with a sigh of relief on my part, but my relief was tempered by the thought that it was quite likely that he had crossed the river lower down and would be waiting for us in ambush alongside the track, a stratagem of which these beasts are fond.

Kota Belud, the station, was built on a bold, upstanding hill, around the base of which the river curled. At the foot of the hill was the small collection of shacks where the Chinese carried on an extortionate trade in imported piece goods, which they bartered for jungle produce. The name Kota Belud means "the hill fort," and the place was obviously adapted by nature for a defensive position. The police barracks were on the highest point, and a quarter of a mile away, but on the same ridge, was the bungalow of the district officer, which in those days served also as an office. From the hill one looked over twelve or fifteen miles of open plain, with irregular clumps of coco-nuts and fruit trees in the near foreground shading the Bajau villages. To the west, over the plain, one saw the China Sea, five miles distant, and on the horizon a black smudge represented the Mantanani Islands, the habitat of the swift which builds the edible bird's-nest. The glory of an entrancing panorama culminated in the picture of the river winding its way for a mile or so through the plain and losing itself gradually in the foot-hills and lower slopes of the main backbone range of North Borneo. Behind them all, closing in the eastern horizon, rises

in solitary grandeur, sheer and forbidding, the great mountain, Kinabalu. There can, one imagines, be no more impressive sight than Kinabalu after an afternoon shower, standing jagged against the eastern sky, the silver streaks of the waterfalls down its steep sides standing up against the background which reflects on the black sheen of its precipices the wonderful mauves and crimsons of the tropical sunset. It is little wonder that the natives have based on the mountain a great part of their mythology and made it their seat of the mighty and the home of their departed spirits.

The District provides for the less æsthetic mind a fund of pleasure. It is the home of the hardy little pony of the country, and in olden days one could have the pick of the native herds for six or seven pounds. Stocky little beasts, ranging up to 13.2 hands, they will carry all day a European riding thirteen stone, and, unless interfered with, will seldom put a foot wrong. The native, riding deer across country, leaves his reins and trusts to his pony. A severe brass bit gives him control when he wants it, the rope reins being brought together over the withers and spliced so that they stand up like a tiller and are ready for instant use when required. When riding deer, one hand wields the spear and the other the native riding-whip, which, with its three lashes of unsplit cane, makes an appalling sound but does little damage. The saddle is built up of wood and coco-nut fibre, with a high peak and cantle. A loose loop of rope over it serves for stirrups. The first time I rode one of these instruments of torture I

forgot that unequal pressure on one stirrup reacted on the other, and I took an ignominious toss.

This looseness of seat and the ill fit of the saddle results in a deplorable amount of saddle sores. The narrow foot-tracks are responsible for single file always being the order of march, while the native drums continually with his bare heels on the pony's ribs. All these factors combine to make a pony which has been broken and trained by a native a somewhat unsatisfactory mount for a European, but caught young and broken to European saddlery and riding they are wonderful little beasts.

I once owned a long, ugly roan with an enormous head, which would lope along bridle-paths for hours without turning a hair. As a rule he would do nothing but walk or lope, but on a hunt, as soon as the deer was afoot, nothing would hold him. At first I used to halter him in the shade when I took my stand with my rifle at a drive, but after he had broken away three or four times I found that it was more economical in saddlery to leave him to follow the deer. He used to pursue it like a hound, and one occasion snapped at it and took a bunch of hair from its neck. Another pony, a midget of 12.1, appropriately named Tikus (the mouse), having done a weary trek of about 200 miles in a fortnight, carried me thirty miles at a good pace on the last day, and finished by bolting the last two miles home.

I had two bad tosses off these ponies during my time, in both cases owing to an effort on my part to "collect" my steed at a faulty bridge. The first entailed a complete somersault for both pony and

me. We were lucky not to break a leg and neck respectively, but got off lightly, he with a strained tendon and I with concussion.

The second was, as far as I was concerned, rather more serious. I was riding very early one morning while the dew was still on the ground, and was crossing a narrow bridge over a shallow gully. The bridge was made of two very smooth planks of merabau wood and was slippery. The pony started to slide, and I made an effort to pull him up. He had a very easy mouth, and on feeling the bit he threw up his head. In a flash he skidded with all four feet and came down sideways, throwing me clear into the gully, where I arrived in a sitting position on the stump of a clump of bamboos which had been felled to clear the track. I was punctured in a good many places, but I thought only superficially, and an examination a fortnight later, when I could get hold of a doctor, appeared to confirm this. One wound, however, obstinately refused to heal and formed a sinus, which was at intervals probed by various doctors and pronounced free from any foreign bodies. Eventually it became obvious that there must be something there, and it was decided to tunnel until the "something" was found and removed. In the event some three or four chips of bamboo were found, which had worked their way about four inches in. As far as I could make out, a little patience would have given them time to emerge through my mouth, but the surgeon was in a hurry to retrieve them from their place of entry and insisted on doing so.

A native pony which has been used much on bridle-paths is far better left alone to pick his way over the pitfalls which await one even on the best kept path, but the temptation to help him is hard to resist. It is sometimes equally foolish to insist on a pony going on when he jibs, unless one can see and avoid the trouble which is stopping him. I was riding on a pitch-dark night along a path which skirted the banks of the Tempasuk river. The pony jibbed, and I, having been half asleep, pushed him on and touched him with the whip. The next moment he and I were in ten feet of water, the river having cut the path clean away. Luckily, it was a good hard bottom, and we swam out of the hole and managed to scramble out again to terra firma, but the rest of the ride, until the sun rose and dried us off, was not pleasant.

Being mostly open rolling country, the Tempasuk district affords good scope for a keen horseman, and to this attraction is added good shooting. Snipe and duck in their season, pigeon of two or three species provide a mark for the shot-gun, while rhinoceros and wild cattle are found occasionally in the wilder country on the northern and eastern boundaries of the district. The standing dish which offers an infinite variety of sport and so never palls is the hunt for sambur deer. Whatever his faults may be, the Bajau is a splendid sportsman, and the whisper of a "buruh" for deer would always draw a field. The pack of prick-eared, skinny pariahs was never much to look at, but it would pick up a deer in a covert, if one were there, and with a chorus of shrill yapping

keep him moving out into the open. The field was in keeping. Every man who owned or could beg or borrow any animal larger than a goat was there. Cattle, buffaloes and ponies of all sizes, shapes and sexes gave the gathering a rather motley appearance, but man and beast played their parts well. The "heavies," on buffaloes or cattle, could not, of course, take any active share in the operations, but they were always useful as "stops" to bring the deer up to the horsed contingent or to the "guns." I have seen few finer sights than during the tense moments when a deer breaks from the jungle and, realizing the position, gets going across the rolling country for another covert. In a second twenty scallywags on twenty sorry little nags are after him hell for leather, yelling at the tops of their voices, spear in one hand and riding-whip cracking in the other. The ponies, for all their scraggy appearance, nō longer wear that dejected mien which is habitual to them, but seem to share the excitement of their riders. It is fearsome country to ride. Grass two or three feet high conceals all manner of pitfalls, but the ponies seldom put a foot wrong. The chase, with any luck, is soon over, and the stag goes down to a spear-thrust, followed by the usual rite of throat-cutting to render it fit food for the followers of Mahomet.

A day spent like this gives one the best side of the Bajau, which is not apparent to anyone who only knows him officially. He *is* a bit of a blackguard in many ways and a difficult citizen to handle; but, personally, I have always felt that half the crimes

of the Bajau are due to his sporting instincts. It may be a very immoral sentiment, but there must be something very exhilarating in cattle-lifting. A dark night, the search for an eligible buffalo, the chase, the capture, and then the long ride by circuitous tracks to the highlands, the bargaining with one's tame "receiver," the effort to establish a fool-proof alibi, and all for very long odds—ten or fifteen dollars against a couple of years in gaol.

At one time buffalo theft reached such a pitch of popularity that I issued an order (quite illegally, I was afterwards told) that persons who were abroad at night should carry a light. I used to take or send out patrols to round up the disobedient, and many a game of hide-and-seek was played in the dark hours with the night-errants. Personally, I have and had little doubt that quite a large proportion of the shadowy figures which used to disappear silently but completely when challenged were Bajaus who had left their houses not with covetous eyes upon their neighbour's ox or his buffalo (though in some cases, perhaps, with a view to their neighbour's wife), but merely because it was forbidden. It satisfied the gambling, sporting spirit of the Bajau to see how he fared. It was only after a shot or two had been fired over the heads of fugitives that the amusement began to lose its zest, and then one could be fairly confident that any night-bird was playing a bigger game than hide-and-seek.

This "chance-it" trait in the Bajau is rather nice, and, from any point of view other than that of a policeman, preferable to the stolid, bucolic, un-

imaginative mind of the Dusun. And yet the Dusun is reputedly a good citizen, while the Bajau stinks in the nostrils of all who have never known him as he is.

Be that as it may, the District, taken all in all, was and I think is the pick of the basket, and it was with a light heart that I set out for my kingdom. It was with an even lighter heart that I received the news, some months later, that my application to be allowed to transfer to the administrative branch of the service had been sanctioned.

I spent nearly four very happy years in the Tempasuk, and was genuinely sorry when the time came to leave it.

CHAPTER VI

JUDICIAL WORK—BUFFALO THEFT

THE Tempasuk district was officially and superficially peaceful when I arrived to take over, but under the crust there were simmering possibilities of trouble. The neighbouring districts still harboured groups of rebels who, quiescent for the nonce, might at any moment open up again. My predecessor had been *hors de combat* with dysentery for some time, and had in consequence been unable either to travel or to keep pace with the judicial work. I made a hurried trip or two to outlying parts of the district to show the flag, and then settled down to a solid fortnight of court to wipe off the arrears.

Judicial work in the East is apt to be tedious and is certainly a considerable strain. Apart from the fact that the magistrate or judge has to set down with his own fair hand the entire record of the case, having minute regard to the hampering and trivial demands of the criminal and civil procedure codes, there is the additional handicap that the language of the court is almost invariably a foreign tongue. At best the case is conducted in Malay, a familiar tongue as the lingua franca of the country, but one which, being that of a more or less primitive race, affords

small scope for the expression of legal refinements. To give in the vernacular a clear summing on the definition of murder as detailed in the Indian penal code is not easy, and, in any event, listening to evidence given in a foreign language, sifting the chaff of the unessential (so bewilderingly preponderant) from the wheat of the relevant, and mentally recording elucidatory questions one wishes to put to the witness makes up a distinct feat of mental gymnastics. A native witness, unless he comes into court determined to perjure himself (or, alas! not infrequently herself), is prone to go to the other extreme and ensure himself against any suggestion of not having told the whole truth by commencing his evidence with the pedigree of his grandparents. It is to him no doubt an interesting theme, but not quite pertinent to the issue whether A struck B.

The alternative is the case where interpretation is necessary. Single interpretation, a Chinese dialect into English, for instance, is bad enough, but the time comes when perhaps the accused speaks one dialect of Chinese, the witness a second, and the judge neither. I acted as interpreter in one case where the accused was a native of British India, the judge spoke English only, and a witness spoke Bajau. The evidence, given in Bajau, was interpreted into Malay. Here there was a short circuit, as the Indian interpreter could understand and speak Malay and so give the accused the gist of what the witness had said. Meanwhile, I translated the Malay into English for the judge's benefit. It was a dreary and lengthy proceeding, and one was never quite sure that a

remark in one language retained even a distant resemblance to itself after its final transmutation.

Court day in the Tempasuk, however, was on a different plane. To start with, in those primitive days one administered justice rather than law. An appeal was never contemplated by the most vociferous accused, and one felt safe in disregarding, if convenient, the doubtless excellent provisions of the procedure code, which are apparently designed to make it a certainty that any decision can be upset by an Appellate Court on the ground that a magistrate has omitted to sign his name in a particular place or in a particular way or in a particular colour of ink. Whether or not this sort of thing is necessary in more highly developed communities is a matter of opinion, but in out-stations in the early years of the century, these provisions were more honoured in the breach than in the observance. There is no doubt, however, that the justice administered with these technically faulty methods was as thorough and correct as if the full liturgy had been followed.

In the Tempasuk Thursday had always been court day, provided the district officer was not away. To "kena Khamis" (be Thursdayed) was a pleasing euphemism for an appearance in court, whether under civil process of law or otherwise. In those days any district officer, whatever his substantive magisterial powers, so long as he sat with two native chiefs as a bench of magistrates, exercised the powers of a first-class magistrate. Thursdays always saw three or four of these grave and reverend signiors in attendance

and following the intricacies of the cases with acumen and interest. Their findings were almost always thoroughly sound from every point of view, though there was at times in difficult civil cases a tendency to split the difference between the parties.

One antidote to boredom on Thursdays was the mixed character of the judicial fare provided. The civil and criminal calendars were presented when the court cast away its cigarettes and "took its seat." It was rather like scanning the menu in an *à la carte* restaurant, and the court selected the next dish with all the relish of epicures. A dreary civil suit would be followed by something more appetizing in the shape of a buffalo theft charge, and as a *bonne-bouche* at the end, a real savoury, something really salacious in the way of a matrimonial case. The questions which one's fellow-magistrates used to put to the parties or witnesses in these cases simply could not be recorded. The whole proceedings, including the bald, bad, bold admissions of the principals and the full and frankly intimate histories of their trysts were more than embarrassing, not to them, but to the only person who could put them on paper. They sounded sufficiently crude in the original Bajau or Dusun, devoid as they were of any prudish circumlocution or innuendo, but reduced to English they were impossible and often failed to find a home in the record.

Buffalo theft was the main crime of the district, and though many reported cases were never traced, the bulk of the court business was charges of buffalo theft.

Buffalo lore is a mass of technicalities, but the important part that this beast plays in the native world renders essential a certain acquaintance with the genus, its natural history and its habits. The rate of growth of the horn is often an important point in a case, while the length and shape of the horn is frequently one of the prime distinguishing marks alleged by a claimant. In some districts lopping and nicking of the ears are in vogue as proprietary marks, but in the Tempasuk most owners rely on the "ibul-ibul," or whorls, in the rough, bristly coat of the buffalo. These whorls are said to be as permanent as are finger-prints in the human race, though one gentleman, in an expansive moment when a draught of rice beer had mellowed him, claimed to be the inventor and owner of the exclusive rights in a system whereby he could obliterate existing whorls and substitute others. He explained the method to me, and asserted that he had often used this method of "permanent waving." The calm reason of the dawn appeared to show him that this was a dangerous admission, and at a very early hour next morning I awoke to find him seated by my camp bed eagerly awaiting the end of my slumbers. My eyes were hardly open before he started an impassioned oration to the effect that he had never practised the arts of Marcel on any but his own kine. It was a tactless hour to choose for the explanation, and in the heat of the moment I bluntly informed him that his statement was not worthy of credence and that I believed him to be the father and mother of all buffalo thieves. Nothing, however,

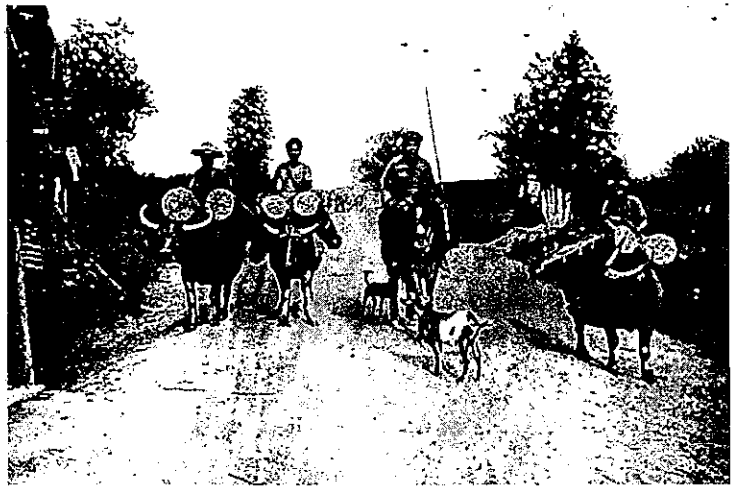
could be brought home to him, and I had to content myself with warning him that he had better forget this accomplishment very, very quickly and never impart it to anyone else. It was rather like finding a "safe-king" who could guarantee to open anything from a cash box to a bank strong-room and asking him to desist, as George Robey would say, but there was no other course open. My sergeant and I, in secret, conducted experiments on a Government buffalo on the plea of a wound which required treatment, but the herdsman, being of an inquisitive turn of mind, removed the material we had used to examine the alleged wound. He was much impressed by the efficacy of our medicament and proceeded to point out other beasts in the herd which actually had wounds which called for curative treatment. I had to make the lame excuse that we had used all of my small supply on the one animal, but that I would write to England for some more.

The whorls on a buffalo might be anything from one to six in number, and were liable to occur apparently on any part of the beast's anatomy. It must often have raised hopes in the accused's mind of an abrupt termination to his case when he beheld his worship on all-fours peering at the stomach of some more than usually restive buffalo resenting the close approach of a European.

For some reason the water buffalo does resent much more strongly than any other beast the proximity of a white man. It cannot be, I think, the distinctive clothing. At one time my habit of wearing, for travelling, blue shorts, a blue flannel

shirt and a slouch hat set a fashion which thronged the country with replicas of myself, and yet buffaloes continued to shy at me. The theory of a distinctiveness in personal odour also seems untenable. I have approached buffalo up wind and still found them intolerant. On one occasion I had need to cross a flooded river, and cadged a lift on a very docile riding buffalo belonging to a native chief, Lengok by name. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I got on board this beast or retained my seat when there, though every child in the village could and did ride him at pleasure. After the ordeal I asked Lengok if he could explain the repugnance of buffaloes for Europeans. He answered without hesitation, "Oh, the smell, of course," and then, sensing a *faux pas*, hastened to explain that Europeans used scented soaps, and so their odour, though of course pleasant, was not what the buffalo was accustomed to. The natives of North Borneo are, on the whole, fairly cleanly, but Lengok was a man whose personal habits as regards bathing always left me in doubt, and the opportunity was too good to miss. The moment we camped I unearthed my cake of superfine scented soap, hurried Lengok to the river, and personally supervised his lavation, including an "all-over" lathering of the most thorough nature. He simply reeked when he came out, and I sent him straight up to his buffalo, which must have discerned the allegedly repulsive odour yards off. The animosity for which I had hoped, preferably in some active and demonstrative form, was more than lacking, and, if one could say it of any

"The Flying Squad"—Police on Buffaloes



Transport—Natives on Buffaloes

animal so uncouth as a buffalo, it positively fawned upon its scented master.

One buffalo case was, in its way, a comedy. Complaints had been coming in for some time which pointed to Sayap village as being for the time being the receiver of stolen buffaloes. A posse of police was therefore sent out, with a limited number of the owners of missing buffaloes, to round up the Sayap herds and their owners. In due course the patrol returned with some thirteen buffaloes and seven prisoners. The case came on, and, it being a local *cause célèbre*, the court was crowded. The sergeant, a man of experience, explained to me with some pride that for ease of reference he had allotted a number to each of the accused and to the brigade of buffaloes, which, as exhibits, were marshalled in an imposing row outside the court. None of the parties, none of the witnesses, and only one of the sitting magistrates was sufficiently literate to read even numbers, and before the case had gone very far it was obvious that some less complicated differentiation was necessary. After a hasty conclave a messenger was dispatched hot-foot to the shops with orders to purchase a piece of any material (paper or cloth) that he could find there so long as the colours were distinctive. He returned with a motley collection, the outstanding features of which were two gaudy chaplets of artificial flowers. These were allotted to two of the cow buffaloes as being more appropriate to their sex. These ungainly beasts, leering through these floral wreaths, had a Bacchanalian air of which I had not deemed them capable.

The colours proved insufficient to go the round, and one prisoner was granted the temporary use of a very dilapidated straw hat belonging to the magistrate. The case proceeded in terms of "the pink prisoner was found in possession of the scarlet buffalo" and "the prisoner in the straw hat was riding the cow buffalo wearing the blue chaplet."

One of the buffaloes in the case had been lost ten years before, but was positively and irrefragably identified by the owner and his witnesses. The memory of a Bajau for his buffalo and his identification of these beasts was to me a constantly recurring mystery. To the uninitiated they seem all alike, but to a Bajau each of them has a distinct identity. In my ignorance at first I used to doubt the evidence proffered, but my eyes were opened by an instance which was demonstrably bona fide. I was riding to a native fair attended by one Mandor, a clever and intelligent Bajau, and as we came to the clearing where the fair was held he pointed excitedly to one of a group of twenty or thirty buffaloes tethered a couple of hundred yards away and said: "That is my buffalo. It was taken three years ago." I pulled up and asked him what his beast's marks were, and he gave me without hesitation a list of four or five whorls. These were found on examination to be correct, and after the usual case the beast was returned to him. To the ordinary person, even on close scrutiny, this animal looked just like thousands of others, and yet, seeing it quite unexpectedly and among a crowd at a considerable distance, he recognized it in a second, after three years. People say

that every shepherd knows each one of his sheep, but would the ordinary shepherd identify a lost sheep among others after three years?

The cases that used to weary everyone were the suits instituted by Chinese for the recovery of debts. There was no Chinese interpreter, the Chinese mostly spoke a very indifferent Malay mutilated by their inability to pronounce certain letters, and they used to produce piles of day-books and ledgers, all, of course, in Chinese script, and so intelligible only to them. These tomes used to be stacked on the court table and regarded by the plaintiff as positively uncontrovertible evidence of his claim. Any hint or suggestion that the bench was about to disallow, for want of corroboration or admission by the defendant, an entry, even for five cents, was invariably the signal for a torrent of harangue, the gist of which was: "It is in my book, and therefore is and must be correct." One can usually accept a claim by a better-class Chinese merchant as correct, but one did not feel quite the same confidence in some of the traders at Kota Belud. I often wondered, after spending an hour or so deciding whether the plaintiff should get his judgment for $1.50 (say three shillings), if it was worth while.- It seemed such a rotten way of spending the cool of the evening when the pigeons were flighting.

It was always rather intriguing on a Thursday to scan the criminal calendar and see which, if any, of one's friends was to come before the court that day. Friday was the usual hunting day, and, unfortunately, the best hunters were usually suspected of

being also the most proficient cattle-lifters. It would have been irony to have to impose a lengthy term of imprisonment on the very men upon whom one was relying to show sport on the morrow. Fortune was, however, kind, and although one or two of the lesser lights had to undergo an enforced retirement, the more skilful successfully evaded the clutches of the law. That is, one fears, the only way to account for and to record the fact of their immunity.

CHAPTER VII

VISIT TO THE MANTANANI ISLANDS

I HAD an amusing trip during 1905. The Tempasuk District included the Mantanani Islands, a small group consisting of one fair-sized island and two small limestone knobs twenty miles from the coast. In those days the islands were uninhabited, but were of interest from the fact that all the rising ground was honeycombed with caves which provided a habitat and building space for the swifts which produce the edible birds'-nests so welcome to Chinese epicures. The nests are harvested three or four times a year, and my purpose was to visit the islands when the collectors of the nests were already at work under the tutelage of the head native chief, dear old Arsat. We had planned to take the harvest of nests over to Kudat, a town in the next residency, for sale. The Chinese merchants in my station were, it was thought, in a ring to keep the price down, and we hoped to euchre them by selling elsewhere.

My craft for the journey was a "pakerangan," a dug-out about twenty-five feet long with built-up plank sides and, towards the stern, a "cabin" consisting of a palm-leaf roof open fore and aft. The helmsman sat behind this and manipulated the rudder and the sheets of the sail. I, on a camp mattress,

occupied the cabin, sharing it with my camp kit, stores and as much of my servant as could be packed in among the saucepans, etc., while the open deck forward accommodated the crew of six and my orderly. The boat had a large dipping lug on a bamboo tripod mast. She would get along at quite a good pace before the wind, but owing to her keelless bottom was useless on a wind.

After dinner on the shore, we set sail about 10 p.m., taking advantage of the land wind, that steady and reliable stand-by of those whose business leads them to sail on the coasts of Borneo. Every night, whichever monsoon is blowing, it is all Lombard Street to a China orange that a good stiff breeze will blow straight out to sea from the land, and the mariner is able to arrange his journeys to fit in with this phenomenon.

I snuggled down in the draughty tunnel which represented my "*suite de luxe* on the bridge deck," and, rocked by the steady swing of the boat, slept until, just before dawn, the rattle of the sail against the mast woke me. Mantanani, our destination, was five miles away on our starboard beam, while we, if there had been any way on the boat, would have been heading gaily for Hong-Kong, some two thousand miles across the China Sea. My crew, one and all descendants of the Ilanun sea rovers, were in the last throes of seasickness and were past caring where we had got to or whither we were going. Death or terra firma was all that they could contemplate. I am not a bright performer on the ocean myself, but I could see nothing to upset the most queasy tummy

in the gentle swell which was coming in. However, as I knew from bitter experience, there is no more revolting or useless form of cruelty than to tell a man that there is no reason for him to be sick when his inside maintains the contra, and there was nothing for it but to take charge and sail the boat in. I took the helm, while my boy and orderly stacked the inert lumps which represented the crew up to windward, where they would serve as ballast.

It was always my endeavour on these trips to arrive somewhere at daybreak, so that one might have a chance of cooking and drinking a cup of tea, and I simply hated my crew for letting me down in this way. However, an hour's sail brought us into harbour, and the forecastle complexion gradually reverted to its pristine bronze from the nasty greenish tinge which a native who is sea-sick or frightened acquires.

I found old Arsat with his band of ruffians camped in huts on the seashore. He reported that they had another two days' work, including one of the easier caves which he had reserved until I arrived so that I could accompany the collectors. Two days was just what I had hoped for. I had particularly looked forward to a shot at the Torres Straits pigeon with which these islands abound, and that, with the sea-bathing, seemed to be as good a way of spending a week-end as any.

The "easy" cave was more than enough for me, and after a very perfunctory glance at some of the places to which it was proposed that I should attach myself limpet-wise, I told the collectors to carry on

and went off to the pigeons. *The* place was on the north of the island, where a small patch, perhaps thirty yards square, knee-deep in the sea and surrounded by mangrove trees, gave one very pretty shooting as the birds came over, fairly high and going fast. There was much satisfaction in a right and left of which I got three the first day and five the second. We solemnly slit the throats of all the birds which were not too obviously dead so as to meet the prejudices of the Mohammedan coolies, and in this deception Arsat, himself a strict Islam, with great glee took the leading part. " What the eye does not see, the heart does not grieve over;" and the crew, recovered from its indisposition, did itself well on the bag.

The night before we were due to sail the weather broke, and we found ourselves in for one of the local " blows " which, proverbially, last for three, seven or eleven days. The next morning dawned to disclose a heavy sea running and a strong gale, effectually pinning us *in statu quo*.

The storm proved to be a seven-day effort, and for a whole unexpected week we sat on the shore in leaky jungle-huts and watched our boats at anchor pitching in the bay, while, outside, the sweep of the sea reminded us that we were on the southern edge of the China Sea with a strong north wind blowing. I had used all my shot-gun cartridges, but had a .303 carbine with a few soft-nosed rounds. I expended a few of them *pour faire passer le temps* on roosting pigeons. I scored one hit, but the bullet hit the branch on which the pigeon was sitting and

" set up " before hitting the bird. The resulting pulpy mixture of splinters and pigeon was not an adequate result. A monitor lizard paid us a visit to vary the monotony, and left again with five .450 revolver bullets in a nice pattern all along his back, a fact which did not seem to incommode him in the slightest degree.

The few books I had brought were exhausted, and I was at a loose end for employment when my patience cards gave me a brilliant idea by which I could combine amusement and instruction. The two crews included some of the heaviest gamblers in the district, and I wanted to learn some of the native card games. I " staked " four of the coolies and started on a thorough training in all the games known to them. The experience cost me two dollars (four shillings) and I learned a lot. The games resemble very closely games played by Europeans, and I found the deductions which one intuitively made from a knowledge of bridge, for instance, were a great assistance. In fact, at one period a little skill and a lot of luck left me holding all the chips, and I had to share out again with my instructors before the school could reassemble.

Recorded in cold blood it sounds very undignified. The district officer deliberately sat down and gambled with his coolies, with men whom, sooner or later, he might have to try and sentence in court. Both sides, however, realized the circumstances of the case. In those days the relations between a district officer and his subjects were much more those of squire and his faithful tenants than they can be now, when the

native has become so much more sophisticated and the continual transfer of officers makes their relations with the inhabitants necessarily less patriarchal and intimate.

The eighth day broke bright with a gentle sea breeze and only a slight swell. The fleet of three weighed anchor and set sail for Tambaluran, a bay on the west coast from which it was only a day's march across the peninsula to Kudat. On the plea that Arsat's boat was much bigger than mine, I induced him to take on board a lot of my heavier baggage, with the result that when we started I outsailed him steadily, and I finally reduced the old gentleman to a frenzy by the old yachting insult of a rope trailed under the stern as an invitation to a tow. His crew had settled themselves down for a smoke and a nap, but he turned them out and kept them at a racing stroke practically throughout the passage, coming in only a couple of hundred yards behind us.

We landed at the small fishing village to find the place full of rumours of some epidemic and of a sanitary cordon all round Kudat, but whether to keep infection inside or outside of Kudat I could not gather. I sent out a couple of police to march until they bumped into the cordon, when they were to find out what it was all about and come back with news. Meanwhile I devoted my day to the deer, which were plentiful and had not been shot at for years.

The patrol returned with a confused story which made matters no clearer than before, and I determined to run the risk and proceed. After all, we

had undergone some ten days' pratique (some of us three weeks'), marooned on an uninhabited island in the China Sea, and we were, therefore, not likely to be infectious; while, if Kudat were the plague spot, it was no more beastly to catch whatever disease Kudat had than to starve while waiting in the desolate spot we found ourselves in.

What the infection was supposed to be or how the yarn of the cordon originated, I never found out, but the fact remains that on our arrival in Kudat one of Arsat's men went sick, and was found to be suffering from a bad go of measles. Where or how he contracted it it was impossible to guess. He was the only case; there had been none in his village or the district for years, and he had been on the island for three weeks.

We completed our business in Kudat, got together some more stores, and marched back to Tambaluran to pick up our boats and coast the forty-odd miles home. We got to Tambaluran to find a real "snorter" blowing. The third day came and no easing of the wind, so, as our stores were again getting low, I set off to walk along the coast with half the party, leaving the other half to bring along the boats when the weather moderated. We started at 2 p.m., intending to camp that night and the next at spots where there was said to be water, reaching Merempayan, a big Ilanun village, the third day.

We arrived, according to plan, about 5 p.m. at the first well, only to find it full of a stinking yellow mush which no one and nothing could have drunk. It was a bright moonlight night, and there was

nothing for it but to march on to the next well. We arrived there about 3 a.m., and found it dry. We finally reached Merempayan at 4 p.m., having marched twenty-six hours without a break and without a drink. The old chief of Merempayan was profuse in his welcome, and seated me in state on his best embroidered mattress with a bunch of elaborate pillows behind me. I managed to get out the usual fatuous greetings, and then, as the old man, garrulous and verbose as usual, chatted away, I was rude enough to give way and go to sleep. Politeness, the smell of the coco-nut oil on the pillows, my dripping wet clothes, nothing could keep me awake.

Only one incident of this trek remains in my memory. Some time during the night we had to cross, within a hundred yards of one another, the embouchures of two small streams, the Keniong and the Layer-Layer. Bakar, the head collector of the nests, a gentleman with a very pretty wit and a fund of stories usually, I regret to say, bordering on the vulgarly broad, was marching in front of me and had been keeping us going with his yarns. As we reached the banks of the first estuary he stopped and said quite politely, " Jalan dahulu, tuan " (go ahead, sir). I was too sleepy to ask why, and crossed. Bakar waited, and then shouted to ask if I was over. I replied, " Yes," and he then followed me. It then crossed my drowsy brain to wonder, and I questioned him. He assured me that his only reason had been the fact that these rivers were noted for the rapacity and daring of the crocodiles, and, in fact, he thought that *fiat experimentum in corpore vili* was quite a

useful motto. I told him with some emphasis that I hated humour at 2 a.m., and we crossed the Layer-Layer hand in hand.

Early this year I was visited by burglars. A small and offensive-looking Dusun had been detained for some days under suspicion of complicity in a buffalo theft, but had escaped from the local lock-up. The real culprits were, it was supposed, two Bajaus who lived close to the station. They were men with remarkably large wide feet, resembling tracks which had been seen round the grazing ground of the missing buffalo. They were notoriously friends with the Dusun, but there was for the moment no evidence implicating them in the crime.

I had returned very late in the evening from a tour up-country, and my personal flag, which we district officers in those days used to arrogate the right to fly, had, in consequence, not been displayed for some time. Prima facie, therefore, the house was empty. Some time after midnight I heard a noise in the veranda, but fancied it was one of my dogs moving about. I had at that time thirteen, large and small. The noise was repeated, and was obviously someone endeavouring to open the window leading from the veranda into the dining-room where I kept a fairly valuable collection of native brass-work. This noise called for investigation, and after a vain search for either shot-gun or revolver, neither of which had been replaced after my return, I armed myself with a .50 rifle firing a capped bullet, and sallied forth into the veranda. A gentleman who was standing at the top of the front steps made one leap

down them and retired at a gallop. Seized with a wish to speed my parting guest, I ran to the railings, and was just drawing a bead on him when a clatter of chairs behind me made me turn. A second visitor was desirous of leaving the house, and, with a large, glittering "pidah" (a knife not unlike a kukri) above his head, was approaching me with unpleasant rapidity. I threw my rifle up to cover my head, and felt the knife whiz past my fingers and bury itself in the stock. I was wearing a long sarong (a native sleeping-petticoat), and at the critical moment trod on the tail of it and sat down on the floor with a most disconcerting bump. A moment's thought convinced me that I was neither wounded nor dead, and I turned my attention to my assailant, who was fast disappearing down the drive. I can only have missed him by inches, the splash of the bullet showing up next morning just wide but of beautiful elevation. A search round the house revealed the marks left by two pairs of very large feet and one small pair, but it was not enough to warrant a conviction, and my burglars were never caught.

My annoyance was the more intense when, after all the hullabaloo was over, my pack emerged from under the house and one and all greeted me with those expressive yawns and stretches with which a dog intimates that he has just awakened.

A second burglary, years later, somewhat resembles this in detail, but had a touch of humour about it. The culprit was again a prisoner who had escaped. Three or four days after he got away the back premises of the Residency were raided, and a

ham, a carving knife and my favourite pair of football shorts were removed. About 2 a.m. the next morning I heard a drawer being opened in the dining-room and, as I came out, a hurried flight down the back-stairs. I pursued the fugitive into the garden, but, hearing and seeing nothing, I fired three shots into the air to warn any of the patrols which might be in the neighbourhood. Two days afterwards the man was caught hiding in a shelter he had made in a rough piece of ground not ten yards from my house. He was wearing my football shorts, and on being arraigned before the magistrate he made quite a long and impassioned complaint against me for having put him in jeopardy of his life by firing at him and for having caused irretrievable damage to the pants he was wearing (mine) by a bullet-hole through the seat of them. Sure enough, there was a hole such as a bullet would have made, but there was only one, with no second aperture for the exit of the bullet. It was a good effort to bolster up an *ad misericordiam* appeal against a brutal assault with a firearm on a harmless burglar in the exercise of his profession, but it failed to awaken any decent sympathy in the bench. He was sentenced to a further term of imprisonment for the burglary and a few strokes of the cane on the part of him which my trousers were covering.

In 1904 and 1905 we had to deal successively with epidemics of smallpox and cholera. The latter was without doubt the more difficult proposition. There was so little that one could usefully do in the way of prophylaxis, and practically nothing that one could do during the course of the disease itself. Its effect

on the individual was always so rapid that one could not get remedies out in time to a patient. Smallpox was in many ways more easy to handle, though, in the then state of the medical service, I with my sergeant and one or two native chiefs had to undertake the entire charge of the outbreak in the district. We were issued as many tubes of lymph as could be spared, and then set to work to vaccinate the district, man, woman and child. An ordinary penknife and a razor hone formed the outfit, and every day for months on end we carried out the good work. It needed a lot of persuasion, and I used, in order to convert the doubting Thomases, to scrape away at my arm and dab on a little condensed milk which I kept in a special tube. This usually capped the long, earnest oration with which I had opened proceedings in the chief's house or in the shade of a coco-nut palm. It was discouraging work, both for the operator and the patients, as much of the lymph, owing to the heat, perished and so did not "take."

The process of disinfection was really a farce. It is impossible to "seal" a house built of palm thatch and split bamboo or to sterilize clothes, but we used to go through the formality of sulphuring the houses and steeping the clothing as the outward and visible sign of official release from quarantine rather than from any hope of the process being efficacious. In fact, "Have you been smoked?" was the regular form of inquiry if one were doubtful about any person whom one met and suspected of being a "contact."

In one's efforts to keep the diseases in check one had to contend both with the ignorance of the natives

Photo: G. C. Woolley

IN WAR KIT

and with the fact that they had either to be fed or to be allowed to get their food from the usual sources, the weekly markets or the shops. The whole thing was a difficult proposition, and one did not want to worry them with a lot of regulations which one could not properly enforce and a breach of which it was not easy to punish. On the whole the low-country natives showed up fairly well, but the Dusuns in the hills reverted at once to their old habits of bolting into the jungle, and it was impossible to do much for them. It used to be rather pathetic to ride into an infected Bajau village and find the whole population round one, dumbly expectant that, as a white man, one must have some specific against the pest. It made one very sad to be able to do so little except offer them platitudinous advice as to bearing up and not losing heart. One felt such a hypocrite.

CHAPTER VIII

REBELS—DUSUN CUISINE—DUSUN OATH

I HAD no rebels of my own, none at any rate in permanent residence, but my neighbours each had several coveys. They used generously to give me the privileges of a "gun," and when I had nothing better to do I used to go and climb about the hills where they were supposed to nest. It was a mug's game really, as one probably never got within miles of them, though in the jungle of the tropics one might have been within a stone's throw of the whole band without knowing it. These forays, however, served a double purpose. They kept the rebels thinking and gave them little chance to settle down and terrorize the country-side. They instilled into the bucolic Dusun the idea that it was at any rate a toss-up whether it paid him better to keep in with the rebels, who tyrannized over him and levied an uncertain and unofficial tribute, or with the Government, which was at least regular in its demands and requirements.

I managed to "get in" some of the minor rebels by judiciously advertised fishing parties. For some reason dynamiting fish was a tremendous attraction, and a rumour that one was going up-country and proposed to let go a plug in some well-known pool

often meant that some wretched outlaw would come along and surrender in order to be there. He had, of course, always to stand his trial, except in two cases where men announced that they were escaped prisoners and had been prominent members of some rebel band. The gaol from which they alleged their escape had formed part of a station long abandoned, and all record of these gentlemen and of their offences had disappeared, while there was nothing beyond their own statements to show that they had ever committed any overt act of rebellion. To their chagrin they were told to go home and be good boys. One of them expressed an earnest desire to "plant a stone" with me, but I would only consent if he could show me just cause and would provide a buffalo. His failure to prove himself even a "-super," let alone a "star," seemed to gall him, and I had finally to turn him out of the office.

It was at one time prima facie evidence of outlawry to be found wearing a pair of tight breeches. The Bajau and Ilanun "nuts," aping the Sulus, affect very tight and very bright trouserings, usually embroidered, not unlike Jodhpurs. The leaders of all the rebellions had been members of one or other of these tribes and had carried the fashion into the hills when they retired there. The hill Dusun until then had been content with his bark "chawat," an exiguous garment of the sporran type, just adequate for the purposes of decency. He learned to imitate his leader's garments, and soon all the Susies in the hills were busy sewing pants for Dusuns, pants into which it seemed that the wearer must have been

poured. The dread fiat then went forth, and one diagnosed loyalty or otherwise by the sartorial efforts of those one met.

When the outlaws were more or less all harvested, I used to receive shy requests from young men for permission to have a pair cut on the old lines. It seems that they show off the figure and leg better, and I gather that the embroidery on them offers a diplomatic and easy approach to the virtue or otherwise of the local seamstresses. These applications used to provide the excuse for a little mild badinage in office, and occasionally something broader from any old chief present.

The kudos of the rebels began in time to wane, and so the band in the Tuaran district planned a *coup de théâtre*. Striking well away from their accustomed haunts, they attacked and took a small railway station forty miles south of us. They killed the Indian station-master, and, after looting the few small shops, retired up-country again to their fastnesses, leaving a hot scent of bottles of perfume and other trifles which they found too heavy to carry. The alarm was given, and a pursuing party was sent off under a native N.C.O.; but it was only a leisurely and half-hearted business, which was finally abandoned after a day's march on account of shortage of food. The news was telephoned to all district officers, and three of us started from our respective stations and formed three sides of a square to make a cul-de-sac into which the pursuit would push them. It was an excellent scheme, only lacking one factor for success. There was no "push," and after a vain

wait we three forgathered in the centre of the rebel country. It was a brave display. All told, we had about twenty police and six or seven hundred "friendlies." However, failing the inducement of a pursuit, the flies would not walk into our parlour, and there was nothing for it but to return home, leaving a small force of police to keep things moving. The rebels had shot their bolt, and soon afterwards came in, were tried and hanged.

The covey on the other side did not prove wanting, and provided me with six weeks of strenuous and continuous work, followed by a spell of spasmodic attempts to abate the nuisance one way or another. The immediate cause of this hunt was a tragedy which tinged the whole expedition with sadness from the very beginning, but there was a good deal of comic relief which lightened the gloom.

I had at Kota Belud a very excellent telegraph operator, taciturn to a distressing degree normally, but in times of stress and excitement so volubly and unintelligibly eloquent that he concealed quite impenetrably the information he wished to convey. He wore, incidentally, that peculiar garment made of cheese-cloth which, wound round into a resemblance of very baggy trousers, always gives one the horrible suspicion that it is slipping and will presently, most immodestly, subside on the floor. I never could interview this gentleman without ulterior suspicions of the possibilities.

I was devouring one morning a very belated breakfast when I espied a balloon of white lingerie flying down the hill on which stood the fort and

telegraph office, closely pursued by the sergeant, also an Indian, but of another tribe. I presumed that one of the two had insulted the other, and that there was the usual race to be the first to complain. I did not, therefore, refrain from finishing my meal.

The procession arrived, the operator winning by a short head. However, the sergeant had the better wind, and blurted out, " Tuan sudah mati," which, being interpreted, means, " The (or a) European is dead." I was the only European whose decease should have occasioned all this disturbance, certainly the only one within hail, and I awaited further enlightenment. The operator afforded it. " Sir, he is dead," quoth he. " Well, bury him," said I.

It was only after much questioning that I got to the truth. My neighbour, the district officer of Marudu Bay, was dead. He had been killed at Merak Perak, a spot about three days from my station, and at that juncture the telegraph line, already very indistinct, had petered out entirely.

Obviously it was my job, as the nearest officer, to go up and see what had happened, but I was terribly in the dark. Was it only a murder or was it a rising? I thought things out, and, from all I had heard from outside sources previously, decided that it was a rising, headed by my friend Gunting. There was no time to wait for reinforcements, and I took all the police I could spare, a corporal and five men, and started out. Now, the ordinary ration of transport was one carrier to every two police and six or seven for the district officer. It will therefore be appreciated that we were travelling light when I say that

we took no coolies at all. I did not know what I was up against, and could not risk any chance of being hampered by baggage-carriers.

We set off shortly after midday and travelled fast to Mumus, a convenient centre covering both Gunting's haunts and Merak Perak. A look at Gunting's former village site yielded, as was expected, nothing. He had removed soon after our previous attack on him there. We slept on a rocky beach of the river at Mumus, well clear of the jungle, and early next morning started downstream. A large number of footprints up a side-track delayed us some time until, having followed them up very cautiously for some miles, we found that they led to a native fair which was in full swing. This decided the question as to a general rising, and we pushed on with less caution to Merak Perak, and found life in the village proceeding quite naturally. A few inquiries settled the question of the circumstances of the murder. It was the work of two men, one of whom was under arrest and the other a fugitive. There was nothing left to do but to march on to the headquarters of the district and find out what the plans were.

About an hour from the station I was met by a policeman with a tin of pears and a bottle of beer. These were relief stores sent on to our succour by the Resident. The intention was excellent, but, alas! we had no corkscrew or tin-opener, and he had forgotten both. An attempt to knock the top off the bottle only led to an untimely explosion, and we resumed our march unrefreshed.

After a certain amount of palaver an expedition

under command of the Resident, with myself as assistant, started up-country. We made a central camp at Merak Perak, and from there moved about and generally kept the neighbourhood stirring until, finally, the second murderer was brought in by natives. He did not come in in one piece. Some Dusuns, emboldened by the reward offered, had battered him, and, having removed his head, brought it in as a sort of voucher. The Resident was adamant in demanding the counterfoil, to wit the body. It arrived some days later, heralding its approach very loudly. He was very, very dead. We held a most impressive funeral ceremony at the scene of the murder, and after it was over the chiefs of the villages in the district heaped up a cairn over the body and cemented each stone of it with the most appalling curses on the deceased, his forebears and descendants.

As we were in Gunting's country and had finished our immediate business, we determined to round off proceedings by mopping up Gunting. The strategy was for the Resident to proceed to the south of a mountain (Tambayukong) on which he was supposed to be living, while I, with ten police and thirty scallywags, beat the mountain from the north. I had not realized, when I cheerfully acquiesced in the scheme, that the mountain was over 5,000 feet high and that my path led over its very peak. Gunting's village was just the other side, and the idea was that we should arrive at dawn. We started at 3 p.m. and climbed steadily until 9 p.m., when our guide said that we were just below the peak. We bivouacked on a ridge five feet wide, clear of jungle, and running

sheer down either side twenty feet. It was only when the sentry challenged and fired at a rhinoceros which was making wild efforts to descend the ridge that we discovered that we were on the only track leading to a latrine which the rhino had apparently established at the foot of it. Intuition seemed to tell me that the ridge was unhealthy as soon as I heard the sentry shout out " Badak ! " and bolt, and I slid over the edge in quick time. The same idea struck thirty-eight other people at the same moment, and the sight in the very dim moonlight of the row of anxious faces either side of the narrow track was the sole lining to an otherwise cloudy moment.

I had been leech-bitten before, but I had never had the experience of having my clothing literally stiff with my own gore from their attentions. Leeches, the little jungle leeches, were there in their thousands, and had fairly battened on us during the night, and our garments crackled like paper when we started away again just before dawn.

As soon as the rhinoceros alarm had really subsided I served out medical comforts in the shape of a couple of bottles of square-face gin, and we progressed to the attack. We emerged in the clearing containing the village and drew blank. There was not a soul about and had not been for certainly three days. We could only hope that they had walked into the Resident's party, and camp down for a rest. Next morning we burned the village and started home.

We were jogging along, all rather tired and sleepy, when alongside the track and in a thick bit of undergrowth there was a rustle, and a man was

seen crawling away about five yards off. There was a volley from myself and the police, followed by a sickening groan. We closed up, expecting an attack, when the "man" started to climb a tree and disclosed himself as a female orang-utan with a youngster clinging on to her. She had been badly wounded by the shots, and there was nothing for it but to finish her off. We caught the baby and took him on with us, but he had been too badly shaken by the fall from the tree, and died en route.

We arrived back in camp, and found the Resident just in. He had not seen even an orang-utan.

We had done all that was reasonably possible at the moment, and the expedition dissolved, he returning to his headquarters at Kudat, and I making my way back to my district to battle with the arrears which had accumulated during my absence. I was not, however, quite satisfied about little Gunting, and I determined to make another effort to get in touch with him before he had time to settle down again. A week or two of office work left my conscience clear, and I started off again with half a dozen police to have another stroll round his country. I visited a lot of small villages on the hills under Kinabalu without hearing any definite news of my friend. Finally, after a fortnight's hard walking, my feet gave out, and I had, perforce, to take an easy in a small village while my police finished the round of inspection.

I was sitting at tea outside the hut I had commandeered, when the owner of the next house returned one evening with a pig he had speared.

Not long afterwards the chief of the village, a courtly and pleasant youth who had looked after me most carefully, and in the absence of my proper escort had insisted on placing a native to do sentry over my hut nightly, came up and inquired whether I had any objection to the inhabitants eating pig. I took it that he was ranking me as a Mohammedan, and said that as far as I was concerned they could eat all the pork they wanted. It was a fatal error. The request and the dead pig had connected themselves in my mind, and I presumed that he was referring to good fresh meat.

The Dusuns have a habit of making potted meat. They mix the flesh of any dead animal with certain barks and leaves, and inter the mass in a bamboo which they bury in the ground for six months or so. The result is a mass of decomposition, jelly-like in texture, with a smell that resembles no other smell that I have ever encountered or can conceive. It permeates everything. One's clothes smell of it, one tastes it in everything; it is so penetrating, lasting, cloying that it gives one the feeling that it is almost a palpable solid. It was one of these "stink-bombs" that he had meant; the "pork" to which he referred had already been six months in its grave, and was not nice new pig. However, the deed was done, and we spent the rest of the evening in a solid cloud of the odour of putrefaction. I was young and inquisitive in those days, and, knowing how people who eat that pungent fruit, the durian, do not perceive its scent, I ventured to try some of the deceased. Once one had mastered the natural repulsion, it was not

difficult to swallow the condiment, and it had a distinctive and not unpleasant taste.

Having plumbed, as I thought, the worst depths of the Dusun cuisine, I made up my mind to go through the whole gamut, and I tried on successive days other examples of the art. Rats, snakes, squirrels and various jungle herbs were quite palatable, but I had to draw the line at monkey. It was, I imagine, a tasty dish, but the appearance on a dish of a "wing" of a monkey was more than I could stand. It was served complete with the hand, and was too revoltingly cannibalistic in its resemblance to a child's forearm.

This trip had for the moment no visible result. We got neither sight nor news of Gunting, and I was reluctantly compelled to call off my police and go home; but I let it be known that I was coming back very soon to renew the chase. Before very long I was approached by very indirect channels with a suggestion that Gunting would "come in" or was, at any rate, prepared to negotiate. After some inquiry I found that I could get into communication with him through his latest wife, the lady whose honeymoon we had so rudely interrupted a year before. I sent off Lengok, my head Dusun chief, to start the ball rolling by seeing this lady and finding out exactly how matters stood. He returned with an offer by Gunting to meet me at a designated place if I would come unarmed and without an escort. I went up with the trusted head chief of the district, Orang Kaya Arsat, and after a long but placid interview with Gunting and three or four of his followers,

all armed, I got his promise to surrender within thirty days.

Lengok was rather a blackguard in many ways, but I had rather a soft corner in my heart for him on account of a little attention he paid to me unsolicited when I was ill. I had a very bad go of fever and was delirious for some days. My boy did not, I gather, do a great deal for me, but old Lengok was found one day in the corner of my room praying hard for my recovery to such of his deities as he thought had charge of the case. The idea was, I believe, not his own, being an imitation of a similar effort by the Mohammedan chief, but it was none the less genuine. It was, at any rate, a contrast to an instance of deliberate neglect by my own servant which occurred after the fever had left me. He had recently married, and with my sanction had built himself a little habitation about fifty yards from my house. I had told him during the morning that I wanted some soup about midday, the first nourishment I had had for more than a week. I was asleep at midday, but awoke shortly after one and rang my bell. There was no answer, and I crawled to the back premises, which I found all locked. My only chance of getting hold of someone was to telephone to the police station, about a quarter of a mile away, and get an orderly to go and find him or any other of the staff. He was brought to me after a few minutes, and rather casually said, "You were asleep at twelve when I brought the soup, so I threw it away and went home." It is regrettable to relate that I lost my temper, and, anger steeling my arm, I got

him a beauty across the ear which floored him. One is never proud to remember having lost one's temper, particularly with a Malay, who considers any display of emotion undignified and bad form, but I do not think that I have ever really regretted that spank.

Kastawi gave me an opportunity shortly afterwards of returning good for evil. I was still rather seedy, and was sitting one morning waiting for him to return from the weekly fair with provisions. I heard him ride past the house, and shouted out to the boy that I wanted breakfast soon. Shortly afterwards Kastawi came into the veranda and stood waiting behind me. Without turning my head I asked him what he wanted, and got the answer: "Just look at my face." I did. His face had never been a thing to grace the early morn, but the fact that he had fallen off his nag and had slid for some feet on a rough wooden bridge face downwards had committed further ravages on it. He was a mask of blood, and, having cut his lower eyelid right across, one eyeball was more or less hanging on his cheek. I was rather a wreck myself, and proceeded to vomit violently, after which I sent for my little Malay clerk and got to work to look for Kastawi's features and to put them back as far as possible where they belonged to his face. The result was not a credit either to us or to the original makers, but it was the best we could do and had to serve. I was not surprised to hear shortly afterwards that his young wife had gone off with another young man. She really had a good reason.

It was, of course, a *sine qua non* that Gunting

should go through the usual peace-making, the "planting of a stone." This archaic ceremony was always "featured" whenever a surrender, either of a village or of an individual, took place. The material required consisted of a buffalo, a suitable cylindrical river-stone about two feet long and six or so inches in diameter, some salt and some rice. The cast included a principal representative on either side and any number of prompters. A hole was dug to receive about two-thirds of the stone, and the business then started. The ex-rebel, with a long-drawn, repeated, falsetto howl, called on his god "Kinaringan in the heavens, Kinaringan in the earth, and Kinaringan in the water" to bear witness, and he then started on a recital of all the misfortunes which he invoked upon himself if he betrayed his oath. "If I climb a coconut, may I fall; if I enter a river, may a crocodile take me; may my children die; may my wife be unfaithful and die; may I die; may monkeys eat my crops; may my salt melt and be absorbed and may I perish as it does when cast into water." At the appropriate moments he cast a handful of rice to the winds and a pinch of salt into a bowl of water. He also recited his various obligations under the oath towards the other party. "I will obey the orders of the Government; I will not consort with rebels; I will not harbour buffalo thieves or their stolen animals; I will report to the Government any information I may obtain as to criminals or criminal doings or intentions," and so on. During the two divisions of this commination service the prompters of the other side listened intently, and at intervals

broke in upon the sing-song chant to suggest even more dire and dreadful fatalities or more stringent duties and undertakings. The final result of the whole imprecation seemed to cover every exigency of the swearer's life and environment, and any betrayal of his oath appeared warranted to involve him in a manifold catastrophe of pain and misery. The Government side then had an innings, and, in a more perfunctory way, calls down curses if it does not treat its new subject fairly. The wretched buffalo, which has until now been only a rather bored spectator of the ceremony, is led forward and thrown near the hole. Its throat is cut and the blood allowed to pour into the hole, into which is then set, by the joint efforts of representatives of both parties, the recording stone. The district officer and the rebel chief solemnly smear the stone with some of the bloody mud, and the ceremony then degenerates into a mere butchering of the buffalo into suitable "joints" and the distribution of his remains for a feast.

The whole scene is picturesque and impressive, while the native usually respects a treaty hallowed in this manner. In one or two cases, where I had reason to think that a village had not been as faithful to its pact as it should have been, I had some of the inhabitants down and made a solemn pilgrimage to its particular stone among the group of mementoes which stood in the garden at Kota Belud. This ceremonial *aide-mémoire* usually revived the dulled conscience, and once only did I have to threaten to pluck out the stone as no longer valid to mark a

bargain which they had renounced. That threat caused a furore of excitement, and we reconsecrated the stone with a second baptism of buffalo's blood.

My last effort after rebels was short but sweet. I was just turning in one night when I heard a hail from the gate of the compound surrounding my house, and in response to my invitation my friend Mandor, a feckless Bajau who lived close to the station, appeared and excitedly announced that there were rebels not two hours from the station. I gave him time to regain some sort of coherence, and then gathered that three men, whose names I did not recognize as among the "wanteds," were in a hut on a clearing five miles away. They were armed, but he did not know whether their intentions were peaceful or otherwise. It was a gloriously bright moonlight night, and seemed made for a "night op." of this nature. After hurried preparations, Mandor, six police and I set out to visit these gentlemen. We got out into the clearing and found a small hut on the top of a rise. I sent the police in pairs round the clearing with orders to creep up to within thirty yards of the back and sides of the hut, while Mandor and I took the front. As soon as the police had taken up their positions I heaved a lump of mud on to the roof of the hut and shouted to the inmates. There was a scuffle and a lot of whispering, and I hailed them again. The door opened, and a very sleepy-looking head came round the corner. I could see two spear-heads, and anticipated any idea of resistance by giving a short and concise *précis* of the situation and explaining that my

"thirty" police had them surrounded and would fire at the first move. I finished by an adjuration to throw out their weapons—knives in their sheaths and spears butt foremost. This was done, after some hesitation and a lot of whispering. I ordered Mandor to gō forward and pick the lot up, while I covered the door with my revolver. There was no answer, and I found, after a despairing howl for him, that he had quietly retreated to the edge of the clearing, where he was watching events. It was lucky that matters had gone off so quietly. As soon as he was satisfied that all was peace, he came up with a bravado that I envied and picked up the weapons with the air of Nelson's coxswain. The "rebels" were then invited to descend, and were marched off in handcuffs to the station, where investigation showed them to be very minor satellites of a band which was presumed to have been wiped out long before. They had, as a matter of fact, been proposing to "come in," but rounding them up like this was not a bad object-lesson. The wretched Mandor all the way home was the butt of a running fire of sarcastic congratulation on his prowess *vis-à-vis* the foe, a poor return really for the trouble he had taken, but not unnatural after his exhibition of masterly strategy.

These "mopping up" chases after rebels were hard work, but there was much amusement to be got out of them and they relieved what might otherwise have become monotonous. They always provided a good emergency excuse to serve as an explanation of any official remissness. My neighbour was once

ordered to the capital to see the Governor, and until he had ascertained that the invitation was entirely friendly he staved off compliance by, as he put it, "moving Dulah across the district." In other words, he went up and had a look round in order to "mark time." They certainly gave one the opportunity and inducement to visit many parts of one's district which would otherwise probably have been a closed book, and in time they bore fruit with the elimination of the trouble.

There was, of course, always a spice of danger—not, indeed, of direct human encounter, because in the "mopping up" days we could never get the rebels to stand. They would sometimes build a small so-called "fort" (personally, I always gave them time to do it, in the hope that we should be able to get at them), but usually the only satisfaction one got for a hard fortnight's march was the knowledge that one had stirred them up a bit. In the real rebellion days of Mat Saleh a fort was a nut that took some cracking, but the minor forts of the scallywags did not often present much difficulty so long as one did not do the utterly obvious. For instance, one fort into which I walked by the back-door with a party of police would have been a most unpleasant enterprise if one had come up the front drive, so to speak. It was on a spur of a hill overlooking a river, with a track winding round and up the steep cliff. This path was plastered with bamboo spikes and traps, and was commanded by a most ingenious battery of heavy stones slung in rattans which could be loosed singly or in one grand salvo. A three

days' march enabled us to take this masterpiece from the rear, and, news of our arrival having spread, we found the birds flown and simply dropped in without trouble. I had two consolations for missing the inhabitants. I had the privilege of firing the salvo of rocks, and I had a pot-shot at one of the band, who, so to speak, was cocking snooks at us from across the valley. I never found out whether I hit him or not, but his disappearance was so instantaneous that I have always cherished the thought that I got him.

Hope springs eternal in the breast of the district officer, and we used to stagger time after time through the night so as to have a chance of getting at these people at dawn. There was always just a chance that they knew nothing of one's movements, but it was a thin one. A night march across country in the tropics is not child's play, and I have more than once stepped on the guide's head going down a steep place. Add the risk from anything in the shape of a "sudah" or a "blatik" (bamboo spikes and traps) which were usually left for our reception, and the prospect is sufficiently uninviting without the chance of meeting one of the foe *in propria persona*. Still, it was great fun, and the gentle thrill enhanced the enjoyment—afterwards.

CHAPTER IX

JUNGLE TRAVELLING

JUNGLE travelling, like most other things in life, has a dark side and a light side. Heat, mud, narrow slippery tracks, precipitous hills, torrents in spate, leeches, rain—all are factors which, given undue emphasis, make up a dismal picture. An ardent lover of jungle travelling will always admit all these annoyances and a whole lot more, but he will set against them all that he gains by leaving his more or less comfortable home and casting himself on the tender mercies of Mother Nature, aided or hindered in her ministrations by the varying worth and prowess of the jungle "boy." One gets away from routine, from the dry-as-dust atmosphere of one's office, from the telephone or telegraph urging upon one what one considers the impossible and futile ideas of one's superiors, and from the claims of the small "society" of the towns. A new world opens before one, a change from the everlasting routine of the "office-wallah." Those who say that the price one pays for that change is too heavy earn one's pity. They miss such a lot which the man who does not mind a reasonable amount of exposure and discomfort gains. New people, new places, new customs are the reward of those who travel the

"back-blocks" of Borneo; scenery of a varied grandeur and beauty which the stay-at-home can never conceive; and, with luck, the chance, at any rate, of a shot at any of the bigger fauna, which, naturally, do not often approach the more civilized parts of the country. I admit one must be young, enthusiastic, and not too rotund, to taste to the full the joy of travel in the jungle; but, given these essentials, it is to anyone who has once eaten of the fruit of the tree of travel a continuing marvel that men exist who really hate it. There have, it is true, been times when I have cursed the lot that has made it my part in life to crawl panting up a sheer hill-side or to lift one foot after another with a glutinous "plock" from the noisome, cloying mud of a sago or mangrove swamp. One requires to be a stoic to sit on the banks of a mountain torrent, swollen and yellow from the storm which is making even a cigarette impossible for the moment, and watch the carriers essay the ford which, after a struggle, one has just negotiated. They bear the burden of all the comforts and necessities which, in a short hour from now, will do so much to wipe out all memories of the tribulations and dangers of the day. They are laden with one's roof, one's furniture, one's food and a slender supply of one's clothes. The river is running breast-high, the bottom is one long trail of slippery boulders, and only fifty yards below the ford is a rapid. It only needs a slip, a foot placed wrong in the murky water, to up-end the coolie and drive him and his load down the boiling stream. That bulky bundle wrapped in a ground-sheet is one's

mattress and pillows, the three baskets made of sago-palm bark represent respectively the wardrobe, the larder, and the kitchen, and their respective fortunes cause an agony of apprehension until they are safely across. Stick or spear in hand, the coolies one by one worry their way through the torrent, or, if the river is really bad, the stronger and taller men leave their burdens for the time being and help the weaker brethren across. Then, picking up a substantial boulder which they rest on their shoulders as ballast, they recross and essay the passage with their own loads. The caravan re-forms on the other side of Jordan, appreciably exhausted by the fight, and resumes its march.

Rivers are not the only obstacles. A native track is the result of casuistry on the part of previous travellers. The jungle, except in big timber country, is a solid layer of vegetation which wraps one round as a mist, and which only allows passage to a person who is willing to dodge and wriggle his way past or to nick his way with a knife. The first pioneer on a new track takes the line of least resistance, and will fetch a compass round a fallen tree or a clump of the thorned rattan. Each succeeding traveller follows literally in his footsteps, and the net result is that a native track is a defile, perhaps a foot wide, winding and curling between two practically solid green walls with a slightly less continuous but quite obvious green ceiling. In course of time the log or the rattan which gave birth to a deviation rots away or dies, but the deviation remains, apparently causeless and

to the unobservant merely fortuitous and annoyingly unnecessary.

The leafy surroundings afford, in some parts of the country, harbourage to the jungle leech. He is a little fellow, half an inch to an inch long, and, when hungry and empty, the thickness of a knitting-needle. He sits erect on the grass or branches alongside the paths with his business end ready for action. Whatever sense it is which warns him, he is always prepared to attach himself to any passer-by, human or otherwise. One has only to brush past his resting-place to have him as a lodger. His landing-place may be one's shirt or one's stocking, but it takes him no time to find an orifice which will give him access to the good meat below. A button-hole, the lace-holes in riding-breeches or shoes, are quite enough, and without delay he worms his way in, selects a juicy spot, and digs in his plunger. A few minutes and he has lost his elegant figure and has become Falstaffian with a good meal of red blood. He usually manages to insinuate his sucker without its being felt by the victim, and often one is not cognizant of his presence until he has completed his gorge, though at times one sees suspicion break over the face of a jungle-traveller, and a hasty search, often without regard to the dictates of decency, discloses the trespasser.

Once a leech has got a hold, his removal should be managed circumspectly. If he is torn off, he is apt to leave his sucker in the wound, which festers and becomes the nucleus of a nasty jungle sore, slow in healing. The *habitué* uses a pinch of salt or a

lighted cigarette or a piece of chewed tobacco to discourage the leech, which then relaxes his grip, withdraws his sucker, and comes away easily, to be solemnly cut to pieces.

The "tungau," a minute red speck-like insect, which bores under the skin and incontinently dies, is another terror by day; while the sand-fly, in certain places and at certain times, makes sleep utterly impossible. A mosquito net, unless it is made of cheese-cloth or some material equally close in texture, is useless, while a smudge of smoke is just as inefficacious and extremely unpleasant. A mosquito is a sportsman, and notifies his attack by his preliminary buzz and by the sting of his sucker piercing the shrinking cuticle. Not so the sand-fly, whose presence, to use an Hibernianism, is only noticeable after he has gone. A large, angry and intensely irritable lump marks his feeding-place. It subsides after some hours, only to reappear twenty-four hours afterwards with hardly lessened virulence.

Some of the native huts and houses are not innocent of the commoner personal vermin, but a rag soaked in kerosene oil tied round the legs of the camp-bed, chair, and table will check their advance.

This sounds a formidable list of horrors, but they are only possibilities, and one may go many miles without encountering any of them. At other times the cup of misery may be filled to the brim and a sample of all these plagues molest the traveller without intermission.

A last affliction to which one is liable is attributable to oneself or one's wretched agent, the "boy"

or coolie, and not to Nature. It is kerosene oil. One starts a trip with innumerable bottles of this liquid slung on every load. So long as the bottles are well corked and the contents are reserved for their proper use, the hurricane lantern, all is well; but it is a wayward and a penetrating liquid. The time comes when a cork comes adrift, and life becomes one long savour of kerosene. Food, clothes, bed, all reek of it, and one's lot is dismal. That, again, is not a frequent event, one's servants not being anxious to brave too often the storm which such a catastrophe always rouses in the most placid and long-suffering temper.

Minor troubles, such as the bread—brought from home and rationed with much care—running short, the last bottle of whisky being broken, or the morning egg proving explosive, are incidents which might occur anywhere, though the wise jungle-traveller guards against the last misfortune, at least, by never allowing a boiled egg to be served to him. What, after all, is the use of a "boy" if he is not to run the risk of all that an egg may be? *Experto crede*, in the jungle an egg must be poached, fried, or scrambled if one wants to be certain that one's interview with it is to be genial.

There are two main schools of thought as regards the proper method of travelling in the jungle. Some there be who like to take things easy, who in luxurious comfort have their tea in bed, perform a leisurely toilet, and start about 8 a.m. or so and halt about 10 a.m. for breakfast. They admit the salient disadvantages of this practice, the fact that all the

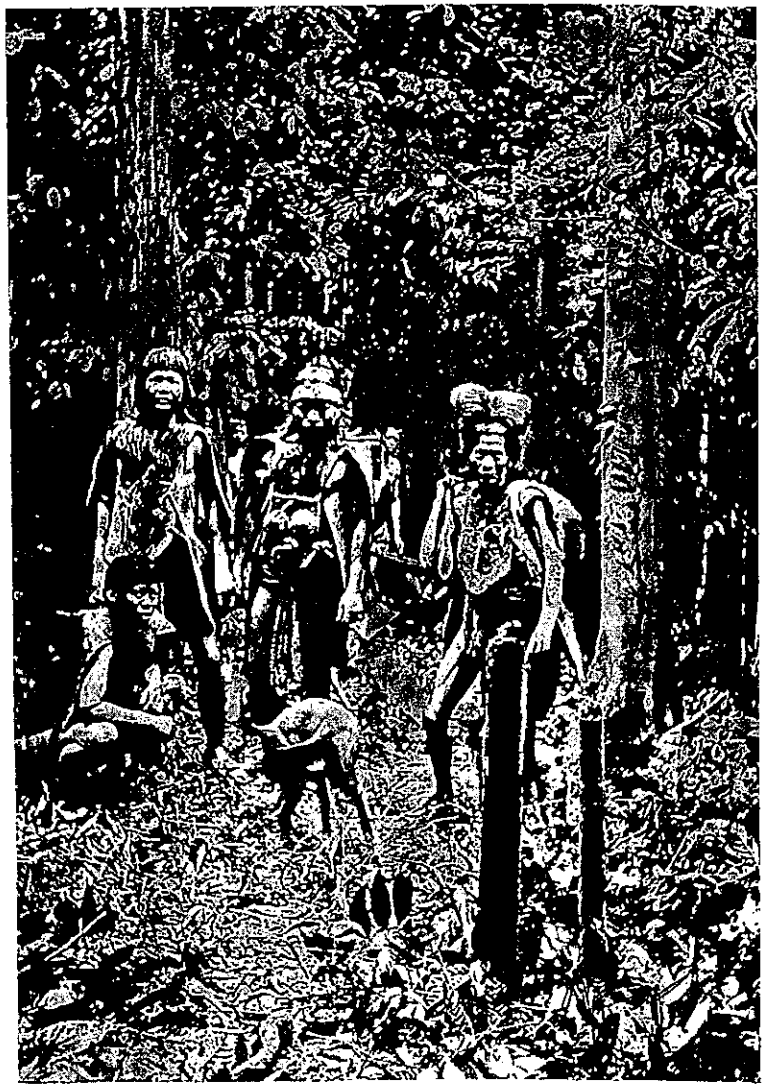


Photo: N. B. Buboneau

A Halt Midway.
Carriers in the Jungle

marching is done in the heat of the day, and that they are liable to finish the march in the usual afternoon shower, but they do not mend their ways.

The other school, the orthodox school, to my way of thinking, rise at 4.30 a.m., breakfast stoutly on bacon and eggs at 5 a.m., and are off at the very crack of dawn. Their toilet is sketchy, but they get a good part of the march done in the cool of the morning; they camp at a decently early hour, when, almost for a certainty, even the last coolie gets his load in before the rain; and, after a sleep and tea, they are ready for a shoot or an audience of the local potentates. Dinner at 6.30 p.m., a smoke and a read, and they turn in at eight or half-past, having earned a night's rest.

This régime requires some training. At the grisly hour of five in the morning, bacon and eggs to the novice are not attractive, but use soon accustoms the human stomach even to that insult. A planter of very hospitable tendencies habitually, even in the shelter of his own very comfortable bungalow, breakfasts at 4.30 a.m. The accommodating visitor who, in response to the courteous inquiry as to the hour at which he would like to breakfast, says, "Oh, whenever you have yours," is aghast at the pit he has dug for himself, and compromises with the suggestion that he could manage a bite about half-past eight.

It was once my privilege to escort a very distinguished official on a tour of my Residency. I was assured by his wife that he could sometimes face a cup of tea about seven, but nothing to eat, not even

a slice of dry toast. I determined not to inflict the full rigour of my day on him, and therefore postponed réveillé until 5.30 a.m. I breakfasted at six, and he was given some very diluted tea, his repast being sent ahead to await us at a convenient spot some two hours out. About the third morning of the journey I had some sausages set before me by the cook, and shortly after heard from my liege-lord a prolonged sniff of appreciation, followed by "That smells very good. Is there any for me?" It was a case for firmness, and I explained tersely, but, I hope, without offence, that there was not enough for two, that it was *my* meal, that he had no right even to sniff at it, and that his breakfast would, I trusted, meet us at a spot eight miles away, whither a coolie and a servant were then speeding like the wind. The conversation lapsed, but over tea that afternoon I took a firm hold of the subject and expressed a desire to hear, once and for all, whether he wished to eat his breakfast at daybreak like a man or mumble his tepid picnic meal at ten as aforetime. He was converted, and for the rest of the trip became a disciple of the true faith.

Some there be who prefer to follow behind the last of their carriers and so make sure that every load arrives. They certainly ensure that, but the pace of a laden coolie is, at best, lugubrious, while there is always one weakling who lags behind and has to be shepherded. In any event, a posse of natives, apart from any over-ripe delicacy they may be carrying for their own consumption, sometimes becomes unduly hot and not a little smelly.

Personally, I prefer to go ahead of my carriers, accompanied, if necessary, by a guide, my orderly, and an acolyte with a light load containing a change of clothing, a tin of biscuits, and a flask of whisky. This enables one to get into camp early and refresh the inner and the outer man without having to wait.

As regards food, one has on the one hand the "simple life" enthusiast whose ambition never rises beyond a plate of rice and, possibly, the sinewy leg of a chicken, and on the other the sybarites who go in largely for tinned foods of abstruse natures. The proper course lies probably in a happy mean. Tinned foods are, of course, not particularly nourishing and at times induce stomach trouble, but they add that relish for food which is apt to be lost on an eternal diet of rice, even-seasoned by a portion of fowl. Circumstances, of course, vary. In some parts of the country one need not, given a reasonably good "boy," look beyond the produce of the neighbourhood for practically all one requires. In others, where population is scanty or unenterprising, everything, every crumb and drop of daily nourishment, has to be carried with one. I spent ten days once at a spot where the only liquid was a tawny, viscid fluid, and I and my companion, a fellow district officer, were reduced throughout our stay to drinking coco-nut water, suitably tempered with whisky or lime-juice. This diet began to pall, and we endeavoured one afternoon to make an *ersatz* of the cup which cheers without inebriating by boiling coco-nut water and hopefully adding thereto tea-

leaves. The result was more beastly than I had thought possible.

The main desideratum is undoubtedly a reasonable amount of the best and most nourishing food available. Travelling is hard work and takes a good deal out of one. It is false economy to save one's employer fifty cents or so a day by eliminating a single coolie's load and starving oneself. The only result will be a loss of vitality, which will prove more expensive in the end.

Clothing in the jungle is another highly contentious subject. Personally, if one is walking, I regard a double Terai hat, a loose flannel shirt of the "colonial" type, shorts, stockings with a pair of socks underneath, and canvas shoes as ideal. Others regard this as indecently exiguous, and don riding-breeches and tunics. One man with whom I travelled once or twice over very precipitous country had developed a theory that the leg muscles required support, and for climbing used to indue skin-tight riding-breeches with putties rolled on at extreme tension. A newly-arrived surveyor laughed at my canvas shoes, which, he said, would let in the wet whenever I crossed a stream or struggled through the dew-soaked grass. He pointed with pride to his field-boots, which would carry him dry-shod all day through anything. After we had forded the first river waist-high we had to up-end this gentleman to empty his very watertight boots!

Until one's arms and knees get hardened, their exposure to the attacks of tropical sun and vegetation is apt to be painful, but use soon toughens them.

On one occasion I was visiting a district and had arranged to traverse a scorching hot plain with the district officer. The night before our trek he politely asked what time I should like to start, and I suggested half-past five. He seemed rather overcome at the idea, and I inquired what his views on the matter were. He replied that he had never liked the early morning, and preferred things to get warmed up before he left the house. Next morning I appeared in my usual short-sleeved shirt. The idea took his fancy, and in spite of my warning he shed his coat. We started about nine o'clock on a piping hot day, and rode twenty miles across an absolutely shadeless plain. At the end of the ride his arms were blistered to the elbows, and by the evening were like two rugby footballs. I could not help murmuring just once: "It *is* jolly to get things warmed up before one starts."

Mental recreation on jungle trips was always a difficulty. Personally, I found patience a useful pastime; but, being unable to sleep unless aided by some sort of book, I had to provide myself with literature of some sort. I am a quick and voracious reader, and I always found it difficult to keep myself going when on a long trip. One's accumulation of English papers and a modern book or two were soon exhausted. My refuge was something stodgily interesting which would bear re-reading, and I almost always took with me Buckle's "History of Civilization" and Queen Victoria's "Letters." I found that I could always pick up a volume of either work, open it at random, and find something to amuse or

interest me. One young district officer with whom I travelled, irreverently discussing my jungle habits with a friend, summed them up by the condemnatory criticism: "He reads Queen Victoria's 'Letters' with his eggs and bacon." It was true, but I did it mainly to avoid either a fatuous early morning conversation or, as an alternative, a moody contemplation of that junior's face. Neither prospect pleased me, and I was forced to find some more congenial occupation for the dawning hours.

CHAPTER X

THE JUNGLE-BOY—BRIDLE-PATHS

TO my mind an ever-continuing miracle is the "jungle-boy," the composite cook, butler and valet who attends on the peripatetic European in his trips through the wild lands of the East. He is always a native, because practically no Chinese have a jungle "sense," though on one long trip, when there were four Europeans, we did have a Chinese cook. He was an exception, and stuck the seventy days in the wilderness well.

The native, on the other hand, is country-bred; he has probably been in the jungle in his youth, and so has a certain amount of jungle "craft"; he probably knows something of cattle and ponies; he can probably speak one or more of the native dialects, which are after all mutually allied; and he can subsist on rations at which a Chinese will usually turn up his nose. All this redounds to the comfort of his employer, who has then only to see that his boy knows a certain amount about plain cooking and that he learns and panders to his employer's pet fads in the details of camp and jungle life. When, however, one translates the actual daily duties of a boy on trek into cold print it looks appallingly cruel.

Taking as an example a traveller of the "early" school, the boy probably arranges with the sentry (if there is one) to call him at 4 a.m., when he starts to get the fire going. At 4.30 he calls his lord, a task on occasion comparable with Daniel's entry into the lions' den. If the boy is wise, he has overnight set out the day's kit in some accessible place, but one where it has not been exposed to rain or mist. He indicates the spot firmly and clearly to the recumbent mass on the camp-bed in the hope that its faculties are sufficiently awake to be receptive of the information, and he then retires to the kitchen, probably a tripod of stones in the lee of the hut, where he busies himself with preparations for breakfast. He dumps the meal on the camp-table and proceeds at once, helped by the police and coolies, to strip and pack up the bed, clothing and kitchen equipment. He gets away with the last of the loads about 5.30, and has the day's march in front of him, to be covered on foot, unless he is lucky enough, when on a bridle-path, to get a lift on his master's spare pony. The moment he gets into camp, probably about two in the afternoon, he finds a hungry and weary European, who expects tea to be served at once, if not sooner, and bed, books, *batterie de toilette* and clean clothing to be laid out. This done, the boy has an hour or two to spare before he need contemplate the preparation of dinner, but, just to keep him from any ennui, there are the day's clothes to wash and anything that his master may suddenly want to find. Dinner over and the bed set ready for the night, he has a chance to think about

himself and to fit in a few hours' sleep before the inexorable routine starts again the next morning.

The return home does not bring him very much relief. He dons a white suit in place of his travel-stained khaki, and reverts to the duties of an ordinary "house-boy," assisted, of course, by the rest of the household staff.

In earlier days practically every resident and district officer spent on an average two-thirds of his time travelling through his kingdom, and a good jungle-boy was a pearl beyond price, someone to be pampered and cajoled into staying with one. It is wonderful that they did remain faithful to their masters for years. One got to know them almost as well as one knew the masters, and to regard the master as incomplete without his accustomed satellite. Ari, Khamis, Bakar, Korok, Ahmat, are all names which recall to the memory, not only their usually plain but cheerful bronze faces, but also the varying physiognomies of the respective employers of them.

In seventeen years I had two jungle-boys. Kastawi, a Banjerese from south (Dutch) Borneo, was a wiry old veteran who, with my Dyak orderly, Baji, was with me on many a long journey in the Tempasuk district and in Marudu Bay; while Ambun, a Dusun, took on Elijah's mantle when Kastawi left me, and served me faithfully for nine years of hard travelling. He was a short, stocky man, with enormously developed legs which carried him steadily up and down the very vile hills of the Interior Residency. He was usually cheerful, spoke

practically every dialect, knew all my pet fads, and so could be trusted, as a general rule, not to make silly mistakes, and he seldom disobeyed an order.

I gave him, twice, an order of which I was, in my heart, ashamed. On one occasion I was travelling with a district officer, and we had ridden out twenty miles from his station to a halting-house, whence we were making a short march the next day of nine miles on. Ambun had left at the station the only corkscrew and the only tin-opener, and came and told me so. As we had a ten or twelve days' journey ahead of us, I told him he had better fetch them. He started off there and then, marched the twenty miles back to the station, and caught us the next evening about six o'clock at our next camp. Sixty-nine miles in thirty-six hours is good going.

Another time, I had returned from a long trip to the Dutch boundary, and when writing my report I found I wanted to refer to a sketch-map of my Residency which I had compiled at vast trouble and which, being the only copy, was as the apple of my eye. It was about ten at night when he came and told me that it could not be found. I told him to find it and told him that I knew that I had had it at Rundum and had there given it to him to pack. The next morning the second boy brought in my early-morning tea at five, and I asked him where Ambun was. He had started for Rundum at 3 a.m. Now, Rundum was fifty-two miles away, if one followed the bridle-path, and perhaps forty-four if one took the short cuts, which, however, meant

wearisome scrambles up the precipitous hill-sides. Ambun was back on the third day, having found time en route to call on a lady he was courting and arrange his nuptials. Nearly ninety miles in well under three days, with a bit of love-making thrown in, is useful marching.

Love was rather a hobby of Ambun's, and has once or twice played him false. He was occupying at one time a menial position on the Governor's household staff, and, while accompanying His Excellency on a trip round the coast in the Government yacht, was entrusted with the important job of drying a pair of His Excellency's trousers which had got wet. They were in harbour, and Ambun, having other business toward—which rumour says was a fair but frail lady on shore—secured the trousers in the rigging and departed. Whether the wind blew or thieves broke in and stole, history does not relate, but the fact remains that the sacred pants disappeared, and Ambun was given his immediate *congé*.

The next time I saw Ambun he was a convict, having been found guilty of climbing over the partition of a cubicle into which the Chinese cook presciently had locked his (the cook's) wife. For some reason Ambun had chosen to carry out his escalade with a knife between his teeth, but, if one may judge from the reputation attaching to the lady, it was not to terrorize *her*. She was, unless rumour slanders her, more than complacent to any advances. It was not for the cook's benefit, as, when that worthy unexpectedly returned, Ambun did not make

the natural use of the knife to discourage the cook. In fact, what the knife was for I never could ascertain, even on minute inquiry years afterwards from Ambun; but it had, I gathered, the effect of enhancing his sentence considerably. I took Ambun, so to speak, from the gaol door, and never regretted it.

Gaol-birds usually make good servants, and I have had many of them in my service for varying periods. In a country where there are no schools and time does not possess any real significance for the majority of the inhabitants, a few months in prison does a man a lot of good. It teaches him order, punctuality and discipline, and, to some extent, cleanliness. The nature of the crime is of some importance, and I never took on anyone who had been convicted of petty theft or any mean felony of that sort; but the adulterer, the head-hunter and the buffalo thief have shown themselves to be men, and are worth a trial, at any rate, after they have purged their offences.

Twenty years ago the present extensive system of bridle-paths, with their series of halting-houses at frequent intervals, was hardly begun, with the result that all travelling was on foot over native tracks. Camping meant either a palm-leaf hut, hastily built up in the jungle, or a corner on the veranda of a native house in a village. The former alternative was the less comfortable, but gave one a reasonable privacy. The latter had several advantages. There was a moral certainty that the roof did not leak, and one was able to hear a good deal of news, some of

it, one gathered, not quite meant for one's ears, but an apparent air of detached interest in one's book or one's game of patience was often conducive to intimate and confidential talk among the inhabitants which sometimes proved very useful. After dinner a cup of native beer or even a dram of square-face gin loosened the strings of their tongues still more, and stories of the olden times with tit-bits of information about the present would flow until the small hours. To the novice the ordeal of robing and disrobing, feeding and sleeping absolutely *coram populo* was embarrassing. All the children, most of the younger community and probably one or two veterans would settle down from the hour of one's arrival and watch, with an intentness which missed not a movement, the whole, to them novel, operation. Hair-brushes, tooth-brushes, bed, knives, forks and spoons, under-garments and shoes were all surprises, and one felt when leaving a village that one had provided entertainment for a lot of people whose lives were seldom cheered by anything so intriguing. The fowls, more often than not, roosted in the roof, the pigsty was invariably underneath the house, and the population, with its cats and dogs, encircled one on the horizontal plane. It was only the assistance of the sarong which enabled one to perform a modest toilet suitable to the audience, while one's ablutions at the village spring or in a near-by stream were always attended by the local herd of swine. They perform the function of sewage disposal, and always chaperoned one hopefully on one's walks abroad.

Nowadays one's rest is more comfortably secluded. The halting-houses are equipped with separate rooms for the European, and retiring rooms for bathing, etc. One gains, no doubt, in comfort, but one loses a lot of human interest and quite a lot of knowledge of and information about one's subjects. If one is near a village, the chief comes and pays a formal call, but it has not the same genial bonhomie as of olden days. After all, even more sophisticated people feel a difference between a "call" and sitting after dinner over the port and cigarettes. Bridle-paths, however, are there now, and will stay until they are supplanted by roads. It is certainly very pleasant to amble along comfortably seated on a pony where, in one's younger days, one has sweated through all the vicissitudes of a native track, and it tends without doubt to a speeding-up of the work of travelling. Whether that accelerated scurry through the country gives the same results, from an administrative point of view, as the more leisurely progress of yore is questionable. One can only hope that it does, and that the inhabitants do not need the same intimate handling as they did.

These same bridle-paths have been characterized by many travellers as more than creditable to their makers. In fact, a distinguished official from India pooh-poohed the name "bridle-path," and said that in India they would be classed as "third-class roads not available for wheeled traffic." A rose by any other name will smell as sweet, and changing the convenient name of these arteries of communication for a longer and more lofty title will make them no

more and no less convenient. They enable one to ride in comparative safety and comfort where, before, one suffered the perils and tribulations of the native tracks, which, perversely, always climb and follow a ridge unless they are, as an alternative, sited practically in the bed of a torrent.

The paths were traced and constructed by that maid-of-all work the district officer. It is not easy in thick jungle to set out a path on a minimum grade of one in fifteen, and it was often one's lot to think one was making good progress with a section and to find that an impassable cliff or abyss blocked the way. This might mean the abandonment of a fortnight's work and a dreary search for a way round. At one hill I had a dozen traces started, but each time was pulled up by some difficulty. I finally put in a flying trace at a grade of one in ten in order to explore the country and before deciding what to do. I was transferred to another district while this was being cut, and was horrified when, after some years, I came back to the district on a visit to find my tentative trace, with its awful grades and curves, widened into a full-blown path. My successor, not realizing the circumstances and being a novice at the art of path-making, had airily ordered my poor effort to be adopted as the path.

On one occasion the year's vote for the construction of bridle-paths had come to an end and left me with about two miles actually constructed and another mile which had been surveyed and cleared of all jungle and undergrowth. This left an attractive strip of sidelong hill-slope about twenty feet wide

and two miles long. Now, the native method of preparing to plant hill-rice is exactly this on a larger, or rather squarer, scale. He fells and clears off by burning a tract of jungle, and dibbles in his seed. My bridle-path trace caught the eye of a local cultivator, who regarded it as a gift from heaven, even if heaven's immediate agent were a person for whom he had never entertained any great affection. Be that as it may, he proceeded to plant up this riband-like clearing. The new year came, and, the Government coffers once more replenished, I was in possession of funds and authority to continue the cutting of my path. The overseer who was sent up with his gang to get on with the job arrived back after three days and reported that he had not been able to start work owing to the truculent demeanour of the squatter, and in the end I had to go up and explain to my friend exactly how matters stood. We only cut into about a hundred yards of this sinuous field before his crop ripened, but he was very indignant.

It is fatally attractive to the casual passer-by in later days, riding easily on his pony, to burst into criticism and jauntily say, "Good heavens! Why did he carry his path up here?" But he betrays himself. Any man who has clung to a steep hill-side, compass and clinometer in hand, in thick Borneo jungle and gazed hopelessly round for some possible line which is slightly less than perpendicular, knows the difficulty, but it is only the novice who condemns the finished article after a casual glance. Considering that many cadets come out to the East with no

Photo: G. C. Woolley

HARVEST TIME
A Dusun man loading up a sago-bark basket with ears of rice

previous acquaintance with engineering, even in its most elementary form, or with geometry, or even, in some cases, with the ordinary compass, it *is* creditable that such a system should have been evolved, and though in later years the district officer will motor or fly over his district, the " alun-alun " will remain, if only in memory, a monument to its builders.

CHAPTER XI

MARUDU BAY—SURVEY TRIP TO SANDAKAN

IN 1906 I was, to my sorrow, transferred to the neighbouring district of Marudu Bay. It was a complete change in every way. From a district where one rode or walked, where one was the only European, and where there was a pleasant, if sometimes intractable, lot of natives to handle, I found myself supervising, for judicial and administrative purposes, four tobacco estates, two rubber estates, a timber camp and a manganese mine, all, of course, under European management, largely Dutch. The bulk of the nearer population was Chinese, and, except for a small part of the district, the main mode of travel was by buggy or by boat.

When I arrived to take over the district a most curious state of affairs was just ending. The tobacco estates had been long established, and had built up a considerable force of Chinese labour. Part of this force made good money on a system of payment by results, but the unskilled labourer was paid just a living wage and no more. The manganese mine was a new enterprise, and was greatly in want of labour for the exploitation of its concession and the winning of its ore. Wages double and treble those in vogue on the neighbouring estates were offered, and it was

understood that no awkward questions would be asked of any applicants for work. The natural consequence was an exodus of large numbers of coolies from the tobacco estates without the formality of notice. Tobacco is quick-growing, and requires handling at exactly the right moment, so that a shortage of labour just when it is wanted may mean the waste of an entire season's work and the complete failure of the year's crop. The management of the mine refused to afford the usual courtesies which had obtained from time immemorial between employers of labour, and finally placed an embargo on police or other "minions of the law" entering the boundaries of the concession to make a search or to execute any process of law. Arms were served out to some of the employees, and it was intimated that any entry or attempt to serve summonses or warrants would be forcibly resisted. My predecessor moved over with a force of police to the neighbourhood of the mine, and found himself engaged in an acrimonious correspondence with the manager, the envoys on either side bringing the series of letters being armed to the teeth. Just when matters seemed to be reaching a climax the management was, on orders from the company in England, changed, and the new manager adopted a more sensible view and gave every assistance. It was, however, touch and go whether civil war would not break out, with the rebel party headed by a European.

In order to be able to understand the cases brought before him in connexion with plantations, mines or lumbering work, it is almost essential for

a magistrate to learn the groundwork, at any rate, of each industry, and I found myself busy for some weeks studying the growing and harvesting of tobacco, the elements of the planting of rubber, of mining, and of cutting timber. It was interesting work at first, but after a time the sameness of the petty cases brought before one for trial and of the whole routine of administration became monotonous. It was not considered advisable that I should leave the estates for any prolonged period, and I had, therefore, to forgo to a large extent my treasured journeys up-country. The boat work was uninteresting, but I usually managed to do the bulk of my journeys by night and arrive at daylight at some spot where one could stretch one's legs and get a cup of tea brewed.

The natives of this district are seldom content without a "handle" to their names, and my boat's crew were all either "Serips" (descendants of the Prophet) or "Datohs" (chieftains), mostly, I think, without much claim to either honorific but vehemently insistent on being credited with them. The monthly pay-sheet looked like a page out of Debrett, but that fact did not make them any better a crew than their baser compatriots. On one occasion I formally renounced all their titles, and only restored them after a couple of months' degradation. I had started one night en route for Kudat, the headquarters of the Residency, where I told the coxswain I particularly wanted to arrive at daylight. Just as dawn broke I awoke with an uneasy feeling that all was not well, and found the boat high and dry on

a sandbank with all sail set and every soul on board fast asleep. We had drifted on to it some time during the night and were stuck there, luckily more or less upright, but still about three hours' paddle from Kudat. The tide was down, and the decayed noblemen had a real job to drag the boat to water over some two hundred yards of sticky sand, and then a good pull in to Kudat against the wind.

One prime difficulty when coasting was drinking-water. The district is badly watered, and even the inhabitants of some villages had to paddle long distances to supply their needs. We were going up one unpleasant little stream, partly to get potable water and partly to visit a timber-camp, when, as we rounded a corner, we saw on one bank a European gig with a piece of her side broken away from keel to gunwale. On the other bank was a fair-sized native boat smashed almost beyond recognition. This encouraging sight was, I found, the work of a female crocodile whose nest was on a small mud-flat at the bend. This lady had held up all traffic for a week, and, finally, when these two boats, relying on their size for immunity, had tried to get past, she had taken more active and violent measures. Having gained this information, our passage down-river again was too exciting for my taste, but we emerged unscathed. Why we were let off I do not know, unless the old lady had killed somewhere and was feeding, as she returned to her beat shortly afterwards, and only ceased from being a nuisance and a danger when she was shot.

Marudu Bay in those days was in the heyday of

a boom. A factory for the manufacture of cutch (tanning material from the bark of mangrove trees) was added to the commercial activities in the bay, while the presence of a surveying ship of His Majesty's navy added to the social and sporting activities. Cricket and football matches against the ship used to see full European teams on either side. Nowadays, alas! the bay is fallen from its high estate, and it is rare that even a tennis four can be raised. The turf club was a flourishing concern, and the yearly meeting was always an attraction, not only to the inhabitants of the bay, but to people from all parts of the State.

Life on the estates was cheerful, not to say lively. Tobacco is a strenuous crop, and only allows of two rest days in a month, but the celebrants always made up in the quality of their enjoyment for the lack of quantity. The Boer war, in which naturally the Dutch had sympathized with the enemy, had not long ended, and yet the Dutch planters were the kindest and most genial hosts. It was regarded as a direct and deliberate affront to pass anyone's house without calling and, whether one's host were at home or not, having a drink with him. Officially, they were less facile, but one can hardly wonder at it. The manager of a big estate is a man of considerable power and controls important interests; he has had to work himself up through all the lower levels of the planting world, and so is no chicken. One can hardly blame him for not coming to heel at once when a district officer, only recently out of his teens and new to the veriest A B C of planting, issues some

order or makes some suggestion which offends the conservative soul of a Dutch planter. As a general rule, however, our official bickerings were conducted in a fairly amicable spirit and were kept strictly official. Oh! *si sic omnes!* How often does one find in small communities the business difference degenerate into a social estrangement!

We ran a very successful little bridge club which met at the house of each member in rotation on the evening before the semi-monthly estate holidays. It was very good fun, and it gave one something to do after dinner instead of the eternal poker which the older generation always played. Poker is a good game, but the man who has a salary of $200 a month meets the fate of the earthenware jar if he tries to swim with brazen vessels drawing five or six hundred and a large commission on the year's crop.

The one drawback to convivial evenings on the estates was the ineradicable tendency of the younger members of the community to throw things about, particularly food. I have always had a prejudice against this, and especially in my own house. I had a dinner one night at which a number of assistants were present, and one youth started this unpleasant little game. I told him that if he did it again I should put him out, and before I had finished speaking a succulent piece of papaya whizzed past my head and squelched into a nasty pattern on the wall. There was nothing for it but to carry out my threat and run the lad out of the front door to cool outside. My house had seven steps to the ground, a small earth "landing," and then a sharp descent of

twelve steps down a bank to the path. The steps were covered in by a pergola with creepers over it. My victim came quite quietly to the top of the steps, and then started to struggle, and I suppose that I expelled him with rather more vehemence than was necessary to my purpose. Anyway, the next second the air was ablaze with Dutch oaths and successive crashes as arch after arch of the pergola gave way before his Gadarene descent. It seems that the parabola of his flight was nicely adjusted to take him clear of all the steps and accurately through the pergola, but he spoiled things by clutching at the pergola as he sped past it. Among my guests was a very circular Dutchman, who, while disapproving of the throwing business as a waste of food for which he knew a better use, was at the same time rather shocked at my British brutality. He was distinctly mellow, and, being misguided enough to want to see what had happened to Theodor, started down the steps to look round. From the sounds that reached us, he apparently missed the first step, bounced once half-way down, and landed at his next hop on the salad below from which Theodor was slowly emerging. It was an unfortunate incident, and we had to exercise superhuman efforts to get these two warriors up to the house again and mend their skins and their dignities.

One good gentleman, a most generous and kindly host, had one most mischievous and dangerous hobby. It appears that somewhere it is possible to get essences which, mixed with pure alcohol, make up into imitations of various liqueurs, Benedictine,

Chartreuse and so on. He decanted these vile philtres in genuine bottles which had held the appropriate liquor, and one innocently helped oneself as they went the round after dinner, suspecting no guile. I never could make out why a quiet evening at his house always resulted in a headache of the concertina type, while the most uproarious entertainment elsewhere was innocuous, until one day he betrayed his secret. Ever afterwards, even when he assured me that the liqueur was the real stuff and none of his *ersatz*, I shied; but, luckily, I was able to avoid hurting his feelings under a true plea of doctor's orders, my liver being in an excitable condition after dysentery and requiring careful treatment.

My travels in the bay were conducted mostly in the district boat, an ordinary native "pakerangan" painted white and more or less luxuriously fitted up. I was entitled to fly a Borneo blue ensign, and it used to cause my coxswain the greatest joy to sail past the surveying ship at the sleepy time of the day and "dip" to her. It is true she was only a surveying sloop, but it was something to see the quartermaster on duty double along and acknowledge the courtesy of a twenty-five-foot dug-out. I suppose it gave my serang the same sort of satisfaction as it does to some people to be noticed by royalty. He grew so fond of this amusement that I had to limit him to not more than two dips on every voyage. It grew wearisome to be taken four or five miles out of one's course to gratify a lust of this nature.

There was not even a stray rebel in the whole

district to relieve the monotony of petty crime, but the Chinese provided us with a certain amount of spasmodic excitement. Apart from individual cases of arson, when, to requite some private grievance, a coolie would set fire to one of the big sheds used for drying tobacco leaves, there was a good deal of secret society organization rife on the estates. It was a time of unrest in China, and these societies, nominally established for the purpose of ousting the Manchu dynasty in China, were really anarchistic and criminal bodies. They had a picturesque ritual and numbers of office-holders bearing the quaintest but most sonorous titles. They were, however, strictly illegal, and the well-known clannishness of Chinese made it difficult to obtain information about them. A very slight clue at one time put us on to the track of a very wide ramification, and by arrangement the Resident came over to direct the raid on and search of various coolie lines where alleged members resided and the books and paraphernalia were supposed to be stored. I was to get one additional piece of information and to report to him, when active steps would be taken at once. In order to ensure secrecy I was to make my report over the telephone in French. Having got what I wanted, I concocted laboriously the critical sentence, French not being my strong suit, and whispered it into the receiver. So far so good, but no farther. The Resident was a fluent French scholar, and, having absorbed the meaning of my little sentence, he proceeded to unbosom himself of his views on the subject at about 3,000 revolutions a minute. There was

nothing for it. We had to cast secrecy to the winds and let him say his little piece in English. However, no harm was done, and we proceeded at two o'clock next morning to round up five sets of lines simultaneously, luckily without trouble or resistance, and collared all the men we wanted with the books and regalia complete.

A case which I heard on Pitas estate had a somewhat unusual ending. The coolies on the estate had for some time been in a mood which portended trouble at the slightest provocation. I happened to be at Kusilad, a small police-station about four miles from the estate headquarters, when early one afternoon a sais arrived in an estate buggy, bringing a very incoherent message which his excitement did not tend to make any clearer or more intelligible. The gist seemed to be that the coolies on the estate were "up," and that the Europeans were under siege in the big fermenting shed. The manager was, I knew, away, and there were only three youngish assistants on the place at the moment. The ordinary light buggy will usually hold two people in front and the sais on a step behind. However, if the story as we understood it was true, there were something over two hundred Chinese on the loose four miles away, and, neither buggy nor pony being mine, I got on board with a lance-corporal and two police, leaving the sais to follow as best he might on foot. Our progress down that road would have done credit to a battery of R.F.A. coming into action. When we got within sight of the estate headquarters I stopped, hitched the pony to a railing (he was not

disposed to take any further exercise for a few minutes), and started a reconnoitring movement down the road towards the fermenting shed. There was a deathly silence, no shouting, no burning houses, no corpses—nothing to give even a hint of a riot. In fact, to cut a long story short, I found all the staff, Chinese and European, quietly at work sorting the tobacco leaves in the shed. Exactly whose fault it was that I had been summoned so hastily I never quite discovered, but the sais, having been sent up in a hurry to ask me to come down to try some cases, had added a few trimmings of his own to the message, knowing probably that there was trouble brewing on the estate.

Having come down armed cap-à-pie, I was not prepared to hear cases just then, and I arranged to come-down the next day for the purpose. On the morrow I sat as magistrate and started on the half-dozen cases presented. I was sitting in the "receiving room," where the sorted and bundled tobacco is checked in by an assistant. A short passage-way, the other side of the shed, led into a long, narrow gallery where sat two hundred or so Chinese coolies sorting the leaves. I had just finished the cases when two Chinese, rather notorious "toughs" who had just been convicted, broke away from the escort of two diminutive native police and started to run across the shed to the sorting gallery, shouting to the coolies to rescue them. I saw one policeman fumbling with his rifle and the other drawing his parang. The last thing I wanted was any bloodshed under the circumstances, and the only chance was to

recover these fugitives before there was any more excitement. I had played a good deal of Rugby football in my youth, but I never made a better "collar" than that day. I caught the leading fugitive just above the knees when he had got half-way across the shed, and we came down together on the rails on which run the frames for the press used for baling the tobacco for shipment. This distracted the other coolie, who stopped and came to his comrade's assistance, endeavouring, as we struggled on the ground, to use the well-known Chinese disabling nip "below the waist." I could feel him groping, and had only time to bang my first friend's head on the iron rail before turning round to loose off a really hefty kick. This caught No. 2 in the wind and put him out of action temporarily. The shouting and the noise had meanwhile roused the rest of the coolies, who came streaming down the alley-way from the sorting gallery. We just got to the exit in time to stop them, and hustled them back to their places. The sight of "His Worship," not a little dishevelled and dirty, commanding them to resume work, backed by two excited police with drawn weapons, and in the background two of their pals "taking the count," caused much speculation and criticism for the rest of the afternoon, but, fortunately, nothing more. The whole episode did not last more than a couple of minutes, but it was touch and go. The usual pattern of fermenting shed has the sorters seated all round the walls of the main building, and the coolies would, in any other shed, have been all round us. I have always felt convinced that

all that saved us on that occasion was the fact that they were in a separate building with only a sort of Thermopylæ debouchure which two or three could block.

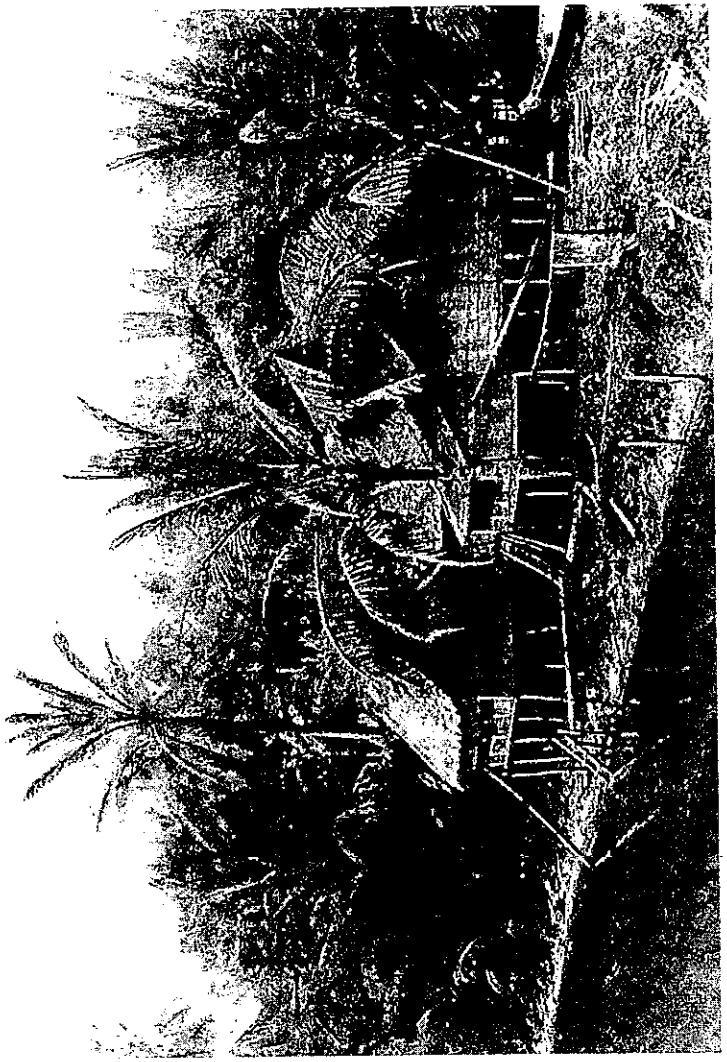
Not very long afterwards I was again at Kusilad, and was sitting reading late one night in the minute veranda of the small halting-station, when I heard the premonitory cough which an Asiatic uses to "knock at the door" when there is not a door. To my "Siapa sana" an obviously Chinese voice made that aggravating reply, "Sahya" (It is I). I went over to the railing to see who and what it was, and found at the foot of the steps a Chinese with a large and very bloody axe. I was not quite certain of my midnight guest, and, telling him to wait while I got some clothes on (a sarong and slippers are hampering kit in a scrap), I pulled on a pair of trousers and some shoes and slid a revolver under the paper I had been reading. I then invited my friend to come up, but to leave his axe "in the cloak-room," so to speak. "Are all of us to come up?" quoth he. This was a new development. I had only seen one man in the dim light from the lamp, but inquiry and closer inspection showed me fourteen braves, all carrying bloody weapons. It seemed to be time for reinforcements, and I howled for the lance-corporal to turn out with his three police (the entire garrison) and take a hand. My guests were then invited to pile arms, and the axe-bearer, who seemed to be the only one with a working knowledge of Malay, to come up and tell his tale. Shortly, the band had set upon and cut up a Chinese overseer

who had annoyed them, and, like all good citizens, had at once reported the occurrence of a death of a sudden or suspicious nature to the coroner, myself. The sole means of restraint were three pairs of handcuffs and a lock-up, a cage of stout logs, ten feet square. There was nothing for it. In they all had to go until the morning, when we all set out for the estate to have a look round. The wretched overseer was mincemeat, but had, to some extent, apparently been "asking for it." Inquest and preliminary inquiry followed in due course, and after about four days of it I committed the whole lot to the sessions court for trial on the capital charge. I could not help sympathizing with the attitude of the accused, who complained of the procedure involved. As they put it: "We killed him, and we walked four miles at night to tell you so. We know the punishment. Why not get it over and hang us now?" However, the law is a just ass in some ways, and the sessions judge came down in state, and they were all duly tried, convicted, and sentenced to death. Only the three self-confessed ringleaders were actually hanged, and it was my duty to superintend the performance. They had ordered overnight a breakfast of roast chicken, which was duly set before them at 6.30 a.m. All were extremely cheerful, but had changed their minds and wanted roast pork. There I had to draw the line, and I advised them to get on with the fare provided, as time was getting on. One lad, stout-heartedly facetious to the end, complained, as the noose was adjusted, that it was too tight. This callous and light-hearted demeanour at the very

gates of death seems strange to us, but it is, I suppose, really nothing to a nation which permits the hiring of a substitute to undergo a sentence of death imposed on anyone who can afford the privilege. The ill-timed humour did not make an already sufficiently gruesome task any easier.

Early in 1908 it was decided to run a rough survey over the line of a problematical railway from Marudu Bay, in the north of the State, to Sandakan, on the east coast. I was detailed to accompany the expedition through my district as transport officer, political officer, officer commanding the escort, and, generally, nurse to the whole show. At a convenient rendezvous well into the next district the neighbouring district officer was to meet us with a new lot of carriers and a fresh outfit of provisions, both for Europeans and natives, and to take over from me. This incidentally left me to find my way home through reputedly good shooting country.

We set off, and after some vicissitudes, including a total eclipse of the moon—which I had forgotten, and which caused alarm and despondency among our followers until, owing to their prodigious efforts on kerosene oil tins and other tympana, the moon was restored to us—we arrived at the rendezvous some four days overdue. No district officer, no stores, and no news of either. We were four Europeans and 120 carriers and servants with about three days' rations left. The river was in high flood, but not bad enough to account for the lack of news. On the third day a small native boat was seen passing upstream, and, on being hailed for news, the crew told



A Riverside Village in the Low Country

us that they had heard a rumour that all our stores had gone down on the bar and that the district officer had returned to his station, seven days' journey away. I sent out foraging parties to gather in anything edible to be found locally, and set off in a light boat, well manned, to see what could be picked up at the Chinese shops at a very small station about fifty miles down-stream. We got in about five in the afternoon, and I left my crew in the boat with a sentry over them. I was not anxious for my Chinese brother to know how I was placed before I had sounded the market. An apparently aimless and casual stroll round the shops disclosed a stock of some six bags of rice, about nine days' short rations for my crowd. The moment I had this information and word as to the price I bought the lot, and then released my crew to load it up. The lamentations of the worthy merchants at having failed to corner me and run up the price when they found how desperate was our need were enough to melt a heart more tender than mine was just then. I had secured our carriers' food, but the Europeans' was another matter, and all that I could raise was a dozen tins of lychees and a tin of cigarettes. The ordinary dried lychee is a delicacy. The tinned lychee resembles, to my mind, a glutinous piece of gelatine flavoured with sour cherry-juice. As a prospective diet it lacks everything that one could wish. However, we loaded up the rice and the lychees and started on our weary two days' paddle up-stream.

The only comic relief on the whole journey, if one excepts the plausible afterthoughts adduced as

reasons by the Chinese for not handing over the rice I had bought, or for not handing it over at the agreed price, was the astonishment of a very offensive person who was condescending to help paddle the boat. We had struggled up rapid after rapid until noon, when I called a halt to cook and rest a bit. It had rained incessantly since early morning, and we were all soaked. I had brought for just such an occasion a couple of tins of soup, which, by the use of carbide, were self-heating when punctured. I duly pricked one of these machines and laid it beside me while the carbide got its work done. My friend, an interfering busybody, picked up the tin, an innocent-looking tin, just when it came to the boil, and was so astonished to find it practically red-hot that he forgot or did not know how to drop it. Two days afterwards his hand was still a mass of blisters. The burning julienne soup went down with a double blessing on the head of the gentleman who invented the " calorit " tin.

We had, with the six bags of rice, evaded starvation, but the absence of my opposite number to relieve me made it incumbent on me to go a further stage to see whether he turned up. Another eight days brought us out in the vicinity of his station, and I sent on an urgent message to say that we were short of all stores and asking him to come up with something to keep us going. The reply amused us, a fact which shows the equable temperaments of the whole crowd. It advised the dispatch of a bottle of whisky and six bottles of soda. A council of war was held, and it was decided that so

long as the further stores we were due to meet at his station were forthcoming, I should go through with the trip.

After a rest and refitting, we started out again, this time into what we knew to be more or less unexplored and to a large extent uninhabited country. We did not, however, realize what we were really in for. The country was more or less a swamp at the best of times, and throughout our journey it rained as only it can rain in the tropics. We had no guide, and got entangled in a wilderness of unfordable rivers until, at last, the floods drove us on to a slight hillock, where for nine days we abode. We had neither raven nor dove to send out, and once again starvation stared us in the face. By some miracle a search-party on a launch happened to strike the river near which we were camped, and replenished the larder sufficiently to carry us on to our next refilling station, a timber-camp. Here we rested before starting on the last lap to Sandakan, not forty miles away, but once more over unknown ground. We were at one end of a peninsula some forty miles long and perhaps twenty wide. We knew our departure point and our destination in terms of the compass, and yet we spent more than a week wandering about in that cursed promontory, lost, utterly lost, and without water that could be called water. Our carriers, most of whom had done the whole journey, nearly two and a half months, with shortage of food, indifferent lodging and vile weather conditions, were beginning to crack up, and we were now faced with a number of cases of dysentery and intestinal ills

owing to the tainted water which was all that the streams could provide. I represented the urgency of affairs to the technical men and persuaded them that any further delay with a view to settling the best line for the railway must prejudice the safety of the whole show. The cross-country telegraph line comes round the end of Sandakan Bay on approximately a due north bearing, and then turns at an abrupt angle east into Sandakan. If we had already progressed far enough east to have passed the longitude of the angle, it was only necessary to turn due south, strike the telegraph line, and follow it to Sandakan. We settled down that night with scales and books of logarithms to plot our position, and after hours of calculation we made it about 118° 6′ E. and 5° 45′ N. A hurried reference to the map informed us that we were in about ten fathoms of water in the middle of Sandakan Bay, which, for practicable purposes, did not help us much. We were, at any rate, on more or less dry land and north of the bay. I stuck to my point that our only course was to lay a bearing as direct to Sandakan as we could, and in any event to proceed as near as we could south-east in the hope of getting on to the telegraph line. This was adopted as more or less reasonable and duly put into practice next morning. The correctness of the decision received an unexpected confirmation soon after we started when the dull boom of twenty-one guns due south-east of us gave us a line on Sandakan, where we subsequently heard a salute was being fired in honour of the Sultan of Sulu, who had just arrived. We held a hurried consultation, and it was

decided that I should push on ahead, strike the telegraph trace, and ask for assistance from Sandakan, while the expedition followed on slowly. I took a couple of the strongest coolies, and, with my orderly, set out on a compass-bearing which brought me out on to the telegraph line in something under an hour and to Sandakan in another five. Here I was able to arrange for the necessary assistance to be sent out to meet the rest of the crowd, with transport for the casualties.

Going ahead in light marching order, I had, of course, taken no weapon beyond a revolver, and, as luck would have it, we "put up" out of a large wallow, practically at our feet, a large bull rhino, which stood and glared at us for a minute or two cogitating, one instinctively imagined, whether he would charge or look for a "better 'ole." It was a disconcerting moment until he made up his mind and went off.

The prime mistake and the cause of all our trouble on this expedition was the time of year chosen for it, just when the north-east monsoon might be expected to be at its worst. The engineers were wanted for another job elsewhere, and there was no time to waste in waiting for dry weather. However, no great harm was done. We had had only two deaths, and the rest of the carriers soon picked up in Sandakan.

CHAPTER XII

RESIDENT OF THE INTERIOR

THE year 1910 brought me promotion to the acting rank of Resident of the Interior. Of the three junior Residences, the Interior was certainly the one which I would have selected if one were given any option in these matters. It comprised four big districts, and consequently involved a large amount of travelling, but there was a considerable length of bridle-path completed, and I was able, therefore, to do a good proportion of the work mounted. Tenom, the headquarters of the Resident, was the nearest point to the coast, but stood about 800 feet above sea-level, and the greater part of the Residency was high enough to ensure a comparatively cool climate. In some parts, in fact, at night and in the early morning it was really cold. One felt the benefit of this refrigerating process in a very marked degree, and the longest and most arduous journeys were carried out at a cheaper expenditure of energy than lighter tasks on the coast.

Tenom is about the only town in North Borneo which has, not like Topsy, "just growed." In most cases the towns are old native trading centres which have gradually become townships regardless of their manifold disadvantages. In many cases their sites

were adequate in the olden days, but have become inadequate under modern conditions, with the consequence that many of them have advanced to the rank of "flappers," but are still forced to wear the garments of their early childhood. The result is a curious medley of the presentable and the otherwise, of what may legitimately be seen in the child but should be discreetly skirted in the more advanced. The approach to one town, for instance, commences with a hospital ward open to view, and as the train sweeps proudly on it passes the full array of the Japanese quarter and several public latrines, in neither case a feature which one wishes to impress too forcibly on the casual visitor as the chief characteristic of one's township.

Tenom, on the other hand, was built on a specially selected site and laid out with great care. Fine broad streets, a good recreation ground, a picturesque little group of Government offices, and, away on the hills, the bungalows of the resident officials afford a nucleus for a pleasing little city, which in its early days gave great promise. Alas! the promise has never been fulfilled, and the town remains a sleepy hollow. It is just big enough to give one an interest in keeping it going, but it will, one fears, never make much progress.

The Tenom district had two estates to represent European enterprise. Both had originally planted tobacco, but when I arrived were in a state of transition, dropping tobacco, which the comparatively arid climate did not suit, in favour of rubber. The manager of one estate, Mr. Frank Edwards, is a

landmark in North Borneo, having been engaged in planting in the State for nearly thirty years. His hospitality is unbounded, but it is more than is usually understood by the word, for it is not limited only to lavish entertainment of the guests whom he invites to his house, or who invite themselves, or even whom others invite. It extends to the most timely, efficient and whole-hearted succour to anyone who is ill, and, in my experience, particularly to Government officers. Not once only has Mr. Edwards, unprompted, sent up medical aid and comforts to meet a district officer who was being brought down from up-country seriously ill. In cases where the patients passed his estate his practice was to intercept them and, without more ado, turn his house into a hospital and himself into head attendant. This attitude was in no sense dictated by any desire to stand well with the Government or its minions. In official matters he was a stalwart opponent who dearly loved a tilt with the powers that be.

Owing to a breakdown on the railway I, personally, underwent in his drawing-room a severe operation, at which he officiated as anæsthetist, and I spent three weeks of convalescence there, a special telephone at my bedside to enable me to keep in touch with my office. I do not think that at that particular time any of my actions had merited his condemnation, but I feel certain that he would have proceeded quite cheerfully, if necessary, from my sick-bed, where he had been lavishing care on the individual, and made his typewriter rock with the

passion of his fulminations to Government against the malpractices of the official. One only had to ask him, even in one's official capacity, for anything within reason, and it was forthcoming, but an official demand as often as not involved a prolonged official wrangle before it was conceded.

The hospitality of planters is proverbial, but it is too often the case that a failure to see eye to eye with an official on an official matter is followed by a cessation or diminution of social intercourse. That, however, was never the case as far as Mr. Edwards was concerned, and one's régime in the interior was made more pleasant than it might have been in other circumstances.

In pre-war days the end of the year was celebrated with much éclat in the Tenom district. The Sapong estate "Christmas" was a festival in which it was a privilege to take part. The Interior Residency as a whole mobilized at Sapong on Christmas Eve. The celebration commenced that evening and continued without a pause until the 27th, when the party began to scatter to its various homes. En route the majority of its component members were forced to undertake a more or less active part in the New Year native sports.

For many years it had been the custom to usher in the New Year with a gathering of natives from all parts of the interior. In some cases the guests had a ten-days' journey to overcome, but when the great day arrived there was usually a gathering of anything up to 3,000 people, and the resources of a not very large township, supplemented by temporary

hutments, were strained to their utmost to provide lodging.

The fatal day commenced with a regatta on a broad reach of the river Padas, about a mile from the town, and included boat races, raft races, and a greasy pole competition. The assembly then adjourned to the recreation ground in the town, where the more ancient warriors competed in a shooting match with the blow-pipe. Disappearing targets, to represent human heads, at 25 yards take some hitting, but good scores were often made, and the contest always aroused considerable excitement.

The "sumpitan," or blow-pipe, is the characteristic weapon of the Borneo native, who, fortunately, has never discovered the bow and arrow. It consists of a six-foot tube of hard wood, an inch or so in diameter, with a bore of about a quarter of an inch. The darts are made of the rib of a palm leaf, fitted at one end with a plug of pith to fit the bore, and sharpened at the other. The point, on active service, is steeped in poison, but on these festive occasions only "blank" was used. The composition of many of the poisons used is not accurately known, but the juice of the "ipoh" or "upas" tree enters into most of them. The poison, if fresh, is said to cause death within five or ten minutes. I have never seen a poisoned dart used on a human being, but I used an old dart on a monkey of mine which got loose and, after breaking up most of the happy home, had bitten everybody who tried to catch him. He dropped from the rafters where he had taken refuge two minutes

after the dart hit him, and was dead in less than three.

The sumpitan is an unpleasant weapon in the hands of a foe. It makes no noise, and unless one is provided with the antidote, which is also a secret, the only remedy is bold excision on the spot of the wound and surrounding tissues. This always strikes me as a most heroic operation, and I dreaded the chance of a wound from one of these missiles.

It is rather a comfort that the ordinary Murut on the war-path rather despises the sumpitan, an efficient weapon in his skilled hands, and prefers the more imposing aid of a fire-arm of some sort. Presumably the noise comforts him, but, as he fires more often than not from the hip with his eyes closed, one's chances as the target are fairly bright, while there is always the chance that an extra handful of powder or an additional flaw in the gas-pipe barrel may cause a burst and the duel end in his discomfiture and extinction. The blow-pipe, on the other hand, is a weapon of great accuracy which will never explode or play the user false, while the silent expulsion of the dart does not give away the position of the firer, or even the fact that he has fired in case of a miss.

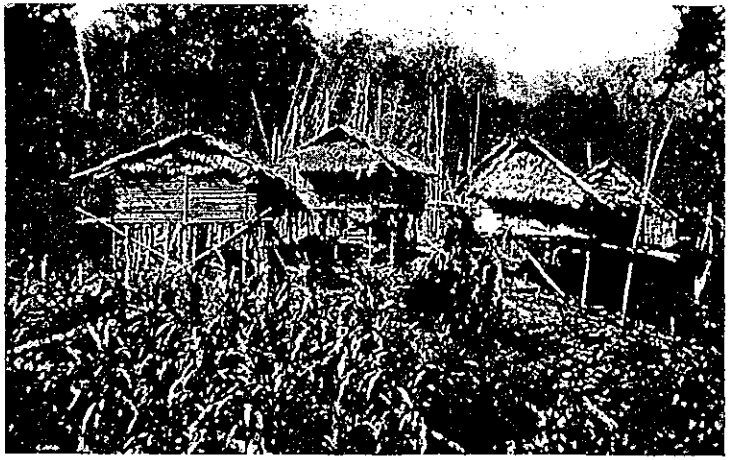
The accurate boring of a barrel six feet long with the implements available is a wonderful piece of work, and a sight through the bore gives one the impression of machine work. The operation is usually carried out by hand, but it is on record that water power is used in some cases to do the work.

It was a rule at the "sumpitan" competition that

no gentleman in trousers was allowed to compete. The " chawat " and little mat, which was the normal wear of the Murut, the latter serving him as a portable camp-chair, seemed to fit into the picture, but a grimy white suit was as inappropriate as a frock-coat in the cricket field.

After an adjournment for lunch the land sports commenced. Sprints for each different tribe and for aliens, high and long jumps, sack races, needle-and-thread races for the women, short races for the kids, and a strenuous obstacle race made up a long programme which lasted until sundown. A dinner for the Europeans gave them renewed strength for the closing entertainment—a native dance.

In a special shed was erected one of the dancing platforms, set on a spring substructure, which are the feature of every Murut house. The " play " of these platforms is some three feet, so that as the dancers warm to their work they and the floor are oscillating up and down to a degree which is bewildering to the onlooker if not to the performers. The solid " surround " to the dancing platform represents the supper-room, and there, set out in serried rows, are the jars of rice-beer brought in by the various villagers. The recognized formality for opening the dance was a solemn round by the Resident of all the jars and, theoretically, a fair and full drink from each. The procedure adopted by the natives for their drinking-bouts allowed one to avoid a too literal compliance with the requirements of etiquette. In the narrow neck of each jar is fixed a cup made of leaves and holding, perhaps, a pint. Through this cup are



A Primitive Up-country Village

Typical Murut Women

run a couple of hollow reeds or bamboos long enough to reach nearly to the bottom of the jar, which is full of rice-beer. The cup is filled with water, and host and guest, each taking one of the reed mouthpieces, suck beer until the water in the cup has percolated and taken the place of the beer absorbed by them. The rules of the game demand that neither shall cry halt until the cup is demonstrably empty. The jars numbered often well over a hundred, and a certain amount of subterfuge was essential if one was to go the complete round and maintain a suitable sobriety. A good deal of facial by-play would suggest that one was sucking manfully, but care would ensure one's efforts meeting with only small liquid reward, leaving the host to drain the cup. Suitable ejaculations as to the sweetness and potency of the liquor usually went a long way to covering up one's default and disarming suspicion.

There were certain dangers about the performance which this shirking enabled one to avoid, at any rate in part. One tribe made their beer not of fermented rice, but of tapioca and chillies in practically equal parts. A gulp of the resultant "Tabasco" was painful and disconcerting. All the jars were liable to contain foreign bodies of various sorts, and, as one gentleman of long experience always put it, "If you feel anything solid come through the tube into your mouth, swallow quickly. It is probably a cockroach." It was sound advice, as it left one in reasonable doubt whether the solid was a grain of rice or something less welcome.

The opening ceremony over, and the demands of

politeness filled, the Europeans adjourned and left their native guests to enjoy themselves in their own way. The performance was usually in full swing next morning, though the weaker vessels had probably dropped out by then and were busy sleeping it off.

The whole festival was known as the "Januari," a name which is given generically to any gatherings of the sort whatever the month in which they occur. It was hard work organizing it, but the results were valuable even if intangible. It brought these unsophisticated children down from their distant hills, let them meet people foreign to them, and showed them the few small amenities of civilization that an up-country station possesses. One is a little doubtful whether, in their inmost hearts, they really enjoyed it much, or, rather, whether the pleasure they got out of it was commensurate with the trouble of the journey; but it was part of their education, and the invitation, while not absolutely a command, was couched in cogent terms, and only the most urgent private affairs justified a refusal. Whatever their real sentiments were, every man, woman and child entered into the spirit of the thing, and, after a little natural shyness at first, every race and contest filled easily. The native is quite a sportsman by nature. In spite of keenness to win, cases used to occur when the decision of the judges would be questioned by a competitor, who, placed, say, first, protested that So-and-so was really first and that he himself had only come in second. Alas! that spirit does not survive to the same degree after any prolonged or intimate

contact with civilization, but for the most part a native of North Borneo never displays the same "win, tie, or wrangle" spirit as the lower classes of Chinese or Indians.

One of my chief objections to Tenom was the continual influx of visitors—visitors, that is, of the official or semi-official type recommended to one for care and probably entertainment. There were presumably several reasons for the repeated selection of Tenom as the objective of these pilgrimages. The fact that we had in the neighbourhood two of the most forward rubber estates in the country and that we enjoyed a fairly low temperature, at any rate at night, were contributory reasons. We were on the railway, and the line ran through a gorge which afforded the most spectacular views of rapids and wild river scenery. Lastly, the visitor could see, without danger to himself or herself, a head-hunter in all his native and naked simplicity. Many a quite respectable and innocent Murut gentleman strolling at his leisure through the Tenom bazaar has been pointed out to globe-trotters as the most truculent murderer whose veranda was crowded with heads. It did him no material harm and gratified the desire of the voyager to be exposed to a very little entirely safe danger.

It was always amusing to note the consistency with which these peripatetics used to "snapshot" all the curiosities which one used to find for their diversion, promise one a copy of each picture taken, studiously recording one's name and address for the purpose, and thereafter maintain an impressive

silence. There must be a large number of amateur photographers in the world who have my name and residence set out in full, but presumably not in sufficient detail to enable them to carry out their promise.

I used to keep in my office, over which there was a permanent guard of police, a dispatch-box with a certain amount of cash and personal property in it. The office was burgled one night and the cash-box removed. Apart from the personal loss, I was not unnaturally annoyed that such a thing was possible, and had the corporal of the guard put "on the carpet" before the commandant of police, who had come up with a football team to play my local collection. I was not present at the interview, but I gathered that the "unwinged words" of the commandant got properly home. It was a little unfortunate, perhaps even improvident on the commandant's part, that this interview should have taken place before the football match. The corporal was a hefty Punjabi Mohammedan, a good player, but rough and at times inclined to be foul in his play. The commandant was his "opposite number" in the game, and so there was every chance of dirty work. It came with a vengeance. I never saw anyone sit down so often or so abruptly in the space of one hour as did the major. He had only to make a move towards the ball, when a lanky six feet of Indian launched themselves at him with, as I know to my cost, a marvellous profusion of knobs representing elbows and knees. In later years I served as a humble unit ("tempy.") in His Majesty's forces, and I

longed for the services of Fateh Khan to deal with some of the field officers who spoke unkindly to me in times of stress.

The whole incident brightened up the police quite a lot, and the guards became so much on the *qui vive* that challenges by the sentry became almost a chorus which lasted through the night. I happened to have staying at the Residency two ladies who had been deposited there while their husbands went a short journey up-country on business. Once, just about midnight, I was awakened by five or six shots from the town. I came at once to the conclusion that the sentry had probably challenged some intoxicated but otherwise inoffensive citizen who was staggering past the office, or that there was really some trouble. In any event it seemed to be up to me to go down and have a look-see. I got quietly out of bed, slipped on a pair of trousers and one of a pair of riding-boots which I kept handy for night jobs of this sort. Just as I had got that one boot comfortable I heard a fusillade of Chinese firecrackers in the town, and realized too late that it was the tenth day of the Chinese New Year, when the Celestials make merry at midnight. Normally, I should have awakened my boy and made him extract me from that boot, but I did not want to alarm those good ladies, who were already a little bit on edge at being "among the head-hunters" without their lawful guardians, so I struggled with that boot myself. Nothing would shift the beastly thing, and I had to retire to bed again minus the trousers, out of which I managed to struggle at the expense of

some of the seams, but neatly shod on one foot. My boy's face when he brought my morning tea was a picture. All Europeans are, to the native mind, a bit mad, but "never," one could see him thinking, "in all the years I have served him have I seen him go to bed with a boot on." My explanation evidently struck him as no tribute to my inventive powers, but, *faute de mieux*, he had to accept it for what it was worth. *Il faut souffrir pour être galant*, and my efforts to avoid alarming my tender guests only increased my reputation for eccentricity in the mind of my valet.

This was not the only case where the presence of these ladies caused me embarrassment. The Residency at Tenom is a big building, but it is of the "Renaissance packing-case" school of architecture. A large expanse of roof covered an enormous area of floor, which was divided by high partition walls into a succession of loose-boxes. At each end was a large bedroom with its bathroom attached, in the centre a dining-room and an office, and a large veranda in the front of the house served as sitting-room and drawing-room. The walls gave one the requisite seclusion as far as vision was concerned, but the lack of ceilings allowed an undue amount of audibility. The story is too crude to set down in cold print, and the reader must fill in the details to taste; but it caused me a world of embarrassment at the time.

Another difficulty, one of some delicacy, has until now remained a secret between the water-carrier and myself. It was a question of baths. In the East the bathrooom consists of a small cell con-

taining a large tub of water. The *modus utendi* is to dip out the water and throw it, with more or less accuracy, at oneself and the floor indiscriminately, a cool and, I presume to think, a cleanly way of washing. Water was not laid on, but had to be fetched by the water-carrier from a mountain stream a hundred yards away. The carrying vessels were empty kerosene oil tins borne on the usual Chinese carrying-stick, and it took eight or ten journeys to fill each jar. The day after my visitors arrived, my boy explained that, instead of pouring the water over themselves, they were immersing themselves in the jar, and that the water carrier, in consequence, had hardly been able to keep the house going in water. It was indeed a delicate subject. I could hardly go to my guests and say that "from information received" I knew that they were overdoing it in the manner of their bathing, and after consideration I told the water-carrier to get on with the job and let them do all the bathing they wanted in their own way, in the sure and certain hope that I would recompense him when they went. He carried on, but from conversation that filtered through to me I was aware that he never again filled that jar to the brim as had been his wonted custom.

I had a good deal of difficulty in preventing these ladies from making a raid, on their departure, on my menagerie of pets. I had then five Siamese cats, a young sambhur deer, and three monkeys, and if they had not been globe-trotting I would have let them take their pick. I knew only too well that any animal would only be a nuisance to them on their

travels, and that it would have a wretched time being transhipped at their different ports of call.

The number of pets which one acquires (and, I am sorry to say, loses) is marvellous. I have had at different times orang-utan, grey gibbons, monkeys of six or seven sorts, an otter, adjutant birds, a young crocodile, sambhur, muntjac and mouse deer. I have never aspired to a pet rhinoceros, as one district officer did, nor did I ever get a mynah that was any use as a talker.

I was present at a distressing midnight scene for which a mynah was responsible. The Governor had gone to Kudat for a race meeting with me in attendance as A.D.C. The Resident owned a very loquacious mynah, which lived in the back premises of the Residency where we were staying. We sat rather late, and I went to sleep as soon as we turned in. Some time in the small hours I heard a burst of passionate expletive from His Excellency and an answering whine from the Sikh sentry below. We all turned out and found the Governor stamping with rage at the sentry, who, he said, had done nothing but clear his throat and hawk for the last hour. In vain the wretched man denied the charge, each "Bukan sahya, Tuan," producing a fresh cloud of abuse and threats. In a momentary silence the repulsive sound was repeated loud and long, followed by a raucous chuckle, and we realized that the culprit was discovered. His Excellency made a graceful apology to the sentry, and then gave an explicit and detailed exposé to the Resident of what he would do if that blinking bird made another sound. I always

thought, after that, that the possession of a talkative mynah might blast my career.

Not many hours after my lady visitors left Tenom we killed under their bathroom a female hamadryad (king cobra). These beasts proverbially run in couples, and we looked steadfastly round for her spouse. I drew the lucky number and found him two days afterwards. I was walking to the office, after tiffin, down a little jungle path, and saw a snake in the undergrowth. I could not reach him, but, just to frighten him, twirled my paper umbrella round in the leaves. Alack! he took it as a challenge, and slid down the bank on to the path and after me. It was about two hundred yards to the office, and the sentry was very surprised to see me do the last fifty in level time. My usual gait after lunch was very slow and very dignified, but on this occasion I was all out. A hamadryad is about the only snake which will attack, but he does it good and hard. We turned out all hands, after I had got my gun down, and found and slaughtered that reptile.

One official visitor occasioned me some anxious moments. I was notified by telegram that a Japanese Consul-General was arriving by train the same day and was to be looked after. I gave orders for a room to be prepared at the Residency, put on my best clothes, and went down to meet the train, taking the precaution to call at the "rest-house" and order a room for him there also, in case—well, in case he and I did not make friends quickly. In those days the only first-class coach on the train bore the warning "Europeans only" at one end,

the other compartment being discreetly unlabelled. The train rolled into the station, and from the sacred compartment there stepped a scrubby little gentleman in a very soiled white suit. I advanced towards him, but was forestalled by the Chinese station-master, who, with a snort of indignation, leaped at the passenger and in villainous but fluent Malay blackguarded him for daring to travel in the holy of holies. That, he might know, was for his betters, and not for such as he. The guard of the train was a delightfully humorous Chinese who had been brought up in America, and who spoke English with a hyper-American twang and phrasing. Always polite, he first saluted me with "Good afternoon, jedge," and then proceeded to check the station-master's abuse with "Why! Say! Agent! You've slipped! Traffic (the traffic superintendent) put him there. He's *some bug!*" Meanwhile the Consul-General, luckily understanding very little of the harangue directed at him, was bowing at me and hissing in the approved Japanese fashion, interjecting at intervals, "Oh, honourable Resident!" However, we got to grips, and I offered him the alternative of staying at the Residency or at the rest-house. He refused both and announced that he had arranged to stay at a Japanese "house" in the town. The "house" was, to put it euphemistically, not a place which one would choose to enter in broad daylight, and I could see nothing for it but to wash out all calling. I sent hastily for shorts and a shirt and took refuge on the football ground. To my horror, during an exciting rally in our goal, I saw a

figure marching across the ground clad in a frock-coat, silk hat, and gloves. It approached me and solemnly handed me a card, about six inches by four, emblazoned in English and Japanese with his name and titles. Hat in hand the little man stood hissing at me, while I, in the scantiest of football kit, sweating profusely, gazed alternately at the card and its owner. My book of etiquette does not deal with official receptions in the middle of a football field, and I could only get out of the dilemma by conducting my magnificent guest to the rest-house and apologizing to him over a bottle of Japanese beer.

Association football is a game to which all Borneo natives take kindly, and practically every station has a ground where, every evening, the police and natives from the nearer villages kick the ball about. At Tenom, with its rather larger population, there was a game on most afternoons, sometimes a rough-and-tumble "pick up" and at other times something more serious. We used to run quite a useful team, and play Sapong Estate or any other team we could find to take on. It was a cosmopolitan collection, and we usually fielded representatives of seven or eight different races. It was *de rigueur* for members of the team to wear football boots and stockings when proceeding to the ground and indulging in "punt-about" before it started, but when the preliminary whistle went for the game to commence every native player made a rush for the touch-line, stripped off his boots and stockings, and came on to the field again ready for the fray. It used to make my toes tingle in sympathy to see a native back take a kick

down the field to him on the half-volley with his unprotected toes. As a general rule they were short, and it was practically impossible to charge them, but their stature gave them a lot of assistance when they tackled any of the Europeans. They lost in weight, but their charge usually got home just above one's knees, and the resulting loss of equilibrium was very complete.

A good deal of my time was spent in ranging to and fro over my four districts, and so avoiding some of the social pitfalls which the constant influx of visitors threatened, but one could not always run away from this danger. It was my misfortune to be in charge of three lengthy pilgrimages undertaken by distinguished personages who were not content to stop at Tenom, but went through the greater part of the Residency. In each case there was no real *contretemps* during the journey, and they were gracious and commendatory in their subsequent remarks, but the responsibility of piloting a comparatively elderly man over a prolonged jungle trip is trying. He comes, probably, straight from a sedentary life and a comfortable home to a fortnight or so of hard physical exercise, an indifferent cuisine, and an unaccustomed exposure to tropical sun or rain, without the mitigation of comfortable lodging at night. He has probably, in his younger days, undergone equally strenuous journeys, but later years of office work have lessened his powers of resistance and rendered him less immune to the minor hardships of jungle travel. The importance of one's charge of course justified one in adding refinements

and luxuries to the outfit and equipment which were taboo on one's ordinary tours, but the task was not one to be assumed lightly.

Even these stately pilgrimages were not entirely devoid of an element of comedy. Reverence or perhaps a sense of the discreet leads me to regard most of the humorous side of them as confidences not suited to the proletariat, but two of them may be told, safely shrouded in anonymity.

To one personage I had written emphasizing the fact that our proposed trip included camping at fair altitudes, when one was liable to be exposed to a comparatively low temperature, and suggesting precautions as regards warm clothing and bedding. I added that in this part of the country I always carried at least two blankets. A rather frigid answer informed me that he had always found a single sleeping-wrap of silk adequate in all parts of the tropics, and that he was bringing that silken wrap as his sole covering. My revenge was slow in coming, but complete. At one camp, at about 4,000 feet, there was a bitter, bone-piercing mist, which led us very shortly after dinner to turn in. I snuggled down under my blankets and read peacefully, but I heard in the other room uneasy turnings and adjustments. Presently my liege-lord emerged and inquired how many blankets I had. My reply indicated that I was using and proposed to continue using three. The form returned to its comfortless couch, only to return shortly afterwards and complain of the cold. The time had come, and, summoning the corporal of the guard, I sent him to borrow one of the police

blankets, which I handed over with an expression of hope, and nothing more than hope, that it did not contain more than a remote risk of one of the many native skin diseases or of vermin. I have every reason to suppose that the horrible suggestion had the desired effect and that his slumbers were sadly marred by the thoughts of what that blanket might have in store for him.

One trip gave me redoubled responsibility. No less than three personages wished to visit a station out towards the Dutch boundary where, for the moment, I had no district officer. Any empty out-station house is a most dismal place, the absence of a "lived-in" appearance being more than depressing, while the fact that this particular station was only temporary and was built at the bottom of a cañon enhanced the natural gloom. I laid myself out to tickle the palates and fancies of my convoy, and decided to grant them a privilege which we lesser mortals always regarded as the acme of luxury. The last day before getting to Rundum station one crossed the main backbone range of the island of Borneo over a pass about 4,000 feet high, and from there a shaded seven miles down-hill led into the station and to the end of one's journey. We used on the most special occasions to arrange to have buried a day or two before on the highest point a bottle or two of beer. By the time it had rested a night at this altitude it became deliciously cool and provided a welcome refreshment after the previous climb. Personally, as a general rule, I drank nothing until I finished the day's march; in fact, I knew when

The Suburbs of an Out-station—Rundum Station

A Fishing Village

the time came that I simply had to take a drink of water from one of the numerous cold streams which one met everywhere, that I was only good for about another half-hour's walking. For the descent into Rundum there was no need to keep oneself in abstinence. One could have rolled down.

We reached the pass, and I produced the beer and long aluminium tumblers. Personage No. One scoffed at the idea, but when the frost began to dim the outside of the tumblers and the rest of the party made appreciative noises as they drank, he weakened and, after a little pressure, fell. I thought it well to explain that this was a special occasion and that I seldom indulged in this bacchanalian diet en route.

The native of Borneo invariably carries any load on his back, with the result that one has to limit one's baggage to loads which are not too clumsily bulky and not exceeding about sixty pounds in weight. I was, therefore, a little worried to find that one personage had brought a tin bath full of clothes and a luncheon hamper (the word "basket" is not adequate to describe this monstrosity), neither of which admitted of any means of transport other than slinging from a pole supported by at least two coolies. It was not so bad on the bridle-paths, which took us as far as Rundum station, but when there was a suggestion that the menagerie should go on towards the Dutch border, over the very vile native tracks, I thought it was time to step in. They took a terrible lot of dissuasion, and I had to draw largely on my imagination for dangers and tribulations

sufficiently impressive to check this exuberance. I was not at all keen to find myself in charge of three elderly gentlemen and two pantechnicon loads of personal effects in the centre of Borneo. Success crowned my efforts, and I got their noses turned on the homeward trail.

Another pilgrim of high degree had lost the greater part of the hair with which, presumably, he had been endowed in his youth; but to hide Nature's failure the remnants were allowed to grow to an inordinate length and carefully trained as a camouflage over the central desert. This artifice filled its purpose in the ordinary way, but was not adequate to cope with the vicissitudes of jungle travel, and before the procession entered any populous centre we always halted in some secluded spot while the imperial tirewoman (to disarm criticism let me say at once that he was a male) produced glass, brush, comb and unguents, and the vagrant tresses were coaxed back to their duty.

The bridle-paths ran, speaking generally, in a line from north to south of the Residency, and so offered a fairly easy means of reaching each district, but a lot of country remained which they did not serve and which had to be traversed on foot. The gentleman who once stated in a lecture that Borneo had no hills had, one imagines, never traversed the Interior Residency, unless, of course, he was indulging in euphemistic meiosis and meant that it was all "dashed" mountains. Even that is incorrect, as there is a certain amount of plain and undulating ground, but there also is a lot of very sheer and

abrupt country over which one has to clamber. On one journey, only sixteen miles, from a station at the head of a river to one lower down on the same river, one climbed about 7,000 feet in all, and the journey took a day and a half. For mere bravado I did it once in one day, but I was sorry for it afterwards.

One hears people talk glibly about doing two and a half or three miles an hour over native paths. I have no hesitation in saying that it is not humanly possible as an average rate, and, personally, I should be surprised if, as a general rule, taking everything in, one can take credit for more than one and a half to one and three-quarters as a maximum average over the ordinary jungle-path and two miles an hour in favourable conditions. The native tracks were seldom measured up, and the corresponding bridle-path distances offer no comparison at all. One is, therefore, rather in the dark on the subject, but one must take into account the fact that on a native track one can never get into a real swinging march, that one seldom, if ever, meets even five yards of level ground, and that the whole journey is beset with impediments of one sort or another—a tree down, a patch of mud or, in considerable frequency, a stream or river to cross. A path I knew very well was that from Kiau to Kota Belud, in the Tempasuk district. As one traversed it in normal circumstances it took eleven or twelve hours of steady but not impetuous walking, two fair days and one short one. It involved, besides a number of tributary rivulets, no fewer than seventeen crossings of the Tempasuk

River, a fast-running stream often waist-high over a bottom of slippery boulders. The result was that, in addition to the physical labour and the time which each crossing involved, one was continually carrying an extra burden in the shape of sodden clothes. I once accomplished the journey on foot in one day during a period of drought when the river was low and consequently the fords were very little hindrance; but there was the countervailing disadvantage that all the beaches in the river, left high and dry, were thoroughly baked by the sun, and the effort resulted in my feet being reduced to a swollen pulp from which my boots had to be cut off. I was led into this exuberance by a taunt that a Dusun would outwalk a white man, and, having ascertained that the trip had not been done before, I offered to bet old Kabong three buffaloes that I would do it. He took the bet, but made no offer to pay up. I did not press him, partly for obvious reasons and partly because I do not know what I should have done with three buffaloes, an unhandy form of asset for a person who is liable to be transferred at a moment's notice to the other end of the country.

CHAPTER XIII

COURT WORK—MEDICAL AND SURGICAL WORK

THE northern end of the Interior Residency was, from long contact with the Government, comparatively peaceful, and, having a large and industrious population of farmers, the question of commissariat on one's trips did not present much difficulty. One could always get fowls and eggs—the traveller's stand-by. Fruit and vegetables were, in season, available; and, for the carriers and servants, native tobacco and rice-beer or coco-nut toddy were plentiful and cheap. The travelling was fairly easy on the whole, a great part of it being on bridle-paths, which intersected the country fairly thoroughly and gave access to most of the bigger centres of population.

There was a rather dreary and uninteresting stretch of country between Keningau and Tambunan stations, 37 miles apart. I usually aimed at traversing this piece about the time of full moon, when, except in the few stretches of jungle, the path was as light at night as if the arc-lamps of Piccadilly illuminated it. I used to send my servants, ponies, and coolies on in the morning to a halting-station fifteen miles out, and ride out there after tea. A bathe and a change and dinner formed the prepara-

tion for a ride by night over the remaining 22 miles, and I used to arrive at Tambunan about three in the morning. I never found any of the district officers enthusiastic about this arrangement, as it meant their turning out at that hour to welcome me and provide tea. I always told them that it was a small price to pay for the pleasure of seeing me, but, I think, without really convincing them.

It was my habit to cheer myself by singing a not very lengthy repertoire of song, the greater number of the items being hymns and the bass part of anthems which remained in my memory from my days in the choir at school. Whether the melody stupefied or attracted the beasts of the jungle I do not know, but I have more than once been startled by the harsh yap of a sambhur or the boom of a muntjac within a few feet of me. On one occasion I topped a hill and spied in the valley beneath me three or four fires, betokening a native camp. I rode on, and found the fires deserted when I arrived, but all the signs of quite recent occupation of the few small leaf shelters. A general exodus of that sort often denotes guilty consciences, but anyway merited inquiry, so I pulled up and shouted reassuring words. Presently a decrepit old Dusun appeared and responded to my questions. It seemed that they were a perfectly innocent family trekking down with their year's tobacco crop for sale. The strains of "Onward, Christian soldiers!" in a rather husky *basso-profondo* which had broken on them apparently from the skies as I came over the brow of the hill had been too much for their nerves, and they

had bolted for the jungle until this portent had passed. As we talked the rest of the party came out, and we parted good friends, one young minx, no better, I fear, than she ought to be, asking for an encore as I went on. When the organist at Rugby asked me, as one of the "swells," to join the choir on condition that I did not sing, he little thought that he was doing his bit in the Empire-building line.

Being of an inquisitive turn of mind, and having a craving for mapping unknown parts of my country, I was intrigued by the fact that nothing much was known of the stretch of river lying between Tambunan and Keningau. The connecting bridle-path avoided the gorge in which the river ran, and I wanted to get the river on to my map. I arranged, therefore, with the District Officer of the upper station that we would attack that gorge on rafts and take a watch-and-compass traverse of the river, tying in to the bridle-path, which had been more accurately surveyed.

A raft is built of some ten or so bamboos cut about twenty feet long and tied together to form a deck, in the centre of which is built up a superstructure also of bamboo. On this are placed the baggage, the Europeans, and other articles of value. The crew of two takes post fore and aft with poles to steer the craft, but the stream provides the motive power. Theoretically the raft floats on the surface of the stream, and the superstructure flaunts itself well above the water. In practice the raft waddles down the stream, with the superstructure appearing above the surface at irregular intervals, only to

plunge again at the next lot of broken water. It is submarine work without any of the amenities of "the trade." On very rare occasions, where there is any considerable fall, the entire raft leaves the water, and through the limpid air plunges, always performing what vulgar little boys call a "belly-flopper," into the pool below. There one gyrates for a varying period in the centre of the pool, where the deep water offers no bottom for the poles, until chance brings one, probably stern foremost, near the bank, where the crew can once more get busy and start the raft again on its course. These delays have, of course, to be computed and allowance made for them in the time factor of the survey.

For this trip I had a super-raft built with a sort of conning tower, presumed to be waterproof, and there I and the District Officer, duly armed with watches, compasses, and traverse books, took our seats, while other rafts carried our servants, escort, and baggage. It was a noble armada which set sail early one morning about a mile above the gorge.

All went well until early on the second day. I was busy giving readings of watch and compass to my coadjutor, who plied pencil vigorously, recording his and my observations, when, without a word of warning, we hit a hidden rock hard and the vasty deep closed over our heads. When we floundered to the surface again we were still on board, but all the day's readings had gone, leaving us with a horrible blank of two hours in the middle of the traverse. It was no use lamenting and no use contemplating return. Rafts are not craft to take up-stream. We could

only hope for another opportunity later—which, of course, never came.

I have made other trips by raft, many of them devoid of incident other than those which the exigencies of this sort of navigation always entail. One, however, again attributable to an inquisitive mind, ended in complete disaster. I had been engaged off and on for months trying to find a line for a bridle-path skirting a gorge in which ran the river Tempasuk. As usual, the thick jungle made things very difficult, and I decided to have a look at the lie of the land as seen from the river. I noticed that there was little enthusiasm shown by any of my party, and a local chief was almost vehement in his efforts to dissuade me. The river was nothing very terrible above the gorge and was almost placid below, but that, while encouraging, was, I now admit, no criterion of what it might be in between. I was fed up with crawling like a spider over the sheer cliffs of the gorge, and I pictured myself sitting at ease on the raft and noting down the points where my path could go.

Four rafts were built, and we duly set out, swept gently along on a beautiful, glassy reach of the river. We turned an abrupt corner and were met by a roar of rushing water. The rapids had begun. The crew —two of my best police—steadied the raft while they looked for the best passage and then poled us towards it. Personally I only remember the first dive and splash. The next few minutes or seconds were spent in the most earnest efforts to keep on the raft, combined with the most sincere resolutions that if I ever

came to the surface again I would get out and walk. Temporary relief came when we scraped through a narrow gate in the rocks and found ourselves in an unfathomable pool hemmed in by sheer, even overhanging, cliffs, which afforded no foothold even for the smallest jungle plant. Nothing less adhesive than a fly could have got out and walked, and I had to steel myself to the remainder of the run down river. Just as we were starting off again the bundle in which my bedding was always rolled rose like a trout alongside my raft, and I realized that disaster had overtaken one of the fleet, so I waited. Two rafts appeared over the fall more or less damaged, while the fourth arrived in segments, the lashings of the bamboo deck having come adrift. It was impossible to rebuild it, and we could only retrieve some of the material and add it to the remaining craft to give them enough buoyancy to carry the flotsam cargo and mariners from the wreck. The fleet sailed into action once more and got through the next rapid without any serious damage. The third essay was when I and my raft paid the penalty. We hit an enormous boulder absolutely end on and with such force that the square "bows" were crumpled for about four feet. Now bamboo splinters cut like the sharpest razor that ever was honed. "Bow" was shot clean on to the rock and escaped. I gave one despairing leap to clear the wreckage and got on to the rock also, landing partially on "bow," while "stroke" made the best of a bad job and jumped into the river, which was running like a mill tail. It was a ten-to-one chance either way, but to be cut to

ribbons by bamboo slivers is a messy way of passing out, and he chose the better part. He got through unscathed and swam to a pebble bank at the end of the next pool. Just as he was clear the raft was caught by the stream and, standing almost upright, was hurled past our refuge, just missing us by inches. It was a forlorn position. We were on an island in the centre of a brawling river with about thirty yards of rapid to navigate before we got to the calmer waters below. A series of really good and scrupulously accurate jumps would take one ashore, but a standing jump off slippery rock three feet square on to slippery rock three feet square is asking a lot. The alternative was to wait for the remaining rafts, if any still remained, and, as they passed, to do a "pier-head jump." There was a howl from upstream, and we saw one raft starting down our rapid. They only saw us when they were half-way down and, to my horror, thinking our raft must be still in or across the passage, they shot away into a second channel and passed us twenty feet away. The last hope came into view and crashed down our channel. As she shot past my refuge I jumped and landed with a resounding bump impartially on my boy and the cooking outfit, while "bow" slid into the stream and tailed on to the raft. We all forgathered in the pool and held a council on matters in general. We were now two rafts, both a little shaky, eight passengers and crew and some baggage, all at the bottom of a heaven-high cleft. We had, however, run the worst part of the trip, and it seemed, from what one could see of the next rapid, that the rafts

would get through and that the sides of the river would give some chance to pedestrians. It was tolerably obvious that we could go neither back nor sideways. I rearranged the crews and, rather enviously, sent off three men to clamber along the rocks with orders to signal the best channel, meanwhile, with an outward bravado, once more taking my seat on deck. We got through this time intact, but very badly shaken and waterlogged. We found at the foot of this rapid a devious hunter's track on the river bank, and as there was a unanimous sentiment in favour of *terra firma*, we abandoned ship with light hearts and trudged the rest of the way into camp. Personally, I had not improved my chances of finding a trace for my path, I had broken my last bottle of whisky and lost a saucepan. I had also learned that unknown gorges are not to be taken lightly.

The southern and eastern parts of the interior were very different from the northern end. With much less density of population, and not so well equipped with bridle-paths, their interminable steep hills and dangerous rivers did not afford the same comfort in travelling as the northern sphere. The country as a whole had only recently been brought under the sway of the Government, and the temper of the natives was an uncertain factor. They had lived in their inaccessible hills for centuries, self-sufficient in every way and without contact with the outer world. Unlike most of the up-country peoples, they were not dependent on the coast even for their salt, which they were able to draw from the numerous

salt springs. The advent of an ordered régime entailed a complete reversal of their customs, and, like children fearing the unknown, and, again like children, resenting the deprivation of their favourite amusement, the taking of heads, they were only sullenly acquiescent in the new state of affairs. Shortly after I went on leave in 1914 this resentment broke out in rebellion—the Rundum rebellion—but there was not lacking indication that they were uneasy long before that date. The acute question was really whether they could be won over before any spark fired the train, but the difficulty was to know what would have that effect. I travelled with a succession of district officers over a great part of the country and came in contact with the majority of the inhabitants, but one never quite felt that one had their confidence in the same way as elsewhere in the State.

I encountered here the two worst pieces of travelling that I had experienced. One was a march along the bank of a river, and the other a boat journey down-a river. The former I found to be the most exhausting trip I had ever done, and I was relieved to hear afterwards that others who had followed in my footsteps suffered equally. The journey was not long, four hours at the outside, and it involved no great amount of climbing, but for practically the entire distance one was clambering over enormous boulders literally the size of a house, and jumping the intervals between them. The river boiled away below, and at every jump one instinctively imagined what a fall would mean. How the

laden carriers managed the journey I do not know, except, of course, that they did not suffer the handicap of wearing boots.

The second trip was replete with incident in the way of natural dangers, and, we afterwards heard, was to have had a gory ending for the District Officer and myself if we had carried out our full programme. We were paying practically the first visit to a very raw part of the country, and proposed to take boat down-stream to the Dutch border to explore and to look at possible sites for a station. I have already referred to raft-travelling as an unpleasant way of courting death, but I am doubtful whether boats are any safer, though there is a specious appearance of stability about a boat which is lacking in a raft with its entire absence of freeboard. It was a new part of the State which had for some time been a sort of Alsatia owing to uncertainty where the boundary actually was. A number of traders from Dutch Borneo had taken advantage of this uncertainty and had made it a field for their predatory methods, flying the while the Dutch flag to cover their various iniquities. As a counterblast I took the opportunity of aping an imperial progress and flew various banners. We mustered a Blue Ensign, a Red Ensign and a Union Jack, all emblazoned with the Borneo "cat." The use of a "Jack" when afloat is, of course, confined to Governors and others of high degree, and the British Navy is rigorous in its refusal to countenance illicit use of the distinction. However, we were ten days' journey from the nearest sea and the nearest Governor. Thus beflagged, the

start of the procession was an impressive spectacle; but "pride goeth before a fall." I had heard a terse disyllabic description of the river from a man who had already been down part of the way. There is no doubt that it was really all he said it was. We shot the first rapids in a welter of spray and green seas but without incurring any serious damage. A long, straight reach of the river then faced us which seemed quite childlike, and I lay back in the boat comforted to think that the danger had been exaggerated. The corner turned, I sat up and began once more to agree with the poetical soul who had given me his impressions. We could see in front of us the tossing of a real snorter in the way of rapids, but before we had time to contemplate it for long we felt the bow give a heave upwards and then a sickening lurch down again, crash on the first wave. We hardly rose to the second, which came at us sideways and threw us at the third. There was a mighty heave by all the paddlers on the port side, which just straightened us up in time for the fourth, a monster which came on board green and practically filled us, necessitating my borrowing Blake's topi as a baler. Two of our precious banners were carried away and preceded us down-stream. A short spell gave time for our crew to hold a solemn conclave which resulted in a deputation to suggest that we should be landed above the next rapid, which was apparently *the* feature of the show, and walk past it while they took the boat down. One had to pretend to demur, but we finally yielded, ostensibly under protest. I confess that I was glad to have been

persuaded. As far as I could see, the boat left the water at the top of the rapid and, occasionally "hitting the high places" for fractions of a second, spent most of its time in mid-air. She came through, however, without mishap, and we re-embarked.

This particular rapid was said to be the place where Witti, the explorer of so much of North Borneo, was killed many years ago under very similar circumstances, he having disembarked while his boat was taken down by the crew. Our luck was, however, in, and incidentally remembering the occurrence, I had been at some pains the day before to have a little practice with my revolver before a crowd of natives who had come in to meet us.

There was no idea of repeating the Witti tragedy at that spot, but we heard afterwards that we had been cast for the parts of first and second corpses at a fishing party which was due to take place a day or two later.

The comparative absence of game and the nature of the terrain drive the natives of these parts to the rivers for their food and sport. The method employed is the use of one of the many forms of "tuba," a narcotic produced by pounding certain jungle roots and pouring the emulsion thus obtained into the river. The fish are stupefied and rise to the surface, belly upwards, to be landed by the assembled field. A big tuba fishing is a great sight. Everything that will float is pressed into service, and man, woman, and child from every village for miles round turn out for the ceremony. Those who have not

PENOTAL GORGE

succeeded in getting a seat in a boat line the banks or form a " stickle " across the shallower rapids.

The programme was to invite us to one of these gatherings and gradually to surround our boat so that a sudden concerted rush would catch us and our escort (if any) unawares. Whether their courage gave out or the omens were bad we never found out, but the party was put off for two days and I was unable to spare the time to wait for it. It was a close call, because we had no reason to suspect any active trouble, and we should in all probability have gone off gaily without a weapon in the boat.

It was in this part of the country that I made a very lucky shot which, long afterwards I heard, exaggerated probably after many repetitions, discouraged from coming to meet my District Officer a Murut of Dutch Borneo who had aspirations to carve hairpins out of my shin-bones. He had certain bickerings with some of my people in which a number of undoubtedly worthy folk had lost not only their lives but their heads, and I had sent him a cordial invitation to come over and have a yarn about it all. I sent with the invitation a few small presents, and I am to this day a little doubtful whether the offer of a cake of very highly scented soap was quite tactful. I waited at the appointed spot until two days after the appointed hour, and then left. Our camp was on a promontory at an angle in the river, and while we were waiting a brown hawk chose to squat on a branch of a dead tree eighty yards off across the river. There was nothing particular to amuse us at the time, and I borrowed a police

carbine and, adopting a Bisley attitude, pulled the trigger. By some miracle I hit the wretched bird in the neck and practically severed its head. There was a rush across the river to retrieve the target, and a hubbub of admiration what time I tried to look as if I was not a bit surprised myself. The news of this one chance bullet travelled across the border and frightened my friend to such an extent that he did not come near the District Officer for some years.

Blake and I had a previous trip which, commencing as an ordinary tour of inspection, ended with a few thrills. I first distinguished myself by wandering away from the shack, where we stayed the second night out, and losing myself while looking for a deer. I killed a deer and wounded a pig, and sat down to await the butchering party, which I felt certain would turn out from the camp as soon as the shots were heard. It was a vain hope, for, though I was not half a mile away in a direct line, they heard nothing. At long last, well after sunset, a rescue party consisting of two small camp followers arrived after much difficulty and we started campwards. I thought that I had my bearings correctly, and took on myself to guide the party back to the bridle-path and so to camp. I was aiming for a point where the path takes a right-angled bend, but I must have missed it by about twenty yards. When, finally, a further rescue party came along down the path, I found that for about half a mile we had been tearing our way through really thick jungle parallel to and not twenty yards from the path.

After dinner the same night (owing to this contre-

temps about 11 p.m. instead of the wonted 6.30), Blake, who was outside making inquiries about an alleged murder, was suddenly confronted by about forty natives, fully armed, who retailed with considerable detail a nice little affray which had taken place that afternoon, resulting in three corpses and two men seriously wounded. They reported the place to be only five miles away, but along a newly opened native path. Blake was the local coroner and was all for starting off at once to perform his gruesome duties. Personally I had had enough for the night and said that for my part I would see everyone in blazes before I walked another five miles over a native path, especially a new native path, on a pitch-dark night, to watch him sit on any number of bodies, but that I did not wish in any way to interfere with his pleasures. I did, however, stipulate that he should leave me enough police for a guard, as I proposed to sleep and so wanted looking after while he presumably would be awake and so could look after himself. He came to the conclusion that the business could quite well wait until the morning, when, good and early, at the very crack of dawn, we started.

It is a matter for discussion whether a sense of the dramatic, or some recollection from a previous existence of the provisions of the Code Napoléon in respect to "reconstitution of the crime," had inspired them, but the fact remains that the local potentates had left all the exhibits *in situ quo* and *in statu quo* the day before. I am not very long-sighted and am inclined to be petulant in the early

morning. As I always prefer to march in front of my party it was my fortune to stumble over exhibit A, the body of a man, which was lying right across the path. I circumvented that and resumed my progress to the house where the outbreak had taken place. It resembled a dissecting-room. Two bodies lay as they had fallen the night before, and the weapons used were strewn about the place. In one corner one of the two wounded men was being treated for a series of wounds any one of which would have finished off a white man, while, in his private room, the owner of the house was having a ghastly slash across his face plugged with raw chicken flesh. Having done what was possible in the way of first aid with half an ounce of cotton-wool and a little permanganate, Blake produced a dilapidated pocket-book and proceeded to hold his inquest. After he had toiled through a wearisome coil of evidence from various witnesses I, my matutinal petulance having developed into squeamishness, was nearly admonished by the coroner for interrupting to ask him to lend me a cigarette, as one of the exhibits, near which I was sitting, was becoming emphatically dead and required its evidence taken at once.

The ghastly business over, we returned to camp and, after dinner and a council of war, turned in. Just as I was making that last turn which always results in sleep there was a furious outburst of barking from my dogs, a noise, half grunt, half sigh, from some fifty odd coolies sleeping in the veranda, and a sound which resembled nothing so much as the first moments of a hailstorm. This was caused by the

coolies simultaneously rising and shuffling along the veranda. One of the sentries challenged but got no reply. Blake and I leaped from our beds (it is mighty difficult if not impossible to leap from a camp bed when the mosquito curtain has been well tucked in, but the phrase will serve) and commenced the usual frenzied search for our revolvers. One never seems able to find a revolver in emergency, however carefully one puts it ready the night before. In course of time sleepy menials produced these weapons and we went out to examine the tracks of persons who had been seen to bolt from under the building. There certainly were tracks, and right under the rest-house. Our escort at the moment consisted of a lance-corporal and a private—the rest of the men with us having been sent off to follow up the murderers—two dogs and five ponies. It may seem ridiculous to include ponies as a possible safeguard against murderers, but it is not so strange as it sounds. There is nothing that the back-block native funks like a pony. A prominent official on tour once tendered the reins of his steed to a native with the request to hold the beast for a minute. The said native looked at him for a short second, gave one wild yell, and was off into the jungle like a flash. His first reappearance is said to have been three days afterwards at a village twenty miles away. It just happened that all our ponies had been tethered together at the east end of the shack and the invasion took place at the west end, but we made a redistribution of the cavalry and covered all the approaches.

Anyone who is at all ticklish knows the sensation

that an anticipated jog in the ribs affords, and will appreciate the fact that, the floor of the hut being only of bark and the beds only canvas stretchers, the possibility of a spear to do the jogging was hardly a soporific. The dogs were so pleased with the results of their little stunt that they barked vigorously at bones, spiders, biscuit tins, and camp tables at intervals for the rest of the night. They nearly succeeded in making me shoot my own pony at one time when a prolonged effort on their part seemed to point to something tangible being in the offing.

We got through the night without any disturbance and moved next day to our next camp, fifteen miles on and not far from the murderers' village. We were greeted by the news that they had been seen that morning and that the pursuing parties were close at hand. The police came in to report and were instructed to carry on the chase and to report progress two days later at the same place. Blake and I meanwhile did a side trip to a small Government outpost which had formed part of the original programme. This was duly accomplished, and we started back to the rendezvous the next morning to meet, after a few furlongs, a large party of locals, glittering with all manner of weapons, who announced that the night before a party of three unknown folk had been seen on that path and, when accosted, had bolted, and that they were now searching for them. We left these worthies and, a few yards farther on, I was moodily crossing one of those lengthways slippery logs which serve the barefooted native very well as a bridge but are anathema to the

shod European, when something charged through the jungle about five yards from me. We were all a bit "jumpy," and the effort of pulling out my revolver very nearly resulted in an ignominious slide from the log into the muddy stream below. However, the "something" went off into the dim distance, and all was well until the native behind me said cheerfully, "I expect that was a plandok" (a mouse-deer about the size of a hare). This was rather too much for an early-morning temper. The "something," whatever it may have been, was not a plandok. It was, from the noise, about the size of Buckingham Palace; and with much caution and circumspection I turned on that beastly log and made a long and eloquent address to that fool.

We got back to the rendezvous and asked for news from the police who were waiting for us there. It was perplexing. A very estimable policeman had gone off the day before, refused to take anyone with him, said he was going to follow up the murderers, and promised to be back the same evening. When we arrived at noon the next day he was still missing. Having absorbed this news, we came to the not unwise conclusion that the policeman had probably met the murderers and was either by then exhibit A in a new inquest or was bringing them in. It did not appear that our going without tiffin would be of material assistance to him in either event, and the order was given to the boys to carry on preparing camp. I retired to a log to await the announcement that lunch was ready and to wonder if it would really be necessary for me to accompany the coroner to

another inquest. Suddenly round the corner came four armed natives. They advanced and shook hands profusely, while the missing policeman, who was with them, grinned rather sheepishly and said, "*Itu dia,*" which was his way of saying that he had single-handed followed up these desperate men and, by some art of persuasion, induced them to come in with him and surrender. Nothing succeeds like success, and it was a plucky act, but, if his effort had miscarried and they had turned and rent him, it would have caused a lot of trouble for everyone concerned, and not least for the policeman.

My appointment as Resident carried with it the duty of sitting as Sessions Judge as and when necessary, but, as requisite, I used to take magisterial cases in the Tenom District. They were not, however, of any very great interest, being mainly charges against estate labourers for minor offences.

One case was a little amusing, though it involved, one can only imagine, a thoroughly contumacious contempt of court. On a certain estate there was an estate order forbidding the Javanese women to approach the coolie lines tenanted by Chinese. Javanese females are not noted for their morality, and their intercourse with the Chinese tended to engender racial feeling between the Chinese and Javanese. One damsel, who seemed utterly deficient of morality or obedience to regulations, habitually, in spite of warnings, broke this rule and was finally charged in court with the offence. She admitted it and was duly lectured on the enormity of her sin and fined a dollar. There was the usual sharp bark from

the clerk asking for payment, whereupon my lady turned to the bench and, with the most ingratiating smile, asked permission to pay early the next morning. Asked why she could not pay on the nail if she could pay twelve hours ahead, and expecting the usual assertion that the money was at home or that friends would lend it, she simpered and replied: "I expect that I shall have earned a dollar by to-morrow morning."

On one trip to Ranau, a small station in the north of the Residency, we were met on arrival by a gruesome tale and a gruesome job. A prisoner, who was awaiting our arrival for trial, had about a week before snatched a fighting-knife from a sentry and attacked the local chief. He had given him a tremendous wound across the head and cut down into his skull. The chief had taken what he thought was a bottle of water to wash out and cool the wound, only to find that it was kerosene oil. We were surprised to find on our arrival that, in default of any other antiseptics, this had acted excellently and that the wound was clean and commencing to heal nicely. Not so the prisoner, who, after his attack on the chief, had threatened to go "amok." A policeman who was in barracks heard the noise, seized his rifle and pluckily approached the prisoner to recapture him, but finding him preparing to attack, had fired. The bullet had passed right through the prisoner's biceps. He bolted and had been hiding in the jungle for a week, but had been recaptured the day we arrived. His arm was a mass of putrefaction. We were seven days from the nearest doctor, and so we had to do

what we could for the man with our own resources. Personally I did not think that it was possible to save either arm or life without amputation, but I was not prepared to try my hand at that without any sort of anæsthetic and only a very small supply of dressings. The only other chance was to squirt very strong carbolic into one of the bullet holes and drive the maggots out through the other. The treatment was extraordinarily successful, and in a week's time the wound had responded well and was quite healthy.

The rough and ready surgery and medicine that one practised in these out-of-the-way places were marvellous, but, to a qualified man, probably appalling. On one occasion a village headman asked me to prescribe for his wife, who, he said, had been ill for months and was, he thought, dying. I went to see her and found her unconscious, no more than skin and bones, and with practically no pulse. I thought that any medicine would be wasted, but, as he said that she suffered agonies when conscious, I gave him some opium tabloids for her to take. I rather thought that they would kill the wretched woman, but consoled myself with the feeling that they might ease her pain a bit. To my surprise he reported after a fortnight that she was much better, and a month later I was invited as the guest of honour to a feast at his house. My hostess would not rest until I had gorged myself on cakes of her own making, all simply reeking of coco-nut oil—a nauseating and cloying fluid. I seriously wondered whether, after all, it is wise to interfere with the workings of Providence.

A great point in pharmacy, as far as natives are concerned, is to remember that anything for internal use should have a pronounced and lasting taste, and anything for external application should at least be coloured and preferably pronouncedly odorous. I always used to add a generous dollop of quinine to any dose I gave anyone, and to any disinfectant a pinch of permanganate of potash. The most convincing dressing for a wound was iodine. It showed up well even on a brown skin, and it galvanized the patient into activity which showed that it had a bite. It was a case of *experto crede*, as I underwent a long treatment with iodine on a bad jungle sore. In addition to everything else, it was a very efficient dressing.

With two short breaks I had four years in the interior. They were enjoyable as affording large scope for travelling and a minimum of office work, while they were also instructive. The interior is a happy mean between the free, open life of an outstation District Officer and the more sedentary life as a senior Resident. The supervision of two estates and the administration of four large districts gave one considerable scope, and the experience was very useful afterwards. The Residency has, ever since it was severed from the West Coast Residency and started life on its own, had good traditions, and one had to see that those traditions were handed down unsullied. Chief among them were scrupulous neatness and tidiness of the stations and careful supervision and maintenance of the means of communication, the telephones and bridle-paths. It was

said, and I think with truth, that one could always tell when a District Officer had served a term in the interior by the appearance of his station. If this is true (I always found it so) it is a feather in the cap of the interior as a unit.

It was a high misdemeanour in Tenom for anyone of lower rank than a Resident or a general manager of an estate to walk on the grass edgings to the paths or across the recreation ground. The rule was made to prevent that untidy and unsightly appearance which grass worn by constant traffic presents. It has often amused me to see portly and important gentlemen take a very careful look round to see if they were observed, and then sprint like rabbits across the sacred turf, pursued and accelerated by a roar which a bull of Basan would have envied.

One of the only two occasions when I struck a native was brought on by an offence against this rigid law. A small and rather unpleasant policeman strolled across the recreation ground one morning about 6 a.m. when I happened to be in office. He was told in a few terse words exactly what I thought of him, and all was peace. I returned to my office and busied myself once more on an overdue report. It was well recognized that, when I was in office at these extra-official hours, the wise man walked and talked with an Agag-like delicacy anywhere within fifty or sixty yards' range. We had a very complete, if not invariably efficient, telephone service linking up all the stations in the Residency, and it was equally well recognized that it was unwise to be discovered using the telephones on private business. I

was therefore all the more surprised to hear a raucous voice in the next office confiding the most indelicate story of the owner's amours to a friend sixty miles away. I shouted, but the terrible recital proceeded, and I dashed down my pen and flung myself into the next office, where I found my little friend, who, in more senses than one, could not keep off the grass, enthralled in his horrible saga. I reached him just as he got to the critical point, and I caught him a beautiful box over the right ear. He was, being diminutive, standing on a low stool, and my smack upset him. I caught him, just as he was overbalancing, with a neat clip on the left ear, which replaced him *in statu quo* but minus the telephone receiver, which, in the surprise of the moment, he had dropped. Not a word was said on either side, but he grasped the situation and returned to his beat outside (he was the sentry on duty at the moment). I picked up the receiver and listened for a moment or two to the anguished appeals of the pal at the other end, who wanted, apparently more than anything else in the world, to hear the end of the story. I am not really surprised, as I myself was rather regretting not having stayed my hand for a second. However, a few words from me, and the receiver at the other end went on with a click and once more all was peace.

CHAPTER XIV

ODD JOBS—ODD GOVERNORS

THE even course of my career as an administrative officer was interrupted more than once by the imposition of sundry "odd jobs." On two of them I was reft from my district and appointed secretary to the Governor. The first appointment was merely temporary and for the period when the real incumbent was absent undergoing an operation. I had been up-country to the boundary of my district, where I had arranged to meet the Resident of the interior and one of his district officers in order to arrange with them the point at which our bridle-path systems should link up. This historic meeting took place, but the effect was spoiled by the fact that all three of us happened at the time to be suffering from dysentery. The consequence was that the discussions on the subject were liable to frequent and prolonged interruptions owing to the absence of one or more of the councillors "on urgent private affairs." They accompanied me down-river to my station by easy stages, but we were all sorry wrecks when we arrived there. As we arrived, a telegraph messenger, little heeding the danger he ran, handed each of us a telegram. Williams, the Resident, was told that the stables at his station had been burned

to the ground and one pony and all his saddlery burned. Henry's district, which he had by the strictest quarantine hitherto kept inviolate, was a hotbed of smallpox; and I was to go down and act temporarily as secretary. We wrangled for some time as to the severity of the respective blows which had struck us, but I still maintain that I was the greatest sufferer.

My second tour of duty as secretary came upon me shortly after I had returned from long leave. I was, of course, in the normally impecunious condition resultant on six months in England and a new outfit, and so was glad to find myself back in a good and not too expensive station. There was all the excitement of unpacking and stowing away all one's new china, glass, and general "gadgets," the fitting of saddlery to the ponies and the rearrangement of the house. The job was hardly done when my complacent contemplation of the result was rudely shattered by the order to move at once, if not sooner, and become secretary. Luckily some prescience had led me to tell the water-carrier that death of an inglorious and painful nature would be his fate if he followed out the instinct of his class and turned the packing-cases into firewood; and we gloomily packed and reported in Jesselton. "If youth but knew." In the first nine months after my return from leave I had six different houses. Packing and unpacking became a mechanical second nature, to which the fact that only six glasses "crashed" during that uneasy period bears eloquent testimony. In that nine months, while retaining my appointment as secre-

tary, I did the preliminary work of opening a rubber estate, acted as Resident in Sandakan, and was sent off, as " political," on a British man-of-war to look for a rebel murderer who was supposed to have sought sanctuary in our territory from his American pursuers.

It was during my temporary reign as Resident of Sandakan that the following problem of international jurisprudence made me long once more for my jungle home. A Japanese damsel, resident in Sandakan, set out for the Philippine Islands, where she proposed to stay. She travelled by a German ship, and, as far as one could gather, well inside the waters of the American dependency, she stabbed a Chinese fellow-passenger. It was a nice medley. The Americans disclaimed jurisdiction and refused her admission, and so she remained on board for the return journey. We had no jurisdiction, as the offence was certainly committed either in American waters or on the high seas and under the German flag, and the German skipper was not enthusiastic at the prospect of taking the lady on to Singapore for her eventual transfer to Germany for trial. The difficulty was finally solved, if I remember rightly, by her landing at Sandakan and resuming there her aforetime profession with all the added kudos of being an international complication.

My next " odd job " was a mission to the Philippines, where, it was hoped, some interesting novelty from an administrative point of view might be learned from our American cousins. I was accompanied by Wison, and we were nobly and hospitably received

by the Government of the Philippines and its officials. We put up at the Metropole Hotel in Manila, but the city was fairly full at the time and the management could only give us one very large room with a bathroom *en suite*. This we shared for the six weeks of our visit. It was a relief to find that Wison was not eloquent in the early morning, and we finally adopted tacitly an arrangement under which we arose and performed our toilets in silence, proceeded to breakfast, which we ate under cover of our morning newspapers, and then, over the after-breakfast cigarette, solemnly exchanged " good mornings." It was an excellent way of ensuring that amity which matutinal prattling often distorts into discord.

Our official business was of interest to us but is not worthy of record. I was, however, touched by an instance of thoughtfulness and kindly commiseration displayed by a seemingly rugged prison official. I was inspecting a prison, and in due course came to the execution room, where I noticed some rope twined neatly with red, white, and blue tape. My guide, in whose province lay the duties of executioner, explained that the naked rope always struck him as being rather depressing to the doomed man as he walked into the room, and he had therefore evolved this colour scheme. " It makes things look more cheerful." I duly made a note of this and, on my return, offered the suggestion unofficially to our local functionary. He was a crude and unimaginative soul and could not see the poetry of the idea at all.

Talking of hangmen, a young cadet and a hangman were lodging temporarily in a rest-house. The former had made himself rather unpleasant but thought fit to go and shake the latter warmly by the hand before he left on his return journey to his station. The rope-merchant was forgiving up to a point and replied: "Well, good-bye, Mr. James. I am glad to have made your acquaintance, but—the next time I meet you I hope to God it's in my official capacity."

I took Ambun with me to Manila, and, as it was his first sight of a big city, he was amusingly bewildered. I was never able to find out how, speaking only Malay and his native Dusun, in a city where Spanish and American were the two valid languages, he managed to get about and do his work. I had taken a Philippino policeman with me as orderly, but Ambun seemed to run largely under his own steam and only called on the orderly at the last extremity. Ambun had then never seen a cinema, and I sent him off one evening to a good seat in the best "movie palace." He was back again after twenty minutes or so, and I asked him if he had not managed to find the place. Bearing in mind his amorous propensities, his reply was a little incongruous. "I was too disgusted to stay," he said with a sniff of righteous indignation. "There was a man who, the moment his wife had gone out of the room, kissed another woman." The remark is really rather interesting as showing that, however venial the Borneo native may think his own sexual peccadilloes, he does not look with a complacent eye on undue

A Typical Lowland Dusun

familiarity between the sexes of the European races. As a contrast to this his remark at a later date is *à propos*. I was going on long leave and made a trip through the Federated Malay States, joining my ship—one of the Japanese mail liners—at Penang. Ambun accompanied me on board to arrange my baggage before returning to Borneo. It happened that there were two or three Japanese ladies on deck, first-class passengers, as we came on board. Ambun, whose experience of the Japanese female had not compassed any but the light-o'-loves, turned to me with a leer and said: "Your luck's in this time, sir." It was, for they were charming and interesting fellow-voyagers, but the luck was not of the sort that he had contemplated.

His sense of propriety received another shock at the little hill-station of Baguio, to which we paid a short visit. He himself was a Dusun who would eat, with equanimity and relish, decayed meats of all sorts—snakes, rats, squirrels and many other uncouth foods. He appeared one morning in my room, a nasty grey-green in colour, and, unsolicited, poured out his woes. He had been in the servants' dining-room of the hotel, waiting for his morning meal, when a party of the local tribesmen employed about the hotel grounds had brought in their breakfast on a large dish discreetly covered. Left alone for a moment, Ambun's curiosity had got the better of him, and he lifted the cover to find that it contained a large boiled dog. This had so upset him that he literally vomited, and even the mere recital of the episode seemed to disconcert him so completely that

I turned him out of the room incontinently for fear of an untimely repetition of that unpleasant expression of his emotion. I must admit that, when my curiosity led me to look at this *bonne-bouche*, I was not attracted by its appearance or by the idea. This dish is, however, a common one among the Igorot tribes, and the weekly market at Baguio sees literally thousands of dogs brought in for the larder.

One real grief afflicted us in connexion with our stay in Manila. We had had a strenuous time packing, and it seemed time for a long whisky and soda instead of the ordinary "peg" which we had taken as our usual beverage. The boy presented the chit, which was for fifty centavos, the price we had been paying for the ordinary "stengah." Inquiry resulted in the sorry tidings that all drinks were the same price, and we found that for six weeks we had been having small pick-me-ups and paying the equivalent of large ones. If it had not been that a rather vehement Governor was at the other end of the cable, asking us at frequent intervals when he might hope to welcome us back, I should have put in another week to make up for lost time.

It smacks of impropriety to suggest that a Governor would be or could be consciously or unconsciously amusing. There can, however, be no doubt that Mr. Robert, the Governor in question, was both. Superficially, he was brusque to the point of cruelty and castigated unmercifully a statement which was not absolutely precise, terse and bald, bold fact. Any qualification of fact, any variation, even by legitimate mistake, from the strict and literal fact,

or even from what he thought to be the fact, would be picked up at once in a broad, Irish brogue: "Man! Ye mist be either a knave or a fooooool to say that." The speech was sometimes accompanied by a twinkle which smoothed its asperities, but I have heard it come rasping out quite unbuttered and before a crowd of underlings. It was an entertainment to hear him compose a draft in any controversy. He would complete some document which was calculated to give his opponent the "knock-out," and then, calling in his staff, read it "with action," interjecting at the nutty bits, "I think that will do for Tommy ——" (it was always "Tommy," whatever the man's Christian name might really be). The secretary's office opened out of his, and I listened once with the greatest glee to his complete defeat in a single sentence of a rather pompous and reputedly inefficient official who was the head of an important department. Robert had no opinion of him and, if there had been a suitable analogy, would have used the same aphorism as he used to describe the medical profession in general: "If ye don't look after yeself, ye'll get into the hands of those doctors, and there's not one of thim that I would trust to cut the tail arf me caaaaat!!!" The last word used to come out with a rattle which was the very essence of contempt. Simpson, the head of department, had prepared and submitted for approval an ambitious scheme for the reorganization of his department. It involved a large increase in the *personnel*, and at the apex was placed a director with a comparatively princely salary. Simpson, of course, took

it for granted that he would retain his post under the new title and with the new emoluments. Robert took him through every item of the new scheme with apparently an absorbed interest, though he had already openly said that he thought it absurd. He finally reached the paragraphs dealing with the director, his duties and, above all, the pay attaching to the post. Simpson at this point became really interested and, in his most impressive manner, enlarged on the importance of the department, and finished off: "Of course, sir, the head of such an important and vital department should be exceptionally well paid."

"Of course, of course," assented Robert, to Simpson's evident satisfaction, and then, after a pause: "Have you anyone in view, Simpson, whom you could recommend for the appointment?" It so took the wind out of Simpson's sails that he never said another word.

Robert was noted for an absolute disregard of appearances. He usually wore rather disreputable grey flannel clothes, and insisted at all times on carrying, slung round him, a haversack which contained a dry singlet, one of those neutral-coloured garments which are so unappetizing to look at. The moment he got hot, off would come his coat, shirt, and vest, and the change was effected oblivious of the surroundings. I have seen the operation take place on a public road, in the publicity of his special railway carriage when stopped at a station, and on the open veranda of a club-house in a small town. Two things in this connexion used to annoy him.

Any suggestion that he should seek some privacy for the operation or that anyone but he should carry the haversack always evoked a snarl.

He was a strong walker and an excellent and keen shot. In spite of his years he used to spend long days after snipe and big game. His chief joy, however, was bridge. It was more than a joy—it was a passion; and every Sunday a chosen band used to be "commanded" to Government House at 10.30 a.m. He allowed half an hour for lunch and ten minutes for tea, but, with those exceptions, the play was solidly continuous. I was caught once or twice, but I began then to arrange to be away on Sundays or to have some special business which would justify me in replying, "Government business prevents."

Taken all in all, he was a good Governor and, if one got past the hard crust, a true man and gentleman.

Governor Woodford was a great sportsman. Cricket, shooting, racing, football, billiards, cards, all came welcome to him. A cricketer could always be sure that His Excellency would secure him leave from office for a whole-day match; and when he wanted a team to play against the colony of Labuan, which was then jointly administered with North Borneo, the component members of it were always expected to fit in some suitable duty for performance there, so that one's fares were chargeable against the Government. A police officer would inspect the garrison, the auditor would check accounts, while administrative officers would find some subject which

would justify a personal interview with His Excellency. This little subterfuge did no one any harm, it made all the difference financially to the players and it gave them a chance of meeting a number of their fellow-exiles which was invaluable.

My appointment as secretary to Governor Edwards was within two minutes of coming to an untimely close. He and I were staying temporarily at Government House in Jesselton, having come round from Sandakan on a trip. An unfortunate attack of indigestion had laid him low and he retired early to bed, leaving me alone in a rather dismal house to amuse myself. There was, I knew, a gathering of kindred spirits at a neighbouring house, where it was anticipated that there would be a little poker. I went round and enjoyed a mild gamble until about midnight, when our host offered to dispense with our further attendance. Three of my fellow-guests were staying in a bungalow a couple of miles away, and I accompanied them home to share a supper of which they had boasted. We re-opened the poker school and played on until, to my dismay, I discovered that it was 5 a.m. It was two and a half miles from Government House, and I knew that His Excellency was, unless his indisposition held, likely to want a walk at or before 6.15. I hastily collected the chits which represented my winnings and hustled home. I just had time to get to my room and get rid of the few obviously "evening" touches about my costume when the Governor's orderly came along to say that in five minutes he would be ready to set out. It was a small margin, but I got home just on the

post and duly escorted him to inspect some confounded building in which, try as I would, I could raise no interest. However, a bath and breakfast revived me for the day's work.

It was my misfortune to beat two Governors in club billiards handicaps. Both were good players, while I am rather less than moderate. Superhuman luck pulled me through against Mr. Woodford, who remained quite equable until, having amassed 248 to my 243 out of 250, he left me in apparently an absolutely safe position. On the "hit hard and pray" principle I played my next stroke, fluked a cannon off the white and put every ball down. Coming on top of a galaxy of flukes, it was not tactful. I have often wondered what my career might have been but for those two unfortunate victories.

My next "odd job" was the representation of North Borneo at what one may call the coronation of the Sultan of Brunei. It was, in its essence, rather an amusing state of affairs. Both North Borneo and Sarawak are, in part, held under lease from the Brunei Government. The Sultan of Brunei is, on the other hand, under the protection of Great Britain. A distinguished Straits Settlements official represented His Majesty the King as a sort of overlord, while a Sarawak Resident and I played the parts of the loyal tenantry obsequiously congratulating our landlord. However, His Highness the Sultan made no effort to collect the rent from us while we were there, and was, in fact, very gracious to us.

The ceremony itself was quite impressive, though one could wish that the procession of native chiefs carrying emblematic umbrellas had been given something a little more in keeping with the solemnity of the occasion than the cheap sunshades which are displayed in the bazaars.

His Highness was borne from his astana to the throne-room on a State litter on which stood his Prime Minister with drawn sword. As soon as he had taken his seat in the throne, which was a ceremonial sort of four-poster baldachin, the Prime Minister proceeded to recite all the titles of his sovereign and punctuated each paragraph by an adjuration to the assembled multitude to "Pay homage." The response, in a deep-noted chorus, "Sembah! Sembah!! Sembah!!!" was most effective.

Brunei custom demands that at any ceremonial each personage present shall be given a native cigarette made of Borneo tobacco wrapped in a palm leaf. These weapons are about eighteen inches long and a full inch in diameter. It may therefore be imagined that graceful manipulation of them is not easy. I nearly disgraced myself by suddenly realizing that the ambassadors at the first reception, seated in a row mouthing these monstrosities, must resemble a troupe of minstrels with piccolos. I managed to master any untoward display of mirth, but with much difficulty. In addition to the cigarettes, each guest is faced by a super-candle made of pure beeswax covered in gilt or coloured paper. Four inches or so in diameter and a couple of feet long, they stand in a majestic

row before one, and, the ceremonial over, a henchman seizes them for conveyance to the guests' homes. It may be taken for granted that a dozen or so of these candles burning merrily in an overcrowded hall do not tend to cool the atmosphere, and the knowledge that I had to make, before a critical audience, a speech in Malay raised my temperature to an abnormal height. Court Malay is something which seldom comes within one's ken in North Borneo, and I had suborned a Malay clerk to compose something suitable. He went "all out" and indited for me a speech which coruscated with Arabic polysyllables. I had a casual glance at it and put it aside pending my journey to Brunei. A diligent search on arrival there soon made it plain that I had forgotten this vital document, and I had to make up something more modest and spontaneous. I believe I refrained from using any undue Malay familiarities of address. I only managed to remember two of the Arabic gems but, to make the most of them, I started and finished my little piece with the sentence containing them.

The first two years of the war seemed to have little appreciable effect on prices in North Borneo, but early in 1917 the price of food-stuffs, particularly of rice, the staple food of the population, began to rise. Some evil genius led me to be interested in the subject and to busy myself with all sorts of calculations and graphs illustrating the gradual but certain tendency upwards. Fatal inquisitiveness again! for I was summoned to appear at Government House one morning and baldly told that I was food con-

troller and to get on with it. Rice was *the* factor in the situation, and, as far as one could see, not only was there going to be a phenomenal rise in price, but there was going to be a shortage. For the natives and Chinese, food is rice and rice is food. To the European his weekly curry is all that makes existence tolerable. Dogs, cats, pet monkeys, chickens and all other domestic fauna live on rice, while horseflesh is given the unhusked grain in place of oats. It was hopeless to endeavour to ration properly, but it was made illegal to purchase more than a small amount of rice at one time, and the finer sorts of rice were no longer imported. This hit both the gourmet and the gourmand at one fell blow, and the voice of the epicure was heard in the land crying that he had never eaten anything but Siamese rice and could eat nothing but Siamese rice. Rangoon or Saigon was nothing to him. I let that storm blow over and then had a dig at the European. Curry was put on the black list. The heavens were rent with the wailing. It was then the turn of the lower ranks of the animal world, and the edict went forth: "No more rice or padi to be fed to any animal." I then became an utter outcast. My own dogs and my own ponies turned from me, pot-bellied Chinese merchants grew cadaverous, and the pleasant Sunday mornings in the club, trying to stimulate the appetite for a gargantuan tiffin, were soured by the reproaches of the starving Europeans. A sorry life, that of the pariah, the despised of all creation. The situation was not improved by my efforts to induce people to try substitutes. Coolies on estates were given weird

diets which, correctly embodying all the necessary calories and vitamines, revolted their conservative tummies; guests in my house, who were inveigled into trying a patent porridge made of whole wheat crushed in rubber-crêping machines, never forgave me; and the animals starved rather than eat potatoes. When flour began to get short, I turned my attention to bread-making and evolved a mixture of tapioca and wheat flour in varying proportions. I had loaves made and invited society to tea at the club to try them. The result was one or two pronounced stomach-aches and a deplorable intensification of my unpopularity. It is the only time that I have ever seen the whole population unanimous, and even then the unanimity was confined to one phrase in the general commination service, "Damn the Food Controller!" Outside the unison of that one general curse, the chorus was harmonized for two voices—the consumer who shouted lustily that the trader was being allowed to rob him, and the trader who complained that food, under the stringent limitations of profits, was really not worth touching as a commercial proposition. At frequent intervals choleric representatives of the public used to ask me to attend their meetings. Speaker after speaker would get up and explain at some length that I had not the most elementary ideas on the subject. I used to reply generically that they were talking through their hats, and we finished the evening by dining together. The expenditure of energy on both sides in the emission of hot air was deplorable and, as there were no precedents to guide one, and neither side knew very

much about the future or even about the present, it was rather wasteful, but it was quite good sport and little harm was done. It is, however, something to be able to feel that one had been the means of uniting for once all nationalities and creeds within the State—with one solitary exception, of course, oneself.

CHAPTER XV

SOCIETY AND SPORT

THE European population of North Borneo is something over four hundred, men, women and children. The main concentration is in Sandakan, a busy little commercial port and the centre of several big industries. Sandakan is situated on a peninsula, and approach to it by land is, owing to difficulties of country and absence of roads, not very far off being impossible, and one passes almost at one step from the town into the jungle. Jesselton, on the other hand, is in easier and more open country and, being the terminus of a railway and of a system of bridle-paths, is more accessible to people living in what may be termed its suburbs. It is the commercial centre for a number of estates along the railway line and, though its actual European inhabitants are not very numerous, it has a considerable reserve which can be drawn upon for social and sporting purposes.

There is and always has been a lot of jealousy between Sandakan and Jesselton. The former has many advantages. As a port of call for ocean liners it has gastronomic facilities in the shape of cold storage direct from China and Australia and, of course, the liners give a variety to the population,

fluctuating naturally, but fairly continuous. Jesselton is a more secluded spot, and the waters of its harbour are only ploughed by the irregular mail boats from Singapore. The community is small but cheerful. Jesselton's great advantage is the ease with which one can get in or out of it as one wishes without being bound to the vagaries of steamers.

Sandakan, as a port of call for naval and commercial ships, plays a larger number of, to use an old school phrase, "foreign" matches than is possible on the other coast. There internecine strife, in the shape of Planters *v.* Government, North *v.* South Keppel, Province Keppel *v.* The Rest, and so on, made our matches, unless a man-of-war came in, when we healed our sporting feuds and went for "the ship" baldheaded.

Our great difficulty at Jesselton, which was my *alma mater* during the greater part of my time in North Borneo, was the distance, reckoned in terms of days, which a visit there for sporting or other purposes involved for some out-station men. In one match my wicket-keeper had a five-days' journey to perform before he stepped on to the field, while two bowlers and my first-wicket batsman lived, so to speak, next door and only had to spend four, three and two days respectively on their way down. Not unnaturally the backbone of our side was the younger contingent, but, as a very proper corollary, they were the recipients of the thinnest pay-envelopes at the end of each month. One felt consequently a little bit shy about asking too often a man to expend a stout proportion of his exiguous earnings in coming

SANDAKAN
The Convent and Hospital

down to play cricket or football. One could sometimes mitigate the expense by offering to find quarters for the out-station men which left them only the cost of their fares as a legitimate charge against the match, but, having been young myself, I realized that there would certainly be a bill of umpteen dollars per diem at the club and one final splash of umpteenty dollars on store at one of the local purveyors. The difficulty about finding quarters for the visitors was not always appreciated. The senior men were always ready and willing to crowd their houses with those to whom a hotel bill was a serious consideration, but many of them realized, with a reminiscent eye on the past, that the senior is usually rather a stodgy person who has settled down into a routine of home life and does not relish any serious dislocation of that routine. I can remember the time when, at the house of a wild Irish medico, our host has interrupted a game of poker at eleven at night with the general invitation, "You chaps had all better stay to dinner," and disregarding the half-hearted protests of his starving guests, has trundled two tins of soup down the back stairs to "cookie." The soup finished, it occurred to him that fish was normally the next course, and a wild dive at his store cupboard has resulted in two tins following the soup down the stairs and an interval for another jack-pot. The provident cook had earlier in the evening prepared some sort of meat dish and seized the opportunity to send it up, closely succeeded by the fish. The boy then had a whispered consultation with the host, who was just beginning to hold some cards, and was

greeted with the reply, "Oh, blazes! Here, take the keys and get out something to make a pudding!" We finished the meal about 3.0 a.m.

I do not suggest that a keen cricketer wants to indulge in irregularity quite so excessive the night before a match, but a man who has just done six months in the back-blocks of Borneo does not want his series of "just one more" to be cut short by the vision of a grim host, certainly hungry and possibly greedy, waiting austerely at home while his regular dinner hour recedes farther and farther into the limbo of the past.

My most satisfactory guest was a young district officer who used to "stay" with me occasionally. Actually it was mutually understood that my house was his accommodation address where his clothes and his boy resided. If he ever did attend a meal he was punctual, but it was not a frequent occurrence. I used occasionally to hear his boy summoned to the telephone and receive orders to take a change of clothes to Mr. So-and-so's house. This gave me a clue to the present whereabouts of my guest, but he was like a wasp after jam in the way he used to smell out the different convivial gatherings of kindred spirits and dip into the successive feasts provided. Let me hasten to say that he was a very welcome guest at all these feasts, and I personally was always glad to know that he was having a good time without having to keep an eye on the clock. He knew that he could always come home if he wanted to. He had one reprehensible fault as a guest. After his greeting, on arrival, the first remark usually was, "Oh,

by the way, sir, might I get your boy to lend me——?" And then there would follow a list of garments varying according to the festivities he had to attend. One's wardrobe was a veritable Mother Hubbard's cupboard after a week of him, and one was reduced to frantic messages to the dhobi for something to eke out the days until the flowing tide of clean linen once more filled the shelves.

Like most Eastern countries with a cosmopolitan population, North Borneo was well endowed with holidays, every nationality and religion expecting its own festivals to figure on the programme. The time factor prevented one making full use of single holidays, but when two or three came in sequence we usually managed to arrange a series of matches, tennis, golf, cricket, football, shooting, billiards and sometimes even bridge. This meant a good deal to cram into a couple of days, but, weather permitting, the full gamut of contests went through to the bitter end. With the exception of cricket and football, the opposing teams were European all through. Football in the tropics is a bit strenuous after one has passed thirty, and there were often, perforce, seven or eight Indians, natives or Chinese in each team. At cricket I used to try to insist on playing a few non-Europeans who were really good and keen cricketers. It was rather a bone of contention, but, as I discovered during a heart-to-heart discussion with the protagonist on the other side, only because they had not natives good enough to represent them.

It was rather wonderful the way the wickets played. We used grass in the middle of a recreation

ground which was used for football five or six days in the week, and yet we got wickets which would last reasonably well, practically unprepared, through a good day's cricket. The boundary was pleasingly easy, but there were seldom any big scores.

Football was a more general game. All natives took to it kindly, and in any town there were usually two or three teams at least whose encounters were fought out vigorously and equally vigorously applauded by their supporters. There was an amusing discussion after the deciding match in the local league one year. The team representing the railway department had added to their course of training the spiritual vigour afforded by the blessing of a Mohammedan priest. This use of "dope" was only discovered after the match was over, and there was a rancorous discussion whether such assistance was legitimate or not. The point was not referred to the Football Association for decision, and remained for some time a very sore spot.

Rugby football has been played, but there were not enough Europeans to allow of any regularity of play, and it never took on very well. Not only is it a little strenuous in the tropics, but it would want a deficient olfactory sense to enable one to last long in the scrum. Some of the body unguents in favour are a shade too pronounced to be really welcome. At one time, when the powers that be favoured such ideas, a scheme was discussed for taking a team to Singapore to play that city at Rugby, Soccer and cricket. It was a bit ambitious, as we should have been very short of practice at the first game, but we

could have put into the field a team which looked promising on paper.

Golf is another fairly universal game, and many stations have a sporting little course. They vary from a full-length, bagful-of-clubs links to a one-club, mashie-niblick course round the station compound. At one station the district officer's bungalow was the bunker for four holes and, being of palm-leaf thatch, it held any mis-hit ball. If one's opponent was a gentleman he said, "Hard luck! Drop another." If he was simply a golfer, he said "My hole," and went off to the next tee. The holes were originally lined with tins which had contained food-stuffs and were known by the names of their pristine contents. The first hole, for instance, was julienne, and the fourth carrots. The caddies take very kindly to the game and, in default of proper weapons, whittle grotesque clubs out of local woods. The caddies' competition was won one year by a nipper of twelve or thirteen with one formless bludgeon, and he only took three or four strokes over Bogey for the nine holes.

Tennis is played vigorously everywhere, and there are not many places in the State where one cannot get a game. It is the one sport in which ladies can take a part, and so is favoured by them. The courts are mostly grass, though sand courts have been built in one or two places and have the advantage of being playable in the wet season. The game is particularly suitable for the tropics. It requires comparatively small space and enables one to get a reasonable amount of hard, flesh-reducing exercise in a short

time and provides an excellent excuse for a drink.

Racing provides good fun and is amusing even to the man who is not greatly interested. The enthusiasts are so intensely serious over it that one almost suspects them of "putting it on" to impress the outsider. One gentleman who, for 335 days in the year was never out of bed before 8.30 a.m., during the remaining month used to be out at the course, three miles away, long before dawn, watching the training and spotting his fancy. To suggest to him a "worm hunt" of this matutinal nature at any other time or for any other purpose would have been futile.

One is not allowed to say so, but, to my mind, the present-day racing is not as amusing as the racing of yester-year. It has become rather too professional and specialized. Ponies are maintained for racing only, and the European is outweighted as a jockey. Aforetime one's buggy pony was taken from the shafts three weeks before the race, given a bagful of oats and, often with eleven or twelve stone of owner on his back, ran his hardest. However, progress comes in everything, and our sport was crude but enjoyable, while the refined sport of modern days seems to satisfy the participants.

Shooting is in some places easy to get, and for those who care to undergo the expense and trouble, elephant, rhinoceros and wild cattle can be found if one looks for them, or, occasionally by chance, when one is neither looking for them, nor, indeed, particularly wanting to meet them. A policeman spent

seven hours in a tree with both his rifle and a wild bull at the foot of it, and was only released by the bull going off to attend to a rescue party which came out to look for him, but the rescue party took the precaution of slinging arms before climbing and so managed to lay the bull low.

Fishing has its devotees, even fly-fishing, but never, as far as I ever heard, with any result. I fear that my liking for the easier and popular use of dynamite placed me outside the pale as far as the few anglers were concerned, but one had the satisfaction of a "bag" which enabled one to assuage one's shame with a decent meal. Natives employ, in the sea and rivers, various traps which produce good harvests. They have, in the eyes of many of the fishermen, the one disadvantage that they only catch the fish and do not deliver it ready cooked. To the ordinary onlooker they seem most efficient.

The social side of life is, one imagines, that of any other Eastern town. The ladies are mostly invisible during the heat of the day but assemble after tea at the club, where they watch or take part in the tennis and, when night falls, retire to their own sanctum and, it is said, tell one another all the nutty bits they have heard during the day. The men play bridge or billiards or discuss the theory of relativity while they sip a restorative after the day's work.

Entertainment takes the form of dinners, or sometimes dances, but in a country where one rises at 5.30 a.m., any "doing the season" in the way of late nights is not popular. There are, of course,

dinners and dinners. The cheerful meal followed by a friendly rubber is a treat so long as it is not too frequent, but the dinner which calls for the black garments of civilization in a hot room and for one's best "high brow" conversation is a sin. The more pronounced form of it, when one has to entertain officially foreign personages speaking strange tongues, is a breach of all that can be called decent, and one takes it as one of the penalties of age and promotion and probably a punishment for otherwise unrequited malfeasances of one's youth.

Dances are, the devotees say, great fun. Days were when a dance would produce twenty men and only four or five married ladies of more or less mature years. In that respect matters are improved, but, to an onlooker, the effect of prolonged dancing is no less marked now than it used to be when every man arrived at a dance with a bag containing two or three extra shirts and, if he were wise, at least one complete change. As an onlooker I always envied the dancing men, but I often wondered why none of them had exercised their talents in the designing of a costume which would not show so plainly the effects of prolonged exertion in a grossly hot room.

Thés dansants at one time were popular, charade dinners had a vogue mercifully not prolonged, and, for a long time, early morning bathing picnics were responsible for estimable citizens and citizenesses being dragged untimely from their beds and taken to a sea beach where, at imminent risk of stings from jelly-fish and assaults from sharks and crocodiles, they laved themselves in a diluted mush of sand, sea-

weed and salt. The performance was rendered more painful when, after the ablution and a nervous resumption of one's clothing behind an entirely insufficient bush, one was called upon to absorb a mouthful of sand flavoured with hard-boiled egg. The festival was sometimes postponed to the afternoon, when one took a launch across the bay to an island. Here the water was crystal clear and the bottom of white coral sand, but I am still unconvinced that even fine white sand improves bread and butter or is a good lining for one's socks.

The European community showed up well during the war, and there was a unanimity and push that was cheering. We were in many ways far from the great struggle, and in many ways we remained unaffected directly by it; but even the mere distance made one feel the position of spectator all the more hopeless. It seemed so hard to find any tangible service which one could render other than the mere "carrying on." Even in those distant parts the repercussion of the war was felt. Many of us were doing the job of someone in addition to our own; rice, the staple food of 99 per cent. of the population, rose to five and six times its normal price; while at times rumours of raiders and mysterious vessels brought a more active share in the combat within view.

North Borneo may be proud of its contributions to the Red Cross during the war. It is a poor country inhabited by poor people, and during the war the European population did not amount to much over three hundred. Other nationalities resident in the State helped to swell the collections, and

the remittances made up a very creditable total. Every form of licensed robbery was practised, but the most fruitful was always "an olde English faire," when everyone contributed or helped to contribute some stunt which would cajole a dollar or even a few cents from the public. The most respected members of the community turned themselves for the day into cheap-jacks or showmen or bar-tenders or tea-room waitresses. They did a manful "bit" towards helping on the great cause, but the results were a great reward.

A personal experience will perhaps serve as a type of the work that all took a hand in doing. We managed to borrow from a sympathetic Singapore firm a cinematograph and twelve films, North Borneo being in those days almost a virgin field in the cinema world. In our simplicity we had asked for and received a cinema lantern, not knowing that the projector is a separate article but is essential to the use of the lantern. The Superintendent of Customs knew that a projector had recently been imported, and we followed up this clue and got the loan of it. We now had the apparatus complete, but beyond was a gloomy area of ignorance as to the use of the machine. Night after night we experimented until we found how to set it up, how to roll and thread the films and how to focus. A further difficulty then faced us. We were to run three nights, two houses a night, and had advertised a change of programme for each house. One house would use at least ten of the short films we had, and we had to ring the changes on the audience. I managed to get one

genial planter to sit four times through the performance. He then struck and, after recommending me to take up piracy as a profession, became adamant to all my blandishments. I tempted him by the prospect of seeing all twelve films at our last "gala" show, but, as he had seen each one at least three times and some four times, I was not really surprised at his continued refusal.

Society in the various towns was, on the whole, fairly free from bickerings, though at times one would hear of people who had mutually agreed to differ. It used to embarrass me at the best of times to enter the ladies' sanctum at the club, but once or twice I penetrated there to find only two representatives of the sex, each obviously "dug-in" behind some prehistoric periodical. A short effort to maintain an absolutely fair distribution of fatuous platitudes so as not to declare even an *entente* with either side soon broke my nerve, and flight to the *pentralia* for a tonic was the only salvation.

One must not, however, judge too harshly the European lady whose lot is cast in the East. Housekeeping necessarily gives very little occupation even to those who keep their fingers on the household pulse and do not leave everything to the cook or boy. The early riser gets in a walk or a ride before breakfast but then has no break to the monotony of the day until lunch, when a certainly heated and possibly angry husband returns from office disgruntled with his chief clerk or orderly or with the Resident or any other of the plagues that afflict one in the East. He departs, to her relief, and she then has the after-

noon to get through pending tea at four o'clock and a subsequent set of tennis, if it does not happen to be raining. Two hours in a small room in the company of other ladies whom she has seen every day for the last month or year precede a return to dine off foods produced by a Chinese cook who, however skilled, has no great repertoire or imagination, and always manages to impart the same flavour to everything. If her children are young enough to remain out East, the amah looks after them; if they are old enough to have come East again after schooldays are over, they rank as grown-up and have their own interests and amusements. Of the intervening period, when they are at home and she is not, one need not speak. It is one of the penalties of life in the East, but it is none the less cruel because it is inevitable.

Taking it all in all, there is scope in the East for every taste, and it is a man's own fault if he does not fit into some niche. It shows a want of adaptability which probably indicates that he is not suited to the life, and the sooner he recognizes the patent fact and returns home to England, the better for himself, his associates and the prestige of the white races.

CHAPTER XVI

RELIGION

THE North Borneo of to-day is a very different place from the North Borneo of the earlier years of the century. The west coast was then the happy hunting ground of the rebels, the nearer parts of the interior were just being opened up, the system of bridle-paths was in embryo, there was hardly a wheeled vehicle in the country and practically no roads on which to drive them; in the towns ponies were almost the only means of conveyance, and outside the towns the only alternative to walking was boating. There was a good market for jungle produce, plantation rubber was unknown, and tobacco was the commercial crop, while the timber trade was still conducted on the most primitive lines. Ice was occasionally to be obtained as a luxury from the steamers, soda-water was imported from Singapore, while a leg of mutton, a cabbage or some fresh butter were delicacies which afforded an excuse for a dinner party. The only apparatus of civilization in common use was the telephone, which for some reason has always been largely utilized in North Borneo as a means of communication even to the most remote out-stations. Living was cheap even if it were not luxurious.

The rubber boom was, in many ways, the direct

cause of the change, or perhaps it would be more correct to say that it accelerated the change which had been gradually taking place. The tobacco planters were conservative and economical souls, nursing their long-established industry on old-fashioned lines and content to "carry on." The rubber planter came fresh into a fresh field with fresh ideas and lots of money to spend. He set a higher standard of life and pressed for progress to keep pace with his own ideas. The railway of 1903, moribund and closed to traffic from premature decay though it had only been opened a year, is now a fairly efficient means of communication, and feeds and taps the whole of the west coast. Good metalled roads in the towns now admit of the use of cars, electric light has replaced the smelly oil-lamp, wireless has replaced the old land-lines, which were more often "down" than "through." Ice and soda-water are made locally, cold storage foods are available on both coasts, the timber business is now worked on modern and progressive lines and is becoming an important asset, and townships, which twenty years ago consisted of a few palm-thatched shops and two or three Government buildings, are now small cities well laid out and built of brick or concrete.

Even to a man living in the country the change in externals is noticeable, and in many cases it is real progress. The old days were happy ones, free, leisurely and primitive. The present is more strenuous and punctual, not, one thinks, quite as jolly, but still tolerable and even enjoyable.

Civilization has set its mark on the European in Borneo and on the face of the country. It has also affected the native, but not probably in the same degree. The Borneo native has a slow mind and is not given to any swift change of custom or characteristics. The outer man follows the fashions, and gentlemen who, twenty years ago, would have been well clothed in a loin-cloth now wear soiled white suits, straw hats and bulbous American shoes. In spite, however, of this change in veneer, I still think that the soul of the native has not absorbed much civilization, and he still remains at heart the simple, rather lovable child that he was when I first knew him. Now, as then, one has to know him and be known by him before his real worth is apparent. He has his prejudices and his customs, which he is slow to discard, and he asks that these may be respected, if not observed, by those with whom he comes in contact. The man who "has no use for" a native is probably a man devoid of patience or sympathy and unable to appreciate another's point of view. So long as one remembers that the native is still essentially a child and treats him accordingly, he is really tractable. Most natives are, in their own way, gentlemen of good manners, and no one is quicker to discern the difference between a Tuan (a sahib, a European gentleman) and the mere "orang puteh" ("white man" *tout court*).

Personally, I have had many friends among the natives—even men against whom I have led expeditions and men whom it has been my lot to consign to prison for varying periods have been

essentially friends. Others of more reputable behaviour have been equally my friends. One could not, for instance, want to meet a more loyal, sterling character than Orang Kaya Arsat, of the Tempasuk district. He, it is true, hails from Dutch Borneo, but the principle holds good.

The pity will be if there is allowed, yet awhile, any tendency towards the "little brown brother" policy which at one time threatened to be so fatal in the Philippine Islands, a pandering to the false idea of "self-determination" for a people lacking a mind to "determine."

In the Philippines, when the Americans first went there, there was a craze for educating the natives, giving them, that is, a universal smattering of the three R's, but without teaching them the use and application of these accomplishments. The consequence, as we have found in India, is that the "literate" native regards his literacy as the be-all and end-all of his existence. One is left with the "shoe hombre" in the Philippines and the "failed B.A." in India, a waster too proud to perform useful manual labour, and too ignorant to be a factor in the already overcrowded ranks of clerks. In countries where literacy is general a man does not disdain manual labour merely because he can write his name, but it has taken generations to establish the idea that a labourer is not disqualified for labour merely because he has that other accomplishment. That is the difficulty in North Borneo. A man sees that a clerk draws good pay, lives well and is well clothed, and his one idea, if he has been to school, is to get a

clerk's job somewhere. Time was when the demand for clerks was greater than the supply and any bumpkin could get a job. Competition is now keener and the inefficient drop out, but, too proud to dirty their hands as their fathers did, they become wasters and hangers-on. The Americans were not too proud to profit by their own mistakes and have now provided for the fact that a very large proportion of the Philippinos must economically remain on the land. That they can be trained to become good farmers is now recognized, and the curriculum of their schools is aimed at differentiating between the varying mental capabilities and fitting each man into his proper groove. Some, no doubt, of the Borneo natives are mentally fitted for a fairly high degree of education, but, as a whole, the inhabitants are still children, and any effort to impose or even to allow these mental infants to absorb too rich a diet of education, undiluted by guidance as to its practical application to their daily needs, will result in a severe fit of mental and moral indigestion. As time goes on and the tribes as a whole progress, they will be able to digest a more advanced nutriment, and it will then not have the unpleasant effect it has now of turning the native into a precocious and nauseous youth instead of the interesting, if undeveloped, personality that he is by nature.

It seems equally fatal at present to push too vigorously the Christianizing of the natives. The mind of the average native is equivalent to that of a child of four or five, and yet he is admitted to the full communion of such one of the sects of Chris-

tianity as may have gathered him within its fold. He is expected to be able to appreciate and absorb the esoteric mysteries of the Christian religion, or rather of his particular church; but, unfortunately, he has not been endowed with a mind which is capable of comprehending what he is taught. If the religious teaching of missions in the wilder parts of the East were reduced to the level of that given to the junior classes in Sunday schools at home, the native mind *might* be receptive, but, long before their converts are ready to paddle in shallow water, the priests make them take the plunge into the deep end. After all a child in England is not admitted to confirmation until he or she is sufficiently equipped with understanding to be capable of comprehending what religion really means; but a native, illiterate and caught raw in his squalid village, is allowed to share in rites which an educated child in Europe is considered too immature to appreciate.

One would have thought that there should be no difficulty or objection to a redraft of the Prayer Book in simple language to give the essence of its meaning, the sort of thing that would be used at a children's service. Instead, it is translated word for word into rather "dog" Malay, preserving literatim such things as "Lift up your heads, O ye gates." This phrase is sufficiently cryptic in English, but rendered into Malay it is hopelessly confusing and meaningless. I have every respect for those missionaries (it is not all who do) who give themselves up to the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen, but I always feel there is such a mass of effort and such a quantity

of money so woefully misapplied and producing such a miserable crop of weeds. The fault seems to be in the method. The ground wants tilling and gradually working up until it is fit for the seed. After all none of the Borneo tribes is without a religion of some sort, and one cannot help feeling that it would be more profitable to the so-called "heathen" if proselytizing were less rabidly radical and abrupt. Leave the native his religion, at first at any rate, and start by teaching him cleanliness, physical and moral, the unselfishness of games, the dignity of labour, self-respect, and then, when he is mentally more nearly fitted for the process, begin to translate his present religion (which is usually good plain theology not so very distant from the best Christianity) piece by piece into the particular form of Christianity which the teacher favours. The present method catches a wild savage and, without more ado, says, "Your religion is all wrong, your gods false," an assumption which is rather wide when the person making the assertion has probably not the faintest idea what the religion so condemned consists of. The transition, without any other secular mental training, is too abrupt, and the consequence is that a good "heathen," with quite good morals based on his primitive religion and custom, becomes a very bad Christian.

There is very good reason for the antipathy so general in the East against the employment, in any position of trust, of native converts. They have been switched off the old rails which guided them and dumped down on a different gauge without any alteration in their frames and understructures. Is

there any wonder that they do not hold the road properly?

The professional missionary is not, of course, in a position to admit publicly that his methods are wrong or that his results are not so fruitful as the mere number of converts would seem to indicate; but I have had admissions from more than one priest of the English and Roman Churches that less insistence at present on the dogma of their religions and a greater attention to the application of basic principles to the life and environment of the native, a closer teaching of *esprit de corps*, of discipline, of moral and physical sanitation is the real basis of missionary work. Alas! they can go no farther, as things are now, than express opinions of this nature in confidence while outwardly they remain, and must remain if they are to keep their jobs, priests of religion in the most narrow sense and even then not priests of the Christian religion, but priests of a particular church condemning as heretics all adherents to other sects.

At the present time religion is the dominating feature in the educational system of North Borneo. A boy goes to the Protestant school or the Roman Catholic school or the Seventh Day Adventist school or the Islam school. He learns the elements of literacy, and there education stops. Sanitation, industrial occupations useful in after life, games to teach him team-work, are all closed books to him, and all one gets is a half-baked little Christian who is no Christian but knows enough to sign his name. As an embryo citizen he is a less valuable asset than

his "heathen," illiterate father who never wore anything more pretentious than a piece of bark round his loins.

It always seems to me that what is wanted in North Borneo for the present, as far as the bulk of the youth is concerned, is a curriculum which embodies the essence of the Boy Scout movement, a compulsory part in games, agricultural and industrial training of a practical nature, a smattering of letters and religious instruction to taste. As things are, the order is reversed, and one gets no farther than the last two items on the programme. A few—a very few—picked boys could be trained for commercial and office life, but only after they have shown themselves to be men enough to tackle the rougher practical side of education and to benefit by the mental bracing which the more athletic side of the curriculum should give them.

When the mind of the native races has been developed to a state of receptivity, the higher grades of mental and religious education will be appropriate, but at present they are as wasted as seed would be if sown on a concrete floor. One cannot expect the native to remain for ever the child of nature that he is now, but the process of remoulding him should be gradual. The material, if properly handled, is plastic, but radical and abrupt alterations only spoil the vessel which is now crudely efficient and turn it into a useless, inartistic and, in many ways, offensive caricature of the machine-made products of civilization.

Absit omen.

CHAPTER XVII

CLIMATE—RAINFALL—VARYING CALENDARS

IN England climate is a subject of conversation. In the East it is mostly a calamity and always one of the most important factors affecting the life of everyone in the country. To a Briton who is accustomed to the infinite variety of so-called weather in his little island home there is a crudeness in the lack of choice which the tropics afford. Speaking generally, either it rains or it is hot. There are none of the nuances or gradations of mixtures with which one is familiar at home.

Heat is, of course, the normal. The houses are built to combat heat; one's wardrobe, both in quantity and quality, is arranged on the basis that from 9 a.m. onwards until night one will be either hot, hotter, or deucedly hot. The day is a vista of fresh garments and baths, internal or external.

The office-wallah in the towns, unless he be a portly and pompous Resident or a merchant-prince, pads the weary hoof down to his office at 9.30 a.m., adopting a gait which is stately and slow, in the hope that he may be enabled to accept the affectionate greetings of his staff, his white outer garments still crackling with starch and his more intimate coverings yet unsodden with perspiration. A judicious arrange-

ment of his office table and a brazen adoption of "shirt-sleeve diplomacy" will probably get him through the day without anything worse than a "demned moist unpleasant" feeling. Duty in court and visits from or to the great ones of the land are inducements to resume the decency of a coat, while the vagaries of the telephone and the office messenger are incidentals which incite an inward rise of temperature and a consequent greasiness of complexion. Office work finished, tea and a change lead up to tennis or golf. Even the latter placid amusement usually results, as the former certainly does, in a woeful transfer of tissue from body to clothing, which, again, involves a replenishment of the bodily reserve by cunning mixtures of liquid. The bachelor cadet retires to his house at night and, lucky soul, after a bath is able to eat his humble meal in the cool comfort of a sarong and light linen coat, while the less brazen seniors sorrowfully struggle again into the propriety of trousers, collar and coat, a chastisement which becomes scorpionlike when the modified comfort of "whites" gives place to the propriety of full evening dress. It requires a world of care and discretion, after a hearty game of tennis, to nurse a stiff shirt and collar into maintaining a decent rigidity until one has offered a clammy paw to one's host or guests. Some are satisfied if they thus get, so to speak, to the post without wilting; others, more ambitious, are disturbed if they crumple before the journey home. The faint-hearted, cringing before their sudorific capabilities, arrive half-clothed and avail themselves of any reasonable seclusion to

scramble into a shirt and a collar to complete the orthodox uniform.

Heat, however, is only one way of getting wet. Rain in the tropics is never comforting except to the selfish soul of the agriculturist, and even he, it always seems, would only be satisfied if he were granted facilities by Providence for regulating the supply to suit his individual needs. In North Borneo there was no real rainy season, though the north-east monsoon, on the east coast, could be relied upon to give a good showing and to encourage that peculiar growth of green mushrooms on boots, books or anything else that affords nutriment for the foul crop. On the whole, however, there is no pronounced difference in the amount of precipitation throughout the twelve months, and there is always the saving clause, "if it does not rain," to be considered when making any arrangements.

There are four times during the twenty-four hours when rain is most unpleasant and discouraging, and those seem to be the hours when Jupiter Pluvius is most frequently awake and on duty. A shower between nine and ten in the morning is annoying to those who want to get to their offices. They are faced with the dilemma of trudging down in the ordinary kit—white suit, white shoes and topi—and arriving hopelessly damp and mud-splashed, or of dressing the part in riding-breeches and puttees, only to find, when they emerge from their offices for lunch, that the sky is bright and blue and that they are as hopelessly conspicuous in their foul-weather kit as they would be in an outfit of tarpaulins on a May morning

in Bond Street. Some folk welcome rain at this hour as affording some colour of excuse for tardy arrival at office and deplore the fact that it is not a very frequent phenomenon. The more frequent downpour about one o'clock arouses not only their indignation but their spirit. Brave lads! Borrowing an umbrella from the chief clerk, they make their way through the tempest to the club where, after a course of preventive medicine, they lunch.

Rain at four in the afternoon is anathema to everyone. Ladies, ensconced in their houses, have escaped the earlier storms while the mere men, whose progress to or from office has been impeded by them, have assuaged their grief. Both sexes, however, resent being immured at the hour when all good folk are wont to take advantage of the declining heat to exercise limb or tongue.

The feeling of resentment grows more accentuated when, if misfortune, good nature or mere carelessness has led one to accept an invitation to dinner, rain is one's portion at 8 p.m. Borneo is a land of distances and a land where not only is the Englishman's house his castle but, to emphasize the aphorism, he erects it on a hill which no engineering skill can make available to wheeled traffic. Tubes, alas! and buses are things of the future; taxis are very few in number and fewer still the plutocrats who can afford to own or maintain a car or carriage. In the tropics rain is rain, and only a diving suit complete is adequate to keep one immune to an inch of rain in the hour. Those who, by means of importunity,

bluster or luck, have managed to hire a taxi, watch the storm with a moderate complacency, knowing that they have at the beginning and end of their journey to overcome only thirty yards of what, in normal times, is slippery earth path, but is now a distant imitation of the Lachine Rapids. The improvident or unfortunate, who have made no provision for transport, after the excitement of a commination service on their would-be host coupled with the name of the weather, awake to the fact that their own cook has gone out for the evening, taking with him the key of the "meat-safe," which, anyway, is bare of provender. The choice left to them is narrow, dinner elsewhere after practically a swim in dinner-dress, or famine at home, dry but hungry.

At such times the taxis are double-banked, and the person who rings up at the last moment finds himself offered the choice of times which will bring him twenty minutes early, or alternately twenty minutes late, to his host's house. Much then depends on his own effrontery and the relative precedence of himself and his host. A "brass-hat" will unblushingly arrive late. A junior will shrink from that sin and arrive early. Failing a reasonably dry spot in which to hide until the appointed hour arrives, he will find himself in a drawing-room, obviously only recently vacated and only too exposed, through or over a thin plank wall, to the confidences exchanged between host and hostess on the subject of their guests. She details to him the list of those who have accepted, and his running commentary is amusing

until the moment when one's own name comes up for review.

The last stage of the jest is rain at the hour when one is warned by the strained efforts of one's hostess to avoid yawning that the time has come to take the plunge into the Niagara which, for some unknown reason, Eastern architects always design to play upon the threshold. There is, however, nothing for it but to plunge out into the night. I once left Government House on such a night, in company with two others, arrayed in a sarong and native sandals which, in a fit of economy, I had borrowed from the Governor's orderly to save my dress clothes and boots. It was unfortunate that His Excellency should have chosen that moment to pull up the canvas blinds of his veranda and survey the teeming night. It was, I admit, not the costume in which he might expect to find his A.D.C. leaving his mansion after an official dinner, but there was, I submit, no call for comments on the incident next evening at the club.

These eccentricities of weather are hardships to which the sybarites of the towns are at times exposed. The out-station man certainly reaps the advantage of having no one to criticize his get-up, he lives probably in fairly close proximity to his office, and he has no social duties to undertake in unsuitable garb. Whether he be a planter or a mere district officer in his back-block station, social duties and amenities play a very small part in his life. To the district officer, however, the weather is a very vital and pertinent factor in his work and his life. A house, even

an Eastern house, will usually afford some sort of shelter against the most torrid sun and the most torrential rain. The out-station officer does not regard either extreme with equanimity because the greater part of his life is spent away from the station and from the building grandiloquently described on his notepaper as " The Residency," which has, if he be a wise man, at any rate a watertight roof to cover the rest of its demerits. For the district officer an excess of heat spells drought, and drought means that, sooner or later, he will on his travels arrive at some predetermined camping ground to find that the pristine stream is dry or, at best, that its few remaining stagnant pools are mausolea for entomological specimens. One heavy storm of rain, on the other hand, will not only penetrate the palm-leaf thatch of his temporary jungle hut, but will probably result in his being cut off by unfordable streams from further progress on his journey. I awoke one morning on the last day of a long trip to find it raining hard. After long thought I made up my mind to brave the rain and went off on the path home. When I reached the Tempasuk River it was just beginning to get muddy and was coming down breast high. I half stumbled, half swam across to find, after a change and a meal, that it had risen six feet and that all my coolies were marooned on the other side. They had the sense not to try to get across but, storing all my loads in a native house which was handy, departed to their homes. It was ten days before anyone crossed the river again. It rained in sheets every day and almost all day, and we spent

Photo: N. B. Baboneau

Rafting across a Flooded River

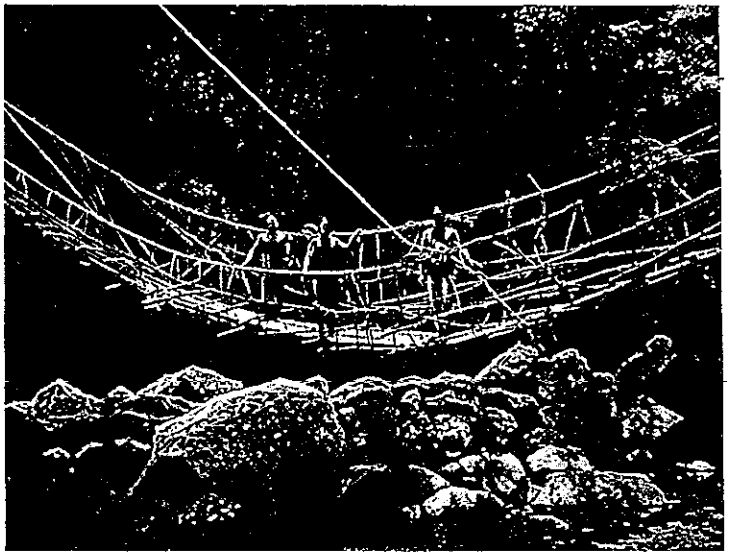


Photo: N. B. Baboneau

A Rattan Suspension Bridge

exciting hours trying to rescue folk who had been cut off by the floods in the shaky little huts which are a feature of every native field. In them sit women or children, as the weaker members of the community, but the more loquacious, to scare away the birds which otherwise would batten on the grain. I was engaged one morning organizing a rescue party and fitting bamboo air-chambers to a small dugout with a view to rescuing a woman and two little kiddies who were perched in one of these huts only six inches above a raging and rising flood. I heard a moaning voice coming nearer and nearer down the village street, and presently a plaintive voice asked us collectively, "Minggo sapi-ku diki diki?" It is only an innocent question in Bejau as to the whereabouts of a calf, but it sounded so childishly whining and so unsuited to the work of the moment that I seized the youthful herdsman, one of our local "nuts," shoved a paddle into his hands, and pushed him out to do nobler work than bleat around for news of his wretched animal. I must admit that, thus forcibly pressed into service, he did heroic work but, no sooner had he helped to bring the last child ashore than he resumed his mournful chorus and renewed his search.

It is not easy to convey an idea of rain in the tropics when it does rain. The average Briton does not know and does not really care what the annual rainfall is in England, and to record the bald fact that eleven inches of rain fell in ten hours, or thirty-two inches in thirty-six hours, means nothing to him. To say that the rain falls at times literally in sheets

means equally nothing because he uses the same phrase of a comparatively minor sprinkle in his own homeland. I have seen, in the Philippines, the remains of a bridge, ninety feet above the ordinary level of a mountain stream, which has been carried away by a flood. In Borneo I have played billiards on a table normally twenty-five feet above the level of a river, around which people have boated. I have seen a river, up the bed of which an optimistic engineer, disregarding all warnings, had built a railway, come down in flood bringing with it loaded trucks of ore. For months afterwards one ran the risk, anywhere near the mouth of the river, of staving in one's craft on debris which had been carried down by this flood.

Even a shower of rain leaves one practically only two alternatives. One can either stay indoors and trust to its not finding out the leaks in the roof, or one can brave the storm and get thoroughly wet. It is useless to contemplate being out in tropical rain and keeping dry. Umbrella and mackintosh only delay for a few minutes the penetration of the downpour through one's thin clothing and are quite ineffective against the splash of the drops from the ground which in no time soak one to the knees. "Oilies" and sea boots will keep one protected against the rain, but the pores of the patient assist him to do personally and uncomfortably what the rain would do more pleasantly.

A feature of the climatology of North Borneo is

the marked variation between the rainfall in places geographically adjacent. At Tenom a wet year produces sixty inches of rain, while at Beaufort, only twenty miles away, a yearly total which does not considerably exceed the century is considered a phenomenal occurrence and leads to talk of droughts. It is interesting to note the monthly and yearly readings at meteorological stations in close proximity to one another. Inanam, Jesselton, Kolam Ayer and Lok Kawi estate are points in a parallelogram fifteen miles by ten but, as far as their rainfall returns are concerned, they might be in different hemispheres. Keningau, Melalap, Tenom, Sapong and Kamabong are points on a line less than forty miles in length, Melalap and Sapong lying ten and six miles respectively north and south of Tenom. Yet, in a month selected at random the following figures are returned:—

Keningau	...	6.09	inches on	16 days
Melalap	...	10.70	,,	25 ,,
Tenom	...	10.78	,,	17 ,,
Sapong	...	8.41	,,	22 ,,
Kamabong	...	4.88	,,	14 ,,

Multiplication of observing stations would only accentuate these bewildering differences, and I was amused at the complacency of a pseudo-expert who treated me one day to a lengthy discourse on a tropical product which he proposed to exploit. He gave me, after he had enlarged on his own unique knowledge of the plant and its requirements, an ex-

position of the climate of North Borneo, particularly in relation to rainfall, which he insisted was regular in its distribution through the year and over the country.

At intervals I made a half-hearted protest against this doctrine but was waved aside. "I am not speaking at random, my dear sir; I have studied the question and I *know*." I could not spare the time to inquire how, where or when he had pursued this study; certainly it was not during the two days which had elapsed since he first landed; but I produced my own pet rainfall charts and graphs, seated him at a spare table with a map of the country and all my figures, and invited him to complete his studies. He had to confess later that the subject was one of which a little knowledge was very dangerous, that all his preconceived ideas were rotten to the core, and that his crop would certainly not do in the locality on which he had set his heart. Somewhere in the world there are several hundred or several thousand investors who are substantially in my debt for having prevented that lad from floating his company and starting his enterprise at their expense. So far my assistance has not received any very substantial mark of their appreciation, but one never knows.

That the climate of North Borneo is generally healthy will be admitted by all who have lived in the country for any length of time. There are men who have been ten and fifteen years there without leave, and in some cases even without a change. The saving grace, except in one or two sultry spots, is

the fact that the nights are usually cool if not cold. There are few places, even on the coast, where practically every night in the year, one does not welcome a blanket or rug, while up-country, of course, the temperature gets too chilly for tropical kit, and a thick shooting-coat is grateful and comforting. During one sojourn at a small halting-house on the hills near Kinabalu, I found that a flannel shirt, a sweater and two blankets were quite insufficient at night, and I had to spread my Burberry over me and rig my mosquito net in order to get myself into sleeping trim.

The top of Kinabalu must often be below freezing point at night, and at least one of the scanty band of folk who have scaled it reports a thin film of ice on the rock surfaces. It was once my fortune to be roused from my blankets in a little village east of the mountain by the report that the top of the mountain had "gone white." It was certainly a very cold morning, and indubitably the top few hundred of the mountain's 13,000 feet were covered with a very obvious layer of snow or thick hoar-frost. Through a very excellent pair of binoculars (German, I fear) I watched the melting as the sun got up, surrounded by a shivering crowd of natives to whom the phenomenon was evidently unusual and who were not, I gathered, disinclined to connect it with the first sojourn of an European in their midst. It took me a long time to make them believe that in my country one was more or less accustomed to rain in the form of feathers and to water which was as hard as rock. In fact, I am not sure that the story ever really

gained the credence that it merited, though one old grey-head helped me a bit by reciting his tale of a hailstorm which he had experienced in his youth. His description of his careful collection of the hailstones, the careful packing of them in his little carrying basket, his triumphal return home and the bathos of the unpacking and search of the basket for the corroborative evidence of his improbable story distracted attention from my wilder assertions.

Years afterwards I saw back-block natives who had come down to Jesselton at my invitation to have their first taste of civilization hopefully spreading in the sun the lumps of ice which the kindly manager of the local factory had given to them. After all, you sun-dry fish and it keeps, even though it becomes a trifle smelly, so why not parch this wonderful stuff and take it home the ten days' journey to show to "the wife" and hang in the roof alongside the heads as a souvenir, an uninscribed "present from Jesselton"?

Mist is an occasional feature which never really merits the name of fog and, except in high ground, when it is really low-lying cloud, it never survives more than the first hour or so of the day.

Borneo is officially outside the zones affected by earthquakes and typhoons. There are occasional earth-tremors of no moment and, at more frequent intervals, the country finds itself combating what is euphemistically termed "the tail-end of a typhoon." It is a tail that wags with considerable vigour, and

personally I shall never forget one voyage in one of the North Borneo mosquito fleet, a small coasting steamer of about 120 tons. We got round the north point of the island and started to claw our way down the west coast against wind and sea of a really tempestuous kind. After some four hours it became fairly obvious that if we went on we should without doubt meet with the proverbial fate of old soldiers and "merely fade away." The only question was whether we could risk trying to turn and run for shelter.

We managed to find a comparative smooth and got round just in time with three tremendous rolls. We managed to get back under the lee of the North Point, taking just under the hour to run before the wind the distance it had taken us four hours of fighting to accomplish against it, and we were able to start in to count up the casualties. They included some feet of water in the engine-room and a kink in the keel which would have resulted before long in the ship breaking her back.

The "tail-ends" help to realize dimly what a real typhoon must be, and those whose duties took them to sea used to study the C.Q. telegrams conveying typhoon warnings and giving the position of the centre of these colossal and alarming circular storms and the direction in which they were moving.

In a country where the normal method of telling the time is reference to the position of the sun or moon, and the calendar is based on the time for

planting the rice crop, a season varying in each district, and in each depending on the rising of certain constellations, the overcast skies to which Britons are accustomed would be a calamity. In the neighbourhood of the Equator there is, of course, very little variation in the hour of sunrise, and a grimy forefinger pointed at an angle of forty-five degrees will indicate equally correctly nine o'clock, whether it be June or December. The lesser light which rules the night is less exact as a timepiece, and it involves a deal of consultation of diaries to ascertain the age of the moon and so the time which a witness means when he says that the moon was "there" on the umpteenth day of his own peculiar lunar month, or, worse still, the umpth day after three fair-days ago. Add to this the fact that the Mohammedan day commences at 6.0 p.m., so that "this evening" is part of to-morrow according to their calculations, and it may be imagined that elucidating the probabilities of an alibi tendered as a defence in court is a full-size man's job.

The calendar, even among the more civilized members of the community who can tell the time and have a recognized record of months and years, is not simple. There is the ordinary Augustan calendar, which is the official reckoning, but the Chinese and Mohammedans have their own lunar months and years and, in consequence, no fixity of date. The Chinese keep pace with us to a certain extent by means of "inter-calary" months, but the Mohammedan, innocent of any such compensating adjustment, gives a delightful sense of punctual uncer-

tainty, its main fast days being, so to speak, seven or eight days earlier every year. As the most important of them, strictly speaking, depend on a sight of the moon at even, it requires sometimes a cloudless sky combined with good eyesight or a vivid imagination before one can be really sure that, for instance, the fasting month is really over. Faith, however, is a potent ally, and the fact that all the preparations are made for a succulent gorge, all the bright new clothes are ready to put on, and a practical Government has decreed that the moon is visible and that the morrow is the appointed holiday usually convinces all but the extreme purists. "Tuan lebih tahu" salves the conscience, presumably debits any precocity to the district officer's account in the Great Books of Life, and "off we go" on something as near to carnival as the placid, self-contained Malay can manage.

There was one effect of climate which never failed to impress itself on me. When death called to any of the Europeans in the country, one's fellow-exiles, the sense of personal loss of one out of the small band was sharper and more marked than it would be in England, and one had always the feeling, however little one may have known of him during his life, that a loyalty to the colour, if not always to the race, called one to follow him to his last resting-place. Time, alas! on these occasions was always short, and a funeral followed within twelve hours of death. Distance and difficulties of communication often robbed one of the chance of paying the last farewell to one who, perhaps not a friend, had at any rate

been a fellow white man doing his bit in the far-off tropics.

There was something repulsively gruesome in the haste with which everything had to be done, the impossibility of making any but the roughest, most easily improvised arrangements, and the ever-present knowledge that, while all his nearest and dearest were many thousands of miles away, even his friends comparatively close at hand were not able to come to escort him on his last trek.

The Birds of Borneo (Fourth edition) *by* Bertram E. Smythies
(Revised by Geoffrey W.H. Davison)

The Birds of Burma (Fourth edition) *by* Bertram E. Smythies

Proboscis Monkeys of Borneo *by* Elizabeth L. Bennett & Francis Gombek

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