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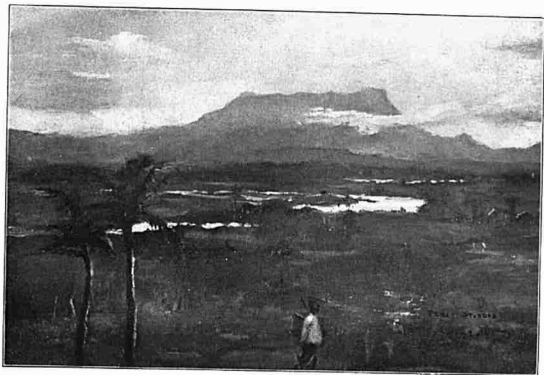
BRITISH NORTH BORNEO



Mount Kinabalu.

From a painting by Major Percy Sturdee.

[*Frontispiece.*

BRITISH NORTH BORNEO

An Account of its History, Resources and Native Tribes

By OWEN RUTTER
Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society
and of the Royal Anthropological Institute

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
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President of the British North Borneo Chartered Company

Illustrated with Photographs and Maps

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To
DOROTHY

INTRODUCTION

WHERE is North Borneo? What is the size of North Borneo? Who compose its population? To whom does it belong? How many men in the street would be able to answer these questions? How few would be able to tell us that Borneo, next to New Guinea, is the largest island in the world, with an area of 290,000 square miles; and that three-quarters of this island (practically a continent) belong to Holland, which has been able to do little towards developing its resources. The remaining quarter is under British protection and includes Sarawak, with an area of 42,000 square miles; North Borneo, 31,000 square miles; and the native State of Brunei, 4,000 square miles. The population of this immense island, with its rich, practically undeveloped resources, is less than two million souls, nearly half of whom inhabit the Protectorates of North Borneo and Sarawak.

The fascinating history of Sarawak is known to many, but the equally fascinating origin of our rule in North Borneo is by no means familiar to the British public. In 1878 this corner of Borneo—most important from its strategic position, commanding the routes between China and Europe on the one hand, and China and Australia on the other—was in danger of being acquired by a foreign Power, when at the eleventh hour a small body of English gentlemen stepped in and purchased it from the native rulers. A Royal Charter was granted on November 1, 1881, and in the somewhat animated discussion which followed in the House of Commons, curiously enough the Conservative Party were the antagonists, and Mr. Gladstone, who spoke strongly in favour of the grant of the Charter, was a protagonist of the policy.

During the forty years which have since elapsed, the country has been redeemed from a condition of lawlessness and desola-

tion and been endowed with all the blessings of a just and stable Government, which is conducted on similar lines to those of our Crown Colonies and which presents a model administration to the other Oriental Governments. Under the administration of the British North Borneo (Chartered) Company the native population have become peaceful and industrious. Their welfare is studiously safeguarded. Smallpox formerly devastated the country, and the indigenous native population seemed to be doomed to annihilation, but vigorous campaigns of vaccination have proved their salvation, and this and other ameliorative measures have brought about a large increase in their numbers. Forty years ago the country was a tropical wilderness; untilled, uncared for, utterly neglected. To-day it is the scene of patient toil and industry. Numerous rubber and tobacco estates are scattered throughout the Territory, and its valuable timber and coal resources are being exploited. As yet however it is still in its youth as a producing country, and the next few decades will assuredly witness an immense expansion of its industrial activities.

The Court of Directors of the Chartered Company welcome any attempt to enlighten the British public as regards the good work which they are doing in this remote corner of the Empire, and therefore were much pleased to find that Major Rutter, who knows this delightful country intimately, had undertaken the task. For this Major Rutter is well qualified. He has resided in North Borneo for a number of years, first as a Government officer and later as a planter. Naturally I do not undertake responsibility for all his opinions, but I can recommend his work as instructive and interesting to the public, and I trust that its perusal will stimulate their interest in this outpost of the Empire which deserves to be more intimately known.

WEST RIDGEWAY.

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CHAPTER I

GEOGRAPHY

BORNEO, the second largest island in the world (it is smaller only than New Guinea), lies across the equator in the form of a gigantic pear, or like the bitter native fruit of curious shape called by the Malays *kelamantan*, a name applied to the island in ancient days. The area of Borneo is 290,000 square miles, five times that of England and Wales. 213,000 square miles, or three-quarters, belong to the Dutch; 42,000, or one-seventh, to Sarawak, the territory of Rajah Brooke, third of the romantic line of white Rajahs; 4,000 to the little State of Brunei, a British Protectorate under the rule of a native Sultan with a British Resident as adviser, and the remainder of the island, 31,106 square miles, or one-ninth of the whole, comprises the State of North Borneo, administered by the British North Borneo Chartered Company under British Protectorate.

The Chartered Company's territory lies in one of the most favoured positions of the East, 1,000 miles from Singapore, 1,200 from Hong Kong, 600 from Manila and 1,500 from Port Darwin. It is bounded on the north by the China Sea, on the east by the Sulu and Celebes Seas, on the west by the China Sea and Sarawak, and on the south by Dutch Borneo. The southern boundary, which was long the subject of dispute in the early days, was ultimately defined by a convention between Great Britain and the Netherlands in 1891, but although a point on the coast at latitude 4° 10′ was fixed by H.M. Survey boats *Egeria* and *Rattler* in conjunction with a Dutch gunboat, the border itself was not actually delimited until 1912 when a Boundary Commission, consisting of North

Borneo and Dutch Government officials, was appointed. This was an event of which the world heard little, but the party, working for many months in virgin jungle and for the most part through the almost unknown country of the far interior, experienced as many hardships and dangers, it may be supposed, as have ever beset a commission of like nature surveying in other parts of the world.

The mainland of North Borneo extends from Cape Simpang Mengaiau (the parting of the pirate ways) in 7° 2′ north latitude to the watershed of the Padas River in 3° 42′ north latitude, the most southerly point, where the boundary drives a wedge between Sarawak and Dutch Borneo; the remainder of the southern boundary follows a mountain range which forms, about the parallel of 4° 10′ north, the watershed between the rivers running to the north-west and those running to the east coast. From Simpang Mengaiau due south to the Border is 285 miles, while the greatest breadth of the country is 270 miles from Klias Point in 115° 20′ east longitude to Hog Point in 119° 16′ east longitude; these points, the most westerly and the most easterly of the country, lie in almost the same parallel of latitude, 5° 18′ and 5° 19′ north. It is usual to compare the territory with the size of Ireland, though the two countries are dissimilar in shape, the map of North Borneo resembling the head of a monstrous boar with pricked ears. The open jaws are formed by Darvel Bay, the ears by the extremities of Marudu Bay and the snout by the great peninsula whose extremity is Hog Point. Whether Hog Point is so called because it is the extremity of this snout I cannot say. It is more probable that its name is due to some good shooting that the officers of a survey ship once obtained there.

From the Bengkulit River on the west to the Sinosulan River on the east the territory has a coast line of 900 miles, indented with some of the best harbours in the island, notably Gaya Bay on the west, Marudu Bay on the north, Sandakan and Cowie Harbours on the east. Off these coasts the pansy-blue of the tropical sea is dotted with jungle-covered islands, particularly on the north and on the east, where they lie like strings of jade, varying in size from Banggi, whose area is 167 square miles, to tiny islets hardly bigger than a tennis-court,

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

AN ISLAND VILLAGE.

[*To face p. 2.*

every one covered with perpetual green and circled by a ribbon of honey-coloured sand.

§ 2

The mainland falls within three fairly distinct geographical zones which may be called conveniently the plains, the downs and the hills. The plains are mainly alluvial flats extending from two to six miles inland; for the most part this country is grassland without heavy jungle and is eminently suited to every kind of cultivation; on the west coast much of it is in the possession of natives and is under wet rice; on the north and east coasts it forms valuable land for the growth of wrapper-leaf tobacco.

The down zone consists of low hills rising like little islands from the plains. In some districts, such as Papar, these hills are often covered with fruit-trees and many are the sites of native graveyards, while in others, such as Tempassuk, they are of sandstone formation and though once clad with jungle and vegetation they now have no other covering but coarse *lalang* grass, the fertile topsoil having been almost entirely swept away by rains, leaving the bare subsoil to be baked by the blazing suns.

On leaving the downs the hill zone begins, usually with great abruptness, range after range rising steeper and higher until they reach 6,000 feet. This hill, or mountain zone as it might well be called, forms by far the greater part of the whole territory. A gentleman who made up in imagination what he lacked in knowledge once read a paper on North Borneo and described the country as not being mountainous but covered for the most part " with low undulating 'ills." There are few District Officers who have not murmured this now classic phrase bitterly to themselves as they staggered wearily up one of North Borneo's formidable heights. According to a native story the reason for this formation is that when the world was first made the earth was flat and extended beyond the sky; in order to join up at the edges it had to be crumpled up into hills and valleys. Most of the hill ranges run through the country north and south, many are connected with cross ridges running east and west, the system culminating in the

vast granite mass of Mount Kinabalu, 13,455 feet high, the loftiest mountain in Malaya. As London is the hub of England's roads so is Kinabalu the hub of North Borneo's mountain ranges and from it they radiate for hundreds of miles like the spokes of a mighty wheel. Climbing one of these heights is arduous work, but the sight which meets one when one has gained the summit and gazes upon the hills around is worth a hard day's climb. As far as the eye can see range upon green range of jungle hills rise and fall like the waves of a troubled ocean and in the distance the peaks of Kinabalu stand out clear-cut against the sky.

Mount Kinabalu is undoubtedly the most striking physical feature of North Borneo. Standing twenty-five miles from the coast it is a landmark from afar ; it rises sheer and wonderful above a thousand hills and, unlike a conical mountain such as Fujiyama, on each side its pinnacles present a picture of their own. But it is from Kiau or Bundu Tuhan, the villages which nestle upon its slopes, that the mountain is most inspiring of all, looming up in its vast bulk above the lesser hills as an ocean liner above a launch. Seen thus in storm, or with the morning sunshine glinting upon its waterfalls, it is no wonder that the natives of the districts over which it throws its shadow hold it in veneration as the resting place of departed spirits and a dragon's home.

§ 3

The foothills of Kinabalu are the sources of many North Borneo rivers, notably of the Tuaran and Tempassuk flowing to the north-west, and of the Labuk and Sugut flowing to the east.

The mountain system rises more abruptly from the west coast than from the east, consequently the rivers running west are shorter and more shallow than those which flow into the Sulu Sea ; except the Padas, which rises far inland and drains the greater part of the interior, none of these is navigable for more than a few miles by boats of any size, and each has the bar which is apparently inevitable to all Borneo rivers. The Bandau, the Marudu and the Bengkoka, which flow into Marudu Bay, can be penetrated for some distance by launches,

but it is only on the east that rivers of any size are found; the Labuk, the Sugut and the Segama are all navigable for many days and the great Kinabatangan, the largest river in North Borneo, reputed once to have had a Chinese colony upon its banks, is 350 miles long and navigable for over two hundred.

Whether they are long or short most Borneo rivers have much in common. The sandy bar at the mouth is formed by the river current being arrested during the monsoons and depositing the silt brought down from the hills; in some cases the sandbank formed by silt has in time risen above sea-level, causing the course of the stream to be deflected. A second deposit is then gradually formed at right angles to the first, with the result that, where this process has been repeated indefinitely in a series of rivers, broad stretches of shallow lagoons are found lying at lower levels than the rivers themselves; the absence of currents causes mangrove to spring up; vegetable deposits push the mangrove forward towards the sea; the swamp-loving *nipah* palm takes root where the mangrove grew before and, as time goes on, is in its turn replaced by forest. So every river is found winding mazily through the swamps to its mouth; above the mangrove it flows between the alluvial stretches of *nipah*, threading its way like a great snake; as one ascends, this gives place to jungle or to open grassy plains with grazing water-buffaloes and to great clumps of bamboo which spread so thickly across the stream that one can scarcely see the sun; sometimes one passes little gardens where bedraggled leaves of banana-trees flap to and fro upon the bank and clusters of coconut palms stand up slim and graceful; sometimes a native village from which come unkempt brown individuals to stare at the passer-by, while across the water steals the mellow note of deep-toned gongs; thus until boat limit is reached, when comes the real beauty of the river, its rapids that break the long deep reaches overhung with jungle trees, where the monkeys chatter as they swing from branch to branch and occasionally a brilliant kingfisher flashes past. Even over the rapids the stream is navigable for native boats and then by bamboo rafts. Above raft limit it becomes shallower, until it is little more than a mountain torrent, no greater than others that form its tribu-

taries on either bank. In a land of hills like Borneo every river is watered by a thousand of these mountain streams, and so great is the catchment area that after a heavy fall of rain the river floods suddenly and impetuously, rising in an hour many feet above its normal level and turning as yellow as the muddy Colorado.

The rivers of Borneo have ever been the highways of the country and most of them give the names to the districts through which they run. Formerly the territory was divided into ten provinces named after persons connected with the early days of the Chartered Company. These divisions were for the most part arbitrary ones, made with little regard either to geographical or administrative reasons, and now, except in the cases of Province Clarke and Province Keppel, they are seldom used ; indeed in the new map recently issued by the British North Borneo Company they do not appear at all, the country being divided instead into five Residencies—the West Coast, Kudat, Sandakan, the East Coast and the Interior ; of these a more detailed account will be given in the succeeding chapter.

The boundary between two Residencies is generally formed by a range of hills, often a watershed of two river systems—such is the boundary between the West Coast and the Interior. But the latest map issued by the Company shows neither hills nor mountains (strangely enough when the country is composed of little else), and the position of those shown on the map in this book is approximate only. The truth is that North Borneo still offers a wide field to the geographer and to the maker of maps. There has never been a trigonometrical survey of the country—a very expensive undertaking upon which the Company has rightly not felt in a position to embark. The coast-line and islands have been charted and the position of Kinabalu and Tambunan fixed by the British Admiralty, but the interior of the country has been mapped by District Officers in their spare time, usually without instruments more pretentious than a chain, a compass and an aneroid. By these methods the old map of 1896 was considerably improved. This was the first official map of the territory and owed its being to the then Commissioner of Lands, Mr. Henry Walker.

But in those days North Borneo was even less known than it is to-day and in order to fill in details of unknown country they could not reach, the early explorers were forced to rely upon the natives, who drew pictures for them by means of matches, pieces of stick and stones. The results were not so incorrect as might be imagined; in any case the map was the best that could be made at the time and served its purpose, though some have smiled a little sadly at such embellishments as the projected railways over which visionary trains ran from Jesselton to the Dutch Border, and from Sandakan to Marudu Bay. The second map, adjusted, corrected and elaborated by the Survey Office and by the District Officers, is, though it shows no hills, an improvement on the old one, but it is not until a survey of the whole country is made and certain points definitely fixed by triangulation that the filling-in work can have its full value.

§ 4

These things will come in time, and North Borneo has always moved slowly. Although it has been British for over forty years little is known of this far jungle land on the fringe of the China Sea, save in the circle of those personally interested in it. As a rule, it is pictured as a country of wild men, dense forests and pestilent fevers. The wild men are to be found in the persons of peaceable and childlike natives and the forests are there too, but the climate of North Borneo is, for the tropics, exceptionally healthy.

Near the coast the thermometer rises from 70° or 72° in the morning to 88° shortly after noon. The average maximum temperature at Jesselton for the five years from 1916–1920 was 87·58°, the average minimum 69·66°; at Sandakan the readings averaged 87·76° and 74·17°. On an exceptionally hot day the thermometer may reach 93° or 94°, but the heat is rarely oppressive, and in the interior at a height of only 2,000 feet the temperature is often no higher than 55° in the early mornings and the nights are cold. Even on the coast a refreshing breeze makes the nights cool and a blanket is nearly always necessary. It is true that there are unhealthy spots in the country; some of the estates in the neighbourhood of Sanda-

kan Bay have had a bad name. One in particular was branded for its malaria, but its present manager, by proper drainage and clearing of the jungle, has performed wonders and it is now almost a health resort. Much still remains to be done in other parts of the country towards eliminating the malarial mosquito by draining and filling in mangrove swamps, but away from these swamps, with care as to the boiling of water, with plenty of exercise and without too much beer before tiffin, a European should keep his health, with nothing worse than an occasional bout of fever. In the tropics fever is a kind of curtain-fire put down by Nature, through which all have to pass and through which few come quite unscathed.

This equable temperature and absence of extremes in the climate of North Borneo, though an advantage in one way, is yet a drawback in another, for while it is never unbearably hot at the same time there is no cold season. The country is a land of eternal summer ; year after year the days go by, as like each other as a row of houses, the only difference being that some months are rainier than others. This absence of any cold season is the real danger of the Borneo climate and it is intensified by the fact that there are as yet no hill-stations, as in India and Ceylon, where the hard-working, the weary and the worn-out may recuperate, and the less hard-working, less weary and less worn-out may repair for a pleasant holiday. The sameness of the heat and the hot moist atmosphere gradually have a weakening effect on the constitution of most Europeans. They may take a trip to Baguio in the Philippine Islands, to Hong Kong during the winter or to the hill-stations of Java, but this means an expensive journey, and it is not always easy to find the necessary leave or lucre unless health has actually broken down, when it must be done at all costs. A hill-station to which Europeans could go for a holiday and not as invalids (on the principle of prevention being better than cure) would be an inestimable boon to the country. In having no hill-stations North Borneo resembles the Federated Malay States, but it has sites for half a dozen, the best and most convenient upon one of the lovely spurs of Mount Kinabalu, only fifty miles from the port of Usukan, where steamers call. At present there is nothing but a dirty Dusun village

there, reached by a winding bridle-path from the coast. It is a great pity that the lack of roads at present makes impossible what could be one of the most delightful hill-stations in the East, where European vegetables would grow, where the cool mornings would make a sweater necessary and the cold nights two extra blankets, where even a fire might be enjoyed. It will come some day, but much water will flow down the Tempassuk River before a metalled motor-road winds above its banks to where Kiau village stands. In the meantime the Chartered Company might do worse than take a leaf out of the book of the Japanese, who have opened up the mountain districts of Formosa by means of "push-cars," small trollies pushed by coolies on very light rails. The push-car is a slightly adventurous method of travel, especially downhill, but with a sedan chair covering the passenger can be made comfortable; the journey from Kota Belud to Kiau could be made in a day and the existing bridle-path could be utilized, widened and re-graded where necessary.

§ 5

Although it has no extremes of hot and cold, most parts of North Borneo are healthier to live in during the north-east monsoon than the south-west. The north-east monsoon begins in the middle of October and blows until the middle of April, bringing in its wake usually much-needed rains. The north-east is very regular and comes up every morning between eleven and midday, gaining strength towards the afternoon, then dying down and being succeeded at night by a cool land breeze. At intervals it blows with much greater strength, such gales usually lasting either three, seven or eleven days. During the south-west monsoon, which blows from the middle of April to the middle of October, the wind is not so strong, but sudden squalls and violent gusts are more frequent. It is these south-westerly winds which, blowing across the mainland, bring with them in their passage mosquitoes and impurities collected from the swamps and jungles; the period of the south-west monsoon is usually drier (and consequently hotter) than the months of the north-east. As there is neither summer nor winter in Borneo, neither spring nor autumn, such seasons

as there are can only be marked by these monsoons. Even the north-east monsoon, however, cannot definitely be called the rainy season, though most of the year's rain falls between November and February; March, April and May are usually dry; then follows what might be called an intermediate wet season during June and July, counterbalanced by a dry spell until October. But beyond saying that December and January are the wettest months (61 inches fell in Sandakan during January, 1918, a record for the State) and August the driest, it is impossible to lay down any general rules as to rainfall in North Borneo, since the amount varies greatly in different parts of the country, and even in localities only a few miles apart. Meteorological returns are kept in most outstations and occasionally add to the burden of the District Officer's life, for it takes a native clerk some time to understand the intricacies of a rain measure—a glass divided into fifty parts to mark the divisions of half an inch. There is a story of how one genius, finding ·19 registered, reported that 19 inches of rain had fallen and *thirty-one inches of wind*.

The annual rainfall is between 60 and 160 inches, according to locality; the following was the average for the five years 1916 to 1920 at the head-quarters of each Residency:

Tenom (Interior) . .	62·12 inches.
Jesselton (West Coast) .	105·98 ,,
Kudat	86·59 ,,
Sandakan . . .	125·57 ,,
Tawau (East Coast) .	78·56 ,,

Though it rarely rains incessantly for as long as twenty-four hours, yet a wet spell in Borneo is a very trying period, and the rain thundering down from the leaden skies has a depressing effect on the spirits of all but the supercheerful; planting work comes to a standstill, travelling is only performed with acute discomfort and normal exercise is an impossibility. Most of the interior is considerably drier than the coastal regions and the wettest place in the country is Beaufort in the West Coast Residency. This is the centre of the rubber plantations, and had an average annual rainfall of nearly 160 inches from 1916–1920; in 1916 no less than 178·20 inches fell, the

heaviest recorded rainfall in the territory, while in October, 1911, 14·46 inches fell in twenty-four hours, also a record. The Padas River, on whose banks the little town of Beaufort stands, drains an enormous area of hills and consequently floods on the slightest provocation, overflowing its banks until the town becomes a kind of inglorious Venice; two feet of water is not an uncommon occurrence and on such occasions the inhabitants are glad to make their way about in native boats.

The rainfall of the country is not always very evenly distributed throughout the year, and, although a rainless month is an exception, droughts lasting several months are occasionally experienced, causing incalculable harm to all forms of agriculture and anxious days to those who depend on wells.

An occasional drought or flood is, however, all that an inhabitant of North Borneo is ever called upon to bear in the way of what may be termed aggravated meteorology. The country is just outside the typhoon area, cyclones are unknown, and there are no earthquakes on record, though slight shocks have been experienced from time to time. North Borneo is of palæozoic formation (one rich in tin and other minerals) and according to most authorities not of volcanic origin, or if any portion, such as Kinabalu, is volcanic it is of vast antiquity. There is a mud volcano on an island near the mouth of the Labuk River, a hot spring on the Apas River near Tawau and lava specimens were once found in a stream on Malawali Island. Nothing more.

§ 6

It is now a generally accepted theory that at a comparatively recent geological date Borneo, with the island of Sumatra, was continuous with the mainland of Asia and that separation from Sumatra occurred at an even later period. The chief reason for accepting this theory is the presence in Borneo of many species of Asiatic mammals: the horned rhinoceros, which is closely allied with the Sumatran species; the Indian sambur-deer; the wild pig, which is of the same species as that found in India, but larger; the wild cattle or *tembadau*, which is of the same family as the South Indian bison, the *sladang* of the Federated Malay States and the *bantu* of Java and

Sumatra, and the two anthropoid apes, the *orang utan* and the gibbon, both of which are incapable of crossing rivers. All these are certainly indigenous to the country and have not been introduced. With the Borneo elephants it is different. They are of the same species as the smallest of the dark-skinned Asian elephants and are only found on the east, being confined to the area between the Labuk and Sembakong Rivers. Whether they are indigenous or not is a disputed point. They are said to be the descendants of a pair once presented to a former Sultan of Sulu, who, finding their presence on his small island an embarrassment, marooned them on the north-east coast of Borneo, where they became wild and multiplied. At the same time there is no reason why the elephant should not be indigenous to the country, and that it was so once is proved by the discovery in Sarawak of a semi-fossilized fragment of an elephant's molar.[1]

With such animals as the elephant and the rhinoceros one would expect to find the tiger, but strangely enough it does not exist in North Borneo. The fact that in nearly every native oath the expression, "May I be eaten by a tiger," occurs and that the tiger is constantly mentioned in native folk-lore might tend to show that the species once existed and became extinct at no distant date, though according to one legend the mouse-deer, hearing that the tiger intended to come to Borneo as King of the Animals, deterred him by sending him a number of porcupine quills, which, said the mouse-deer, were stray hairs of the present king. The clouded leopard and civet-cat are the only wild members of the cat tribe that are found. The former is rare and its skin is prized by the Murut tribes of the interior for making coats; the latter is by no means uncommon and commits frequent depredations upon fowl-houses.

Of the larger mammals the rhinoceros is found in all parts of the country where dense virgin forest grows, while the wild cattle prefer the open grassy plains. Wild pig and deer abound in all parts of the country; besides the sambur-deer are found the roe-deer with its dainty horns and the little mouse-deer scarcely larger than a hare, the hero of a hundred native tales.

[1] *A Naturalist in Borneo*, p. 41.

The honey-bear is another denizen of the jungle; it is a small animal with a cream-coloured patch on its throat, and peculiarly ugly. When young it can be kept as a pet, but as it grows older and stronger it becomes a nuisance and usually comes to an untimely end after mauling the water-carrier.

The commonest wild pet is the monkey, of which the Borneo jungle is prolific. There are many kinds, the long-tailed *krah*, the short-tailed *brok* and the hideous proboscis-monkey with the long fleshy nose; the latter abounds in the mangrove along the river banks and is peculiar to Borneo, but mopes so much in captivity that it is almost impossible to keep it. Even more attractive than the monkey is the grey-coated *wah wah*, or gibbon, an anthropoid ape which disturbs the peace of the early morning by its strange gurgling cry. But the most interesting inhabitant of the Borneo jungle is so strangely human that it has earned the Malay name *orang utan*—man of the forest. In its native state it travels great distances in search of the fruit that is its food, moving deliberately and not flinging itself from branch to branch like the monkeys, yet capable of great speed. It obtains its water from the leaves and rarely comes to earth. It is found only in Borneo and Sumatra, and in at least two distinct species, the larger, which attains great size and strength, being more common in Sarawak than North Borneo. Unlike the gregarious monkeys, it lives in families, not herds, and makes a nest of twigs and boughs far up in the forest trees. When pursued and enraged it tears off branches and hurls them to the ground uttering its strange cry, half-belch half-coo, from which it gets its native name *kogyu*.

It is not strange that the *orang utan* should be the subject of native legends. There is one which tells of a native girl whom an *orang utan* carried off and kept a prisoner on the top of a lofty tree from which there was no escape. He treated her kindly, made her a nest amid the branches and every day would bring her fruit to eat and coconuts to drink. In course of time she bore the jungle man a little son, part ape, part human being. Her heart grew even heavier than before at this shame she had brought into the world and she longed more than ever to be free. At last she hit upon a plan, and when

her captor was away she would patiently twist into a rope the fibre from the coconuts he brought her, hiding her work among the leaves, until there came a day when the rope was long enough to reach the ground. Quickly she slipped down and fled towards the sea, leaving the little babe behind. But her jungle husband soon discovered her escape, and, just as she saw the blue sea dancing beyond the lattice of the jungle, she heard his howls of rage from the branches overhead as he followed, swinging from tree to tree ; before he could reach the ground, however, she burst her way through to the coral beach and scrambled into a fishing-boat that, by the kindness of the fates, was putting out to sea. The baffled ape went back to his leafy nest ; in his rage he seized his strange son and tore him in two, flinging all that was human of him into the sea after his mother and all that was of the jungle back into the forest from whence he came. But the man of the woods never caught his one-time bride again and to this day, when they hear that strange guttural cry far up in the jungle trees, the natives say, " There is *Kogyu* looking for his lost bride, to take her back to his leafy home."

§ 7

Besides these larger mammals there are a thousand smaller animals—armadilloes, porcupines, squirrels, badgers, otters, lemurs, flying-foxes, bats and rodents of many kinds. North Borneo is a happy hunting-ground for the naturalist whether his quest be animals or insects, butterflies or birds, and for the botanist in search of rare orchids or the precious pitcher-plants that grow upon the slopes of Kinabalu. In this connection Hugh Low, Spencer St. John, F. W. Burbidge, John Whitehead and J. C. Moulton have all given most valuable contributions to science in the record of their collecting expeditions. Of these things it is beyond the scope of this book to speak, for among birds alone nearly 600 species are said to exist. The more common are the kingfisher, most brilliant of all ; the mina bird, which can be taught to talk as well as any parrot ; the hornbill, that strange species of which the female when nesting is secured in a hollow trunk with a small aperture for her bill and is fed by males until the young can fly ; owls,

called by the Malays *burong hantu*—ghost birds; the execrated night-jar, disturber of sleep; swallows; innumerable swifts, which inhabit the great limestone caves and produce the edible nest so valued by the Chinese; small green parakeets, kept by the natives as pets in round rattan cages; the argus pheasant of gorgeous plumage; snipe; the small brown rice bird, bane of farmers, and hawks, the bane of those who raise chickens; doves, green pigeon, the Torres Strait pigeon and pergam, a variety slightly larger than the English wood-pigeon, golden plover and occasionally wild duck; the megapod, a bird which few have seen save on North Borneo's 24 c. stamp; the white *padi* bird that may be seen perched upon the backs of water-buffaloes obligingly picking off ticks and other parasites, and the fish-eating heron of the marshes.

The Borneo seas and rivers abound with fish of many varieties; lobsters and crabs, and enormous prawns, dear to curry lovers, are found near the coast, oysters in the mangroves. The dugong or sea-cow, known by the natives as *ikan babi*—hog-fish—from its pig-like mouth, also exists; it is a strange animal with a remarkable head, the upper jaw protruding over the lower like a short trunk. The female has a great affection for her young, carrying them like a human mother, and when bereft of them uttering a plaintive wailing cry. Sharks also abound; their fins are valued by the Chinese for making soup, but they are seldom seen close inshore and bathers are rarely molested. Jelly-fish are far more common and their sting can be most virulent. Sea-snakes are found and are all poisonous, though fresh-water snakes are harmless. Singular though it may seem, there are comparatively few land snakes of any kind; it is said that the large herds of wild pig in the country keep them down and the only places where they occur in any numbers are on coconut estates. Even of those that do occur only 15 per cent. are poisonous and it is doubtful if they ever attack human beings unprovoked, though the hamadryad, or king cobra, is said to do so. I have seen a cobra attack a dog which had disturbed him, and though not actually struck the poor animal was almost blinded for two days by some poisonous saliva or liquid which the enraged reptile spat out. Just as formidable to animals is the python, which is the

largest snake in Borneo, often being found twenty feet in length; though not poisonous it preys upon domestic fowls and even goats, crushing them instantly in its coils and swallowing them whole.

There are two other reptiles of general interest in North Borneo, the iguana and the crocodile. The iguana, or monitor lizard, of prehistoric and rather startling appearance, is yet quite harmless, though, like the python, it has a predilection for fowls. The crocodile, however, is very different and is the most formidable and implacable foe man has in Borneo. As well as infesting the rivers crocodiles are not infrequently found in salt-water creeks, and one was killed quite recently on the Kudat golf course close to the seashore. The female nests in the quiet part of a swamp not far from the river bank; she lays thirty to forty eggs in a hollow, letting the heat hatch them; these eggs are elliptical in shape and are prized as delicacies by the Dusun natives. The Borneo crocodiles are often very savage; they do not scruple to attack their prey and many has been the tragedy of a solitary bather upon the river bank; cases have even occurred where a crocodile has overturned a canoe with a blow from its tail, and has seized and carried off the unfortunate occupant before he could escape. Natives naturally have a very wholesome awe of these man-eaters and in many places will not attack them until they have shown themselves the aggressors. According to the Dusuns of the west coast there was a time when no crocodiles ever touched a human being, but on the contrary were as placid as water buffaloes and most obliging in carrying villagers across a river when there was no ferry, until one day a Dusun damsel came along the bank of the Papar River, wishing to cross to the village on the other side. She found a crocodile basking in the sun upon the muddy bank and he willingly agreed to take her over on his back. The afternoon was hot and the maiden had walked far, so, as she stepped down to the water-side, she broke off a length of sugar-cane that was growing close at hand. It is not a particularly pretty sight to watch a native eating sugar-cane; the cane is gnawed and torn until the consumer comes to the juicy centre, and the damsel, as she sat upon the crocodile's back in mid-stream, was so thirsty

Photo. *Y. Fuji.*

A CAPTURED CROCODILE.

[*To face p. 16.*

and gnawed to such a purpose that a sharp cane-splinter ran into her finger and made it bleed. "Look, Mr. Crocodile," she cried, "look how my finger is bleeding! See if it will stop if I rub it on your wet skin." So saying she rubbed the bleeding finger on the reptile's snout. Now the crocodile had never seen human blood before, much less tasted it, but as a few drops trickled into his mouth he found it very pleasant and waited on for more. A few minutes later he decided that he liked it very much indeed; so, being nothing if not thorough, he made a hearty meal of the unfortunate maiden and went off to spread the tidings among his friends how pleasant a thing was human blood. Since which day (declare the Dusuns) crocodiles have ever preyed upon the human race.

CHAPTER II

THE RESIDENCIES

IN giving a more detailed account of North Borneo geography, physical and political, it will be convenient to describe the five Residencies in turn, starting with that of the West Coast, the head-quarters of which are at Jesselton.

Leaving the little island of Labuan, at one time part of the Chartered Company's territory and now administered as a Crown Colony, after five days' steam from Singapore, the traveller sees the hills of Borneo upon the horizon, a dark crinkled line against the tropical sky, topped by the distant peaks of Kinabalu. He skirts the wooded island of Gaya, where, until raided and burnt by the rebel Mat Saleh in 1897, the old township stood, and, sailing into Jesselton harbour through the channel that separates Gaya and Sapangar Islands, he sees five spurs of coral reef running out from the shore into a bar, making great green lines through the transparent water. From the wharf little of the town comes into view, little but hill upon jungle-covered hill, shaded from emerald to olive green, the shadows made deeper and the lights more brilliant by the sapphire of the China Sea. On a fine day it is as lovely a scene as one could find, marred only by the crudeness of the Customs House and some corrugated iron roofs.

The site of Jesselton, like that of every other town in North Borneo, has been carved out of the jungle. In 1898 Mr. W. C. Cowie, then Managing Director of the Chartered Company, founded Gantian, six miles farther up the bay, to take the place of the raided Gaya. This was abandoned in the following year and the new site, chosen by Mr. Henry Walker, was named

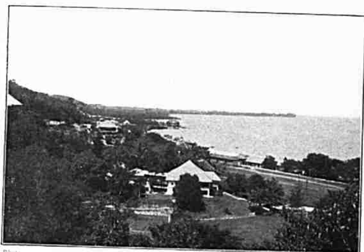

Photo. JESSELTON. *D. J. Rutter.*

Photo. BEAUFORT IN FLOOD. *Man Sang.*

[*To face p. 18.*

after Sir Charles Jessel, who was at that time vice-chairman of the Company.

Jesselton is the seat of Government on the west coast; it is a young settlement, but what it lacks in splendour it makes up for in picturesqueness. It has the contrasts of East and West that every European-made tropical town must have, but these are all the more vivid because the native element has not yet been elbowed out as is the case in larger and older towns like Colombo or Singapore. The Government offices and European bungalows upon the hills stand above the quaint houses of the Malay village below—a cluster of huts built of sago palm leaves over the mangrove swamp; this is a spot delightful enough at high tide, but at low water the sea leaves behind, not a sandy beach, but a waste of mud where gaudy crabs race to and fro. When the sun is high it becomes as unpleasant a place over which to spend one's days as a European could well imagine, but the Bajau native minds that not at all. It is merely a concession to civilization that he lives in a house, for he is a Sea-Gipsy, and his forefathers lived in boats and made their names terrible by deeds of piracy. Here the Bajau lives and dreams, by day catching just enough fish to support him and his family, to buy him the little rice and few luxuries that he needs. In the evening he arrays himself in his best *sarong* (the Malay national dress) and possibly a white coat and shoes, and betakes himself for an hour's gossip in the local coffee-house or for a stroll up and down the five-foot way that fronts the Chinese shops. These are indeed a strange collection. They have been well laid out under the auspices of the Public Works Department, the wide streets are planted with avenues of trees and lighted with electric light, but to the newcomer this only increases the incongruity of the scene. The shops have neither doors nor windows and within, working for all to see, are bootmakers and tailors from whom may be obtained shoes and white drill suits at a seemingly ridiculous cost compared with the bootmakers of St. James's or the tailors of Savile Row; there are Philippino and Chinese barbers, the latter being also—if one may coin the word—oticurists, cleaners of ears; there are the opium-houses; there is the gambling-farm, as cosmopolitan as a Continental casino, where all the

world may meet and try its luck at *fan tan* or *main po*; there are drapers where the Malayan damsel may buy the latest things in *sarong* or muslin coats; quaint pastry-shops filled with cakes and other wondrous sweetmeats which delight the native heart; other stores with European goods in a medley of confusion, where bottled beers jostle tins of sardines in tomato sauce and dog collars find a resting place on the top of boxes of cigars; there is the public market, where Chinese cooks come to battle for fish and fruit and vegetables in the early hours of the dawn; there is the inevitable pawnshop and there is the coffee-shop, to the native what the Club House that stands upon the hill above the tennis-courts and football ground is to the white man. The town also has a European hotel, an ice factory, a good water supply from a recently-built reservoir, a hospital which, though well-equipped, is built on a bad site above the mangrove swamp, an English Church, a Roman Catholic Mission and several schools for natives and Chinese.

Jesselton is a straggling little town, for each house is perched upon its separate hill. Government House and the Secretariat stand on a magnificent site overlooking Gaya Bay, two miles from the shops; a mile farther, at Batu Tiga, are Victoria Barracks, the head-quarters of the Constabulary, and the Jesselton golf links. There are no chairs for hire, only a few very indifferent rickshaws, and motors as yet are few. Distances are made easier by the railway, a single-gauge line to Melalap, ninety-six miles away in the interior, for frequent local trains run from the Jesselton Town to Batu Tiga. Though still liable to washouts, which dislocate traffic for several days, the State Railway has been improved greatly in recent years. Of old there were few who cared to risk a long journey without a large basket containing two days' rations, and its eccentricities inspired an anonymous bard to sing:

> Over the metals all rusted brown
> Thunders the "mail" to Jesselton Town;
> Tearing on madly, recking not Fate,
> Making up time—*she's two days late*.
> See how the sparks from her smoke-stack shower,
> Swaying on wildly at three miles an hour.

Sometimes they stop to examine a bridge;
Sometimes they stick on the crest of a ridge;
Sometimes they find the line washed away
And postpone their advance till the following day.
Beaufort to Jesselton—tour of delight—
Taking all day and the best of the night,
Over the metals all rusted brown
Drives on the mail to Jesselton Town.

These things are happily of the past and it is now possible to leave Jesselton at 8.20 in the morning and to be fairly certain of reaching Tenom, the head-quarters of the Interior Residency, by the same afternoon. It does not sound a break-neck trip, but it is better than the ten days' journey that used to be necessary when there was no railway at all.

From Batu Tiga the line runs alongside the metalled road past Tanjong Aru, where are situated the main railway work-shops, the race-course, the wireless station and Jesselton's picnic and bathing resort; thence, close to the shore, through flat coconut lands until near the seventh mile it reaches Putatan, the first outstation of the West Coast Residency. The district has some of the finest wet rice land in the country and almost every rod is under native cultivation, until the flat land rises to the foothills of the great Crocker Range, which runs parallel to the coast at a distance of thirty miles.

From Putatan the way lies close to the coast, past the rubber-covered hills of Lok Kawi and Kinarut Estates, which rise steeply on either side, then through flat fertile country until, beyond the railway bridge which spans its river, Papar Town is reached; this is one of the most thriving outstations in the State, and famous for its fruit; oranges, bananas, pine-apples, pommolo and papaya may always be obtained in abundance and, in season, mangoes and durians. The Chinese gardeners find a ready market for their produce in Jesselton, and when the train comes in it is besieged by a crowd of Hakka women, picturesque in their great round hats and blue trousers, and a brisk trade with passengers is carried on.

The Papar district extends along the coast from Kinarut to the Bongawan River and inland to the Crocker Range, which divides it from the Interior. The Papar is the largest of its rivers, but it is only navigable for a few miles and has a difficult

bar. Papar Rubber Estate, which is upon its banks, is connected with the railway by a good metalled road, made and upkept by the management.

A few miles beyond Papar is Benoni, North Borneo's one recognized holiday resort. Here, close to the seashore, are two European bungalows, the property of Membakut and Sapong Rubber Estates. By a courteous arrangement these can be hired by the general public. The beach is of the finest sand and the bathing excellent, so that a delightful week-end can be spent as long as the jelly-fish are not in season.

Benoni is also the home of a fabled monster which has been hunted without success since 1904. It is said to inhabit, in company with a few thousand bats, a dark cave, or rather tunnel, in a steep hill close to the sea. No white man has ever seen it, but a cook at Benoni Rest-House once asserted that he had met it during an evening stroll upon the beach and graphically described it to me as having "a body longer than a crocodile's, a neck of about twelve feet, a head like a pig's only with small red horns, and a yellow chest." The natives say that long ago a Benoni woman gave birth to this monster and to a human boy as twins. As soon as it was born, the monster swelled to an enormous size, then made off to the cave where it since has dwelt. As soon as it crossed the threshold of the cave the mother died, but the twin, Pengalan, lived on and is now so old that no man knows his age; when he is ailing the monster brings him magic medicine, for it knows that when Pengalan dies it must die too. By now indeed the twain may have passed away; if not it may be hoped that the monster, who never did harm to anyone, may be allowed to live out his old age in peace, an institution of the country-side, and his cave one of the sights which all lady visitors to Benoni may go to see.

Beyond Benoni are the two substations of Kimanis and Bongawan, each with a few police and, a few miles up their rivers, a flourishing rubber estate. On the south side of Bongawan begins the Beaufort district. This is the centre of the West Coast rubber industry, and from Membakut to Beaufort town there is little to be seen on either side of the train but lines and lines of rubber-trees, where a few years ago

Photo. *D. J. Knaier.*

BENONI VILLAGE.

[*To face p. 22.*

all was secondary or virgin jungle. Membakut Estate is some distance up its river, but the trees of Mawau, Lumat, Kew Gardens and Woodford Estates almost shade the track; on the hills stand well-built coolie lines or white assistants' bungalows, and Chinese coolies with their wide round rattan hats and red waist-cloths put down their hoe-like *changkul* and pause to gaze at the train as it passes by.

Beaufort (so called after a former Governor) was founded by Mr. W. C. Cowie in 1898. It is a flourishing township on the banks of the Padas River with a club, a rest-house, a golf course and a hospital; as already stated, its main drawback is its liability to be flooded at short notice. It has been called a suburb of Glasgow, owing to the number of Scotchmen in the neighbourhood.

At Beaufort the railway makes a right-angled turn and runs, following the right bank of the Padas, to the south-east through Jimpangah and Beaufort Rubber Estates past Rayoh, the boundary of the Beaufort district and the Interior Residency. Here the country is sparsely populated and as yet little opened up. To the south-west from Beaufort there is a branch line of twenty-nine miles to the port of Weston, the trains being reached by a ferry across the Padas River. This line is also a single track and passes Padas Valley, Bukau and Lingkongan Estates before it reaches Weston on the shore of Padas Bay. Weston is a small place consisting of little more than a customs house and a few Chinese shops, but is important as the port for Labuan and for Province Clarke, as the two districts of Mempakul and Sipitong are called.

Mempakul is situated at Klias Point, near the mouth of the Klias River. It is chiefly important as a customs and telegraph station, for the submarine cable from Singapore and Labuan is here connected with the overland system to Jesselton. Sipitong, the head-quarters of the district, is near the mouth of the Sipitong River, which flows into Brunei Bay. It is a lonely little station; although the district is the centre of the native sago industry it has never been developed by European enterprise, chiefly owing to the transport difficulties, and although it has been partially opened up with bridle-paths it is one of the least-known districts in the country. On the

west its boundaries march with those of Sarawak to the far interior and it has a vast up-country area as far as Bole, the centre of the district where a clerk and a few police are stationed, and beyond to the upper waters of the Padas River and the watershed which divides it from Dutch Borneo and Sarawak.

This is the limit of the Residency to the west and south. Jesselton, as well as being the seat of Government on the west coast and the head-quarters of the Residency, is also its centre, for it extends to the north-west until it joins the Residency of Kudat. Four hours by boat from Jesselton, or twenty miles overland, is Tuaran, the chief station of the North Keppel district. A metalled road, which is to take the place of the existing bridle-path, is under construction from Jesselton, running across the Likas Plain, once a swamp, now planted up with coconuts and cultivated in holdings by Chinese settlers. There is a small outstation at Inanam, four miles along the road, and another at Menggatal five miles farther. Both villages are flourishing native communities with houses built over the river of the same name. The surrounding country resembles that of Papar and Putatan, rich in fruit-trees of every kind and famed for its wet rice. Beyond Menggatal village lies Menggatal Rubber Estate, and then the road winds across low grassy hills and between stretches of rice lands until Tuaran is reached.

This is a thriving little station three miles up the Tuaran River, which is only navigable for a short distance, though it rises far away in the hills. The old spelling of the name is Tawaran—*ayer tawar* meaning "fresh water" in Malay. Across the river on the right bank is Tuaran Rubber Estate, and beyond this the district extends four days' march up-country until it joins the Interior Residency in the uplands round Kinabalu. There is no bridle-path to the hills, but in dry weather the native tracks are pleasant enough walking, for the most part crossing and recrossing the Tuaran and its tributaries, the largest of which are the Mulau and the Koriyau. It is a well-populated district, but, being off the beaten track, is seldom visited by any Europeans save the District Officer on his rounds. If a road were ever put through it vast tracts of country suitable for cultivation would be opened up.

From Tuaran there is a bridle-path to Mengkabong three miles away, of old a pirate nest, now a populous outstation. It is here that the traveller lands if he comes by boat from Jesselton. From the Government station to the north the bridle-path runs across the Tajau plain—a swamp in the wet weather, in dry the scene of many a native hunt—then winds round the foothills until it reaches Tenggilan, a large Dusun village, the inhabitants of which own many buffaloes and much rice land, but are none the less not too proud to work on the Tenggilan division of the Tuaran Rubber Estate. Past Tenggilan the path leaves the plain and zig-zags across the high dividing range between the Tuaran and Tempassuk districts; on the divide there is a pass between the hills where, on a clear day, a glorious view may be obtained of the coast and the sea beyond. Thence the path winds down the hills until it reaches the wide Tempassuk plains.

Tempassuk is a sub-district of Tuaran, the two together being known as North Keppel. Its head-quarters are at Kota Belud—meaning in Bajau "the fort on the hill," so called in the days before the coming of the Chartered Company, when intertribal warfare was rife. Kota Belud stands on the banks of the Tempassuk River and near the junction with its tributary, the Wariu; there is an unmetalled cart-road to the port of Usukan, eight miles away; this is the outlet for the district and a local steamer calls four times a month. The chief exports of the district are buffaloes and cattle, fowls, jungle produce and native tobacco from the interior.

The Tempassuk district is, to my mind, the most delightful in North Borneo; it is known to the traveller, for it has been the jumping-off place for most expeditions to Mount Kinabalu. From the hill on which the District Officer's house stands there is a very lovely picture; the broad Tempassuk plain lies spread out, as green as the skin of a grass snake, sprinkled with brown native houses as the sky with stars, girt with a half-circle of jungle hills twenty miles away; close at hand are the neat buildings that form the station, and below them two rows of Chinese shops; on every side are clusters of waving coconut trees, banana-groves, clumps of feathery bamboo, well-tended rice fields, spreading fruit-trees; water-buffaloes graze placidly;

a native rider, spear in hand, canters his pony across the fields; and through all this the Tempassuk winds, now deeply flowing, now rippling over rapids, iridescent as a string of opals, crowned by Kinabalu, four days' march away. Of its kind there is no more lovely sight in all the world, and, though distance is supposed to lend enchantment, it is not so with Kinabalu, for every day's march nearer to its peaks makes them appear more wonderful. The mountain is reached by a bridle-path which runs up the valley of the Tempassuk and finally links up with the Interior system. Kiau, the Dusun village on the lower slopes, is reached after three nights from Kota Belud. It is here that all collecting expeditions to Kinabalu have made their base. The mountain was first ascended in March, 1851, by Mr. (afterwards Sir) Hugh Low, then Colonial Treasurer of Labuan, the journey from the coast being made by the Tuaran route at a time when the country was entirely unknown to white men. The next person to attempt the ascent was a naturalist named Lobb, but though he reached the mountain's foot he was not allowed by the natives to go farther; in 1858 Mr. Low and Mr. (afterwards Sir) Spencer St. John (then British Consul-General in Borneo) made the ascent by way of the Tempassuk, and again three months later in the same year from Tuaran. To Low belongs the honour of being the first to collect the great pitcher plants which are found on the upper slopes of the mountain. These are rightly called by St. John one of the most astonishing productions of nature. The pitchers of the *Nepenthes Rajah*, the largest variety, are of a deep purple colour, resting upon the ground in a circle; the natives used them to carry water in and St. John noted one holding no less than four pint bottles. The story of the two expeditions is told with great charm by Sir Spencer in his *Life in the Forests of the Far East*. He thus describes the spot where Low had left his bottle on the first ascent: "Low's Gully is one of the most singular spots in the summit. We ascend an abrupt ravine, with towering perpendicular rocks on either side, till a natural wall bars the way. Climbing on this you look over a deep chasm, surrounded on three sides by precipices, so deep that the eye could not reach the bottom, but the twitter of innumerable swallows could be

distinctly heard, as they flew in flocks below." [1] To all travellers it will be a matter of regret that Low's bottle does not still rest in that lonely spot he was the first to find; in 1887 the guide of Mr. R. M. Little, who was the first of the Company's officers to ascend the mountain, brought Low's bottle, and also the tin left by St. John, back to Kiau without the knowledge of his master.[2] Mr. Little obtained possession of them, but as they were not replaced and North Borneo has no museum, it would have been fitting for them to have found a resting-place with the Royal Geographical Society, of whose treasures they would not have been the least.

The ascent, though an arduous journey of three days, presents no especial difficulties, and since then the mountain has been climbed many times, though only from the south-west side. The summit is thus described by Major J. C. Moulton: "A huge plateau of immense granite slabs slopes upwards for some two miles towards the north-west, fringed by weird-shaped pinnacles, marking the former height of this immense granite crown." [3] Of these the highest of all is Low's Peak, 13,455 feet. This was fixed by Captain Learmonth, of H.M.S. *Merlin*, who made the ascent with a party in 1910. Two ladies have been adventurous enough to reach the summit, Miss L. S. Gibbs (on a collecting expedition) in 1910, and Mrs. Swinnerton (on a picnic) in 1916. When Miss Gibbs made her expedition, the natives of the neighbourhood were much exercised in their minds to know what her aim could be; they had got used to the vagaries of white men, and so long as the *Tuan* conceded the required homage to the spirits of the mountain and fired off cannons (the Merlin party did not and met with disastrous weather in consequence) they looked upon the thing with tolerance; but when it came to a *Mem* it was too much for them, and they were only partially satisfied when they were told that it was to *chari nama*—to make a name.

Kinabalu is just below snow-level but not below freezing-point, for ice was found near the summit by Miss Gibbs's

[1] Op. cit., vol. i, p. 270.

[2] *British North Borneo Herald*, July, 1887.

[3] *A Collecting Expedition to Mount Kinabalu*, p. 10.

expedition in February, 1910. Miss Gibbs thus charmingly describes the incident : "The waters of the Kadamaian spread over the smooth granite wall, filling all the cracks and holes with water, covered with an appreciable film of ice about 5 mm. thick. The Dusuns, exclaiming with wonder, sank on their knees, hastily filling their *sireh* boxes with what to them must have seemed a miraculous substance. With true British regard for fact they were duly warned of the consequences, but, I was glad to see, with no effect. If it disappeared as miraculously as it appeared, 'theirs not to reason why,' the Hantus had but claimed their own." [1]

In the old maps the mountain is called Mount St. Pierre (though in Mercator's map, about 1595, Mount St. Pedro), and old geographers believed that there was a mighty lake at its summit ; this belief arose from natives' stories, but was of course exploded when Kinabalu was ascended for the first time, and was probably due to their not understanding how otherwise continuous streams of water flow down the mountain's sides.[2] Later, it was asserted that the lake existed south of the mountain, where it is shown in some early maps. This was St. John's view, for the Kiau people assured him that they had been on trading expeditions to the villages upon its shores. If the lake ever existed it was probably below Kinabalu to the south-east, where the plain of Ranau is to-day, a view which will be discussed later when dealing with the Interior Residency. Major Moulton, however, suggests that the lake may have existed where the Kadamaian River (as the upper Tempassuk is called) flows at an altitude of 2,500 ft. along the Minitindok Gorge, through which it appears to have broken only recently.[3]

Besides having the mythical lake the summit was, and is, believed to be guarded by a gigantic dragon, which was once the cause of many adventurous Chinese coming to an untimely end ; a story which gave rise to the derivation of the name Kinabalu as being from the Malay (and Dusun) *Kina*, meaning Chinese, and *balu*, widow. There are several objections to this

[1] *A Contribution to the Flora and Plant Formations of Mount Kinabalu and the Highlands of British North Borneo*, p. 42.

[2] St. John, op. cit., vol. i, p. 255.

[3] *A Collecting Expedition to Mount Kinabalu*, p. 16.

etymology. Firstly, in the Malay language the adjective follows the substantive, so that "Chinese widow" would properly be *balu kina*; the words transposed would mean "Chinaman's widow." Secondly, the name is of native origin, and there is no apparent reason why a fate which overtook Chinese should have given rise to the name of a mountain revered by the aborigines. It is more probable that, as so often happens, the legend arose to explain the name. Another suggested derivation is *Kina Bahru* or New China, corrupted by the Chinese (who have difficulty with their "r's") to Kinabalu, in reference to a former colony of Chinese in this region. Against this again is the argument that Kinabalu is a native name. A derivation favoured by Major Moulton is from *Nabalu*, "the Dusun word meaning resting-place of the dead."[1] In the *British North Borneo Herald* of September 1, 1892, Mr. R. M. Little suggested that the derivation was from the Dusun word *mangalo*, the act of flight of the soul after death, which gives colour to this derivation. A theory which was originally suggested to me by Orang Kaya Haji Arsat, a chief deep in native lore, is that the derivation was from three Dusun words, *Aki*, grandfather, *na*, a prefix denoting past time, and *balu*, widowed, solitary. The prefix *ki* is one that occurs constantly in the names of native rivers, gods and mountains, the *a* sometimes being dropped by ellipsis, sometimes, as in the case of Kinaringan, the Dusun deity, being pronounced indiscriminately. *Na* is a prefix in the Dusun and Murut languages sometimes denoting a past participle. So the word *Nabalu* in Dusun would mean widowed, without a partner. For instance, if two pigeons are flying and one is brought down the survivor is said to be *balu*, irrespective of sex. *Aki* is even used of stars by the Dusuns, and the meaning almost amounts to sacred. Now the most striking thing about the mountain is its splendid isolation and so the name would come to mean the Solitary Father.

Father Duxneuney, of the Roman Catholic Mission at Putatan, has put forward what I now consider to be the most acceptable theory of all. He agrees with me that the word should be divided into three syllables, *Ki-na-balu*, but points

[1] *A Collecting Expedition to Mount Kinabalu*, p. 4.

out that in Dusun the letters *l* and *h* are interchangeable and that the Putatan people call the mountain *Nabahu*. When a Dusun dies, the corpse is laid out on the veranda of the house and a kind of small hut is built over it, covered with costly cloths. This is called *bahu*, the house of the dead; the clothes themselves are also termed *bahu*, and thus the word comes to get a meaning of "pertaining to the dead." The prefix *ki* the Father considers is an abbreviation of the Dusun word *kiwao*, signifying it is, there is. *Na* denotes an action past but still existing and is used in conjunction with *ki*. So Kinabalu would mean "There is a place or home pertaining to the dead." In this connection it is interesting to note that Mr. Von Donop, one of the early pioneers, spells the name of the mountain Kinabahu throughout his diaries.[1]

I crave the reader's forgiveness for this digression. The derivation of the word Kinabalu will always be the subject of mild controversy; it is difficult to clear up the problem, for as a rule little help can be obtained from the natives, who usually meet any inquiries on such subjects with the reply, "Why, it's always been called that, *Tuan*." Which brings to mind W. S. Gilbert's Bishop of Rum-ti-Foo and how—

> They called him Peter people say,
> Because it was his name.

On the north-east side of the mountain a spur 11,000 feet high runs out like a buttress, separated from the main mass by a deep chasm. It is the continuation of this spur at a lower altitude which marks the boundary between the Tempassuk and the Marudu district of the Kudat Residency. This district can be reached from Kota Belud in two short days' travelling by bridle-path. The first day's ride, to the boundary of the Tempassuk district, is a hot one, across open country and a broad swampy plain called the Krah, the *bête noire* of District Officers whose constant struggle is to keep the bridges and the path itself from a descent into Avernus. The half-way halt is at Matanau, on the banks of the River Warong, where there is a little rest-house. Close by is Padang Sikilau, famed as one of the best shooting-grounds on the north-west

[1] See also Evans's *Among Primitive Peoples in Borneo*, pp. 279–90.

coast. The country consists of low hills covered with *lalang* grass interspersed with patches of secondary jungle, and here the sportsman may feel aggrieved indeed if he does not come upon a stag or a herd of shy *tembadau*.

§ 2

At the River Warong the traveller crosses from the West Coast to the Kudat Residency; half a day's ride through virgin jungle and sparsely-inhabited country brings him to Langkon Rubber Estate and the planting activity of Marudu Bay. From Langkon to the north stretches the great promontory near the extremity of which stands the port of Kudat. The head of the bay is a network of rivers and mangrove; beyond the mangrove line there is a horseshoe of alluvial flat land some twenty miles across. In this area the New London Borneo Tobacco Company holds sway. At Langkon the bridle-path ends and to the east the district blossoms out into estate roads, practicable for light buggies in dry weather, but sodden and impassable in wet. Eight miles from Langkon is Pengkalan Bandau on the banks of the Bandau River, which, though fast silting up, is still navigable by launches for some distance. At Bandau there are a few Chinese shops and a telegraph station; thence it is a drive of seven miles to Timbang Batu, the head-quarters of the district, by a flat road which runs past fields of cultivated tobacco, long palm-leaf drying sheds and coolie lines, or between dreary stretches that are lying fallow for seven years and reverting to a tangle of secondary jungle. Timbang Batu is a somewhat depressing spot and peculiarly inconvenient. The little station stands upon the flat bank of the Bongon River, but the District Officer's house is skied upon a high hill behind, a landmark for many miles; it is cool and has a glorious view of the plain below, but the hot climb after an exhausting morning spent in trying to extract truth from Dusun witnesses has been the bane of many a District Officer's life. Below the hill is a swamp where once, according to native traditions, stood a large village that flourished until one day its inmates had the temerity to dress up a tame monkey and make fun of it; this so enraged the deity of the Dusuns that he caused the whole

village, inhabitants and all, to sink into the ground. Timbang Batu Station was opened in 1902 by Mr. G. G. Warder, who was subsequently speared and killed by an escaped Dusun prisoner; his death was avenged, for the murderer was eventually killed by the Dusuns themselves and buried at the spot where he had struck Mr. Warder down. For many years the question of moving the station to a more central position has been under consideration and it is probable that before long Timbang Batu will be abandoned for a more favourable site.

Behind Timbang Batu the jungle hills rise steeply; there is a large and little-known up-country district, the centre of which is Mumus, the scene of a native rising in 1894. Here in the densest forest is to be found the rhinoceros, though in no great numbers, and as shy as a schoolboy. The honey-bear is common and the *orang utan* is often met with, while even close to the Station the gibbon abounds, its strange gurgling cry coming as daily *reveillé* from the jungle behind the District Officer's house.

From Timbang Batu there is an old estate road to the Tandik River, then, still across the flat, to Taritipan Rubber Estate and the Sulu village of Biliajong; thence a bridle-path leads along the coast to Tanjong Batu, formerly the head-quarters of the British Borneo Exploration Company but now deserted, and on to Pingan Pingan, a little centre of European coconut cultivation. Four miles beyond are Mempakad Cutch Works, now closed down, forlorn with empty buildings and silent mill. The only activity here is Valley Rubber Estate owned by Capt. Stewart Murray, and a coconut estate belonging to Mr. Edward Walker. From Mempakad the path strikes inland through as yet unopened country to Pitas Rubber Estate (once under tobacco cultivation) ten miles away, beyond which is Kusilad outstation, both on the banks of the Bengkoka River, while lower down stream is Mr. C. L. Meterlekamp's coconut estate, one of the most thriving privately-owned properties in the territory. The Bengkoka is the largest river in the district, and true to its name (*bengkok* means "twisted" in Malay) it is as winding as the Jordan. It is navigable for launches as far as Pitas, about three hours' steam, but its bar is a difficult one and is becoming worse every year. During the south-west monsoon a launch is often unable to cross it for days at a time,

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

MAIN STREET, KUDAT.

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

THE NATIVE VILLAGE, KUDAT.

[*To face p. 32.*

and a proposal for making a cart road to Mempakad, where there is a wharf, has been considered.

From the mouth of the Bengkoka it is two hours' steam by launch across the bay to Kudat, the head-quarters of the Residency. Kudat is a little township that has seen better days. Twenty years ago it was the capital, and the Resident's present house, which stands on a promontory overlooking the bay, was Government House, and was once rather grandiloquently described by a French journalist as *le palais du Gouverneur.* At that time the Company was hopeful of the little settlement's possibilities and potential wealth. Midway between the east and west coasts, the nearest Borneo port to China, and with a fine harbour, Kudat seemed to give promise of a glorious future. For several years it thrived; tobacco companies began operations across the bay and on Banggi Island, and coffee estates were also opened. In those days Kudat was a little Dutch colony and its hotel was always full. Thus far and no farther, for, to quote Lord Brassey, "The movements of a free commerce are beyond the control of Governments." The trend of trade flowed away gradually to the east and west, until Sandakan became the capital of the country in its stead.

The town was destroyed by fire in 1905, and the Kudat of to-day is a quiet little town (sometimes known familiarly as Sleepy Hollow), waking only to activity when a boat comes in. Then, like a disturbed ants'-nest, all is stir and bustle, for Kudat is the centre of the market gardens and there is a large export of fruit, also of jungle produce such as rattans, resin and beeswax from across the bay, sea-delicacies such as sharks' fins and *bêche-de-mer*, and, moreover, one may see lying on the tiny wharf sacks of copra, bales of tobacco and boxes of plantation rubber. Kudat has its own race-course, golf links and football ground; its hospital, its padre, church and schools; a Basel mission, Government offices, police barracks, wireless station, market and Chinese shops. In fact, save for the native village that stands over the water below the Residency, Kudat is like a little slice of China. There are a few miles of metalled roads behind the town and several miles of earth roads (the latter, like all their kind, apt to be impassable in wet

weather) running through the gardens of the Chinese settlers. These good people are contented, well-behaved and industrious, many being descendants of the immigrants who were brought from China when Kudat was first opened up. They are mostly Christians and they speak little or no Malay. Indeed, they have no need to, for their intercourse with the natives is very slight ; all their buying and selling is done with those of their own race and they employ no labour but their own. Any morning one may see them taking their produce to market in great round baskets suspended from a shoulder-pole or in their great lumbering buffalo-carts, except on Sundays when, dressed in their best, they go to church.

The Kudat Residency joins, with no very distinct boundary, the Sandakan Residency in the neighbourhood of Paitan on the north-east coast. There is no road or even bridle-path from Marudu to Sandakan and the only means of travel, other than on foot, is by boat. It is twelve hours' steam [1] and, as there are no lights beyond one at the entrance to the harbour, the trip through the islands of the Malawali Channel has to be made in daylight. Leaving Kudat Harbour, the islands of Balambangan and Banggi lie to the north. They have nothing but a few scattered villages. Balambangan is to be remembered as the site of the East India Company's station that was wiped out by pirates in 1773 ; Banggi, separated from Balambangan by a strait of 2½ miles, has also been an ill-starred island, for though it had once a flourishing little settlement at Mitford Harbour on the south, no enterprises in connection with it have come to anything but grief. Nevertheless, where the wild buffalo roams to-day there are many thousands of acres suitable for the cultivation of rubber, coconuts and tobacco.

Sailing between Banggi and the mainland the steamer turns into the Malawali Channel, an intricate archipelago of tiny islets, shoals and coral reefs strung out for many miles. It is the dream of sentimental travellers and the nightmare of master mariners. Every sandy islet might be the setting of a romance by H. de Vere Stacpoole, but to the practical mind of the harassed navigator every one represents a potential

[1] A T.B.D., H.M.A.S. *Warrego*, once made the trip in five hours.

snag, and as the coast is unlighted he has to scuttle through while daylight lasts. The dangers of the channel were brought home to Lord Brassey when he visited North Borneo in the *Sunbeam*: "Half a dozen well-placed buoys or beacons," he wrote in the *Nineteenth Century*, "would spare the navigator all anxiety and favourably influence the rates of insurance. In its own interests the provision of these necessary marks for the most serious dangers should be undertaken without delay by the British North Borneo Company." That was written in 1887, but although his lordship was a director progress in the marking and lighting of the coast has been slow, owing to the large expense involved. The chief beacon, known as the Belian Buoy, is over half-way to Sandakan, past the shallow Paitan and Marchesa Bays; beyond Labuk Bay are more shoals and rocks and islands until the ship turns through the portals of Sandakan Harbour.

§ 3

Sandakan has one of the finest natural harbours in the world. At its entrance it is about one-and-a-half miles broad, guarded by Bahala Island's high sandstone cliffs, which glow like copper in the sun. The harbour is five miles across at its broadest point and seventeen in length, while it is watered by seventeen rivers, the largest of which is the Sigaliud, or Sea Galley Hood, as it was spelt in olden days; others are the Bode and the Sekong, each of which has a rubber estate upon its banks. The value of Sandakan Harbour was recognized at an early date; it was first surveyed as long ago as 1774, and its possibilities as a naval base became even more apparent during the Great War, for the whole of the British Navy could lie safely within its arms. The town of Sandakan lies close to the western portal of the harbour. The original settlement existed twelve miles farther up the bay as a tiny white trading station before the country became British, and the present town was founded on June 21, 1879, by Mr. W. B. Pryer, one of the pioneers of the Chartered Company and the first Resident of Sandakan.

For its size perhaps no city in the world has such a medley of inhabitants as Sandakan. Its streets are always busy and

alive with all sorts and conditions of men. Chinese, from wealthy merchants in European clothes to coolies with no clothes at all save a battered hat and a waist-cloth of brilliant red; Malays in coloured *sarong* and round velvet caps; stalwart Sikh policemen in khaki uniforms and Pathans with legs as thin as sugar-canes; olive-skinned Dyaks, Arab traders with distinguished noses and shifty eyes, and Philippinos, with beautifully laundered suits—their womenfolk are the best washerwomen in the world; Japanese ladies in bright kimonos, their shrill voices and the clatter of their *geta* making most noise of all; Dusuns from the jungle; Javanese from the estates; Indians; and—most picturesque—Sulus with coloured head-cloths, long tight breeches and closely fitting embroidered coats, purple, orange or deep blue, often besprinkled with sequins and fastened with thirty-four tiny buttons of silver-gilt.

The European population of Sandakan is only about seventy in number, but that figure hardly gives an idea either of the size or the importance of the town. Sandakan has been laid out with an eye to the future. Indeed, to the stranger it seems the only town worthy of the name in North Borneo; yet elephants have been shot quite recently within seven miles of its main street. European houses are dotted upon the hills, Government House stands amid pleasant gardens and well-kept lawns, and there is a substantial club, a solace to many an exile. The club, "Albany Mansions" (old offices turned into flats), and the hotel, which has need of improvement, form, with the Government offices and court, three sides of a square, with tennis-lawns in the centre, and give the town an attractive air. The head office of Messrs. Harrisons and Crosfield is the best commercial building in North Borneo, and beyond it is the recreation ground where all races may meet at football and cricket. Above stands the Church of St. Michael and All Angels; below, the Leila Road runs out close to the shore of the bay to the sawmill and cutch works. Sandakan is the centre of the main lumber trade, the logs being floated in from the timber camps across the bay. At the other end of the town, beyond the shops, are the Constabulary barracks, the gaol and the slipway, now the property of the British Borneo Timber

Photo. SANDAKAN. *D. J. Rutter.*

Photo. CHINESE SHOPS, SIMPORNA. *J. Wilson.*

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Company. Sandakan is far more compact than Jesselton and the residential quarter rises steeply above the town. Like Jesselton on the west coast, Sandakan is the seat of Government on the east; it is the commercial capital of the country and by far the busiest port. There is direct communication with Manila, Hong Kong, Japan and Australia, as well as with Singapore, and when it has its own reservoir and water supply it will become still more attractive as a port of call.

A metalled road runs inland past the golf links and the racecourse. Beyond are the wireless station, Batu Lima Rubber Estate, the once famous Chinese pepper gardens, and small holdings—there is little land available within ten miles of Sandakan town. Beyond this the road is being continued to tap the vast resources of the Labuk district and finally, it is hoped, to form a grand trunk road across North Borneo.

The Labuk and Sugut district, which forms part of the Sandakan Residency, is of vast extent and embraces the country drained by the Labuk and Sugut and Paitan Rivers; it joins the district of Marudu in the north and the Interior Residency in the west. Until recently the head-quarters of the district were Klagan, on the Labuk River, seven hours from Sandakan by launch, but owing to the difficulties of the bar and the fact that the station was continually being flooded it was moved to Beluran, in Labuk Bay. Although the Labuk River is nearly two hundred miles long, rising near the Ranau Plain in the uplands of Kinabalu, it is not navigable for more than fifteen; the Sugut, which also has its source in the neighbourhood of Kinabalu, is divided from the Labuk by a lofty range of hills, whose highest point is Mount Mentapok, 9,000 feet. It is worse than the Labuk for navigation, for no launches can get across its bar. Paitan, near which is the island of Jambongan, is reached in two days' march from Klagan, but with this exception nearly all the travelling has to be done by native boat, which has not made the district greatly sought after by officers in the Government service. The country, a region of vast, gloomy forests, is sparsely inhabited save in the neighbourhood of the rivers, where villages of Orang Sungei, or River Folk, are to be found.

There is no doubt that a metalled road through this district

will open up the country enormously, for in it there are large tracts of land suitable for all kinds of cultivation. In the past many concessions were given by the Government both on the Labuk and the Sugut, but for various reasons they were never developed to any appreciable extent, and the last enterprise, a division of the New London Borneo Tobacco Company, near Klagan, was closed down in 1918, after a serious coolie riot.

To the south the district joins that of the Kinabatangan, which takes its name from the great river, the largest and most important in North Borneo and famed for crocodiles. The Kinabatangan rises in the Witti Range, which divides the Sandakan Residency from the Interior, and, many-mouthed, pours into the sea south-east of Sandakan through a mangrove delta twenty miles long and fifty broad. The channel most frequently used is that nearest to Sandakan, the Mumiang branch, which at its mouth is two miles wide. Launch limit is Tangkulap, some two hundred and thirty miles from the mouth, though boats drawing over six feet of water cannot get beyond the Lokan tributary, one hundred miles lower down stream. Beyond launch limit native boats can be used for many days.

The Kinabatangan flows through a vast plain covered with swamp and forest, four thousand square miles in extent and embracing almost the whole district. The river and its tributaries are the main highways of this wild country, for there are few roads and only a scanty population. The lower reaches of the river below Sukau village are quite uninhabited, and, ascending the river, the first landmark of interest is Batu Tummanggong, a great limestone cliff rising a sheer two hundred feet from the water's edge. Here it is customary to drop a copper cent into the water, and other small offerings into a deep hollow in the rock. There are few passers-by, even thrifty Chinese, who fail to observe this little act of homage to the spirits of the rock. The story goes that once where the hole is now there was a great cave in which seven brothers who were collecting camphor sought refuge for the night. Just before dawn the youngest awoke and to his horror found that the mouth of the cave was closing up. He cried aloud to his brothers and tried to rouse them, but they slept on and paid

no heed. So, crawling through the fast-closing doorway he tried to keep it open with props of timber, but in vain; it was not until too late that his brothers awoke, and realizing their plight begged, as the hole closed in upon them, that their memory should be kept green by passers-by.

Above Batu Tummanggong is the region of the abandoned tobacco estates, for the district, although far more developed than the Labuk and Sugut, was at one time more opened-up than it is now. The first estate is Bilit, under rubber cultivation and the property of a Japanese company. Above Bilit a tributary stream leads to the edible birds'-nest caves of Gomanton, the wonder of Borneo, five hundred feet above sea-level on a limestone hill, with enormous chambers three hundred feet in height; beyond, fourteen hours by launch from Bilit Estate, is the landmark of Batu Puteh, a great white limestone rock, rising, like Batu Tummanggong, high above the river. The rock has given the name to Batu Puteh Tobacco Estate, some distance upstream, while above this is Lamag Station, the head-quarters of the district, with Lamag Tobacco Estate just beyond it, the limit of European cultivation.

Farther upstream the river pours down from the very heart of North Borneo. At Kwamut the Kinabatangan is joined by the river of that name, its most important tributary, whose rapids make it only navigable for small boats though the river comes from the hills in the south, over one hundred miles away. Past Tangkulap, a small station three or four days' journey from Lamag according to the state of the river, the rapids of the Kinabatangan begin and in times of flood it is a weary journey (and one not unfraught with danger) to Penangah, where the river divides into three branches, and, just as cross-roads at home are considered suitable sites for public-houses, so has this junction of the rivers been considered a suitable place for a trading station, for in this remote spot that very wonderful person the Chinese shopkeeper has long been driving his trade with the natives of the surrounding country, and his continued presence there since the early days of the Chartered Company says much for the administration.

§ 4

South of the Kinabatangan River, and south-east of the Kwamut, the Sandakan Residency joins that of the East Coast, whose southern boundaries in their turn run with the border of Dutch Borneo. Until recently the chief station of the Residency was at Lahad Datu in Darvel Bay, but owing to the increasing importance of Tawau, in Cowie Harbour, as a port of call and centre of planting activity, the head-quarters were transferred there in 1916.

Lahad Datu is reached by a coasting steamer from Sandakan in eighteen hours. There is little of interest in the low even coast-line until the boat comes into Darvel Bay, which is scattered with islands and surrounded with jungle hills, sheltered from storms but with many a coral reef; near the entrance Gaya Island lies like a giant sleeping with his nose turned towards the sky, and in the distance rises Mount Silam, 3,000 feet, beneath whose shadow the original station stood in the early days, whilst on the southern side of the bay are the birds'-nest caves of Madai, second only to Gomanton.

Lahad Datu is a picturesque little station surrounded by coconut trees, and its shops are built upon a wide platform over the sea on either side of a plank thoroughfare many feet above the water. The European houses are upon the hill-side, looking out across the bay. Here with its dome-roofed turret may be seen what is locally known as the "marble palace," formerly the house of the head manager of the New Darvel Bay Tobacco Company. To-day its emptiness gives it a forlorn appearance, but of old it was the scene of unbounded hospitality such as Dutchmen are famed for, and the story of many a feast still lives in the legends of the bay. One comes to my mind. A director of the company was visiting the property and the head manager prepared a banquet to which every European in the neighbourhood sat down. In those days head managers were to their employees what generals are to subalterns, and directors persons so exalted that it would have been considered little short of a sacrilege to "pull their legs." The banquet was a success; an enormous dinner, as is the custom, was eaten; speeches were made; the director, a pianist of no mean ability, was kind enough to

play. Finally the guests came up to say good night—some more hesitatingly than others, but all with deep respect. Last of all the doctor. He, like every one else, had dined well, but he got his farewell done and walked away. Suddenly he turned and shaking the great man warmly by the hand once more he said, very distinctly, " Thank you, sir, thank you again ; I had no idea you played the gramophone so well."

The New Darvel Bay Tobacco Company's property is Segama Estate, the centre of which is eight miles by light railway from its port Lahad Datu. The estate, which of recent years has produced the best tobacco crops in the country, is uniquely situated on the rich alluvial banks of the Segama with a river frontage on either side of over one hundred miles and a subsidiary rubber estate lower downstream. The Segama, which rises in the almost unknown country north of Cowie Harbour, is about three hundred miles long, for sixty of which it is navigable by launches and for two hundred by native boats as far as the Barrier Falls. The river has never been ascended to its source, but it was given much attention by early pioneers, and for many years hopes ran high that the alluvial gold which was found in its banks would prove the making of North Borneo, a hope which up to the present time has not been fulfilled.

The country inland between Lahad Datu and Tawau is some of the least known and hardest in the territory. Lahad Datu is connected by a telegraph line running across country from Sandakan, but until a wireless station was installed there Tawau was entirely cut off from the outer world and could only be reached by sea. This is the position in which the little station of Simporna, on the coast midway between Lahad Datu and Tawau, is to-day. Simporna lies opposite Bum Bum Island at the north end of a deep channel which opens into a lovely bay, completely sheltered and with deep water close inshore. The station was established by Governor Crocker in 1887 as a haven for the refugees from Sulu when the Spaniards were engaged in operations against the Sultan. It was christened Simporna—place of rest [1]—in the hope that

[1] More properly " beautiful."

the name would prove a happy augury for the harassed people, as indeed it did.

The Government station consists of a block-house, the upper story of which is assigned to the District Officer, the lower to offices, court, police, barracks and clerks' quarters. As may be imagined, Simporna is not always a place of rest for a Government officer. It is a very lovely spot but very isolated; there are no roads or paths; there is only a small native population, consisting mainly of Bajaus and Sulus. A good deal of sea-produce comes in from the islands, and mother-of-pearl shells of great size, but Simporna is chiefly noted as the Mecca of the brass collector. In the local pawnshop may be found brass pots of every shape and size, gongs and trays, kettles and cannons. Some are very old and some are new—it is for the collector to decide. Brass-hunting is a craze to which few sojourners in Borneo have not succumbed, but it is a harmless one and the brass when polished is very decorative.

From Simporna (where a local steamer calls twice or three times a month) to Cowie Harbour is a steam of twelve hours through seas sprinkled with a thousand tiny isles. The harbour is five miles broad and twenty-five miles long, with depth of water for any ship. In the past it was a dangerous one to navigate, as the captain of more than one vessel found to his cost, but the erection of beacons has improved matters, and at Batu Tinagat, the rocky headland at the entrance of the harbour, there is now a lighthouse showing twenty-five miles.

This headland is one of the most noticeable features of the coast. Native legend has it that it was formerly twice the height it is to-day. Long ago, the story says, there dwelt at Tawau one Hassan, a man of immense stature and enormous strength. He married a girl from the Sibuko river and they lived happily together until the young bride, becoming home-sick as all natives will, asked that she might go back to visit her own village. Hassan, for reasons of his own, turned a deaf ear to all her pleading and refused to let her go. At last, finding the call of her own people too strong, Alimah decided to take the law into her own hands, and one moonlight evening

she stole away into the jungle. It was not long before Hassan discovered her escape and with the great axe he used for felling jungle trees in his hand he followed in pursuit. Alimah fled before him as a leaf before the wind and sought refuge on the very summit of a great rock that rose above the sea with many pinnacles. In his rage Hassan swung the great axe and started to hew down the rock, which yielded to his blows as if it had been a tree, and Alimah had only just time to leap to another peak before the first came crashing to the ground. Again Hassan swung his axe and again Alimah fled, until at last the elders of the village took council and decided that she should be permitted to return to her village twice a month. The first time that she reached the mouth of the Sibuko a great wave of water rose and went sweeping up the river bearing her canoe upon its breast, and tore on until it reached her village, where it set her down. The rock which Hassan had hewn down was called Batu Tinagat—the Felled Rock—and even now when they hear the bore rushing up the Sibuko river (as it does every fourteen days) the natives say, "There is Alimah going home again."

The town of Tawau, founded as a settlement in 1892, lies on the northern side of the harbour, a few miles from Batu Tinagat. As a Government Station it is a pleasant spot enough and very healthy; it has a delightful house looking across the coconut trees to the sea with a shady garden where roses will bloom the whole year long. It is self-contained and the town is well laid out with roads. Coconuts flourish everywhere, and it is chiefly to the increased activity in their cultivation that Tawau owes its prosperity; much of the land is now owned by Japanese, in fact Tawau is fast becoming a small Japanese colony. Two miles by road from Tawau is the Kuhara Company's Estate which, besides having the largest area of planted rubber in the country, has also a large experimental garden in which is planted almost every product of the tropics, and to the east of the town is the Kubota Coconut Estate. On the southern side of the harbour is Sebattik Island, long the bone of contention between British and Dutch, now bisected by the boundary. Here is the depot of the Silimpopon Mines, where ships coming from all parts of the

world find a plentiful supply of coal. The mines themselves, the property of the Cowie Harbour Coal Company, are some distance up the Silimpopon River, a tributary of the Serudong, which, with the Kalabakang, rises in the hills that form the watershed of the Kwamut. Neither is navigable for any distance, for both are merely a succession of difficult rapids. The country drained by these rivers is little known, but it contains some of the finest timber in the whole State. The Serudong flows only a few miles north of the Dutch border, and its western tributaries come from the great range of unnamed hills that divide the district from the Residency of the Interior.

§ 5

The Interior Residency lies like a great inland peninsula in the centre of North Borneo; each of the other Residencies has a share in its boundaries, except on the extreme south, where it adjoins Dutch territory. It is the Switzerland of North Borneo, the only Residency without a port. It may be approached overland from every part of the coast, but by far the easiest means of access is by way of Jesselton and the railway, by which the head-quarters, Tenom, may be reached in eight hours, the train running from Beaufort on alternate days, following the gorge of the Padas River. The scenery here is some of the most magnificent in Borneo. Between steeply rising hills the Padas comes pouring down, as often as not in flood. It turns and twists and winds, flinging itself against the great boulders with which its bed is strewn, now swirling, smooth and yellow, over a deep reach, now a torrent of gleaming whiteness as it tumbles in rapids, jostling along great logs as a policeman moves along a London crowd. There is a kind of wild barbaric splendour about it all and the railway line upon its bank is as incongruous as a piece of orange peel left by a tourist in a forest glade. At the head of the gorge stands a great rock, Batu Penotal, which, say the Muruts, was once a towering buttress that marked the end of the world, where earth met sky. Here was a great pool from which a giant who lived near-by was wont to get water to wash his sago, but, as he was so tall, he bumped his head against

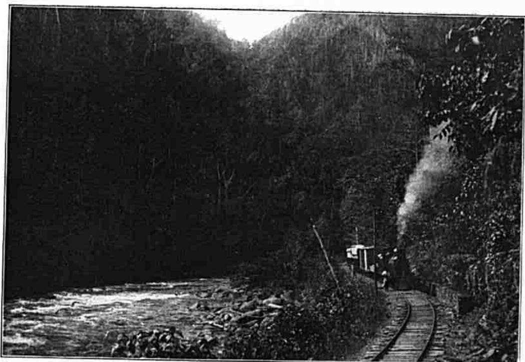


Photo. *Man Sing.*

THE GORGE OF THE PADAS RIVER.

[*To face p. 44.*

the sky every time he visited the pool and finally, in fury, he aimed a mighty kick at the rock, which shivered in pieces and allowed the water to rush through.

Tenom stands a few miles from Batu Penotal on the right bank of the Padas, here joined by its great tributary the Pegalan, which flows down from the north-west, watering the plains of Tambunan and Keningau. The town is 600 feet above sea-level, with cool mornings and cold nights; it is the centre to which the jungle produce of the interior is brought, and its districts lie spread round it, fan-like, north and south and west. Ten miles north are the terminus of the railway and Melalap Rubber Estate; beyond runs the bridle-path to Keningau, the first outstation of the Residency, a ride of twenty miles. The first part of the journey is along the flat, then the path winds across the hills that divide the Keningau district from Tenom and so out on to the broad Keningau Plain. Here, at an altitude of a thousand feet, is one of the most pleasant regions of North Borneo, little known save by the succession of District Officers who have administered it. For them it will always bring memories of open spaces and rolling grassland, too seldom met with in the tropics; of ponies to ride and a vast district to travel over; of a little station on the hill above the Pegalan River, and of the cool nights and mornings spent in that very wonderfully constructed residence, the District Officer's bungalow.

Keningau was the scene of troublous times in olden days, but is now as peaceful as a London suburb, perhaps more so, for no strikes ruffle its calm surface. The Murut villagers in the neighbourhood are rich and prosperous, owning many acres and many buffaloes. Not far from the station is the Government Stock Farm, newly started but with prospects of a flourishing career.

South-west from Keningau a branch bridle-path crosses the wide plain watered by the Sook River, which is the largest tributary of the Pegalan and rises in the neighbourhood of the Witti Range. Leaving the Sook, the path climbs the watershed and branches to Mesopo, where there is a small station on the river of that name, itself a tributary of the Penawan, which flows south. The path ends at Sapulot, the heart of the

Murut and one-time head-hunting country, a vast highland of jungle hills and twisting streams.

As well as this great area on the south-west the district also extends a considerable distance to the north-west, the boundary being the Ayo Ayo River, a tributary of the Pegalan, seventeen miles along the main bridle-path. Crossing dividing spurs, the path leaves Murut country and comes down on the populous Tambunan Plain, scattered with the bamboo houses of the Dusuns, and after a ride of fifty-seven miles from Melalap the traveller reaches Tambunan Station, 2,000 feet above the sea. The site of the District Officer's house is a fine one on a hill looking across the rice-fields with Kinabalu to the north and Mount Trusmadi, 8,000 feet, to the east. Tambunan is famous for its rice and has the advantage of being the least expensive station in the country, though the happy days when fowls could be obtained for 2½d. a head are gone for ever. The climate is as healthy as any in the tropics; at least two blankets are necessary at night, and Spartan indeed is he who ventures to take a bath in one of the Pegalan's icy pools.

From Tambunan to the coast it is a three days' stiff journey over the hills, and three days' by bridle-path to Tenom. Both routes are used by the natives when taking their jungle produce and tobacco to market, for, by disposing of it on the coast, they obtain a better price, the trader having then no railway freight to pay. There are a few Chinese shopkeepers at Tambunan and these drive a prosperous trade buying rice, native tobacco, rattan and wild rubber, most of their business being done by barter. Before the shops were established Tambunan was a happy hunting-ground for the small trader from the coast, a fact from which some would derive the name Tambunan, which means "heap" in Malay. It is said that in the olden days the Dusuns of these parts were a most rapacious tribe, proficient in every form of cheating and utterly unscrupulous. So it was that as every trader or visitor left the place he dropped a stone on the outskirts of the village and cursed it as heartily as he knew how. In time these stones grew into a mighty pile and the village became known as Tambunan—or the Heap. This little story is probably quite untrue. From what one knows of

the habits of the itinerant trader it is much more likely that the boot was on the other foot and that, if such a heap of stones ever existed, it was made by the victimized Dusuns casting down stones and cursing the departing merchants when, as one of Mr. W. W. Jacobs' heroes would say: "They see 'ow they'd been done." [1]

Beyond Tambunan the bridle-path runs on for 40 miles to Ranau, with a branch leading to the large village of Bundu Tuhan and on up the great dividing range between the Interior and the West Coast, where it meets the path from Kota Belud and so links up with the West Coast and Marudu Bay bridle-path systems. Ranau, a substation of Tambunan, stands on an oblong plain 1,600 feet above the sea, surrounded by mountains and under the very eye of Kinabalu. Here, it may be, is the solution of the Kinabalu Lake. *Ranau* in Dusun is another form of the Malay *danau* meaning "lake," and the word is used for a field of wet rice land. It is possible that formerly the country was subject to floods which earned it the name of Ranau. Indeed, an elderly Dusun once informed me that in the days of his youth there had been nothing but a sheet of water where the Government station stands to-day. However this may be, both Mr. W. B. Pryer and Mr. X. Witti proved while exploring in the early days that no lake actually existed near Kinabalu.

The Ranau district embraces the country drained by the upper waters of the Labuk and Sugut Rivers and finally meets the borders of the Marudu district. This is the limit of the Interior Residency to the north; to the south it extends from Tenom to the Dutch Border, and there remains to be discussed the ugly duckling of the Residency, the Pensiangan district. The way lies south from Tenom across the wide Padas River by ferry from Tenom Lama, the old town; thence to Sapong Rubber Estate (formerly, like Melalap, under tobacco cultivation) by a cart road for eight miles. The bridle-path begins again beyond the planted boundary of the estate and runs along the flat until it crosses the Padas once more at

[1] Mr. F. J. Moysey, to whom I am indebted for advice on several points, observes that Tambunan means more properly "a collection of heaps"—or hillocks. This is the formation.

Kamabong, where there is a small police-station and halting-house. Beyond Kamabong the path leaves the river and Tomani (the original head-quarters of the district) on the west and, as it begins to ascend the great range which forms the watershed of the rivers that flow to the west and to the east, enters the jungle, rarely emerging again on to flat clear land. The grandeur of the forest, the tangle of climbing creepers and the rasping note of the cicadæ may well stir the imagination for a while, but as the path goes on day after day winding up hill and down valley with never a sight of a village and rarely of a native clearing, one begins to realize what it means to live in such country, alone, seven days from anywhere, for months on end.

Rundum, which became head-quarters of the district as peaceful penetration advanced, is just beyond the fifty-second milestone from Tenom, three days' ride. The station lies, as it were, at the bottom of a cup whose sides are formed by enormous jungle hills; the buildings were constructed entirely of locally-hewn timber and, as no planks were available, tree-bark was used for the walls and flooring of the District Officer's house and office. This is stripped from the largest jungle trees, flattened out and attached with lengths of rattan. Its dull reddish-brown tint has a decorative effect, but for practical purposes it has its disadvantages. It is a home for innumerable insects which bore unceasingly and leave fine powder of all-pervading red dust behind them; it harbours myriads of cockroaches with appetites as hearty as quartermasters but not nearly so discriminating, and woe to the unwary who does not varnish the covers of his precious books or forgets to close his inkpot, for the cockroaches, not content with eating his books and drinking his ink, will leave a blue-black trail behind them wherever they may chance to roam.

The native meaning of Rundum is "cheerless" and no name could be more appropriate, for the station is a gloomy spot except when the sun is shining. It is very healthy and the climate is almost bracing; the thermometer often stands at 55° in the mornings. The station is built on the bank of the Rundum, which, like all Borneo rivers of the interior, is quick to flood. Time after time the flimsy foot-bridge

to the shops has been washed away, and the thunder of the torrent as it comes down after heavy rain, pounding great boulders together, is like the noise of an artillery bombardment. Rundum, however, has its compensations: excellent European vegetables can be grown there.

After the Rundum rebellion of 1915, when the place was nearly wiped out, the head-quarters of the district were moved to Pensiangan, which is now linked up with Tenom by a continuation of the bridle-path from Rundum, whence it is a journey of four days. The station, which was burnt in its half-completed stage during the rebellion, stands at the junction of the Tagul and Siliu rivers, which flow to the south. If ever there was an "outpost of the Empire" it is here. It is connected with Tenom by telephone, and it is even possible to speak to Tambunan, one hundred and seventy miles away. Otherwise the little station is seven days from civilization. There could hardly be a more isolated spot in the world, for the whole district is one conglomeration of switchback hills, the only sign of cultivation a stray Murut clearing here and there, the only sign of life a stray Murut village perched high upon a crest. The whole area hardly contains ten acres of flat land, and it was one of life's little ironies that the officer stationed there should win a bicycle in a raffle not long ago. Some distance below the station the Tagul River is joined by the Talankai; it is then known as the Pensiangan or Lagungan, and forms the upper waters of the great Sembakong, which, flowing through Dutch territory, eventually pours into Sibuko Bay, to the south of Cowie Harbour. Pensiangan is only half a day's journey by boat from the Dutch Border—denoted by a concrete pillar on the river bank. In this part of the district there is a considerable business carried on between the natives and Arab traders from Dutch Borneo; these traders are for the most part knaves and need very careful watching, being ever ready to foster any intrigue that they think may bring profit to themselves.

It is proposed in the near future to move the head-quarters of the district once again, this time to Sapulot, which will be connected with Pensiangan by a bridle-path. This will be a more central position for the administration of this vast

district of jungle hills, and will relieve the Keningau officer of some of his remoter territory.

It has not infrequently been asked why the Chartered Company finds it worth while to administer a part of the territory so wild, so little capable of development and with so few resources. Why not hand it back to the Muruts to carry on the feuds of their forefathers undisturbed? It is a question that might well be asked by a shareholder anxious to see his dividends increase, for the district does not and is never likely to pay its way by many thousands of dollars a year. Why then waste money on European officers, clerks, police, bridle-paths, transport and public works? There is an answer to all this, which is that the Company is responsible for the administration of the territory it has acquired; it holds sway over the country and has a duty to perform in giving its people the advantage of a civilized Government, even if those advantages are not always at first appreciated. The British North Borneo Company is, it is true, a business concern, but its sole object cannot be said to be the earning of dividends for its shareholders since, if it has privileges granted by its Charter, it also has obligations similarly imposed. The Company has always been actuated by the highest motives in governing the aborigines of its territory, and has behaved in accordance with the highest traditions of British administration. It certainly taxes its natives, but not oppressively, and it certainly has never abandoned to its fate a whole area simply because it is not a profitable undertaking.

CHAPTER III

NATIVE POPULATION

THE identity of North Borneo's first inhabitants and whence they came is an enigma. The only secrets of a tribe with customs other than those which exist to-day are held by some caves in the neighbourhood of the Kinabatangan River and in Darvel Bay, where there have been found, resting high upon the rocky ledges, curious iron-wood coffins, grotesquely carved, containing human skeletons, gongs, weapons and ornaments. Even these are probably not of great antiquity, for Mr. W. B. Pryer records a tradition that the coffins were deposited by the Sabahans, a tribe once numerous on the east coast, and he also mentions that in his day the Tambunwha people were wont to place their dead in iron-wood coffins after embalmment.[1] Beyond these few relics the ages have left nothing; there are no ancient buildings, no monuments, no idols, in fact no vestiges of an older civilization. The natives themselves have no written language, no chronicles that might reveal the mystery of their origin; their only traditions are but fairy tales.

The whole native population of North Borneo is only 197,000, and it is certain that it was far more numerous a hundred years ago. Head-hunting and epidemics both helped to depopulate the country in the past, but with the coming of settled government matters have improved and the numbers are increasing yearly. The two great pagan peoples of North Borneo are the Dusuns and the Muruts. Both these names are somewhat loosely applied to cover a number of tribes, and although some authorities consider the Muruts to be the true aborigines of the country, yet they are nearly related to the

[1] *British North Borneo Herald*, October, 1886.

Dusuns, and both almost certainly sprang from a common stock notwithstanding the fact that to-day they exhibit material differences both in language and customs.

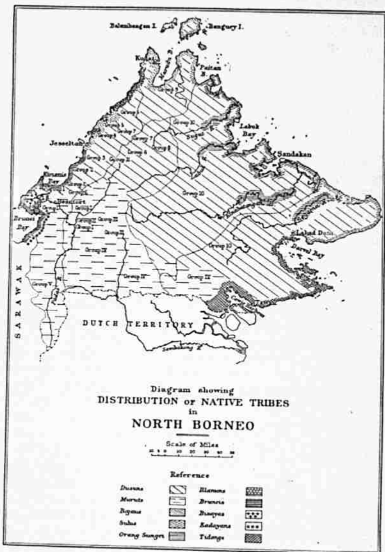
In their great work *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo* [1] Messrs. Hose and McDougall class the Dusuns under the Murut tribes as being closely allied, and they think it probable that the Muruts were originally immigrants from Annam, coming to Borneo either by way of the Philippine Islands or possibly direct. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Abors of Upper Burma and the aborigines of Formosa resemble the Muruts very closely in appearance. In fact, if a Formosan wearing nothing but his loin-cloth were set down in a Murut village it would be difficult to tell him from a Murut youth.

It is, however, in the realm of the ethnologist that such matters lie. For others who have no great concern with "the how and the why and the wherefore" it is enough to say that the general distribution of the native population of North Borneo is that the Muruts occupy the hilly uplands of the far interior, the Dusuns the plains, the downs and the coastal ranges; some of the east-coast rivers are occupied by Orang Sungei or River Folk, who are probably Islamized Dusuns, while the fringe of the coast is inhabited by Bajaus, with a scattering of Bruneis, Bisayas, Kadayans, and Illanuns on the west coast, and of Sulus, Tidongs, and Bugis on the east.

All this coast population is Mohammedan and comes of a pure Malay stock, whose settlements, although existing in North Borneo for several hundreds of years, are nevertheless of a more recent date than those of the pagan inhabitants; in fact it is probable that the new-comers ousted the Dusuns from their settlements along the coast, and that the Muruts in their turn were forced to retire farther inland from the districts which the Dusuns hold to-day.

All these tribes, and especially the pagan tribes, have many divisions and subdivisions into full details of which it is beyond the scope of this work to go, for a large tome might (and it is to be hoped some day will) be written on this native population

[1] Vol. ii, p. 247 *et seq.*


Balembangan I.
Banguey I.
Kudat
Paitan B.
Labuk Bay
Jesselton
Sandakan
Kimanis Bay
Beaufort
Brunei Bay
Lahad Datu
Darvel Bay
SARAWAK
DUTCH TERRITORY
Diagram showing
DISTRIBUTION OF NATIVE TRIBES
in
NORTH BORNEO
Scale of Miles
Reference
Dusuns
Muruts
Bajaus
Sulus
Orang Sungei
Illanuns
Bruneis
Bisayas
Kadayans
Tidongs

alone. Here an analysis of each clan, its distinctions in customs, habits and language would be wearisome to the general reader, while to those who know the country well there would be omissions were an attempt made to compass it within a single chapter.

It will be sufficient therefore to indicate the main divisions of each tribe, together with some of its characteristics, while in Appendix IV will be found a list of twenty-five words in the various dialects for purposes of comparison. It must be remembered, however, that it is almost impossible to confine the North Borneo natives in any very distinct divisions either of language or of custom. To the superficial observer all Dusuns are one tribe, speaking one language, Dusun, and looking very much alike. Yet the longer one lives among them the more one learns how great the differences in custom, dialect and even appearance can be between natives living in villages not a day's march apart. The nature of the country, especially in the interior, tends to isolate the inhabitants, and consequently the development of individual traits in small communities becomes inevitable. At the same time it may be said with certainty that, though it has been the subject of speculation in the past, the race of men with tails only exists in the imagination of native story-tellers. Once in the interior I was told of a village of such men. The tails were short and stiff, my informant said, and when the owners sat down they had little holes in the floor through which they pushed their slightly inconvenient appendages. The village was said to be only a day's march away, but I never found it, and I am afraid that, like many another traveller, I was gulled, which shows that even Muruts have a sense of humour. Nevertheless there may once have been something to give rise to the tradition, probably a peculiarity of dress. One is suggested by Frank Hatton, who in his *Diary* describes how he found on the upper Labuk a tribe whose members were accustomed to eat monkeys and fastened the skins round their waists, letting the tails hang down behind so that in the distance they looked like men of the fabled race.

§ 2

The most numerous tribe in North Borneo is that of the Dusuns, who, according to the census of 1921, comprise over half of the scanty native population. The Dusuns may be divided conveniently into two main classes, the Lowland and the Upland or Hill Dusuns, these classes being split up into groups and subdivisions :

CLASS A. THE LOWLAND DUSUNS

Group I. (i) The Bundu Dusuns, who inhabit the rich sago-growing districts north of the Klias River.

II. (ii) The Membakut Dusuns, who occupy the coastal plain from Bongawan towards Beaufort.

(iii) The Papar Dusuns, under whom may be included the Dusuns of Bongawan, Benoni and Kimanis. All these are closely allied to the Membakut people ; a considerable number of the Papar Dusuns have come under the influence of the Roman Catholic Mission.

III. (iv) The Putatan Dusuns. These are the near neighbours of the Papar family and many are also Christians, but they differ considerably in language and custom. With them may be classed the Dusuns of Inanam and Menggatal on the north side of Jesselton.

IV. (v) The Tuaran Dusuns, who exhibit very marked characteristics of their own and material differences in language.

V. (vi) The Tenggilan Dusuns, who inhabit the lowland region between Tuaran and Tempassuk.

(vii) The Tempassuk Dusuns, whose communities stretch from Tenggilan towards Marudu.

VI. (viii) The Tambunan Dusuns, an entirely distinct branch of the tribe, occupying the Tambunan Plain and the neighbouring country. These people rank geographically as up-country Dusuns, but may be classed more conveniently with the lowland Dusuns owing to their similarity of cultivation.

CLASS B. THE HILL DUSUNS

VII. (ix) The Kiaus, the generic name of the up-country Dusuns who dwell in the Tuaran and Tempassuk districts, and in the neighbourhood of Bundu Tuhan, across the divide.

VIII. (x) The Ranau Dusuns, a division comprising the villages on the Ranau Plain and the head waters of the Labuk and Sugut Rivers.

IX. (xi) The Marudu Dusuns, who occupy a vast area from the Tempassuk boundary to the Bengkoka River and beyond as far as Paitan.

(xii) The Rungus Dusuns, a clan with distinct characteristics found in the Kudat and Melobong Peninsulas, and also in the Labuk and Sugut districts.

X. (xiii) The large group which extends in scattered communities from the north of Paitan along the hills drained by the upper waters of the Labuk, Sugut and Kinabatangan Rivers. It includes the Tambunwha to the north, the Dumpas of the Labuk and the Tenggara of the Kinabatangan and Kwamut. The latter are closely akin to the Muruts, in fact in the south the two tribes might almost be said to merge.

XI. (xiv) The Tegas Dusuns, a once warlike tribe inhabiting the high coastal range above the Tambunan Plain.

Even with these groups it is not always easy to know where one begins and another ends. In the old books the Dusuns are usually referred to as Id'aan, but this name is never heard now, though the collective name Dusun is not usually applied by the people to themselves, and was probably originated by the Bajaus. *Dusun* in Malay means "orchard," so that *orang Dusun* would mean "men of the orchards," farmers. Save in rather exceptional cases where part of the tribe has a distinctive and collective name (such as Rungus or Tambunwha), a Dusun normally calls himself by the name of his district or even of his village. His only ideas about the origin of his race are fantastic stories, but it has often been suggested that the Dusuns are descendants of Chinese who settled in the country long ago, are in fact of Chinese origin. This is a theory which must be accepted with great reserve. There is no question that for the past twelve centuries Chinese intercourse with Borneo has been fairly regular, and it only waned when the power of the pirates waxed too powerful in the seventeenth century. It is not difficult to point to Chinese traces among the west coast Dusuns, especially among those of Putatan and Bundu: their old jars, often ornamented with dragons; their gongs, their brass-wire ornaments, and, most of all, their system of wet rice cultivation, which is purely Chinese. Some of the more remote Putatan people wear their hair in short pig-tails and occasionally a strong Chinese cast of countenance is found, especially among the Bundu Dusuns, who are fairer than their neighbours. Writing of seventy years ago, St. John mentions [1] that many natives of Klias, Padas, Membakut and Putatan spoke Chinese very fairly, a thing they certainly cannot do now, but all these points (and many others could be adduced) merely indicate Chinese influence, not Chinese origin, and I think the most that can be said is that in times gone by there were Chinese settlements in various parts of the country and that the settlers, many of whom

[1] *Life in the Forests of the Far East*, vol. i, p. 311.

intermarried with the Dusuns (their own womenfolk not being allowed to leave China), in some places left traces behind them.

Such traditions are to be found among the Dusuns themselves. According to one, the crew of a Chinese tongkong once deserted from Brunei and, settling on the banks of the Klias River, opened up pepper plantations and married Dusun wives; they sent to China for their friends and subsequently, owing to floods and attacks from the Muruts, they moved to the higher ground at Bundu, where their descendants flourish to-day as Dusuns, some families even celebrating Chinese New Year and having in their homes shrines before which incense is burnt in Chinese fashion. Another tradition exists as one of the versions of the Kinabalu dragon legend. It is said that many years ago there was a colony of three thousand Chinese at Putatan. One of them, Po Kong by name, fell in love with the daughter of a Dusun chief who opposed the marriage on the grounds that the girl was already betrothed to one of her own race. Rather than endure separation the young pair fled from Putatan, and after many wanderings found themselves upon the summit of Kinabalu. Although it was evening a strange light kept coming and going, but whence it came they were at a loss to know until they spied the dragon outside his cave alternately swallowing and spitting out an enormous carbuncle of brilliant lustre. Po Kong and his wife got two handfuls of mud; then they waited for their opportunity and, when the jewel was upon the ground, flung the mud straight at the dragon's eyes. Before the half-blinded monster could recover Po Kong seized the jewel and wrapped it in his coat. Instantly all was darkness, but so eager was Po Kong to escape that he left his wife behind and leapt an enormous chasm into which the raging dragon blundered and was killed. Very basely Po Kong never went back to find his wife, but came eventually to Saiap village in the Tempassuk district; here he settled and devoted his time to making enormous jars, some of which may be seen to this day. His memory is kept green, and the present Dusun headman of Saiap claims direct descent from him, but what became of the carbuncle history does not relate.

Enough has been said to show that amongst the Dusuns themselves there are traditions of Chinese influence, even though many are now merged in the realm of myth. How far-reaching this influence was it is not likely that we shall ever know with any certainty. As far as I am aware there are no traces of Chinese words to be found in the Dusun language, though this is not strange when it is remembered that the new generation would learn to speak the language of the Dusun mothers. Moreover, although there are stories of a Chinese colony on the Kinabatangan River, it is only on the north-west coast and on the Tambunan Plain that Chinese traces are found amongst the natives, and in no other parts of the country does the cultivation of wet rice reach the same level.

Indeed, one of the main differences between the Dusun of the plains and his up-country cousin is that the one plants wet rice and the other dry. This has more widely reaching effects than might appear at first. Wet rice, as cultivated at Tambunan and in the districts of the west coast, is planted in flat low-lying land which can be inundated. This land is much sought after and is handed down from generation to generation; it is ploughed annually, and its owner receives a title-deed on which he pays quit rent. He has a definite small holding in the country and in consequence is not nomadic. Moreover as he always plants the same land it follows that he lives in the same village as his father and grandfather did before him.

In this he is a stage further advanced than the hill Dusun, who, having no flat land in which to grow wet rice, plants the hill variety, an entirely different form of cultivation. Until quite recently the up-country Dusun's usual method was to clear and plant a fresh block of virgin jungle for every crop until all the suitable land in the neighbourhood of his village had been used, which occurred in anything from four to six years. By this time his abode needed repair, so he abandoned it and made for new country a few miles away, where he was wont to start his destructive operations again. The Government now restrains him from hacking down virgin forest indiscriminately, but that does not put an end to his semi-nomadic habits, for he clears and plants secondary jungle that has lain fallow for some years and in due course again moves on.

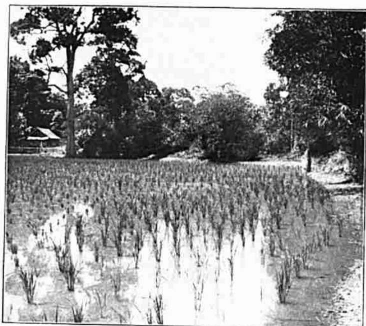


Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

YOUNG RICE.

[*To face p. 58.*

The lowland Dusuns, unlike some of the hill people, have for many years abandoned the old custom of living in the long communal village house. Instead, the various families that make up the community have their separate dwelling-places. These are usually found clustered together, but occasionally one may be seen surrounded by fruit-trees upon a hill that rises gently above the rice-fields. These houses are often well made with hardwood posts, plank or bamboo walls, and roofs thatched with sago leaves. Even in many of the up-country districts separate houses are now to be found where twenty years ago the long house was in vogue. This is a proof of peace and settlement, for the communal system arose from the necessity for self-protection against wandering raiding-parties in the spacious times of head-hunting. In other districts, such as Marudu, the long house still survives, two or three buildings, more rarely one, containing the whole community.

The lowland Dusuns are still more closely linked together by the extraordinary cult of the *gusi* or sacred jar, to which reference will be made hereafter. This jar worship has no counterpart among the hill tribes, though the jars are valued should a family acquire a share in one by marriage.

Differences in language between the plains and the hills are those of dialect and are not fundamental, but within the groups specified the language is more nearly one. A Papar Dusun might at first have much the same difficulty in understanding a Dusun of Marudu as a countryman speaking broad Yorkshire might have in understanding one speaking broad Somerset; also it is to be remembered that all natives are very careless in pronunciation. St. John noticed this and mentions [1] that when collecting vocabularies at Kiau the word for "heavy" was written down *magat, bagat, wagat,* and *ogat,* and the word for "to bathe" *padshu, padsiu* and *madsiu.* With no written language these differences are inevitable, but as a general rule an intelligent Dusun can understand and make himself understood in all dialects, except possibly at Tuaran where the variations are more pronounced than in any other Dusun district.

The lowland Dusun is generally well built, about 5 ft. 4 in.

[1] *Life in the Forests of the Far East,* vol. i, p. 322.

in height, broad and sturdy, with the inevitable squat nose, wide cheek-bones, brown eyes and straight black hair of the Mongolian. His skin is the colour of a coffee-bean, but his face is often pitted with smallpox and not infrequently shows the effect of too much native liquor, when his complexion becomes red and puffy. Usually he affects a pair of blue cotton trousers and a shirt, both extremely dirty; round his waist he wears a native woven scarf in which is held the little brass box that contains his tobacco and the betel-nut that he loves to chew. At most times of the day he has a quid within his mouth, and the red juice discolours his teeth at an early age. When he is not chewing betel-nut he is smoking a long native cigarette or a Cycle Brand. or, if he be a real "nut" a brier pipe. Round his head he wears a cloth wound like a turban without a crown, and perhaps on top of that a wide hat made of coloured rattan, a most effective protection against the sun. For personal adornment he wears a ring or two, a silver coin on a metal band or a coloured stone. He dislikes walking far and prefers to ride a buffalo, which he does with consummate skill, guiding the brute by means of a rope from the nose-ring and retaining his seat in difficult places by grasping the tail. As a rule he can speak Malay, the *lingua franca* of North Borneo, and when he passes you upon the road he will pull off his hat, give you a beaming smile which displays his blackened teeth and say in greeting "*Tabek, Tuan.*" "*Tabek,*" say you. "*Tuan pergi mana?*" he asks naïvely, "Where are you going, Master?" And when he has been told you part with mutual expressions of goodwill.

The Dusuns of Tuaran, together with those of Tenggilan, are in my opinion the pleasantest of the lowland Dusuns, just as the people of Papar and Membakut are the most objectionable. It is inevitable that the native who comes into close touch with civilization should lose his simplicity and become undesirably sophisticated; it is a fact that the Dusuns who live near-by the railway line from Putatan to Membakut have changed very materially during the past fifteen years, and not for the better. For the most part they are very wealthy, as natives go; they have fine rice-fields, much brass, many fruit-trees and herds of buffaloes. The majority are so well off that

they have no need to work. They drink considerable quantities of rice beer and they seldom get up before seven. Prosperity often breeds discontent, and recently they were exploited by persons with a grievance against the Chartered Company until they became insufferable. In 1910, during the rubber boom, the Government sold large areas of land on the west coast to rubber companies. All native rights were rigorously respected, no native holdings were taken except by mutual agreement, and compensation for old graves and for fruit-trees was assessed by Government Officers and paid by the companies concerned. In many cases the so-called owners did not know of the graves' existence until they saw the jungle cleared, and few of the fruit-trees to which they claimed hereditary right had ever been planted by any living agency but that of birds. Nevertheless it was a case of every grave and every tree an owner. Having got this much they started agitating for the land that had been sold, claiming it also as their heritage; this was disallowed, ample native grazing reserves being given them where required. Thereupon they retained the services of the only lawyer in the country and the air became blue with complaints, petitions and suits for many months. Having failed in the North Borneo courts, where their cases were scrupulously dealt with, their backers induced the Aborigines' Protection Society to take up the matter, and the wrangle dragged on until the Colonial Office called for a special inquiry and report. This was made by Sir West Ridgeway and the Hon. Mountstuart Elphinstone sitting with a locally constituted commission, and on this the Colonial Office pronounced the charges against the Chartered Company groundless. This closed the incident and the Society, whose good intentions had outrun its discretion, abandoned the campaign, but at the same time it would have stopped the tongue-wagging still more effectively had the Colonial Office thought fit to appoint an entirely independent commission whose members even the most bitter enemies of the country could not have accused of partiality. It is to be deplored that these Dusuns, who are naturally a pleasant and tractable people, should have been led on to make unjustifiable demands of a Government which has always treated them well, guarded their interests most jealously, given every facility for

the airing of grievances and for the sifting of complaints; it is quite certain that the state of disaffection which for a while existed in these districts would never have reached the proportions it did had it not been for those in the background who, to serve their own ends, hoped to involve the Government in difficulties.

At one time the agitator movement threatened to spread to Tuaran, but the good people of the district did not appreciate squandering in legal charges the comfortable sum they had extracted from Tuaran Rubber Estate for their fruit-trees, and the Papar envoys went home practically empty-handed. Indeed there is little of the agitator about either the Tuaran or the Tenggilan Dusuns. They too are comfortably off, but they are not blatant about it; they not infrequently take too much to drink and, although they are not so industrious as the Tambunan people (deeming it more fitting that their wives should toil), they are at least not such knaves as their neighbours on the Tempassuk plain.

The Dusun female, when young, is a comely, well-built person with great brown eyes, a face as round as a full moon, and hair, glossy with coconut oil, combed straight back from her forehead. She works hard and matures early; like a peony's, her bloom is brief, for she ages rapidly, and when old becomes incredibly ugly. The dress of the Papar girls is most picturesque though (one would think) most unsuited to a hot climate. It consists of a short skirt of black velveteen reaching just below the knee like a kilt without pleats, and a tightly-fitting bodice of the same material, collarless and slightly open at the neck; round the waist is a belt of Singapore silver dollars linked together, and the costume is completed by a little round rattan hat. Elsewhere there is no such uniformity of dress, but as a rule it consists of a similar short skirt made of native-woven cloth, usually of indigo blue and perhaps a peaked hood of a thicker material. The unmarried girls wear a coat, or a piece of cloth covering the breasts, kept in place with a few strands of thin rattan, wearing as ornaments two or three strands of brass rings strung together on rattan round their waists, and large round ear-rings. Fortunately the habit of distending the ears is not fashionable either among men or women. In some

Photo. *Man Sing.*
DUSUN GIRLS OF PUTATAN.

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*
MARUDU DUSUNS.

[*To face p.* 62.

districts, especially Tuaran, it is the custom to wear thick brass anklets, which are most unsightly and clank together as the owner walks along. They must be extremely uncomfortable, but their wearers become so accustomed to their weight that they declare they could not walk without them. The Tuaran women are also peculiar in having a wide blue cloth slung across one shoulder; into this they put their small purchases at market, but if they have to carry anything such as rice in a basket, they carry it upon their heads, a custom foreign to other districts.

The Dusun woman makes a good wife and a good mother. Although she does more work than her lord and master she is by no means downtrodden; she often holds land and other property in her own right and is generally well able to hold her own in an altercation; henpecked husbands are not unknown among the Dusuns and cases of wife-beating are rare. Many of the girls marry Chinese traders, in fact nearly every Chinese shopkeeper in an outstation has a Dusun wife. The children are brought up sometimes as Chinese, but more often as Dusuns, and can be very handsome.

§ 3

Although too much prosperity does not always improve the characters of the lowland Dusuns, they would be nevertheless an asset to the native population of any tropical country. But, man for man, the up-country Dusun is infinitely better. To begin with, he is of much finer physique; he is lighter of skin and fairer; he has to work harder, for ever clambering up and down his hills, and is all the better for it. Usually he does not drink to anything like the same extent as the lowland Dusun. That is to say, he is not a regular drinker. At decent intervals he holds his festivals at which he frequently gets very drunk indeed, but these occasions are few and far between, and in his everyday life he is sober. He is not averse to gin, but as a rule he drinks either *bahr*—coconut toddy—or *tapai*—fermented rice beer. Having abandoned head-hunting these many years he is a law-abiding person, and it is usually only during drinking bouts that quarrels arise, for then tempers are apt to become short and knives easy to draw. He is honest

enough except in the matter of buffaloes, which are his great temptation; he is a good carrier and will carry a load of sixty or seventy pounds upon his back all day up hill and down dale without turning a hair, long after the men of the plains would have given up the ghost.

Nowadays he usually wears an indescribably dirty pair of cotton trousers and a shirt, though sometimes only the loin-cloth or *chawat* of his fathers. His hair is often long and his person is not always over-clean, though he is not afraid of water. In disposition he is a friendly individual and most hospitable, in fact very like a child. If given time to think things out and allowed to come to the point in his own queer long-winded way, he is as easy to have dealings with as any native one could wish to find. He is not so wealthy as the man of the plains, and a drought or a plague of locusts hits him hard, but even so he is a fatalist and prefers to come very near starvation before he will take the regular Government work on bridle-paths that is open to him in times of stress. On the other hand he makes the best class of native estate labour, and he and his comrades are often the backbone of an estate labour force, for as long as he is under a European who understands his idiosyncrasies he will work well. He is a great agriculturist and a great walker. You may meet him any day in the jungle carrying a heavy load of tobacco or of rice or Indian corn on his way down to a native market, where he either sells to the Chinese or exchanges his produce for salt and fish and other necessaries from the coast. As a rule he is shy of strangers at first. When he meets you on the path in the jungle he will, if he has had any previous dealings with white men, give you good-day. If not, he will stare at you vacantly with open mouth. But you have only to say a word to put him at his ease and make him smile. Usually he is not a Malay scholar unless he happens at one time or another to have been a guest in a Government gaol, but he much appreciates your being able to say a word or two of Dusun and will then recognize you as a friend indeed.

His wife, as well as looking after the children (who as a matter of fact get little pampering as soon as they are able to stagger about by themselves), helps in the fields, hews the

wood, looks after the fowls and pigs, prepares the food, and does the cooking, whilst in the evenings she carries water home to the village in long bamboos. Her dress is little more than the short blue skirt, but some tribes, such as the Rungus, still retain the spiral brass-wire ornaments round their necks and arms and legs. It is strange that the Dusun belles have never been induced to abandon these contrivances, for they are both noisy and uncomfortable and must be a great encumbrance to any lover. Having an even harder life the hill woman fades even earlier than her lowland sister, and for pure hideousness there is nothing to equal an old hill Dusun crone, unless it be a Murut.

§ 4

The Murut comes nearer to the popular conception of the Wild Man than any other native of North Borneo. Murut is another form of the Bajau word *belud* meaning "mountain," and as his name implies he is a man of the hills, for, if the Tenom, Keningau and lower Padas districts be excepted, in his country plains are as rare as hills in Holland.

The Muruts, who number about 28,500, may be conveniently classed, like the Dusuns, in groups and subdivisions:

CLASS A. THE MURUTS OF THE PLAINS

Group I. (i) The Keningau Muruts, who inhabit the Keningau Plain in the neighbourhood of the Government station.

(ii) The Tenom Muruts, who occupy the villages of the Tenom Plain. The name by which these people call themselves is Temogun.

(iii) The Muruts in the valley of the lower Padas.

CLASS B. THE HILL MURUTS

II. (iv) The Peluans. Peluan is the name given to a Murut tribe which is to be found on the hills about the Padas River in the neighbourhood of Tenom; they now extend eastwards to the country watered by the Dalit River, a tribu-

tary of the Sook, and westwards over the divide between the Interior Residency and the Sipitong district.

III. (v) The Dalit Muruts, hillmen or quasi-hillmen, who hold the undulating land of the Dalit and Sook valleys, and extend as far as the head waters of the Penawan River.

IV. (vi) The Rundum Muruts, who occupy a large area in the neighbourhood of the Tagul River, stretching from the north of Rundum Station to the Dutch Border.

(vii) The Tagals. These are Rundum Muruts who have settled in the neighbourhood of Bole, where they are known as Tagals, apparently because they came from the Tagul River.

(viii) The Kolurs, a tribe living in Dutch territory. A small number of these have settled (probably to escape raids) in the Bole district.

(ix) The Sapulot Muruts, who occupy the country from the hills south of the Sook Plain to the Sapulot River.

(x) The Pensiangan (or Lagungan) Muruts. These are closely allied to the Sapulot people and are their neighbours in the north, extending south to the Dutch Border and south-east to the head waters of the Serudong and Kalabakang Rivers.

V. (xi) The Lun Dayoh Muruts, who inhabit the upper waters of the Padas River, and stretch away into Sarawak.

VI. (xii) The Kwijaus, a people entirely distinct from any other Murut tribe, and to be found on the western hills above the Keningau Plain.

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*
MURUT WITH BLOWPIPE.

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*
TENOM MURUTS.

To face p. 66.

As with the Dusuns it must be understood that these groups are made for convenience, and that even among the subdivisions there may be considerable variations in the dialect and custom.

Although there are plain and hill tribes of Muruts the difference between the two is not so clearly marked as among the Dusuns, except in the case of the Keningau Muruts, who are ahead of any other Murut tribe in culture, and plant wet rice to a fair extent. In fact they are analogous to the coast Dusuns. They are often wealthy, possessing large herds of buffaloes, good rice lands and much brass. They are of more settled habits than the hill Muruts, and are not for ever moving their villages from place to place; in most cases they have abandoned the communal village house for the smaller family one. They have long given up head-hunting and many of the younger generation go forth as "boys," travel a while in the little land of North Borneo and return to their startled homes wearing collars and ties and patent-leather shoes. They smoke brier pipes, use scent upon their handkerchiefs and plaster their hair with redolent pomade. They have become enlightened. But the veneer of civilization acquired by a Murut is hardly more improving than varnish on a seventeenth-century oak dresser.

Far more interesting is the Murut of the hills. In appearance he is shorter and slighter than the Dusun and often fairer, thanks to the shade of the jungle in which he lives. So far from parting his hair, he usually wears it long with a fringe that comes half-way down his forehead, but twisted up behind and kept in place by a long bone hairpin. These hairpins are often rudely carved, ornamented with tufts of hair and bedecked with fragments of looking-glass. He is fond of ear-rings, but besides them he wears only a loin-cloth and possibly a coat. Of old his entire wardrobe was made from tree-bark, and *chawat* with short, sleeveless coats of this material are worn by the older men still. The younger generation, however, make their *chawat* from the red cloth of the Chinese trader, and a dandy will use as much as fifty feet, winding it round his waist and leaving a tassled end hanging down in front. Loin-cloth is too mean a word for such a garment. Behind is attached a

small portable mat of woven rattan or possibly of bear-skin; this is invariably used when sitting down outside the house. The hill Murut is very wiry, and his legs (on which he wears a number of fibre bands called *unus* below the knee in the manner of garters) are very well developed, though they are frequently bandy, owing, it is said, to his continual climbing. Round his neck he wears as often as not a bead necklace or one made of animals' teeth. Round his waist is tied a small box made from a joint of bamboo, in which he keeps his tobacco watertight, and a little bamboo tube in which he carries his flint and utensils for making fire; hooked on to his *chawat* by two pieces of brass wire is his pipe. This pipe is a fearful contrivance, and is guaranteed to turn the most hardened European smoker green. It consists of a cylinder of bamboo twelve to eighteen inches long with a small brass or wooden bowl about an inch from one end. Into this bowl, which is about a quarter the size of an ordinary pipe, the Murut crams his tobacco, lights it, and then, having taken one or two enormous puffs down the bamboo mouthpiece, inhales violently. The air is choked with the reek of native tobacco and there arise great clouds of smoke, followed by a sound of coughing and expectoration. Immediately after all this you notice that he lays the pipe aside. The smoke is over. Mercifully so, for no pipe and few smokers could endure so drastic a performance for very long.

With the exception of the Lun Dayohs and the Kwijaus, both of which tribes have a distinct dialect of their own, the Murut language does not vary very greatly save for differences in pronunciation. The same may be said of customs and culture within the main groups. The Kwijaus however are different from any other Muruts; they form a kind of buffer state between the west coast Dusuns and the Muruts of the interior, and some have held them to be a curious blend of the two. They plant tobacco and hill rice, and, since the Kwijau Rebellion of 1896, they have given the Government little trouble and rarely show themselves, though they live within a short distance of Keningau Station.

The Lun Dayohs also show distinct variations. By old travellers they were known as Sun Dyaks, and their name is

probably derived from *ulun darat*, meaning "people of the interior," as they originally came from Dutch Borneo and, being superior to the Tagals in strength and numbers, had no difficulty in establishing themselves in the neighbourhood of the upper Padas. Their houses are smaller than those in Murut country and are similar to the Marudu Dusun type, having a wide veranda running the whole length of the house, with family cubicles opening on to it from one side.

On the other hand the standard hill Murut house, a communal building often as much as 200 feet long, containing the whole village, is built with two rows of cubicles separated by a passage down the middle. This passage opens out in the centre of the house on to the dancing floor which, in the manner of the fashionable London ballrooms, is made to sway, but springing timbers take the place of chains. On either side of the dancing floor and raised a few inches from it is an open room. One is the village "lounge" and dining-room; on the hearth a fire is nearly always burning (for the nights are cold) and here the community meet to feed and smoke and chat. The other room is the guest-chamber, set aside for visitors and for strangers passing through to another village. It is given up to the District Officer on his travels. Here he sets his camp bed and table; dresses, reads, sleeps and has his meals, all *coram publico*. One of the neighbouring cubicles is commandeered as a kitchen and another as a bathroom; there is no bathing in the local stream, unless he wants an hour's climb up and down a shadeless hill, for the Murut house is ever built perched upon the highest razor-back hill that the neighbourhood has to offer, and these in Borneo are not few. From this point of vantage the inmate is well out of the way of stray raiding parties or, if any come, he has time to get warning of their approach. In the olden days even the beaks of the cocks were tied up to prevent their giving away the position of the village. The Borneo fowl is no respecter of the night hours; he will start his crowing at 10 or 11 p.m. and keep going steadily till daylight without turning a feather, so that many a European traveller, as he composed himself for slumber under the cluster of dried human skulls, has wished that the custom still prevailed.

As with the Dusuns, so with the Muruts: all their homes

are indescribably dirty. They are built on piles and raised several feet off the ground, the entrance being reached by means of a notched log or a crazy ladder. At either end of the house are doors, open in the daytime and with small circular holes at the base for the convenience of the village dogs when closed at night. The floor and walls are made of tree-bark, flattened out, or of split bamboo; the roof is of *atap*, made from *nipah* and sago leaves, or when these are scarce, it is thatched with dried *lalang* grass; beneath the house, where refuse of every kind finds a resting-place, are the village pigsties and fowl-roosts, an arrangement which to the Murut gains in convenience what it lacks in sanitation. Murut houses are abandoned as soon as they begin to rot, for by then the surrounding country has been planted and it is time to move. The Muruts carry this semi-nomadic existence to greater lengths than the Dusuns; in some parts it is difficult to keep pace with their changes of location, and it is usual to call a village by the name of its headman rather than by the name of the river near which it stands. District Officers who are keen on map-making are continually faced with this problem, for it is enough to break any amateur map-maker's heart when he fixes the position of the villages in his district with care and then finds twelve months later that half of them have moved. The administration is doing its best to eradicate this restless trait, but, as the late Mr. N. B. Baboneau once said, it is rather like trying to tame monkeys.

In his personal habits the Murut is no Pussyfoot. The Anti-Saloon League would not obtain many converts in the interior of North Borneo. His beverage is rice beer, which he drinks through straws, much in the same way as one imbibes an ice-cream soda, but he goes one better than the Yorkshireman who liked his champagne in a bucket, for the Murut prefers his liquor in a jar. Like the Dusuns, the Muruts who live on the fringe of civilization are the least temperate. The people of Keningau are probably the most drunken crowd in North Borneo, drinking much and often; the Murut of the hills is more fain to keep his orgies for high days and holidays, though in such cases he is apt to make up for past abstention and may remain drunk for days. He recognizes three distinct stages of

Photo *N. B. Baboneau.*

A MURUT BOY.

[*To face p.* 70.

intoxication. *Magauk* may be translated as "drunk," but *magauk* without any qualifying adverb merely signifies being (as the Scotch say) "well to do." *Magauk kepioh* means "blottoh," while *magauk ke-pi-pi-oh* (with great emphasis on the first *pi*) denotes "blind to the world and incapable of movement." It is under the last category that the Murut generally falls, for when he gets drunk he believes in doing it thoroughly; his womenfolk do not blush to take copious libations too, and even administer sips to babes-in-arms.

Nevertheless they are a hard-working lot, the Murut ladies, just as are the Dusun women of the hills. When young they are often handsome and strangely fair, but they wither quickly into wrinkled crones. For all that, old maids are practically unknown and in bygone days no Murut damsel would look at a suitor who had not taken at least one head. In some parts of the country both sexes file their teeth, and, in one of his diaries, Witti notes that it is a bad joke to ask a fading lady how many times she has had her teeth filed, as the operation is performed about once in ten years. The women's dress is similar to that of the Dusuns, and the young girls and matrons cover their breasts in the same fashion, a concession to propriety which is dispensed with when the matron becomes a mother. They are always attached to their children and if only they could be taught some elements of hygiene and cleanliness they might be called good mothers.

The Muruts' most ardent champion could not claim cleanliness as a Murut virtue. Frankly, both in habits and in person all hill Muruts are filthy. Bernard Shaw once described baths as the luxury of the dirty, but in this respect Muruts are models of economy. Living on the tops of the hills as they do water is hard to come by; it is generally led to the village from a mountain trickle by a series of split bamboos resting on forked sticks a few feet from the ground. In this manner enough for drinking and cooking purposes only is obtained, so that bathing is not possible until a visit is paid to the river down below, and that may not happen for weeks on end. At the same time a Murut often does his best; he has a bath when he comes to a river, and you may sometimes see one sitting after a climb, bathed in perspiration, scraping the dirt off his

body with a knife. It is doubtful if such clothes as he has are ever washed, and in consequence of all this he is liable to get appalling sores, afflictions of the eyes and skin diseases. The most prevalent of these (common among the Dusuns too) is called *kurap*, which causes the whole body to become rough and scaly, and is intensely irritating. In head-hunting days it was no uncommon thing for the disease to be *bought*, as the afflicted person had to spend most of the night scratching and so was better able to remain on the *qui vive* for raiding parties. *Kurap* is very contagious and the children fare no better than their elders ; in any case they are rarely, if ever, washed, and it is pitiful to see these tiny mites going about apparently quite unconcerned with great festering ulcers. Infant mortality is very high and blindness is frequent, while to make matters worse the wandering Dyak and Arab traders have introduced syphilis into the Murut tribes, in many cases with disastrous results.

The average Murut is not more particular about his diet than he is about his person. He leads a frugal existence upon tapioca (*ubi kayu*) eked out with *kladi*, a kind of yam, and Indian corn—rice is usually kept for making *tapai*—with the occasional luxury of fresh fish caught in the river, or dried fish bought from the Chinese shops ; but he will quite cheerfully pick up a dead snake, a frog or a rat and have it for his dinner, while a monkey, shot with his blowpipe from an ambush in a tree, is looked upon as a great delicacy.

Every race, however, has its little fads and failings, and the faults of the Murut are mainly those of unenlightenment. It would be unjust to condemn him because he is not what he has never had a chance to be. Notwithstanding his little idiosyncrasies the up-country Murut is perhaps the most likeable native of North Borneo, where it may be said that the farther one goes from civilization the pleasanter are the people one meets. It is doubtful if any native of any country in the world is so easy to get on with as the Murut in his normal state, though admittedly he is not such an asset to the country as the more prosperous Dusun, nor is he so encouraging from an administrative point of view. He is the primitive animal, hardly touched by the outside world ; he is hospitable, good-

humoured and honest, so honest that theft is an almost unknown crime, except an occasional theft of some one else's wife. He is not a cheat though he has a good supply of native cunning, and as compared with other natives he is not usually untrustworthy; his chief vice is getting drunk, and it is during drunken orgies that affrays usually occur, for he is not naturally quarrelsome. His head-hunting habits, of which more will be said later, had been handed down to him from time immemorial, but these, through the tactful efforts of the District Officers, he has been induced to abandon. He can keep a promise once given like a gentleman and he appreciates just treatment; on the other hand he is quick to resent an injustice, whether real or imaginary, and, being a mass of superstition, is easily led, so that the strictest possible supervision of the wandering traders among Murut tribes is always necessary, for among such a race one man may do, and has done, incalculable harm.

§ 5

The pagan tribes form about three-fifths of North Borneo's total native population, a Mohammedan element making up the remainder. Of these Islamic people by far the most important are the Bajaus, or Sea-Gipsies, of whom there are about 31,000, and unlike the pagans they have definite traditions of their origin. It is said that several hundred years ago a certain Sultan of Johore had a beautiful daughter, Dayang Ayesha, with whom both the rulers of Brunei and Sulu fell in love. Ayesha herself favoured the suit of the Sultan of Brunei, but as his rival was the better match she was packed off to Sulu with a strong escort of men and war-boats. Thereupon the Brunei prince, nothing if not a dashing lover, led out his own fleet and gave battle on the high seas; when the fight was at its fiercest he brought his own *prahu* alongside that of the princess, took her aboard and sailed away before any of the escort could stop him. The Johore people were aghast. Death stared them in the face whether they went on to Sulu or returned to Brunei, so, cruising the seas, they picked up a living as best they could, stealing their wives from unwary villages. Sometimes they settled on unfrequented islands, but mainly they lived as outcasts in their boats until

gradually some of them formed scattered piratical communities along the coast of North Borneo.

How much truth there is in this story it is hard to say, for though the incident may well have happened it could hardly have been responsible for all the Bajaus, who were far more numerous a hundred years ago than they are at present.[1] They are a more united people than the pagans, and they do not exhibit any great variations in dialect or customs. To-day they are established in villages along the coast and on the islands from Gaya Bay to Cowie Harbour, though some, especially on the east coast, still prefer a gipsy existence, their boats taking the place of caravans and the high seas the place of the high roads; in the Tempassuk district their settlements extend considerable distances inland. Inasmuch as they do not drink intoxicants nor eat pork they are Mohammedans; the Simporna Bajaus are the most strict, but the observances of the remainder are superficial, and religious beliefs are interwoven with savage superstitions. Outwardly, however, they observe the Law, have their own priests and their own mosques; the more devout observe the Mohammedan Fasting Month, or will say they are doing so if there is any work at hand, for the Bajau is a typical Malay, utterly lazy and careless of to-morrow. No one was ever born more tired. He is a graceful liar and an accomplished cheat. He loves fine clothes and gay colours, but is too indolent to work for the money that will bring them. He is an impartial lover and a jealous husband; he generally has good cause to be the last.

The average Bajau is well built and often handsome, with bright eyes, a graceful figure and close-cropped hair; he swims like a fish and is an intrepid seaman; to watch him handling his small dugout with an enormous sail in a tearing wind would earn the admiration of a member of the R.Y.S. He is a splendid horseman, riding his little native pony either barebacked or with a wooden saddle and gripping with his heels. He earns a precarious livelihood by fishing, collecting sea-produce and making salt. And, as he can earn enough in a day to

[1] In this connection Capt. A. B. C. Francis has pointed out to me that many words in common use among the Bajaus are high court Malay.

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

A TEMPASSUK BAJAU.

[*To face p. 74.*

keep him for a week, he worries about little else, though when working on an estate he often makes a good coolie as long as he can get periodical leave, for continuous work is anathema to him. At all times he is a pleasant rogue with agreeable manners; he loves a joke, is generally laughing, and is never happier than when singing his long *pantun* in a high nasal drone; as a fatalist he is an untiring gambler, and any cash he ever has soon finds its way into the pockets of the Gambling Farmer. He is generally wretchedly poor though he has no need to be, and lives in a crazy shack built over the water. Here he has the advantage of the Murut and makes use of it, for both he and his family bathe twice a day.

A great part of the Bajau's life, especially in the Tempassuk district, is taken up with stealing buffaloes in one part of the country and selling them in another, sometimes acting as agent to a Dusun or having Dusun agents himself. The domestic buffalo of North Borneo often wanders at its own sweet will over large tracts of country and a lonely buffalo is to any Bajau an overwhelming temptation.

> How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds
> Makes ill deeds done.

Buffalo theft is an extremely easy crime to perpetrate and a harder one to prove. In order to check buffalo theft and other intrigue the Government allows no Bajau to go up-country without special permission. This is an excellent regulation and is made with the object of protecting the simpler Dusun from the quick-witted man of the coast. For years before the Chartered Company took over the territory Bajaus were wont to batten upon the up-country native, who had as much chance against these sharpers as a country bumpkin has against a master of the three-card trick. Nowadays the interests of the hill people are jealously guarded and their exploiters have had a rude awakening. As far as the Dusuns of the plains go the harm has been done and cannot be undone, for after years of constant intercourse with the Bajaus the lowland Tempassuk Dusuns have now the vices of both tribes and the virtues of neither; they have learnt the game and are now sometimes better at it than their masters.

Of old the Bajau was the Dusun's guide, philosopher and friend, and saw to it that he was well paid. Even to-day in Tempassuk it is not uncommon to find a whole Dusun village with its corresponding community of Bajau agents on the coast. When a Dusun has business to transact he betakes himself to this village, puts up there and obtains the assistance of a man of the world. Until comparatively recently it was a regular thing for a Dusun to appear at the District Office accompanied by his Bajau, who acted (if he were allowed) as spokesman and interpreter. But the sea-lawyer gets a short shift with the average District Officer and the practice was not encouraged; to-day the Dusun knows that he can get exactly the same treatment and consideration by stating his case himself, and he does so, thereby saving himself big fees in kind, cash or service.

It is clear that the Bajau, remnant of intrigue and oppression, is no great asset to the prosperity of the country, though as a boatman he has his uses. For the most part he is an idle good-for-nothing rascal, often treacherous, and though his fangs have been drawn the old pirate strain dies hard and occasionally breaks out. In recent years there have been several individuals who have turned outlaw for one reason or another, and gathering one or two "bad hats" round them have made themselves a nuisance for months before they have been rounded up. In Borneo jungles it is like looking for a needle in a haystack to find them, and the districts through which they range feed them and harbour them, half in sympathy, half in fear.

§ 6

Besides the Bajaus there are on the north-west coast, and on the east at Tunku, a few villages of Illanuns. These people came originally from Mindanao in the Sulu Islands and are the direct descendants of the pirates of old. They only number about two thousand and are simply aggravated Bajaus, with few of the Bajaus' pleasant characteristics and all their bad ones multiplied.

All Illanuns are constitutionally incapable of doing a day's work and they live chiefly on the industry of their wives, who

are very expert in weaving native *sarong*, handkerchiefs and headcloths. As Captain Francis once said : " An Illanun with an industrious wife can be a brilliant and impressive sight on high days and holidays."

There is no love lost between the Bajaus and the Illanuns. The Bajaus believe that the Illanuns have occult powers, enabling them to turn themselves into fish and to become evil spirits at will ; that they chiefly delight in eating the flesh of corpses, and a continuous watch is kept over the dying or the newly-dead to balk these human vultures of their prey.

The Sulus are another race that may be considered part of the native population, though they are immigrants or the descendants of immigrants from the Sulu Islands. There are about 6,000 of them in North Borneo and their settlements are to be found along the east coast, but there is one Sulu village at Biliajong in Marudu Bay. They are akin to the Illanuns, but less inert and more industrious ; like the Bajaus, whom they despise as infidels, they are a race of sailors and their chief business is fishing and the collection of sea-produce. They are dark and swarthy, with large brown eyes, and they have the Malays' love of colours ; for decorative effect it would be hard to beat a Sulu in the full glory of his vivid breeches, cut in the fashion of Jodpores, his embroidered coat and his costly head-cloth. Both the Bajau and Illanun costume is similar, but the Bajau sometimes wears wide trousers instead of tight ones, and among all three races the everyday dress of the men is far more resplendent than that of the women ; the Sulu ladies affect trousers, but most of the Bajaus prefer the *sarong* and loose coat of the Malays, brushing their hair back and letting it fall down their necks in a rather unbecoming hank.

Now that he lives under a settled Government the Sulu is as a rule law-abiding enough, but he is impatient of restraint and intensely sensitive, while a wound to his pride or a blow to his appalling self-consciousness will set him in an amok fury. This blood-mania is a well-known trait among Malayan races and cases of it are constantly occurring among the North Borneo Mohammedans. One of the worst cases on record occurred

at Lahad Datu in August, 1916.[1] A Sulu who was engaged to be married overheard his future bride being warned against him by her sister. He brooded over this and next day had his head shaved, bathed himself and tied a white cloth about his head, the last significant act of a man who runs amok. Taking a knife in one hand and an iron bar in the other, he first attacked the sister, who escaped. Running into the town he cut up two Chinamen and wounded a Chinese girl; then hacked off the ear of an Indian policeman. The policeman fired, missed the Sulu but killed a shopkeeper; another policeman fired and killed a Dyak; the bullet passed on, penetrated the lungs of a Bajau and then wounded a Chinese coolie, while the Sulu continued his mad career and was finally brought down, shot through the back. Most cases of amok arise from some such trivial cause as this one, and really form a substitute for suicide, which is rigidly forbidden by the Islam faith, while the killing of an unbeliever is an act of grace.

Besides the pure Islamic races, the Mohammedan element in the native population is responsible for some queer mixtures. A pagan who wishes to marry a Mohammedan must first embrace the faith, and it is quite common to meet Dusuns who for this or some other reason have become followers of the Prophet. In other cases whole tribes are found who, although undoubtedly of pagan origin, now profess Mohammedanism. Such are the Orang Sungei or River Folk, and the Tidongs (*tidong* meaning "hill" in Murut) on the east coast. The Orang Sungei are found for some distance up the three great rivers the Labuk, the Sugut and the Kinabatangan above the salt-water sections, which are inhabited by the Sulus. They were formerly known as Buluduphis (from *belud*, "hill," and *upih*, a jungle tree) and are undoubtedly of Dusun origin, but, having mixed largely with their neighbours the Sulus, they have at some past date become converted to Islam, have abandoned agriculture and live chiefly in boats. They are smaller and of darker complexion than the hill Dusuns, and are more like the Sulus in appearance; they are unquestionably the most lax Mohammedans in the country, for they get drunk, often neglect the ritual of circumcision and, up-country, even keep pigs.

[1] *British North Borneo Herald*, October 2, 1916.

On the other hand they generally have a mosque and affect to hold in great estimation any local *haji*,[1] who is usually an unmitigated blackguard. Their language is a corruption of Dusun, and Mr. E. A. Pearson, who knew them well, speaks of his Tambunan Dusun boy making himself understood on the Sugut, and of one from Tuaran having no difficulty on the Kinabatangan. I have never heard a good word said for the Orang Sungei ; they are a lazy, shiftless crowd, poor boatmen and weak carriers, and, as they have a superstition that it is unlucky to re-roof their houses, they are ever on the move.

What the Orang Sungei are to the Dusuns, the Tidongs are to the Muruts. Large settlements of them exist in Dutch territory and in the neighbourhood of Cowie Harbour and Simporna, while some have settled by the special permission of the Government on the Labuk at Klagan, where they plant wet rice along the river banks. The Tidongs are undoubtedly Islamized Muruts who have got their religion and a certain veneer of civilization from the coast Sulus and the Bugis of Dutch Borneo. Their language is similar to that of the hill Muruts and they have the same features, though, on account of the change from a life in the hills to a life on the rivers and plains, their physique has suffered. Nor have the rascally Arab traders who abound in their part of the country improved either their manners or their morals.

There seems to be a similar mixture of pagan and Islam on the west coast in the case of the Bisayas, who are to be found in the neighbourhood of the Padas River, below Beaufort. Messrs. Hose and McDougall consider it probable that they are a section of the people known as Visayas in the Philippine Islands.[2] They are Mohammedans, but they speak a Murut dialect, and it is likely that they are a branch of the Murut tribe and became converted on coming in contact with their neighbours the Bruneis. They are agriculturists, planting both rice and sago, and the most noteworthy thing about them is that they have an unenviable reputation for being expert poisoners. Close to the Bisayas, in the neighbourhood of

[1] A person who has performed the pilgrimage to Mecca.
[2] *The Pagan Tribes of Borneo*, vol. ii, p. 247.

Sipitong, are the Kadayans, said to be descended from settlers who originally came from Sumatra as the Sultan of Brunei's bodyguard.[1] They are a peaceful people and good planters, though they have recently taken up rubber planting at the expense, it is to be feared, of their rice cultivation.

Settlements of the Bruneis, who have largely influenced these two tribes, are to be found along the coast and up the rivers from the Brunei border as far as Papar; they practise agriculture, but are chiefly known as boat builders, the Sipitong Bruneis being especially famous. They are of course immigrants pure and simple, but have firmly established themselves in the country of their adoption.

There is one other race of immigrants not so settled—the Dyaks. In the old days it was usual to call many of the up-country tribes loosely by the name of Dyak, but the Dyaks proper are a totally distinct race, only to be found within the borders of Sarawak. Those who have settled in North Borneo are mainly small traders or collectors of jungle produce, many of them ex-policemen who have served their time; in former years when they were more numerous than they are now, they rendered valuable assistance to the Government on punitive expeditions, for they are a warlike people and dearly love a fight. As a rule they are law-abiding and well-behaved but, like the little girl in the nursery rhyme, when they are naughty they are horrid, and no more undesirable native could be found than a free Dyak who has "got above himself." They are a race of wanderers, ranging through the jungle or travelling from river to river, and the only Dyak village in the country is at Paal, a few miles south of Tenom.

§ 7

The remainder of North Borneo's native, or non-European, population is a heterogeneous collection of representatives of most countries of the East. There is a considerable sprinkling of Malays from Singapore and the Federated Malay States; Arab traders, most of them rogues, especially those designated with the name of Serip;[2] a few Tamils; Indians, many of

[1] *Handbook of British North Borneo*, p. 43.

[2] A descendant of the Prophet.

them ex-policemen who have married native wives and settled in the country. The latter live for litigation; their chief means of subsistence is keeping cattle and lending money, in both of which arts they are adept. They are not a valuable type of settler as they send out of the country every cent they can squeeze from it. On the estates are large numbers of Javanese and Banjerese, who often remain in the country when their contracts have expired. They make good grooms and indifferent gardeners. In the towns there are a number of Philippinos, most of them barbers or washermen. Of late years there has been a large influx of Japanese settlers of the better class, especially at Tawau, but although experiments have been made the climate has not been found suitable for Japanese labourers, who, unlike the Chinese, do not seem to thrive in a tropical country.

Indeed, it is the Chinaman who is the backbone of the non-European population. Every class of Chinese is to be found in North Borneo, from the *kongsikan* coolie of the tobacco estates to the rich *towkeh* who is worth a good deal more than most Europeans. The Chinese in North Borneo, 38,000 in number, fall into five groups—the coolie class; the servants; the farmers and market gardeners; the small shopkeepers and traders, and the merchants, who may be interested in any venture from building a row of shops to financing a gambling farm. Each class serves the State, each individual in his own way is a useful citizen. It is beyond all question that, for an Eastern country with only a small indigenous population, the Chinese are the most valuable immigrants she can attract to her shores. One has only to look at the Straits Settlements to see how the prosperity of a State can be built up by their enterprise, and it is quite certain that North Borneo could never have gone a mile along the road of progress had not her doors been opened wide to the adventurous inhabitants of the Celestial Empire. Further reference to each class will be found in subsequent pages; here it is enough to say that few Europeans who have had experience of the Chinese of North Borneo can do anything but allow that they are in the main honest, industrious and intelligent, and not the vicious, opium-smoking thieves they are sometimes pictured. Their

ways are not our ways, it is true. They are a mass of superstition, they are more clannish than the most rabid Trade Unionists, and they speak a language rarely understood by Europeans, but if treated with justice and without pampering they make the best labourers in the world. It is true that of recent years the manners of the lower-class Chinaman have not improved. On estates the Chinese coolie is usually well trained; when he passes you on the road he will remove his hat, often he will give you a grin in greeting, though quite probably he is calling you some kind of devil under his breath; but a stranger entering a shop in Sandakan is to-day often unpleasantly struck by the offensive and off-hand manner of those within. On the other hand nothing could be more courteous than the manners of a Chinese gentleman, and even the small trader is an easy person to have dealings with once he knows you. To give an example, at one time I was in the habit of selling the copra from my estate to a local *towkeh* in Kudat. After we had done business twice and weighed the bags together, Swee Hin intimated that if I liked to weigh the bags on the estate he would take my figure as correct; I insisted on having them weighed in the shop, but he allowed me to write down the weights and calculate the corresponding value, and would always accept my statement for the prices of copra ruling in Singapore. I on my part could always leave my copra in the shop with perfect equanimity for a couple of days before selling it. It was a pleasant way of doing business; it suited both of us, and neither was the loser for our mutual trust.

This confidence in the white man's just dealing is universal among all the eastern races in North Borneo. Even an Indian will take your word as your bond, but the unsophisticated natives of the country are usually unaware that there exist white men other than those whom they find set in positions of authority, for there is of course no white labour in Borneo. I remember a ship once coming into Tawau from Australia with a white crew on board. The simple folk of Tawau were much exercised in their minds at seeing white men heave coal, and the "crew of Tuans" was the subject of considerable speculation for many weeks. The more enlightened natives

of the towns, however, are quick to tell the difference in the race and status of the white men with whom they come in contact. In fact the dweller in the towns sometimes sees too much, but to the Dusun and to the Murut and to most of the Bajaus the white man is a person in whose word the utmost reliance may be placed; sometimes a little trying perhaps, sometimes difficult to convince, sometimes possibly inclined to shout, but nevertheless quite impartial and a keeper of promises, a person with great power and of much learning. In the past this confidence has seldom been misplaced, and it is to be hoped that even though the country expands it will be long before there come others who will in some measure undo what has been done in building up the prestige of the white man in North Borneo and in making his name a synonym for equity.

CHAPTER IV

EARLY HISTORY

"HAPPY is the nation that has no annals." If that is true, Borneo was well described by Ptolemy as *insula bonæ fortunæ*, for the details of its history are never likely to trouble any schoolboy long. Yet it lacks an historian rather than a history; there are few ancient chroniclers to tell of its former glories, of its vicissitudes, of its wars or its prosperities. Before the sixteenth century little is known of the island beyond the fact that there was considerable intercourse with the Celestial Empire. In Chinese Annals of the seventh century mention is made of the Kingdom of Polo as an island south-east of Cambodia; it is possible that this is a reference to Brunei, just as Puni, which in the records of the Sung dynasty (960–1279) is said to have been a town of ten thousand inhabitants, may well be a corruption of the same word. In 977 it appears that Hiang-ta, the ruling prince of Puni, sent envoys to China with tribute, which included camphor, tortoise-shell and elephants' tusks. With this tribute was sent a letter expressing the wish, "May the Emperor live thousands and ten thousand years and not disapprove of the offering of my poor little country." These sentiments were written upon what appeared to be thin tree-bark, glossy and slightly green; though several feet in length it was only an inch broad, and rolled up so tightly that it could be held in the palm of the hand, and written in small characters which read horizontally.[1] In 1292 the country is said to have been invaded by the mighty Kublai Khan, but it is a matter for regret that Marco Polo (that well of information about the

[1] W. P. Greeneveldt: *Notes on the Malay Archipelago and Malacca.*

Far East of those distant days) did not reach the island, for he passed through the Archipelago in the previous year and mentions that a prosperous trade was carried on between Borneo and China.

In the fourteenth century the Sultan of Brunei was the vassal of Majapahit of Java, but in 1370 he transferred his allegiance to China ; in 1408 King Ka-la of Borneo paid a visit to Peking with his family and died whilst there ; his son Hiawang succeeded him and it was agreed that tribute should be sent to China once every three years ; when Hiawang took his leave he was presented with a girdle adorned with precious stones, 600 ounces of gold and 3,000 of silver, together with silks of every kind, while the great mountain range at the back of the kingdom of which Kinabalu forms a part was consecrated as the "Mountain of Lasting Tranquillity preserving the Country," the Emperor himself writing an inscription on stone and dispatching a Chinese envoy with orders to place it on the summit. It is extremely unlikely that this commission was ever executed, but even among the Dusuns, who have few traditions and short memories, the great mountain of Borneo is associated with the first coming of the Chinese. One of the Emperors of China who lived many centuries ago (so the Dusuns say) having heard from a traveller of a wondrous carbuncle that was guarded by a dragon upon the summit of Kinabalu, sent his three sons upon a quest to find this jewel, promising his kingdom to whomsoever of them should succeed. After many perils and adventures the youngest one stole the carbuncle from the dragon by bombarding him with fiery balls. He hurried down the mountain side and with his brothers and their followers made for the ships, but they were pursued by the outraged dragon, who finally overtook them and wrought havoc among the fleeing tongkongs, until, having in his rage swallowed one, he sank to the bottom of the ocean and was drowned. Only the ship in which were the three princes escaped to China, and such survivors as managed to reach the shore, having now no means of returning to their native land, settled in the country and intermarried with the native tribes.

Such is the Dusun legend of the first Chinese settlement in

North Borneo, a story which receives some support from ancient Brunei chronicles.

From 1415 to 1425 tribute was sent from Brunei to the Court of the Son of Heaven four times. These payments showed a falling off in later years, but trade with China increased as time went on. The treasures of Borneo were too tempting to remain neglected; every year the great Chinese junks came down in the north-east monsoon and returned in the south-west laden with precious cargoes of spices, edible birds'-nests, sharks' fins, camphor, rattans and pearls. These enterprises were not unattended with risks as, even before the period when piracy became rife, trading with Borneo was none too safe; many an adventurous Celestial was forced to make his home there as a slave, to the gain, both direct and indirect, of the Bruneis, who by this means learnt the art of working silver and brass, in both of which crafts they excel to this day. Besides those who were forcibly detained, it was inevitable that many members of the trading expeditions should elect to settle in the country of their own free will, and there are records, both in Sulu and Brunei history, of a Chinese colony on the Kinabatangan River in the fifteenth century. A sister of Ong Sum Ping, the Chinese Governor of the settlement, married Sultan Mohammed, who first introduced the religion of Islam into Brunei, and from this pair sprang the present royal family of the native State.

§ 2

It was not until the sixteenth century that Borneo had any dealings with the white man, but a certain amount of doubt exists as to which European nation or to what individual belongs the honour of having discovered the island. The first mention of Borneo by a European writer is in the itinerary of Ludovico Barthema, an Italian, who visited the Archipelago about 1507.[1] According to some accounts the Portuguese Lorenzo de Gomez first set foot upon its shores in 1518, but it is to Pigafetta, the historian of the redoubtable Magellan, that we owe the first detailed description of Borneo.

The squadron of Magellan cast anchor off the town of Brunei

[1] Crawfurd's *Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands*, p. 64.

in July, 1521, soon after the Captain-General himself had been killed by natives in what are now known as the Philippine Islands. Pigafetta, who accompanied the expedition, gives a spirited account of the visit. He describes the town as being, with the exception of the Sultan's palace and the houses of a few chiefs, built below the high-water mark and raised on posts, just as it is to-day. He estimated that the population was 25,000 families, probably a great exaggeration. At high tide the people went about their business in boats, and the floating market was then, as now, one of the most interesting features of the place. On every side there were signs of wealth, letters were known, several of the arts flourished, and Chinese metal coin was in common use.[1]

Together with seven of his companions Pigafetta paid a visit to the Sultan. Two elephants, with silken coverings, were sent to the water's side to take the embassy to the Governor's house, and a banquet of veal, capons and fish was placed before them on the floor, where they sat upon palm-leaf mats. They sipped arrack, distilled rice-spirit, from porcelain cups, and ate their rice and sweetmeats with spoons of gold. That night they slept on mattresses stuffed with cotton and cased with silk; in their sleeping apartment were two torches of white wax in silver candlesticks, and two large oil-lamps with four wicks to each were kept burning all night, two men being appointed to attend to them.

At noon on the following day the party set off to the Sultan's palace, mounted as before on elephants, with men bearing presents for the Sultan marching in front of them. In front of the palace there was a rampart of large bricks on which were mounted fifty-six brass and six iron cannon. On being admitted the deputation passed through a great hall thronged with courtiers, who, though naked save for a piece of ornamented cloth about their waists, wore many rings and had weapons with golden hilts inlaid with pearls and precious stones. From this hall Pigafetta and his friends entered an

[1] The details of Pigafetta's description of Brunei given here are taken from Crawfurd's *Descriptive Dictionary*, etc., p. 70 *et seq.*, and from Lord Stanley's *The First Voyage Round the World, by Magellan*, p. 110 *et seq.*

ante-room where they found a bodyguard of three hundred men with drawn swords. At the end of this apartment was a brocade curtain, and when this was raised the Sultan, a stout man of about forty, was seen seated at a table chewing betel-nut with a little boy, his son, beside him. Close behind were ranged his female attendants.

The envoys were informed that they must not address the Sultan personally, but should communicate their business in the first instance to one of the chiefs, who would tell it to one of the higher rank within the lesser hall. This personage, in his turn, would explain their wishes to the Governor's brother, and he, by means of a hollow bamboo fixed in the wall, would communicate their sentiments to one of the principal officers, by whom they would ultimately be conveyed to the royal ear. Such were the "usual channels" for official business at the Court of Brunei, and by these means the Sultan was made to understand that they came from the King of Spain, who desired to live in peace with His Highness, and that they wished for nothing more than to be able to trade in his island. The Sultan answered, graciously enough, that he would be much pleased to have the King of Spain for his friend and that the expedition might wood, water and trade in his dominions. The presents were then brought out. They consisted of a vest of green velvet in Turkish fashion, a chair of purple velvet, five yards of red broadcloth, a cap, a gilt goblet, a glass vase with a lid, three quires of paper and a gilded inkstand. For the royal consort (Pigafetta does not mention which) there were three yards of yellow broadcloth, a pair of silver embroidered shoes and a silver case filled with pins. As each article of this collection was exhibited the Sultan made a slight inclination of his head, showing no eager or undignified curiosity, giving in return presents of brocade and cloth-of-gold. After this, refreshments in the shape of cloves and cinnamon were produced; then the curtain of the royal chamber dropped and the audience was at an end.

The party remounted the elephants and returned to the Governor's house, where another feast was held; next morning they were escorted on the elephants to the beach, where the royal boats were waiting to take them to their ships.

During his brief visit Pigafetta learnt that the productions of Borneo were rice, sugar-canes, camphor, ginger, gums and wax ; fruit and vegetables in great variety ; and among animals were elephants, horses, buffaloes, and goats. He noticed that the natives were particularly skilful in the manufacture of porcelain, which constituted the principal article of their merchandise, and that they used well-made boats, those kept for State purposes having their prows carved and gilded. He was also given to understand that the Sultan had two pearls as large as hen's eggs, so perfectly round that if placed upon a polished table they rolled continually.

Although the floating market is a feature of Brunei to this day, Pigafetta's picture of the Sultan's Court and of the prosperity of the town will not bear comparison with that of the present time. The glory of Brunei is long departed ; the population is reduced to a few thousand, and even the veneer of barbarous civilization has long since passed away. We can only regret that the historian did not give us a more detailed account of the political aspect of the country. It is strange that he made no reference to the brass and silver work—crafts in which the Bruneis have long excelled ; the porcelain industry is extinct and there is no other record of it. The list of the products of the country is surprisingly accurate, in fact, taken as a whole and allowing for some exaggeration, we may believe that his description was a fairly accurate account of the capital of Borneo in those days.

No mention is made by Pigafetta of any other Malay settlements in Borneo, though he speaks of a city beyond Brunei, also built over the water, "inhabited by Gentiles" who were hostile to the Bruneis themselves. There is no question that Brunei (which had itself grown out of small colonies from Malacca and Johore planted in the fourteenth century) was the capital of the northern part of the island, including what is now British North Borneo and Sarawak, the seat of such government as the country knew and the chief trade centre in that part of the China Sea.[1] Besides Brunei there were two other

[1] The name Borneo, a corruption of Brunei, was first applied to the whole island by Pigafetta. On the old charts the town of Brunei is shown as Borneo Proper.

distinct kingdoms in the south at this time, Sukadana (the Earthly Paradise), which belonged to the Rajah of Bantam, and Banjermasin, where subsequently the Portuguese, the British and the Dutch all had settlements in turn. As to these kingdoms Pigafetta is silent; indeed the south of Borneo had no attractions for the Spaniards, their goal being the Moluccas.

They did not leave Brunei without trouble. Their preliminary intercourse with the natives boded well enough, but they seem seldom to have visited a port without coming to loggerheads with its inhabitants. In this case, in real or affected alarm that an attack against them was intended, they seized several boats which they knew contained valuable cargoes and kidnapped sixteen of the leading chiefs together with three of their women. They then set sail from Brunei, and the squadron began what more resembles a privateering cruise than a peaceful voyage of discovery, for the Spaniards, sailing the Borneo seas, plundered any small vessel that was unfortunate enough to fall in with them and made passengers pay dearly for their freedom. The Governor of Palawan, in particular, was held to ransom for 400 measures of rice, 20 pigs, 20 goats and 450 fowls. They spent forty-two days careening their ships in harbour on the north-west coast and then, continuing their piratical voyage, they sailed past the island of Kagayan Sulu to the long-sought Moluccas.

Such was the first expedition of any importance that is known to have visited the island. It is a bitter fact that Europeans should have been the pioneers of that piracy and rapacity which afterwards became so characteristic of the Malayan seas and so formidable a menace to peaceful trade.

§ 3

After the departure of the Spaniards no expedition touched at Brunei until the visit of Jorge de Menezes, the Portuguese, in 1526. Malacca, that golden apple for which every adventurer of old turned aside, had been captured by the famous Alfonso d'Albuquerque in 1511, and after the coming of de

Menezes, by which time the Portuguese had got a firm footing in the Malay Archipelago, a regular intercourse was maintained between Malacca and Brunei, chiefly for the pepper trade, until the Portuguese were expelled from Malacca by the Dutch in 1641; afterwards the trade was continued from the Portuguese settlement of Macao until the end of the eighteenth century.

For many years after their discovery of the island the Spaniards seem to have taken little interest in it, but when they had completed their conquest of the Philippines in 1571 they tried to get a finger into the Brunei pie by taking sides in a split in the royal house and by putting the man they supported upon the throne; without, however, any lasting result. Such influence as they ever had in Brunei waned, and they are not heard of again until they sent an expedition in 1645 to punish the country for various piracies committed off the coasts of their colonies in the Philippines.

In those days the British had too many other fish to fry to think seriously about Borneo, nor is there any record of the Dutch having any intercourse with the island until early in the seventeenth century, when they confined themselves to settlements in the south-west coast, the nearest point to their East Indian possessions, Java and Sumatra. Nevertheless, their influence had a far-reaching effect upon the whole island, indeed upon all the islands of the Malay Archipelago. No sooner had they got a footing at Batavia in 1611 than they set to and systematically drove the Portuguese out of all settlements in the East Indies with such effect that by 1700 the influence of Holland was paramount in the Archipelago. It was an influence of the worst description. The destinies of the whole Archipelago lay in the hands of the Dutch; by judicious government and fair trading they had it in their power to earn the blessings of the lands they had taken it upon themselves to rule and to merit the commendation of posterity, to say nothing of reaping a rich reward themselves. But they did nothing of the kind. They could not realize that trade breeds trade, and they determined to make Batavia the one and only depot of commerce in the islands. Just as the Portuguese had kept a monopoly of trade and so forced

the natives to sell to them at their own prices, so did the Dutch. So jealous were they of anyone besides themselves reaping benefits from the countries over which they held sway that they excluded the vessels of other nations from their ports, even going to the length of destroying wantonly quantities of cloves, nutmegs and other valuable spices that they could not use themselves.

It was the policy of the time. The Dutch were no worse than the Portuguese had been ; such English trading operations as there were in the Archipelago were none too creditable, and the Spaniards were busy imitating the methods of the Dutch in the Philippines. The Dutch, however, had the strongest influence and so caused the greatest harm. They insisted that all produce intended for the Chinese market must be sent to one of their own depots and thence transhipped to China, thus putting a stop to direct trade by means of Chinese junks. This had most serious effects on the prosperity of the ports, including that of Brunei. The double freight caused the exports to become so expensive that in course of time they were neglected altogether, with the result that large numbers of people were thrown out of employment. The loss of direct intercourse with China put an end to the immigration of new settlers so necessary to the prosperity of the country, and the old ones, unable to make a living and fearful of the future, deserted the shores of Borneo as rats leave a sinking ship ; while to repair their depleted treasuries the local chiefs allowed the country to go back into jungle by dragging the inhabitants from agricultural pursuits to piratical enterprises.[1]

Sir Stamford Raffles, writing as late as 1821, considered that the destruction of the native trade by this withering policy might be the origin of all the piracies which plagued the Malayan seas. Crawfurd, too, referring to the natives of the Archipelago about the same time, considered that " the piratical character we have attempted to fix upon them might be most truly retaliated upon us." [2]

[1] Hunt's " Sketch of Borneo " in Keppel's *Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido*, vol. i, p. 388.

[2] *Hist. of Indian Archipelago*, Bk. IX, ch. III.

The rapacious methods of the Dutch had other effects also upon North Borneo, indirect but equally far-reaching. The coast tribes, their means of earning an honest living being gone, turned (without any great reluctance, it may be supposed) to piracy, which, being a fierce and warlike people, they doubtless found no less lucrative than trade and much more amusing. But the Brunei nobles, now also shorn of their legitimate profits, pressed twice as hard upon the wretched up-country tribes that paid tribute to the Sultan, and besides serving to fill the coffers of the royal treasury these unhappy people had to line the pockets of such sprigs of Malay nobility as the Sultan cared to entrust with the powers of so-called administration. This state of affairs went from bad to worse until about 1650 it culminated in a rising of the aborigines, who were joined by such Chinese settlers as were still left in the country. Matters became so critical that the forces of the Sultan of Brunei could not cope with the rebels and he was forced to call in his neighbour the Sultan of Sulu to his aid. When the country again became settled Brunei ceded the territory from the Kimanis River as far as Tapean-durian, in the Straits of Macassar, to Sulu in consideration of its help.[1] This transaction led to the first cession of Borneo territory to the British, for a century later when Sir William Draper captured Manila in 1763 he released Sultan Amir, who had been taken prisoner by the Spaniards; the Sultan was reinstated on the throne of Sulu and as a *quid pro quo* he ceded the territory obtained from Brunei, together with the southern end of Palawan and the intermediate islands, to the East India Company, the Company agreeing to protect him from any attack by Spain.

In spite of this concession, however, the Company had its hands too full to give any serious attention to Borneo for the next ten years, and although the Company's flag had been planted formally on the island of Balambangan by Mr. Dalrymple in 1763, it was not until 1773 that a small settlement was established there. The East India Company needed a base for eastern produce in connection with the China trade, and Balambangan seemed an appropriate half-way house, as it was not a thousand miles from Hong Kong. It had the

[1] Hunt, op. cit., p. 389.

advantage of two excellent harbours and, moreover, it was considered (how erroneously the future showed) that an island settlement would be less open to an attack from the pirates who then infested the Sulu seas than one on the mainland.

Accordingly troops and stores were sent from India, and numbers of Malays and Chinese began to settle on the island. From the beginning the little colony was never healthy and the Indian troops did not stand the climate well. Moreover, the Spaniards regarded the enterprise with suspicion and did their best to set the Sulus against the English. Sultan Israel, who had succeeded his father in 1773, lent a willing ear to the councils of the Spaniards and sent his cousin Datoh Tating to Balambangan with credentials. Tating, with a few followers, passed himself off as a carpenter; he was given contracts for some buildings that were required, and successfully concealed the real object of his visit by hiding his followers on Banggi and Balambangan itself until he had made his preparations.[1] Finally, on March 5, 1775, at a moment when most of the Indians were incapacitated and the Company's ships away on commercial expeditions, he gathered his men together and made a treacherous attack upon the fort, rushing the defences in the rear, killing the sentries, and turning the guns on the remaining Bugis troops. Thirteen of the garrison were killed or taken prisoner and the survivors (after burying, it is said, some of the treasure in a well) managed to slip away to the vessels in the harbour, taking with them such effects as they could carry. The booty obtained by the Sulus in guns, specie and merchandise was immense, and the loss to the Company alone was estimated at a million Spanish dollars.[2] No attempt seems to have been made to bring the raiders to book or to restore the British prestige in Northern Borneo. In the previous year a "factory" had been started at Brunei, the Sultan having given the Company the monopoly of the pepper trade in return (ironically enough) for its protection from piracy. Some of the survivors joined this factory, others established themselves at Labuan, but in 1803 the Balambangan

[1] Forest's *Voyage to New Guinea*, pp. 336–7.

[2] Belcher's *Voyage of H.M.S. Samarang*, vol. i, p. 290.

settlement was reopened. It proved, however, very expensive to keep up and, as it had few prospects of immediate advantage to the East India Company, it was withdrawn in the following year, the factory at Brunei being closed down at the same time.

Thus ended the first attempt at colonizing North Borneo. Balambangan to-day is a depressing spot, inhabited only by a few Bajaus, and seldom visited by Europeans. The island is twelve miles long and so low-lying that, when approached through its maze of coral reefs, it seems to rise from the sea like a gigantic crocodile. Seen a hundred yards from the shore it is passing fair, a mass of brilliant green with a fringe of sand, but on the island there is little else but a tangle of low jungle hills and swampy flats that tell vividly enough why the settlement was unhealthy. On the shore of the north-east harbour (which goes by the wholly delightful name of Teluk Priok or Cooking Pot Bay) is a flat stretch of land, once the site of the shops, now littered with broken bricks and pock-marked with a dozen disused wells, long since choked with sand. Half a mile away up the hill can be seen the remains of the magazine, a hollow in the ground surrounded by the vestiges of a crumbling wall and connected with the coast by a communication trench. This, the remnants of a road and of a couple of overgrown blockhouses are all that remain of a great adventure started in the midst of the pirate seas. Disaster seems to have dogged the footsteps of the little colony from the beginning, but it is a matter for speculation whether, could the finances of the East India Company have borne the expense for a few more years, it would have reaped the rich rewards expected from the enterprise by its original planner Lord Pigot, and subsequently by Lord Wellesley. The buried treasure of Balambangan is often a subject of speculation too, and many an evening in Marudu has been beguiled by discussing projects for its finding. But the plans of those enthusiasts who swear that the treasure still lies upon the island have seldom got beyond the long chairs of their verandas, which perhaps is just as well, for it is probable that (if it were ever buried) it was either unearthed by the raiders themselves or recovered when the settlers returned in later

years. In company with Mr. F. J. Moysey, then Resident of Kudat, I paid a visit to Balambangan in 1920, but though I am not ashamed to admit that I took a shovel with me in case I came upon a likely-looking well, I could find nothing more valuable to bring away than a broken brick and a piece of Chinese pottery, as souvenirs of that first settlement in North Borneo seas.

§ 4

For forty years after the withdrawal of the East India Company the country was left to work out its own salvation, or rather its own destruction, for the power of the pirate chiefs, meeting with little opposition, grew stronger and stronger like a rising wind.

It must be remembered that there was a vast difference between the pirate of the Malay Archipelago and those heroes of boyhood tales, the buccaneers of the Spanish Main. The trade of the buccaneer was far more precarious, for every nation's hand was against him and he was always confronted with the problems of supplies in lean times when victims were few and far between, of a base where he could remain unmolested and of a market for his ill-gotten spoils. With the Malay pirate it was otherwise. The region in which he was wont to ply his trade might have been designed specially for piracy and, taking advantage of the natural facilities and the absence of any restraint by European Powers, he was able to form communities on the islands or a short distance up the rivers without interference. From these strongholds he could sally forth when he felt so disposed, commit depredations on the native trade, or make a raid upon a peaceful coast village and carry off as slaves those of the inhabitants whom he did not kill. Nor did he scruple to attack a stray European vessel if she was ill-armed or in difficulties. For example, in 1788 the ship *May* of Calcutta, of 450 tons burden, was captured off Brunei. The captain and his officers were lured into the town and murdered while at dinner, the cargo was plundered, the ship burnt and the crew sold as slaves; in 1800 a Captain Pavin and his crew were murdered in the palace of the Sultan of Sulu; in 1803 the *Susanna* was captured and

her crew murdered, a like fate befalling the *Commerce* in 1806, while in 1810 the ship *Harrier* was looted and her crew taken to Kagayan Sulu as slaves. All this was done with perfect impunity. No reparation was exacted by the European Governments for the violence to their subjects or the insults offered to their flags, in fact the only notice that the British Admiralty seems to have taken of these piracies was to warn merchantmen that it was certain destruction to go up the river to Brunei. This warning was left on British charts for forty years.

The pirates therefore had little to apprehend, and as their boats were capable of going long distances they had no difficulty in finding a market for their slaves and plunder. Their activities were rendered all the easier by the fact that such established Malay Governments as existed were so weak that they had no alternative but to afford a market to the pirates, all legitimate trade being paralysed.

Most of the sea-rovers who swarmed on the coast and islands of North Borneo came originally from the Sulu Islands, which formed a kind of huge piratical factory. The most notorious were the Illanuns from Mindanao. Their war-boats were built sharp in the bows but wide of beam, often exceeding ninety feet in length; they were equipped with a double tier of oars worked by slaves, the largest boats carrying as many as a hundred in addition to thirty or forty fighting men, who held the upper deck and went into action arrayed in scarlet and coats of mail; their arms were the Malayan *kris* and spear, and also a long sword which they wielded with both hands. Below the fighting deck was the cabin, which occupied the whole of the main interior, strongly built out at the bows to withstand a six-pounder shot; a small embrasure admitted the muzzle of a long gun (usually of brass) which varied from a six- to a twenty-four-pounder. In addition to this there were numerous brass swivels securely mounted about the sides and upper works of the vessel. The Illanuns usually cruised in small squadrons of twenty sail, but a large expedition might be composed of two hundred. Their main object was the capture of slaves, whom they would seize in one country and sell in another; to achieve their ends they did not confine

their activities to the islands of the Sulu Sea but ranged as far east as New Guinea, and as far west as Sumatra, along the coasts of the Philippines, Borneo, Celebes and Java, and up the Bay of Bengal to Rangoon.[1] These Illanuns often formed a mixed community with the Bajaus, who had settlements a few miles up the Tuaran and Tempassuk Rivers, which gave them excellent outlets to the sea. Their depredations were chiefly committed off the Spanish coast and upon such vessels as were luckless enough to fall in with them, while in the Dusun villages of the country they found an inexhaustible supply of slaves, cattle and agricultural produce.

Even more formidable than these strongholds was that of the celebrated Serip Usman, a half-bred Arab, in Marudu Bay. This personage was connected by marriage with the royal house of Sulu and had entered into an unholy business partnership with Pengiran Usop, an illegitimate uncle (if one may use the term) and adviser of the Sultan of Brunei. He not only had 1,500 to 2,000 men under him but had also made an alliance with the Illanuns of Tempassuk, and was in the habit of commanding piratical expeditions in person. His influence at the Courts of Sulu and Brunei gave him enormous prestige, and he had the temerity to establish himself upon the Sultan of Brunei's own territory, to which he had no shadow of claim ; from here with his gang of rovers, cut-throats and robbers he extorted tribute from nearly 5,000 native families in the district of Marudu and Kudat, flouting the power of Brunei and laughing at the threats of Europeans.

Many were the black deeds to the credit of this pirate chief in 1845. Peaceful traders upon the high seas had their vessels seized and looted ; he had sold into slavery twenty men of the merchant ship *Sultana* which had been burnt off the coast of Palawan ; he had plundered and burnt a stranded European schooner and had sold the crew as slaves. Finally he threatened to attack Brunei itself, in consequence of the Sultan having entered into a treaty with the British Government for the suppression of piracy. Moreover, not content with directly organizing and leading piratical expeditions, he made it a practice to supply food and munitions to the Balagnini (a

[1] *The Voyage of H.M.S. Samarang*, vol. i, p. 265.

Bajau tribe inhabiting a cluster of small islands near Sulu), receiving five slaves in return for every hundred dollars' worth of goods. How profitable an arrangement this was may be seen from the fact that he was in the habit of handing over any Brunei slaves that came into his hands to Pengiran Usop at $100 a head, the worthy Pengiran passing them on to their rejoicing relatives in Brunei for $200, so that the Serip cleared a profit of 500 per cent on each slave handed over by the Balagnini, while the Pengiran made 100 per cent out of a deal in the flesh of his own countrymen.[1]

The Balagnini, who were the means of producing this profitable side-line in revenue, were no less powerful than Usman and his adherents. Like the Illanuns they cruised in large war-boats, but each towed a fast canoe capable of holding from ten to fifteen men. With these they were able not only to overhaul smaller vessels but also to surprise their prey completely by disguising one or two of the crew as peaceful fishermen, while the rest lay concealed at the bottom of the boat. For more serious enterprises they carried little brass cannon known as *lela* carrying from a pound to a three-pound ball; these they fixed to the sides of their boats and as they were often charged with pieces of iron, tin bullets or stones they did considerable damage at close quarters. Their usual method was to get as close to their quarry as possible, to fire a round from every firearm they possessed and then to leap on board whooping and yelling and waving knives in the air, utterly reckless, utterly merciless. While pursuing a flying victim they were in the habit of using long poles with barbed iron heads with which they hooked their prey, yanked him into the water and made him captive without difficulty. Their cruising-grounds were as extensive as those of the Illanuns; but Brunei waters were their favourite resort owing to the easy prey the unwarlike natives made, and during the south-west monsoon, from March to November, there was usually a small fleet of six or eight boats waiting to pounce upon any boat attempting either to enter or leave the Brunei River. The Bruneis themselves were powerless against these attacks; every year more boats were plundered, every year more

[1] *Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido*, vol. ii, p. 147 *et seq.*

unfortunates were carried off as slaves until, so great a menace did the pirates become and so heartily was their coming dreaded, that the easterly wind which brought them to Brunei was called the Pirate Wind.

§ 5

In this way not only was Serip Usman a pest in the Borneo seas himself but he had formed offensive and defensive alliances with the strongholds to the west and to the east of him, until there ran a chain of pirate forts from Tuaran round the coast to Tunku and then on east to Sulu.

It was to free the northern coasts of Borneo from these hornets' nests that Mr. (afterwards Sir) James Brooke made repeated appeals for assistance to the British Government. The romantic story of how this gallant gentleman became Rajah of Sarawak is too well known to need repeating here. In the years 1843 and 1844 he had, with the assistance of Captain the Hon. Harry Keppel in H.M.S. *Dido*, freed Sarawak from the power of the sea-Dyaks who, led by their half-bred Arab Serips, had long been a menace to trade and agriculture; he then turned his attention to the pirates of the northern coasts, and it is not always realized in North Borneo to-day that it was Rajah Brooke, and Rajah Brooke alone, who was instrumental, by his untiring energy and perseverance, in stirring the British Government to act against the pirates of the north as well as against those of Sarawak proper. "In order to extend our commerce in these seas generally," he wrote, "and more particularly on the north-west coast of Borneo, it is requisite first, that piracy be suppressed; secondly, that the native government be settled, so as to afford protection to the poorer and producing classes; and thirdly, that our knowledge of the interior should be extended and our intercourse with the various tribes more frequent."[1]

The fulfilment of the second and third requirements depended entirely upon the performance of the first. The Rajah's chance came early in 1845 when he was appointed confidential agent in Borneo to Her Majesty Queen Victoria and was directed to go to Brunei with a letter offering the Sultan every

[1] *Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido*, vol. ii, p. 154.

assistance in bringing about the suppression of piracy. Four days after his arrival news was received that Serip Usman had put his stronghold into a state of defence, had collected a fleet of boats and was boasting that if the English had not the heart to attack him, he himself would attack Brunei, as a retribution to the Sultan for taking the English side.

He was spared the pains of such an expedition, for in August Rear-Admiral Sir Thomas Cochrane, in response to the Rajah's repeated appeals, dropped anchor off the town of Brunei with his squadron, which consisted of the ships *Agincourt* (the flagship), *Vestal, Dædalus,* the steam-sloop *Vixen,* the brigs *Cruiser* and *Wolverine* and the Honourable East India Company's steam-vessels *Pluto* and *Nemesis*. The first person to be dealt with was the slave-monger Pengiran Usop, who had to answer for the detention and the confinement of two British subjects, natives of India. As he refused to appear when summoned to the presence of the Admiral a single shot was fired over his house from H.M.S. *Vixen;* this the Pengiran was defiant enough to return, with the result that in a few minutes a broadside from the *Vixen* reduced his establishment to a mass of wreckage and he himself was a fugitive in the jungle.

Having dealt with the refractory Pengiran, the squadron sailed for Marudu to deal with the still more refractory descendant of the Prophet, and on August 16 reached the head of the bay. On the 18th the *Vixen, Nemesis, Pluto* and boats proceeded up the bay and approached as near as possible to the entrance of the Marudu River.[1] Twenty-four boats containing forty-one naval and five marine officers, three hundred and three petty officers and bluejackets and one hundred and ninety-seven N.C.O.'s and men of the Marines left the same afternoon and anchored off the mangrove swamps within the bar.

On August 19 was fought the celebrated battle of Marudu.[2] At daybreak, after a light meal of biscuit and water, the attacking force, guided by two Sarawak Malays who knew the

[1] Now known as the Langkon. The Marudu is its tributary.

[2] The account given here has, except where otherwise stated, been compiled from Capt. Talbot's official dispatch dated August 20, 1845, and *The Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido,* vol. ii, pp. 176–179.

locality, advanced upstream in two divisions, the launches and pinnaces with guns leading. The river is very winding and the dense mangrove forest which clothes its banks prevented observation. As they drew near to the objective Captain Charles Talbot, the commander of the expedition, went ahead with Captain Lyster to reconnoitre. After pulling for some three miles they rounded an abrupt turn of the river and found themselves in full view of the position, which consisted of two forts with batteries of eight and three guns commanding the reach, the right fort being further defended by a floating battery. About 200 yards below the forts a well-constructed boom was laid across the river ; this was composed of two large-sized trees fastened by a chain cable which was firmly bolted and secured round the trunk of a tree on either bank. A cut in the right bank allowed a canoe to pass, but the obstacle rendered the river impassable to any larger craft. The forts themselves, which were decked with gaily-coloured flags and thronged with men, stood on a tongue of land formed by the main river and a tributary. There was therefore no way of assaulting the position on land from a flank or in the rear, and the only means of carrying it was to go bald-headed for the boom.

Having seen all this for himself Captain Talbot rejoined the main party. Orders were given for the gunboats to advance to the boom as a covering party for those detailed to destroy it ; the remainder of the force was to hold itself in readiness to act when called upon. At about 10 a.m., as the attacking party approached the boom, a canoe shot out from below the fort with a flag of truce. It was borne by a young warrior, gorgeously arrayed in full Illanun dress, his silken head-cloth adorned with feathers. He was ascertained to be a relative of Serip Usman and had been directed to inquire the object of the Europeans' visit. Captain Talbot, who suspected this was merely a ruse to gain time and felt in no mood to bandy words, sent back a curt message that unless Serip Usman came to him in half an hour he would open fire. The flag conveyed this ultimatum to the fort and returned with a proposal to admit Captain Talbot with two boats in order that he might visit and negotiate with the Serip. No sooner had

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*
SITE OF OLD BLOCKHOUSE, BALAMBANGAN ISLAND.

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*
THE MARUDU RIVER.

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this offer been refused than the enemy, seeing the flag returning a second time and the Navy's axes already busy at the boom, opened fire. It was quickly returned by the covering party and the action became general.

The position of the party at the boom was very exposed, for, as they hacked gallantly away, they were subjected to a galling fire at 200 yards range from the enemy, who had every available gun trained on the boom. The gunboats replied with a will, and a rocket party on the right bank a short distance from the boom produced considerable effect, one rocket entering a loophole and killing a whole gun-crew. Nevertheless the pirates stood their ground; their reserves seemed inexhaustible, and as fast as one man was shot down the gap was filled. Many a chief, brilliantly dressed, leapt on to the battlements and stood there with that fanatical recklessness so characteristic of the Malay, brandishing his *kris*, encouraging his men, and hurling defiance at his enemies. Nor was this devil-may-care spirit shown only by the chiefs. During the fight Mr. George Morritt, senior lieutenant of the *Vestal*, by a well-directed shot brought down the pirate flag—a tiger upon a red ground. This was hailed with cheers from the Navy, but, nothing daunted, a volunteer climbed up the stump of the flagstaff; he erected the broken part, clung like a monkey until he had got the colours securely lashed, heedless of the bullets that whizzed about his head, and then coolly slid down unhurt. Pirate or no pirate, it was a gallant act.

Meanwhile the little band at the boom was working desperately, but it was an hour before any headway could be made in removing the obstacle and Mr. Gibbard, mate of the *Wolverine*, fell mortally wounded axe in hand. Near him, chopping manfully, was Mr. Charles Johnson, who afterwards succeeded his uncle as Rajah of Sarawak, then midshipman of the *Wolverine's* pinnace. A gap was made at last; the smaller boats passed through rapidly and embarked the marines from the large boats across the boom. Once inside the obstacle the marines lost no time in carrying the smaller fort with the three gun batteries; this, being on high ground, commanded the main stronghold, whose defenders very soon found themselves receiving the attention of a well-directed fire from the captured

position. While their enemies had been below the boom the pirates had fought well enough and had stood valiantly to their guns, but the sight of British sailors and marines advancing at close quarters was too much for their nerves and they abandoned their defences, swarming through the village that lay at the back of the fort, and scattered through the jungle in all directions, bearing with them their leader, who had been mortally wounded in the fight.

"On leaving the boats to advance," wrote Captain Pascoe, R.N. (then a Lieutenant in the *Vestal*), "all was helter-skelter to the village as though going to a Fair; had the enemy's retreat been gradual, instead of precipitate, occupying at first the village to check our advance, our loss had been much more considerable." [1] The village was soon cleared of the enemy, the marines set out as a covering party and patrols of bluejackets were pushed up both banks of the river, but met with no opposition. Many of the dead and wounded had been carried away into the jungle, but enough remained to show what frightful execution the fire of the attacking force had done within the narrow confines of the fort. Bajaus and Illanuns in their gay dress and golden charms lay dead and dying on every side, some of high rank; two or three Serips in their long turbans and flowing robes; many slaves, forced to fight against their will—amongst them a captive Chinaman. Not a few of the dead pirates were clad in armour; some in coats of fine chain, some in makeshift mail made from the leaden linings of tea-chests; some had brass helmets upon their heads. With that zest for souvenirs so familiar in our warriors of a later day these helmets were eagerly seized by the bluejackets and marines, and Captain Pascoe describes how some of his party would have been in danger of being cut down by their comrades but for hearing them shout out, "Avast there, shipmate, I'm *Agincourt*." How easy to picture the scene as those brothers-in-arms, light-hearted as schoolboys now that the tension of the battle was over, determined, after the manner of their kind, to turn the morning into a glorified picnic that would make up for many weary uneventful days spent in the China Seas.

[1] *British North Borneo Herald*, April 1, 1886.

Twenty-five brass cannon were captured, with three large war-boats and several smaller ones, all of which were burnt. The iron guns were spiked, the stockades destroyed, and in a short time the vaunted stronghold of Serip Usman was blazing heaven-high. Indeed, with such goodwill was the order "Burn and destroy" obeyed that firebrands were flourished indiscriminately and the party nearly cut off their own retreat to the boats. Then every man became his own butcher and cook, and having roasted pigs, goats and fowls to make a well-earned midday meal, the jubilant force re-embarked and returned downstream to the *Vixen* at 2 p.m. The action had been in every way successful: it was not unattended with loss to the attacking side, but, taking into account the strength of the enemy's position, it was fortunate that the casualities did not amount to more than six killed and fifteen wounded.

On the next morning a fresh party from the *Vixen*, under Commander Giffard, accompanied by Rajah Brooke, arrived at the forts and the work of destroying the pirate nest was completed. Numerous proofs of Serip Usman's crimes were brought to light. It was found that the cable which had been used to secure the boom was one from a vessel of 300 or 400 tons; other chains were discovered in the forts; also a ship's longboat, ornamented with grapes and vine-leaves, and marked "Guilhelm Ludwig, Bremen," together with ships' fittings and equipment of every kind. Such articles would probably have been even more numerous had not there been a market for the more valuable commodities in Singapore.

Prisoners confirmed the reports of Serip Usman's fate. His adherents who survived him retired to Bongon in Marudu Bay and subsequently settled on the south-west of Palawan, where they formed a small community under a cousin of the pirate chief. "Thus," wrote Rajah Brooke in his journal, "has Malludu ceased to exist; and Seriff Houseman's power received a fall from which it will never recover."

The remains of the fort can be seen to this day on the banks of the Marudu River, below Langkon Estate. The crumbling ramparts lie amid a tangle of jungle, and the river, whose banks are fringed with *nipah* palm, has silted up since the day when the Serip fought his last fight. Near-by is to be found his

son's grave and that of his wife who was reputed to have had the power of walking upon the sea. On the grave are scattered little white pebbles, stated to have been brought from Sulu. They are much sought after by the natives of the district, for it is said that water in which they have been placed acquires magically curative properties and—stranger still—that though many come to take them yet the number of the pebbles has never grown less through the years.

§ 6

On August 21 Admiral Cochrane's squadron weighed anchor and by evening made the north-west harbour of Balambangan; the remains of the former settlement were examined and on the 24th a petty officer of the *Agincourt*, Mr. East, who had been mortally wounded, was buried on the island. He was the first of our race that is known to have been laid to rest in North Borneo soil, but unfortunately no trace of his grave remains to-day.

On August 25 the squadron quitted Borneo waters for the China Coast and Rajah Brooke returned to Brunei. On his arrival he learnt that two days after the Admiral had left the capital, Pengiran Usop, so far from profiting by the lesson the Navy had taught him, had had the temerity to make an attack on Brunei itself, with a band of 300 Kadayans that he had collected. He had been met and defeated by Pengiran Berudin, his women and children, together with his gold and other property, having fallen into the victor's hands. He himself had fled to Kimanis, of which he was feudatory lord. After some reluctance the Sultan issued a warrant for his execution. The order was transmitted to the headman of Kimanis and carried out in a characteristic way, for the wretched Usop, after having been received with every mark of goodwill, was seized and strangled at a moment when he was off his guard.[1]

The fate of Pengiran Usop had far-reaching consequences. His daughter had married the Sultan's son, Pengiran Hassim, a worthless character who shared his father-in-law's dislike of the English and was determined to avenge his death. In

[1] Mundy's *Narrative of Events in Borneo*, vol. ii, p. 183.

conjunction with an unscrupulous *haji* named Saman, he exercised his influence over the Sultan until that weak and half-imbecile monarch was induced to connive at the massacre of his uncles, Rajah Muda Hassim and Pengiran Berudin, with members of their families and retainers, for no other reasons than their friendship with the English and their determination to suppress piracy. A plot was also made against the Rajah's life, but Pengiran Berudin, although desperately wounded, managed to send a trusted messenger to warn the Rajah of the danger, and then made an end of himself and his womenfolk by firing a keg of gunpowder, rather than allow either himself or them to fall into the Sultan's hands.

On receiving this news of the Sultan's perfidy Admiral Cochrane wasted no time and on July 8, 1846, accompanied by Rajah Brooke, he ascended the Brunei River with his fleet. The Sultan had been screwed up by his advisers to the pitch of resistance and had collected 5,000 men who were placed under the generalship of Haji Saman, but in spite of strong defences in the shape of forts and heavy batteries the town was captured with the loss of two killed and seven wounded. It was found entirely deserted, for the Sultan, with his adherents and the inhabitants, had sought refuge in the ever-friendly jungle as soon as they saw that the day was lost. The pursuit was taken up, but rain and flood caused delays, and though much booty was captured the party did not come up with the Sultan. In a few days, however, the population recovered from its panic and began to dribble back, until by the fifth day after the attack nearly every house was occupied again. Pengiran Mumin, a son-in-law of the Sultan, was left in charge of the government, and the Admiral next paid a visit to the Illanun pirates, who, thinking that Brunei would make common cause with them, had become active again. These people had never come into personal contact with European power, and the impression caused by the news of Serip Usman's fall had not been a lasting one, as they themselves had never been disturbed. At the hands of the Navy they received the lesson they had so long deserved, and their strongholds at Tempassuk and at Pindassan were captured and burnt.

Captain Mundy, of the frigate *Iris*, was then detailed to

settle accounts with Haji Saman, the Sultan's late commander-in-chief, who had established himself at Membakut, a few miles north of Kimanis. On August 14 Captain Mundy, who had been joined by Rajah Brooke, anchored off Kimanis with H.M.S. *Iris* and the East India Company's steamer *Phlegethon*. His first action was to dispatch a message to the Dusun headman of Membakut asking him to give up Haji Saman. The Dusuns' only reply, probably actuated by the Haji himself, was that if they wanted the Haji the English could come and take him, and that the Dusuns were not afraid of the white man's shot, which they could catch in their hands and throw back again.

No sooner had this little piece of purple been received than events took an unexpected turn, for thirty war-boats appeared upon the scene, carrying twenty guns and 400 men under their chiefs. These people inhabited districts for twenty miles along the coast; their mission, they said, was a peaceful one and they had no other desire than to pay their respects to the English Rajah and to assure him of their desire for legitimate trade. They offered their assistance against Haji Saman, and the Rajah, after a long talk with the chiefs, decided that there was no fear of treachery and that it would be impolitic to refuse their proffered aid.

At 8 a.m. on August 18 the expedition, consisting of seventy bayonets, crossed the bar of the Membakut River. Captain Mundy and the Rajah, with the head chief as guide, led the flotilla in the captain's gig; Lieutenant Little followed with the boats, and a quarter of a mile behind came the great fleet of native vessels, crammed with savage volunteers and decked with many-coloured flags. After a three hours' pull upstream the force encountered the first obstacles laid by the enemy, large rafts sent floating downstream adrift with the object of causing confusion amongst the boats. On rounding a sharp bend, they were confronted with a long line of thick bamboo stakes fixed across the stream with an immense boom attached to them. As luck would have it, the ebb tide had caused the boom to swing athwart so that the boats passed through without difficulty, and though it was a tough pull against the strong current in face of the enemy's fire, Mr. Little carried

the position on the bank and the defenders fled. After the fort, batteries and magazines had been destroyed the force pushed on after the fugitives without delay. At 3 p.m. they came in sight of a large house 200 feet long, built close to the river and partly hidden by coconut-trees. As the boats advanced a masked battery opened; it was quickly silenced; bluejackets and marines were landed, but the defenders as usual managed to escape before the house could be surrounded, and once more got away into the jungle, carrying their dead and wounded with them. The house was soon in flames and with it fifty human skulls and as many packages of human bones which were hanging up within, evidence of the propensities of the Membkaut Dusuns of those times.

Having demolished the second of Haji Saman's strongholds, the force bivouacked for the night. At dawn next morning a deserter from the Haji's camp swam the river and informed Captain Mundy that the rebels had retreated in despair to a third position at the head of the river. The advance was pushed on, and half an hour later a cheer from the leading boat told that the last refuge of the enemy was in sight. For a few minutes the stubborn Haji made one last desperate stand; for a few minutes he tried to stem the advance by a shower of bullets and poisoned blow-pipe darts, then, broken and defeated, he abandoned his defences once again and took to flight. The remains of his stronghold can still be seen upon a steep hill above the river where to-day grow the rubber-trees of Membakut Estate.

The expedition, having burnt the fort and the houses of all who had supported the outlaw, returned downstream and were on board the *Iris* by sunset, the casualties being one seaman killed, six seamen and eight natives wounded. The chiefs, who had entirely justified the trust placed in them by Rajah Brooke, were entertained in the *Phlegethon* and then departed with their people after swearing solemn oaths to protect the persons and property of any Europeans who might suffer shipwreck upon their coast.[1]

[1] Mundy's *Narrative*, vol. ii, p. 213 *et seq.*

§ 7

Haji Saman and his adherents having been scattered, Rajah Brooke returned to Brunei to re-establish law and order. The Sultan, who, now that his teeth were drawn, was no longer dangerous, was allowed by the wise forbearance of the Rajah to return to his capital in order that the administration might resume its ordinary course under the sanction and prestige of his name. He was, after all, the twenty-fifth of a royal and unbroken line; he had received a salutary lesson; while entreating forgiveness for the past he gave assurances of good behaviour in the future and was not too regal to eat humble pie generally. For all that, it was felt necessary to emphasize the warning he had received. For this purpose Captain Mundy visited His Highness in state on September 19, 1846.

After the preliminary courtesies had been exchanged the Sultan led him to a private ante-chamber and ordered a large wax taper to be lighted, explaining that its light was "witness of the purity of his heart, and of the oath which he was ready to make of his goodwill towards his sister the Queen of England." [1]

Captain Mundy thereupon proceeded, in words which probably lost little significance by being delivered through an interpreter, to put the fear of God into this royal personage, ending by remarking that all depended upon his own conduct and that it would be much more agreeable for the Navy to protect the royal palace and the capital than to receive orders to inflict upon it the same punishment as had been meted out to Tempassuk, Pindassan and Membakut.

This and other recent events made a deep impression upon the Sultan and he remained true to his engagements. The government was re-established, the natives on the coast became settled, the Illanuns betook themselves to other hunting-grounds in the islands off the east coast and trade began to flourish as it had not done for many years. To crown all, after many delays, the British flag was hoisted in Labuan on December 24, 1846, by Captain Mundy, the Sultan having concluded a treaty by which the island was ceded for

[1] Mundy's *Narrative*, vol. ii, p. 262.

ever to Great Britain. It was a gala day. The *Iris* and *Wolf* dressed ship and fired royal salutes; a party of bluejackets and marines was landed, and Pengiran Mumin, the Prime Minister of Brunei, together with many chiefs and a multitude of natives, watched the proceedings, their boats, anchored near the beach, being bedecked with flags and banners. A clearing had been made in the jungle, and Captain Mundy in a short speech explained to all assembled that the objects of Great Britain in taking over Labuan were the suppression of piracy and the encouragement of commerce. The prospect of protection and of peaceful trade filled the natives with delight, and their only grief was that they could not settle on the island then and there.

Rajah Brooke had long pointed out the suitability of Labuan as a naval station, contrasting it very favourably with Balambangan, and as early as 1812 Mr. Hunt had indicated the advantages of the island in his memorial to Sir Stamford Raffles. Its spacious harbour, healthy climate, good water, coal and the intermediate position it held between Singapore and Hong Kong were its most favourable features, while its proximity to Brunei made it more desirable a base than Balambangan, which lay isolated and alone in the midst of the pirate seas. It is a melancholy fact that the glorious future predicted for Labuan by those who urged its occupation has not yet been fulfilled, but though it has not become a second Singapore, as some prophesied it would, it has played its part as an outpost of the Crown. At the time of its inauguration there was justification for high hopes. A new era seemed to be dawning in those troubled seas; in 1847, on instructions from the Foreign Office, Rajah Brooke concluded a treaty with Brunei for the mutual suppression of piracy, the Sultan binding himself not to alienate any part of his dominions without the sanction of Great Britain; and finally, in 1848, the British Government, in anticipation of a great expansion of trade in the Archipelago, appointed the Rajah the first Governor of Labuan and "Her Majesty's Commissioner and Consul-General to the Sultan and Independent Chiefs of Borneo," though it was not until 1863 that he was officially recognized as the ruling sovereign of Sarawak.

§ 8

For some time these vigorous measures had the desired effect; the power of the pirate chiefs was broken. They had found that it was not such a glorious thing after all "to be a pirate king." The Dutch had also been active and the Spaniards had helped matters by taking the offensive against the Balagnini, destroying their chief stronghold at Tianggi, now Jolo. The pirate stock, however, was a remarkably hardy growth, and if left to itself it was not long before it would begin to gather strength again. It resembled the rank *lalang* grass of the tropics, the vitality of which is such that to exterminate it for good and all it is necessary not only to cut it down once, but to come back over the ground again and again before it has time to grow into strength once more. The burning of a pirate fort or village was no serious obstacle to future enterprises, for it must be remembered that Borneo forts, unlike Rome, could be built in a day from the abundance of material ever close at hand. It was for this reason that the punitive operations, though they had excellent results at the time, were in a large measure unavailing by reason of the fact that the vigilance of the Navy was not maintained in Borneo waters year in and year out, though Capt. Keppel strongly urged that more rigorous action should be taken.[1] Also the current of piracy set east; Tunku, which had always been a pirate base, now became the refuge of all the cut-throats and rapscallions who found things too hot for them on the north or west coasts, among them Haji Saman, the fallen idol of Membakut. This, moreover, did not prevent the pirates from appearing periodically in their old haunts. In September, 1851, the *Dolphin*, a trading schooner, was captured by Tunku pirates off Marudu Bay. They disarmed suspicion by appearing in three small boats, and got a foothold on board under the pretence of bringing pearls and mats to barter. Then, without warning, the chief seized a weapon hidden in a roll of matting and led the attack, killing Captain Robinson, his supercargo Burns and five of the crew. The remainder (who had sought refuge in the rigging) were given quarter on condition that they

[1] *A Visit to the Indian Archipelago*, vol. i, pp. 74 and 277.

navigated the vessel. The pirates then made for Tunku, but in Labuk Bay the schooner was recognized by the local chief, who obtained possession of her after a fight in which all the pirates, except the leader and four of his men, were killed. The *Dolphin* was handed over to the East India Company's *Pluto*, which had been sent out as soon as the news reached Labuan. Early the following year an expedition consisting of H.M.S. *Cleopatra* and the E.I.C. steamers *Pluto* and *Semiramis* was dispatched, accompanied by Spencer St. John, who was acting as Political Agent in Borneo during the absence of Rajah Brooke. Tunku was attacked, but when the party reached the position not a soul was to be seen, though two sailors had been shot by snipers hidden in the mangrove during the advance up the river. Fort, houses, boats and standing crops were burnt; coconut-trees were cut down and some booty taken, but the party had to return without a single prisoner and did not learn till later that the pirates had retreated to a hill near-by, where they had collected great heaps of boulders to roll down upon the English if they attacked.[1]

Such isolated descents upon the pirate strongholds were usually not thorough enough to effect very much, and the occupants, though inconvenienced, were undismayed. The effects of the Dutch and Spanish operations were not more lasting.

Matters went from bad to worse, for, quite oblivious of the treaty concluded in Brunei in 1847, the Admiralty, as an outcome of a political attack upon Rajah Brooke, issued strict orders that the pirates were not to be molested unless it was evident that they had attacked a British vessel. This almost incredible piece of officialdom undid much of the good that had been done, and in the year 1858 there was a great revival in the activities of the Illanun and Balagnini pirates; their depredations became immense, large numbers of peaceful natives were enslaved, and no trade on the east coast of Borneo was safe from their outrages. A Spanish vessel was captured in the Sulu Sea by a Penglima Taupan of Tawi Tawi; the whole crew was murdered, and the unfortunate daughter of a Spanish merchant was forced to become the Penglima's wife.

[1] *Illustrated London News*, May 29, 1852.

This is only an instance of the condition of affairs that prevailed for many years owing to the inaction of the Governments concerned.

At length, in 1874, things had reached such a pitch in the Sulu Seas that the Spanish Government went to the other extreme. The Governor-General of the Philippines, finding the gunboats unable to cope with the situation, issued an order that all native boats found between the Sulu Islands and Tawi Tawi were to be destroyed; the occupants were to be taken to Manila to labour on the Public Works and those found armed were to be dealt with by the military courts. The gross injustice of such an order is apparent, and it must have been the last drop in the wretched native trader's cup of bitterness, for he had now two foes to fear—the gunboats of the Spanish Government as well as the sea-rovers themselves.

Nevertheless, Tunku remained a flourishing pirate resort until as late as 1879, when the Illanuns became so daring that even the British Admiralty could no longer look on unmoved, and H.M.S. *Kestrel*, under Captain Edwardes, was dispatched to try conclusions with them. This time the expedition was carried out so thoroughly and with such success that not only was the stronghold which had been for so many years a menace to peaceful trade utterly reduced and sixteen war-boats fitted out for sea destroyed but, as in the case of Marudu, Tunku ceased to exist as a pirate power. The dragon of piracy had reared many heads, but the *Kestrel* dealt the death-blow to the last, and the British North Borneo Company, coming soon afterwards, saw to it that at any rate in the seas of Northern Borneo the dragon was given no chance of resurrection.

CHAPTER V

THE BRITISH NORTH BORNEO COMPANY

MORE than one of our colonies has been acquired through the enterprise and foresight of a few British traders (ever the pioneers of the world), but not many countries have had so strange a beginning or became British under such romantic circumstances as North Borneo, which owes its present position to the initiative of a young Scotsman, an engineer named William Clarke Cowie.

He had come originally from Glasgow to the East with four others in an iron steamer of fourteen tons called the *Argyle*, after a hair-raising voyage which lasted five months. How he and his friends ever reached their destination was a mystery even to themselves, for provisions ran so short that for the last five weeks of the trip all hands had to subsist on rice and treacle; having no matches they had to keep a kind of vestal fire burning in the galley, and once when an over-weary watcher let it out, it was only with the aid of a cartridge, an old gun and some jute that they succeeded in getting it alight again.

In the latter end of 1872 this Mr. Cowie, who was by then leading a life of adventure in the pirate-infested seas of the Malay Archipelago, was commissioned to run the blockade which the Spaniards had thought fit to establish in the Philippine Islands with the object of excluding from trade the vessels of all nations but their own. His cargo was mainly arms and ammunition for the natives. Now gun-running is not a drawing-room pastime. There are those who would call it by hard names; nevertheless it is a man's game, for it needs nerve, courage and resource, all of which Cowie possessed to a remarkable degree. He brought his ship, the *Far East*,

into the port of Jolo (then known as Tianggi) the capital of the Sulu Islands, and had just finished discharging his cargo when a large Spanish gunboat appeared upon the scene. Cowie successfully bluffed the Spanish officers by producing the ship's papers which were in a mixture of Malay and Dutch ; the vessel was under the Malay flag, but partly owned by a German and navigated by a Scotch mate with an English master's certificate. There seemed too many chances of international complications for her to be meddled with unduly, so the commander of the gunboat gave her two hours to get up steam and quit the harbour, failing which he threatened in no measured terms to make a prize of the vessel. There was no more to be said, for both right and might were on the Spaniard's side ; Cowie and his men therefore did what they could in those two hours to ship the mother-of-pearl shells for which they had exchanged their cargo. Naturally, however, little could be done in so short a time and ultimately the *Far East* was forced to sail without the greater portion of the precious shells.

Cowie, however, resolved not to be beaten. Accordingly he steamed out to sea for several hours, and, when night came, contrived to elude the gunboat by hiding up a creek in another part of the island. As soon as he had learnt that the gunboat had left Jolo he slipped back to the port, filled the *Far East* with the abandoned cargo under the cover of darkness, and got clean away with it before the dawn broke, notwithstanding the fact that the Spaniards had heard of his return. Not far from Simpang Mengaiau the *Far East* fell foul of a pirate fleet of a hundred boats which gave chase ; having sold all their ammunition to the Sulus, Cowie and his friends were driven to cut up chain into short lengths for shot, and only prevented their assailants from overhauling them by a well-directed fire from the ship's breech-loading six-pounders.

This transaction of Cowie's with Sulu laid the foundation of a friendship with its Sultan which was to have far-reaching results. It was his first experience of blockade-running but, though the financial results were very satisfactory, it showed him clearly that it could not be continued successfully unless he had a local base from which to carry on operations without

the fear of interruption. The Sultan of Sulu bore the Spaniards no love and the question of a suitable spot was discussed, with the result that the Sultan, as the nominal sovereign of North Borneo from the Pindassan River on the north-west coast to Sibuku on the east, gave Cowie permission to erect a transhipment depot for his goods in Sandakan Bay. Once there, he could await favourable opportunities for slipping over to Sulu, so that the danger of falling into the hands either of the Spaniards or of the pirates was considerably reduced.

North Borneo was at this time without any practical form of administration, and this was the first step towards its permanent occupation by Europeans, though some time previously an attempt had been made by a German to establish a settlement and to interest the German Government in the country. The next step was the formation of the Labuan Trading Company, the object of which was to continue running the blockade and to develop the trade of that portion of North Borneo over which the Sultan of Sulu claimed sovereignty. For a considerable time this company (in fact a partnership between Cowie and two of his friends, Carl Schomburgk and John Dill Ross) had an exciting and more or less prosperous existence; none of its vessels was ever caught running the blockade, but no further developments in the fortunes of the country took place until some years later when Cowie, on a visit to Hong Kong as manager of the company, with the object of selling a cargo of rattans and seed-pearls, was startled at receiving a peremptory demand for ten per cent export duty on the value of his cargo from an American named Torrey, who grandiloquently styled himself "Rajah of Marudu and Ambong." This gentleman (at the moment the manager of a sugar refinery in Hong Kong) had in fact some right to his titles, inasmuch as he had bought for a mere song from a Mr. Moses certain concessions giving sovereign rights over the west coast of Borneo in the form of leases for ten years renewable. Mr. Moses had been the United States Consul in Brunei, and while holding this appointment had, as far back as 1865, improved the shining hour by obtaining the concessions from the Sultan. He had then proceeded

to form a syndicate consisting entirely of Americans and Chinese merchants in Hong Kong, Torrey being the chief representative. To this body the leases had been transferred, and in November, 1866, the Sultan had issued a document recognizing the transfer and vesting the president of the company with sovereign powers. The syndicate, known as the American Trading Company of Borneo, had established a settlement on the Kimanis River, and a large number of Chinese had been imported. Trading operations had been started on the coast and shipbuilding begun. Later, when Mr. W. J. Agar was opening Kimanis Rubber Estate in 1910 he found on clearing the jungle that some of the hill-sides had been carefully terraced, and these terraces were probably the remains of the company's experimental planting. But for want of sufficient capital the venture had not flourished; the settlement had been abandoned, the immigrants had returned to China and the activity of the company had been restricted to desultory trading along the coast until it had closed down altogether. The only permanent record of it to-day is upon a high hill where Kimanis Estate's rubber-trees grow. It is a great granite tombstone erected to mark the resting-place of Thomas Bradley Harris, one-time representative of the company. It was found by Mr. E. A. Pavitt, Chief Government Surveyor, in 1909 when he was surveying the Kimanis Rubber concession, and some of the older natives remembered the circumstances of its erection and said it had taken six buffaloes two days to drag it to the summit of the hill. Upon the stone is the following inscription: "In memory of Thomas Bradley Harris, Hon. Chief Secretary in the Colony of Ambong and Marudu. Died 22nd May 1866. By birth a citizen of U.S.A. Aged 40 years. Erected by H.E. the Rajah as a tribute of respect to the memory of an old, faithful and esteemed friend. 'After life's fitful fever he sleeps well.'" North Borneo is not a land of antiquities, and this is undoubtedly the oldest monument in the country.

In 1878 Torrey was the sole surviving member of the original partnership, and a meeting took place between him and Cowie in Hong Kong. Cowie would not agree to recognize the self-styled Rajah's authority by paying the export duty demanded,

more especially as it appeared that the concessions, which had been granted in 1865 for a period of ten years, had not been renewed. At the same time, it occurred to Cowie's active brain that something might be made of the concessions, void though they were. Accordingly, after some argument, it was finally agreed that Cowie should use his influence with the directors of his company and with the Sultan of Sulu to get them to fall in with a scheme he had in mind for the occupation of North Borneo, while Torrey was to transfer the concessions to the Labuan Trading Company, provided that the Sultan of Brunei could be induced to renew them, and that the Sultan of Sulu would grant concessions of a similar nature.

In later years Cowie said that it had been St. John's *Forests of the Far East* which had suggested to him the idea of acquiring the north-west coast of Borneo for a governing company, but on his return to Sandakan he was chagrined to find that his partners in the Labuan Trading Company would have none of his scheme. Nothing daunted, Torrey, who had Cowie's promise of assistance as long as he could get others to support him, kept pegging away until one fine morning he and a certain Baron Overbeck arrived in Borneo waters on board the S.S. *America*, with the avowed intention of occupying the country.

The Baron, who was an Austrian subject, represented a syndicate formed by two brothers called Dent, members of a well-known commercial house in London and Shanghai. He was a person of astuteness and diplomacy and had some years previously presented himself at the Court of Brunei with gifts and proposals.[1] After spending two or three years establishing his influence, he eventually induced the Sultan of Brunei to place him in Rajah Torrey's shoes, so far as the lapsed concessions went, for the consideration of £1,000; further, on December 29, 1877, the Sultan and his Prime Minister made a grant of absolute sovereignty over his possessions in Borneo to the Baron and his friends for the sum of £3,000 to be paid annually, in spite of unsuccessful attempts on the part of the

[1] Ross, *Sixty Years of Travel and Adventure in the Far East*, vol. i, p. 169.

Dutch and Spanish Consuls in Singapore to stop negotiations.

The ceded territory stretched from the Kimanis River on the north-west to the Sibuku River on the east, with the exception of a few independent States, the property of feudal chiefs, and included all islands within three marine leagues of the coast; the provinces of Kimanis and Benoni were ceded by the Sultan's Prime Minister as his private property, the remaining territory as part of the Sultanate's possessions. In area the whole concession amounted to some 18,000 square miles with a coast-line of 500 miles, so that it was not a bad bargain for the Baron and his friends. When the title came to be examined more carefully, however, it was found that the cession was worthless because the Sultan had in fact no power to make such a grant at all. In the first place, by the treaty which he had entered into with Great Britain in 1847 he had engaged to make no cession of any part of his dominions without previously obtaining the consent of the British Government, so that both the grants made to the American Consul Moses and to the Austrian Baron were inconsistent with the treaty. Secondly, while it was clear that he had had no right to grant the concessions, it also appeared very doubtful whether he had any lawful claim to the territories with which they were concerned, for, as already mentioned, one of his ancestors, in return for assistance rendered, had already ceded to Sulu the very lands that he had made over to the Baron and (what was more) the Sultan of Sulu was, with the exception of the coast strip from Kimanis to Pindassan, actually in possession of them. To complicate matters still further, the Brunei chiefs from Kimanis to Pindassan absolutely refused to recognize the Sultan's right to cede their territory, which had been handed down to them (as they said) by their forefathers from time immemorial.

The Baron saw that he had gone to the wrong place for his concession, but he was not discouraged. Where some one less discreet would have lifted up his voice in protest and tried to get his money back, the Baron decided to let matters stand and to go to the right place, namely the Court of Sulu. Here Cowie comes into the story again, for, knowing his influence with the Sultan, it was to him that the Baron and Torrey

turned for his promised help. This Cowie readily agreed to give, more especially as the whole plan of occupying the country had been originated by himself; accordingly (the Labuan Trading Company having died a natural death) he joined the Baron on board the *America* and the party set off for Sulu to see what could be done in the way of concessions there. From the point of view of the adventurers (I use the word in its true sense) the times were propitious for their schemes. The Sultan was in a precarious position, being in revolt against Spain, which nation claimed him as her vassal and asserted her rights of sovereignty over the whole of his dominions, which, besides his possessions in the Sulu Islands, included, according to his own assertions, all Northern Borneo from Kimanis to the Sibuku River. He was getting the worst of the argument, in fact the Baron and his friends only arrived just in time, for six months later he was forced to surrender his territory to the Governor-General of the Philippines. When Overbeck came upon the scene the Sultan probably saw the end in sight and was therefore not indisposed to lend a favourable ear to a scheme by means of which he might be able to realize something on the sinking ship of state. He was not only on friendly terms with Cowie but also had recently gone into partnership with him, and it was agreed that Cowie should act as intermediary in the proceedings. The Baron offered the Sultan the sum of £600 a year for the whole of his possessions in North Borneo. The Sultan demurred at parting with so large an area for the price, even though things were looking black, whereupon the Baron increased his offer to £1,000, reminding His Highness that the Spanish Government was making preparations for a determined offensive which it was unlikely that he would be able to resist successfully. The Sultan, thinking it better to take what he could get and be thankful for small mercies, eventually made the cession on January 22, 1878. By this he granted to the Baron and Mr. (afterwards Sir) Alfred Dent—the active partners of the syndicate—full sovereign and territorial rights over his possessions in Borneo, from Pindassan to Sibuku, including (as in the case of the Brunei concession) all islands within three marine leagues of the coast.

It must have been a strange scene, that conference in the Sultan's dimly-lighted palm-leaf palace, as the white men and that dusky ruler came to terms ; the white men little dreaming to what extent they were making history or what high consequences their action was to have for that lonely land washed by the China Sea ; the Sultan himself despondent of the future and made fearful by the clouds that seemed to be gathering upon the horizon of his domain. The whole story of that very fateful bargain, what Mr. Dent subsequently called "those tedious though most friendly negotiations," is never likely to be written now, but after the cession had been amicably arranged the Sultan gave a dinner-party in honour of the event, and, at its conclusion, gracefully asked each guest to keep his desert plate, a large mother-of-pearl shell with a pearl attached, as a momento of the occasion. Then the *America* took the party straight back to Sandakan, where the Dent's house-flag was hoisted alongside the Union Jack which was flying over the trading station. North Borneo was in the hands of the British pioneers.[1]

§ 2

The Sultans had conferred on the chief representative of the syndicate and on his successors in office the titles of Maharajah of Sabah (as North Borneo was then called), Rajah of Gaya and Sandakan and Datoh Bandahara ; he was a supreme ruler with the power of life and death over the inhabitants, his were the rights of property over the soil, the rights over the productions of the country, the right to the making of laws, of coining money, of creating an army and navy, of levying customs duty and other taxes. There were no restrictions. On the other hand the cession was no hole-and-corner business, and it had been made with the full knowledge of the British Consul-General in Borneo, Mr. W. H. Treacher, who had always been inclined to look favourably upon the project of the Baron and his friends.

In order to acquaint the natives with the new situation each Sultan deputed a high official to accompany a represen-

[1] The account of Mr. Cowie's early activities is based on an article by himself in the *London and China Express* of Nov. 29, 1908.

tative of the syndicate in a voyage round the coast. At six places the Sultan's officers, having assembled the chiefs and people, read a solemn proclamation announcing the cession of the country and commanding them to obey the new authorities. Everywhere the news was received in a friendly spirit.

In this way the syndicate had satisfied the sovereigns of the country, the British Government, the local chiefs and native population on the coast, and had come to terms with the only possible rival claimants, the American Trading Company. One of the first acts of the newly constituted Government was to establish its representatives. Mr. W. B. Pryer, one of the Baron's officers, was left in charge of Sandakan with a staff consisting of a West Indian black named Anderson, a half-caste Hindu and a couple of Chinese boys;[1] stations were also started at Tempassuk under Mr. W. Prettyman and at Papar under Mr. H. L. Leicester. Courts were established for the administration of justice, the native chiefs being invited to attend as assessors in all cases of importance; disputes were settled; intertribal feuds were checked; regulations were introduced regarding trade and markets. The Government officers demonstrated the actual occupation of the territory, cultivated friendly relations with the natives, and, as well as administering their districts, made it their business to acquire information regarding the resources and possibilities of the country generally. They were pioneers in the greatest and truest sense of the word, and their lot, alone in their little outposts, surrounded by natives who, though outwardly friendly nevertheless had not seen fit to cast aside entirely the occupation of their piratical and head-hunting forebears, was not altogether an enviable one. Their armed force was negligible and their only real support was the prestige that the white man held and still holds throughout the East. The Sultan of Sulu, whose influence as overlord, in spite of his increasing difficulties, was still considerable, also helped to keep the country quiet with the aid of his chiefs, and by these means the new Government managed to struggle along and keep its head above water.

Six months after the concessions had been granted, how-

[1] Ada Pryer, *A Decade in North Borneo*, chapter 2.

ever, the Sultan, as stated above, signed a treaty of capitulation and surrendered the whole of his dominions to Spain. The Spanish Government informed Baron Overbeck of this on the very same day and the Sultan (doubtless because he could not well help himself) revoked the concession and cancelled the sovereign powers he had conferred, telling the Baron that if he wished to conduct further negotiations he must approach the Captain-General of the Philippines. A Spanish gunboat even entered Sandakan harbour and endeavoured to bluff Mr. Pryer into capitulating, but, finding that he and his natives were prepared to put up a spirited resistance, finally withdrew.

Realizing that possession was nine points of the law, the Baron very wisely did not pursue the matter further either with the Sultan or with the Government of Spain. He had returned to Europe with the concessions in his pocket, and it is said that, like a true patriot, he first took them to Vienna, only however to have cold water thrown upon his so long-deferred hopes; there is another story that he even tried to interest the Kaiser in his projects and had a correspondence with Prince Bismarck on the subject. Then, finding that neither his own country nor Germany would consider his proposals he determined to wash his hands of the whole business and sold out his rights to the brothers Dent. Thus one by one the originators of the scheme for occupying North Borneo make their exit from the scene: Torrey is bought out by the Baron and Dent; Cowie is heard of no more after helping to bring the negotiations with the Sultan of Sulu to a successful conclusion, and lastly the schemer Overbeck himself abandons his dream of an Austrian colony.

Having got the concessions entirely into their own hands, the Dents' next move was to form a Limited Provisional Association which contained a number of well-known men, including Sir Rutherford Alcock, Admiral the Hon. Sir Harry Keppel, Rear-Admiral R. C. Mayne, C.B., and Mr. R. B. Martin, M.P., a member of the famous banking firm. This Association was not a large one as it was thought desirable (privacy being more or less necessary to ensure success) that it should be limited in numbers. A more comprehensive company or

corporation was always contemplated when a first success should have been secured, as it was realized that the enterprise was too large for a few private individuals; consequently, on December 2, 1878, a statement was addressed to Lord Salisbury (then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs) setting forth the proceedings of the Association up to date and asking that Her Majesty's Government would grant a charter of incorporation to the proposed company.

Before this could be decided there were several European interests to be considered, as it was feared that complications might arise with other Powers, notably Spain, Holland and Germany. Both the Spaniards and the Dutch had long cast a covetous eye upon North Borneo, indeed for more than sixty years diplomatic communications had been going on with regard to the country between Great Britain and the various Governments interested. Then suddenly, when Mr. Dent and the Baron had slipped in under the noses of these Powers (who had had several hundred years to form settlements or get concessions themselves), there was a chorus of protest. The Spanish Government claimed that it had rights over the Sultan of Sulu's possessions in North Borneo by virtue of the treaty concluded between Spain and Sulu on July 24, 1878. The cession to the Baron, however, had been made six months previous to this date, so that North Borneo could not by any stretch of imagination be included as part of the Sulu dominions at the time when the treaty was made. Moreover, Great Britain had at this time never acknowledged Spanish sovereignty over the Sulu Archipelago. In consequence Lord Salisbury repudiated any claim on the part of the Spanish Government to North Borneo, and finally it was arranged that Great Britain should recognize Sulu as a Spanish possession, while Spain agreed to withdraw all claims to North Borneo. The Dutch were also alarmed at the concessions, but they had even fewer reasons for complaint than the Spaniards, and got no encouragement from Lord Salisbury, on the ground that it was not the British Government that was acquiring the country. With this Germany agreed, and eventually the correspondence ended in an amicable settlement. The United States of America also had certain interests

at stake, for some years previously they had concluded a treaty for the protection of American trade with the Sultan of Brunei, but no objections were ever put forward in official form.

All these negotiations took the best part of two years, during which time those interested in the country were anxiously awaiting results. In March, 1879, a meeting was held at the Westminster Palace Hotel for the discussion of the Association's affairs, with Sir Rutherford Alcock in the chair. Many influential people were present and the prospects of the country were discussed at length. Resolutions were proposed and carried as to North Borneo's favourable natural resources, the importance of its geographical position, and the desirability of opening up the country without delay; these it was decided to bring to the notice of Lord Salisbury and a deputation was formed to solicit the Government's support for such company as might be organized to undertake the development of the acquired territory.

This attempt to galvanize Lord Salisbury and his colleagues into action had no immediate effect. Matters dragged on till 1880 and in April that year Mr. Dent, knowing that the Conservative Party might soon be out of office and thinking he had even less chance of getting the Charter out of the Liberals, begged that a definite answer might be given since (said he) " owing to the uncertainty of our present position and to the doubts in Sulu and Borneo as to the attitude of Her Majesty's Government towards us, it has been impossible for the officers of the Company to organize any regular trade." To this his lordship gave the somewhat exasperating reply that he was " of opinion that the question should be left to be dealt with by his successor."

A few months later the Liberal Government under Mr. Gladstone came into power, and it was not until November 1, 1881, that the British North Borneo Company was authorized to acquire the full cessions from the British North Borneo Provisional Association and was incorporated by Royal Charter under the Great Seal. It is extremely interesting that the Charter should have been granted by Mr. Gladstone, one of the greatest anti-expansionists of our time, but it was

pointed out that it had been earned by the Association's good administration, the preference of the natives for its rule, and the growth of trade and the decrease of the piracy which had formerly been the curse of the Sulu Sea.

Although the Government took a considerable time in making up its mind to recognize the claims of the Association it is quite obvious that it was bound to do so in the long run. The case was totally different from that of the Honourable East India Company. The E.I.C. assumed the right of dominion by force of arms, the British North Borneo Company had acquired it in a perfectly legitimate and peaceful manner. There had been nothing high-handed about the transaction, and the concession-hunters had taken scrupulous care not to overstep the mark. The result was that the Association stood in a very strong position ; it was in possession of the country with sovereign rights over it. The Foreign Office had no power to object to a company obtaining such rights, no power to cancel them, no power (unless a Charter were granted) even to control them. The question that the Foreign Office had to decide for itself was whether it was going to allow this Company to continue its course unchecked and unrestrained by any obligations, or whether it was going to grant the desired Charter, at the same time imposing certain conditions and restrictions.

The new administration had been tested ; since its advent conditions in North Borneo undoubtedly had been improved, and there was no suggestion that its powers, extensive though they might be, were being misused. Moreover, from the British Government's point of view the Charter was one not of privilege but of restraint. It enjoined that the Company was to remain British in character and domicile ; that all directors and the chief representatives in North Borneo must be British subjects ; it laid down that the grants could not be transferred without the permission of the Crown ; that negotiations or disputes with foreign States must be conducted through the medium of the British Government ; slavery amongst the native tribes must be discouraged and by degrees abolished ; complete religious freedom must be allowed and careful regard paid to native rights and customs ; no

general monopolies of trade were to be set up, and the appointment of the Company's Governor was to be subject to the approval of the Secretary of State.

The Crown thus obtained what Lord Granville called a negative control over the Company with regard to its general treatment of the natives and its dealings with foreign Powers. On the other hand it incurred no obligation to give military assistance or protection other than that given to all Englishmen engaged in trade in uncivilized countries. It was first proposed that the Company should be subject to the directions of the Secretary of State, but later it was decided that no interference should be made with its administration except in the event of its conduct conflicting with the views and policy of the Government or with public opinion in Great Britain. This power, though negative, is very strong, and any disregard of the restrictions or failure to fulfil the conditions entails the possible cancellation of the Charter. In fact the Charter established on the part of the British Government a control which would not have existed had the Company been incorporated (as it might have been) under the Companies Act, nor did it give any powers or privileges beyond those which Mr. Dent and his friends might have procured by putting themselves under that Act.

What, then, was the object of the promoters in struggling so hard to get the Charter? What benefits were they going to derive from it once it was approved? They were mainly moral ones. The Crown confirmed and at the same time restricted the powers ceded by the Sultan's grants; it exercised restraint upon the conduct of the Company. This was in itself a guarantee of considerable importance against any misconduct on the Company's part. That there should be such a guarantee tended to raise the character of the Company, improve its credit and generally place it in a far stronger position than it could have attained by being merely registered under the Companies Act. This was a matter of vital importance and a very considerable advantage not only in the City but also in Borneo, making investment in the country attractive and increasing the Company's prestige amongst the natives.

The Charter was conferred without Parliament having been consulted, with the result that the Government's action met with severe criticism in the House of Lords on March 13, 1882, and in the House of Commons a few days later. The opposition came from those well-meaning persons who dislike increasing our possessions for fear of increasing our responsibilities. Various members began to panic about the powers of the Company, the probability of the British Government having to take over the country at no distant date and the fact that the Charter did not insist that slavery must be abolished *instanter*. The debates were excellent advertisements for the Company, whose cause was ably defended by Lord Carnarvon, Lord Granville and Mr. Gladstone himself. Much mystery had previously surrounded the subject of the Charter, and the wildest designs had been attributed to Dent and his friends, so that the discussion was the best thing that could possibly have happened to the Company, for although a good deal of adverse criticism was aimed at its head, its whole history and objects were gone into at considerable length, and the Government's action was approved by speakers on both sides of each House. The Charter stood and the young Company gradually forged ahead. Later, on May 12, 1888, North Borneo, together with Brunei and Sarawak, became a British Protectorate, but the Company still holds its powers and administers the country under the terms of the Royal Charter, and "Charter Day," the first of November, is observed officially as a public holiday throughout the State.

§ 3

The Charter marked a great change in the fortunes of the territory. From the day when the Dent house-flag was hoisted in Sandakan until the inauguration of the Company had been lean and trying times indeed, for the future was uncertain, no systematic development of the country could be begun, and there were only sufficient funds available to maintain the barest form of government. The path of the local officers was beset with difficulties. Theirs was the task of upholding the dignity and good name of the white man; of preparing the way for the establishment of a more organized

administration; of checking and controlling oppressive acts by native chiefs, of settling disputes, of opening up the country to peaceful trade. It was a great task, but an uphill task. They had no regular armed force, and rigid economy had to be practised, while not the least of their trials were the reports that gained footing among the natives (owing to the delay) that no Charter would be granted and that the white man's stay in North Borneo would be of brief duration.

With the granting of the Charter things were changed. The prestige of the governing body, both in England and in Borneo, was raised at once. The Court of Directors in London was a body of well-known and influential men, including Lord Elphinstone and Admiral the Hon. Sir Harry Keppel. The first chairman of the Court was Sir Rutherford Alcock, who subsequently resigned in favour of Mr. Bradley Martin. The capital of the Company was £2,000,000, of which £823,000 had been subscribed, so that it appeared to be in a sufficiently strong position financially. Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Hood Treacher, Consul-General in Borneo and Governor of Labuan, was lent by the British Government as the first Governor of the State. He assumed office on August 7, 1881 (before the actual signing of the Charter), with temporary head-quarters at Labuan. He took steps immediately to organize the administration and civil service on a permanent footing. A commandant of Constabulary, an auditor-general, a superintendent of agriculture, a mineralogical explorer, a medical officer, assistant Residents and other new officials were appointed; a few Sikhs, Somalis and Malays were enrolled as a regular police force; new stations were opened at Gaya, at Silam (now Lahad Datu) and at Kudat, which latter afterwards became for a time the capital of the country and the seat of Government. As the trade of the country was insignificant and the capital was not sufficient to begin planting operations on a large scale, it had been decided at the outset that the territory should be open to private enterprise and that the Company should remain an administrative body, but Mr. Treacher found in North Borneo no machinery for introducing a system of government such as the protected Native Malay States had received cut and dried from the Straits

Settlements. The system had to be organized on the spot. Only one or two officers had had any administrative training, and the London officials naturally were not in a position to render much practical assistance in the routine work of laying the lines on which the wheels of the new Government were to run. All the more credit is therefore due to Mr. Treacher and his little band of pioneers for the way they worked to overcome the many and inevitable difficulties they met.

The vendors received £300,000 for their rights, and the Company took over officially from the Provisional Association on July 1, 1882, by which time there were established the stations of Sandakan, Penangah (eighteen days' journey up the Kinabatangan River), Silam, Papar, Kudat and Gaya. The Company's early sources of revenue were quit rent, farms, ten per cent export duty on edible birds'-nests, jungle produce and timber; five per cent import duty on all imports except provisions, a share of the Gomanton birds'-nest caves, poll tax, fines and court fees, and land sales.

For the last item great hopes were entertained. Attractive terms were offered to companies and capitalists, concessions for large areas of land being granted freehold for nominal premiums. A considerable amount was applied for, but the difficulties of obtaining labour were at first very great. Every effort was made to attract Chinese to the country, and Sir Walter Medhurst, who was appointed Immigration Commissioner, organized a system of obtaining immigrants from Southern China which at first met with success. Streams of Chinese began to pour into Borneo—whole families, often including grandparents, mostly of the labourer and farmer class, with a sprinkling of traders and shopkeepers. All were under advances from the Company and the advances were sometimes supplemented by grants of land, from the produce of which the settlers were to repay their loans. The experiment was only too successful, but the flow of immigrants was not properly controlled. The result was an overwhelming rush which the young country could not stand. The labour market became overstocked; the Government had to draw in its horns, finding it impossible to give out unlimited loans; the traders who had come direct from China found themselves

at a disadvantage with the Straits-born Chinese who were versed in trading with the natives and could speak their language; and many of the farmers, dismayed at the sight of the Borneo jungle, absolutely declined to squat upon the land allotted to them and took to picking up a living as best they could. A reaction set in and a return current began which by 1883 had carried hundreds back to their native shores. Nevertheless numbers of Straits-born Chinese continued to flock into the country, and two leading Chinese firms in Singapore put on the North Borneo run steamers of their own which competed successfully with the European-owned lines subsidized by the Government. When Mr. Pryer first took over Sandakan in 1878 there were two Chinese, and in 1883, notwithstanding the fact that many had returned to China, the number had risen to 3,000. A large number of Hakka Christians had also settled happily at Kudat, where their descendants live and thrive to-day.

The country soon attracted notice among capitalists in China also, and the first two companies to start operations were both Chinese—the Chinese Sabah Land Farming Company and the Yaen Yew North Borneo Cultivation and Trading Company, with concessions of 40,000 acres and 10,000 acres respectively. A Mr. de Lissa took up 20,000 acres for sugar cultivation of which great things were expected, but the land was never even selected, for the market value of sugar experienced a fall which drove planters in Fiji and Australia to despair. It was recognized that the whole future prosperity of the State depended on increased population and introduction of capital, but even when labour difficulties had been partially overcome, outside interest in the way of actual planting was on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, though a certain amount of timber was exported to Australia. The country had three strings to its bow: its timber, its reputed minerals and its plantable land. The timber was there, but it needed ships to carry it away; the minerals every one was certain were there, but they wanted finding and proved elusive; the plantable land was undoubtedly there, but it wanted some one to plant it.

Then, at a time when the future looked black, North Borneo

began to attract the attention of tobacco-planters. There was a scramble for land and a small boom resulted. This was a godsend to the Company; indeed, it is difficult to see how it could have carried on without it. Estates were started in Marudu Bay, on the east coast, and on Banggi Island, until in 1889 no less than seventy-eight companies had taken up land comprising some 700,000 acres, nearly all for tobacco cultivation. A large number of these failed through lack of funds, and it is doubtful if the Government ever received the money for many of the concessions, but from the boom the country got a new lease of life which it badly needed. The policy of granting the land on the easiest possible terms was undoubtedly a wise one, for it was the only means of competing with long-established countries such as Sumatra and of attracting capital, but the fact that it was impossible to scrutinize the affairs and positions of the operating companies carefully enough enabled speculators to get land for a song, with the result that large areas passed out of the Government's hands and, as there was no clause insisting on cultivation in the titles, were not developed. On the other hand, the fault of the companies that failed was their own and not the country's; many of the early companies that were properly organized did well and are still operating to-day, and although North Borneo was called the grave of buried hopes by people who had burnt their fingers, capital had been attracted to the country, the soil proved for tobacco cultivation and the young State set upon its feet.

All this helped to open up the territory, but in the meantime the exploration of its more remote regions was not neglected. The story of the journeys made and of the work accomplished in those early days would fill a volume. Before the cession the only parts of the country, beyond the coast, of which anything was known were the Tuaran and Tempassuk districts, which had been traversed by Low and St. John on their way to Mount Kinabalu. The first exploration after the cession was undertaken by Mr. T. S. Dobree, who came from Ceylon in 1878, at the instance of the planters there, to investigate the planting possibilities of the country, especially as regards the cultivation of coffee. Mr. Dobree made several trips into

the interior and was the first white man to penetrate the upper reaches of the Papar River. Apart from him, nearly all the early exploration work was carried out by the Government officers in the course of their duties. In 1881 Mr. W. B. Pryer ascended the Kinabatangan River 150 miles farther than any European had done previously, and in the following year Mr. L. S. Von Donop made a journey up the Tempassuk River, across the divide into the true interior, returning to the coast by way of Mumus and Timbang Batu.

In the chapter on minerals reference will be found to the explorations of Mr. Frank Hatton up the Labuk River and across country to Marudu Bay in 1882, together with Captain R. D. Beeston's and Mr. Henry Walker's prospecting trips up the rivers of the east coast, but perhaps the greatest explorer that North Borneo has seen was Franz Xavier Witti, an ex-officer of the Austrian navy. He first came to the territory at the instance of Baron Overbeck, and while in the Government service he made three great journeys. In 1880 he made his way overland from Marudu Bay to Papar, via the upper Sugut, when he proved beyond all question the non-existence of the Kinabalu lake. In the following year he made a journey from Marudu Bay to Sandakan, and in 1882 he ascended the Kimanis River, travelled over the Keningau plain settling some head-hunting feuds, and visited Tambunan, where he met Mr. von Donop, who was the last European to see him alive. Then, in spite of orders from Governor Treacher recalling him to the coast, he pushed on through the Dalit country towards the south. Some time in June, when he was only a few miles from the Dutch Border, he was attacked by Muruts on the Pensiangan River while his boats were being dragged across some difficult rapids known as Luminggi. He was first wounded by blow-pipe darts and subsequently speared to death, fighting to the last. His head was taken, and only three of his seventeen followers escaped to tell the tale. His death was a severe loss to the country. His intrepid courage, unfailing humour and disregard of personal comfort mark him as a true explorer; his tact in dealing with natives and his great black beard made him loved and remembered by those among whom he went. "Whenever we came to a place for the first time,"

he says in one of his diaries, "there we dare show our faces again," and the fact that he should have met his death at the hands of unthinking savages whose cause he had at heart does but enhance the tragedy of his fate.

§ 4

Not only did North Borneo develop little by little its economical resources but it expanded territorially as well. So far from feeling that it had its hands sufficiently full already (and 18,000 square miles was no small thing) the Court of Directors went on extending its possessions. On May 1, 1884, the Putatan district was ceded to the Company on payment of an annual subsidy to Pengiran Muda Damit. This rich and fertile district was first put in the charge of Mr. S. E. Dalrymple, who, without having a single policeman for the first year, administered the district in a manner that won the hearts of the native population. In fact by all but interested parties the change to the Company's rule was hailed as a blessing. Previously every village chief and every villager had been at the mercy of royal understrappers at the Brunei court; these gentry had been in the habit of obtaining the Sultan's royal seal upon outrageous requisitions for taxes which the poor tillers of the soil were unable to execute, and in consequence had their property and often their womenfolk seized and carried off.

In the same year the Padas-Klias cession, from Sipitong to Bongawan, was made. This comprised the principal sago districts of North Borneo; the cession included the pepper district of Bundu and also the Tuaran district, a total area of 4,000 square miles. The Company's flag was hoisted on November 19, 1884. This was followed in 1885 by the cession of the Kawang District and of the Mantanani Islands, which lie to the west of the Tempassuk River and are chiefly known for their edible bird's-nest caves.

The policy of the Company, however, was not entirely one of expansion. In one case it was found politic to cede a slice of territory. This was the Lawas district, which was handed over to the Rajah of Sarawak in 1905. The inhabitants were clearly allied with those of the Trusan district, which formed

part of the Rajah's dominions, and after an amicable arrangement had been come to, relations between the two States (previously often strained) became much more friendly.

In 1888 the territory was created a British Protectorate with the title of the "State of North Borneo," being given, with Brunei and Sarawak, internal independence under British protection. The British Government took this step in spite of the protests of Holland, who claimed that it was a breach of the Treaty of 1824 which defined the limits of British and Dutch influence in the Indian Archipelago, though Borneo was not mentioned in the document. This recognition of the country was, if anything, an even greater asset to the Company than the Royal Charter had been, for it thereby secured the country from external aggression, added prestige and perpetuity to its character, while all those resident or having interests in it had the definite assurance of living under the protection of the British flag.

In 1889 the British Government further showed its confidence in the Company by transferring to its administration the Crown Colony of Labuan. As a dependency of the Crown Labuan had been a failure, and had never fulfilled the expectations of those who had advocated its foundation, either as regards a trading centre or a coaling station. Far from developing, it had stagnated. That no startling change took place after the transfer was not the fault of the Company, in whose hands the island remained until 1906, when it was taken back by the Crown, rather on grounds of Imperial policy and on account of the existing conditions in the Sultanate of Brunei than "in answer to the frequently and strongly expressed desire of the colonists," as Sir Hugh Clifford puts it.[1] The Company were not sorry to part with it as they had lost £9,000 over it, and since the re-transfer it has been administered as a Crown Colony under the Government of the Straits Settlements.

Most of the additions to the Company's territory were made by peaceful cession or by amicable arrangement, but a few were the result of the small wars that the Company was forced to enter into against its will. Such was the cession of

[1] Article: "British North Borneo," *Encl. Brit.*

the Padas Damit district which was taken over in March, 1889, by Governor Creagh as a result of the operations against Pengiran Shabandar Hassan, and in April, 1898, as a restitution for having assisted the rebel Mat Saleh with arms and ammunition, the Sultan of Brunei made over to the Company the districts of Mengkabong, Menggatal, Inanam, Api Api (where Jesselton is to-day), Kuala Lama and also all rivers lying north of the Padas that were nominally part of his royal dominions.

Kinarut, an old haven for refugees from justice, had been ceded in 1897, so that the Company's territory on the west coast was now a compact whole, instead of having hanging upon its flanks a number of small isolated districts which afforded convenient resorts for the disaffected and all who wished to escape the punishment of their crimes. In 1901 the district between the Sipitong River and the watershed of the Trusan was, with the approval of the British Government, acquired from Brunei on payment of annual cession money. This Independent Territory (as it had been previously called) had long been a thorn in the Company's side, being used, like all the other small " pockets " and detached areas, as a harbourage for criminals and a base for smuggling arms and ammunition. In the following year the Membakut district, the property of an independent chief, was handed over. It was the only part of the west coast that then remained outside the Company's sphere of influence, and as the railway ran through its fertile acres it was essential that it should pass into the Company's hands, more especially as it was, like Putatan, a rich district and noted for its rice and sago lands. This final cession left the country as it stands to-day, with no independent principalities breaking up its territory and its borders marching with those of Sarawak and Dutch Borneo.

§ 5

The foregoing statement is necessary to show how the new State was gradually enlarged and consolidated. In the meantime the Company had its vicissitudes. The tobacco boom died out as quickly as it had flared up; with it many of the surviving companies died too and new ones did not

come forward quickly to take their places. Mr. Punch had his little fling at the Company and suggested that the date on which the shareholders would receive their first dividend would be coincident with the Greek Kalends. The revenue of the country rose from £19,000 in 1885 to £99,000 in 1890, but dropped to £70,000 in 1891. Expenditure did more than keep pace with revenue and there was an annual deficit except in 1889 when, thanks to land sales, the Company did pay its first dividend of 2½ per cent. There was not sufficient capital to develop the property on a large scale and consequently the progress was very slow. In 1892 Lord Brassey, who had previously been a member of the Court of Directors, called attention in the House of Lords to the administration of the Company, declaring that the time had come for the country either to be taken over by the Imperial Government or handed over to Sarawak. He suggested that the Company should retain the ownership of the land and by gradual sales repay to the shareholders the capital thus far expended. As an alternative he advocated a scheme under which North Borneo, Sarawak, the protected Malay States and the Straits Settlements might all be brought under one government. Lord Elphinstone, a Director, opposed the motion. He doubted if the country would be more economically administered under Imperial rule than under that of the Company, and asserted that if a comparison were to be instituted with the progress of any modern colony, British or foreign, there would not be found one that could show such good results in so short a time and at so small a cost. Moreover he did not think that Lord Brassey's suggestions would commend themselves to the shareholders, who had waited patiently for the reward they had every reason to hope might be theirs, and would not readily abandon the prospect they had kept in view for so many years unless liberally dealt with. Lord Knutsford, the Colonial Secretary, agreed with this point of view and said that any such proposal must come first from the Chartered Company to the Government and not from the Government to the Chartered Company.

Lord Elphinstone's opinions were fully endorsed at the next half-yearly meeting of the Company, but the matter was not

allowed to drop. A proposal was put forward that North Borneo should be incorporated with Sarawak provided that the Rajah would guarantee to the shareholders a small interest upon the capital paid up, to be increased *pro rata* with the increase of the revenue. The capital invested was to be viewed in the light of a loan to the State, and was to be paid off as the Rajah could find the means to do so.[1] Lord Brassey was in favour of this and returned to the attack at a special meeting of the Company held in 1894, when he urged the shareholders to hand over their territory to the Rajah, saying that it was a very poor country and that he saw little prospect for it, especially when its affairs were administered by a Board of Directors in London.

Lord Brassey's remarks carried weight because he had paid a visit of inspection to Borneo in the *Sunbeam* during 1887, and therefore had some knowledge of local conditions. Moreover the Company continued to be in very low water (chiefly owing to the general trade depression throughout the East), and, although retrenchments were made and expenditure was reduced, the revenue for 1893 was £6,000 less even than that for 1891. Nevertheless the shareholders had so much faith in their property that they refused to part with it, but empowered the Court to invite Rajah Brooke to become Governor-General of the country, an offer which was declined. The shareholders have little reason to regret their decision. The Company, it is true, has never been a get-rich-quick investment —in forty years it has only paid a total of 85½ per cent in dividends—but it turned the corner in 1896 when revenue again showed a small surplus over expenditure; since that year a regular dividend has been paid and the country has made slow but steady progress.

§ 6

In 1896 the telegraph line from Jesselton to Sandakan was completed at a cost of £10,500. It stretched across the country for seven hundred miles, through dense jungles and over

[1] Baring-Gould and Bamfylde: *A History of Sarawak under its Two White Rajahs*, p. 412.

tremendous hills, much of the work being done under the superintendence of the District Officers.

The same year saw the beginning of the railway, which, although it has never actually paid its way, has undoubtedly opened up large tracts of country that otherwise would have remained inaccessible. The scheme for a railway was originated by the enterprising Mr. Cowie, who was given a concession in 1891 to construct a line across North Borneo from the west coast to Sandakan. The proposal was, of course, far too ambitious ; Cowie failed to float the company, the matter was abandoned owing to lack of support, and it was then that the Chartered Company decided to start construction itself. In 1896 a metre-gauge line was begun from Weston, the port for Labuan, to Beaufort under the supervision of Mr. West ; this line, which is twenty-nine miles in length, was opened to traffic in 1898 and completed in 1900. An extension from Beaufort to Jesselton was then built on contract by the firm of George Pauling and Co. and was taken over in 1902 ; a further extension from Beaufort to Tenom was subsequently undertaken by Messrs. West and Ashton Pryke, £200,000 being raised in debentures for the purpose. This line, which was finally carried on to Melalap, a distance of ninety-six miles from Jesselton, was completed in 1905. The construction of the whole railway was slow and cost the Chartered Company half a million pounds, but although it entailed no great engineering feats it is necessary to see the country traversed to realize the difficulties that had to be encountered in the shape of treacherous swamps, long cuttings, enormous landslips and flooded rivers, especially beyond Beaufort where the line runs through the steep and rocky defiles of the Padas River. No further extension is contemplated, as the present policy is to construct roads. Indeed it has been asserted, particularly by Sir Hugh Clifford when Governor of the country, that had the amount laid out on the railway been spent on making metalled roads it would have made a vast difference to the country's prosperity. It is a vexed question, but it must be remembered that motor-transport in those days was non-existent. In any case the construction of the railway meant development, which was what the country needed, and

it facilitated transport at any rate on one coast, and that the country needed still more.

The question of a cross-country railway was not allowed to drop for some years, and in 1906 Messrs. Tristram and Moore, accompanied by Mr. W. C. M. Weedon, crossed the territory from Tenom to Tawau for the first time on behalf of Messrs. Pauling and Company. They had over 500 coolies and fifty police, and were four months in the jungle. In the following year they made a similar trip with Mr. A. B. C. Francis from Marudu Bay to Sandakan, covering a distance of some 230 miles in seventy-seven days. The chain and compass surveys made on these expeditions did much to fix the position of points which up to that time had been unknown, but they showed what a colossal task it would be to construct a line across the mountainous country of the interior.

Some time after his failure to float the original railway company Mr. Cowie, who had retired from the East a comparatively rich man, obtained a seat on the Court of Directors, after a certain amount of sparring with Sir Alfred Dent. He was always popular with the shareholders, who realized that he knew more about their property and local conditions than the rest of the Board put together; he was subsequently made Managing Director and in 1909, on the retirement of Sir Charles Jessel (who had succeeded Mr. Bradley Martin), he became Chairman of the Company. It was fitting that the man who had been instrumental in obtaining the cession of the country for British interests should eventually become captain of the ship he had schemed to build. At this time the little barque was again sailing in troubled seas. The previous decade had been one of changing policies. In 1901 Mr. (afterwards Sir) Ernest Birch had come from the Federated Malay States to take up the Governorship, eager for development and expansion. He spent the shareholders' money too freely for their liking and finally resigned. He was followed by Mr. E. P. Gueritz, during whose administration the Court drew in its horns. Comparatively little money was spent and consequently comparatively little progress was made, so that when bad times came again the country had not so much to fall back upon. The financial prospect was looking

no less black than it had in the early nineties when, just as the tobacco boom had held out a rescuing hand twenty-five years before, so did the rubber boom in 1909 and 1910. It was then that the railway came into its own; it ran through miles of uncultivated land suitable for rubber, and when the boom came the Company found itself in the pleasing position of being able to sell large concessions to newly formed companies at the excellent price of £5 an acre. But the railway, though an attraction in most cases, was not the only one. Even in those optimistic days people would not have come scrambling to North Borneo for land with the railway as the only inducement. There were railways elsewhere, and though they would not have come had there been no railway (or road) they needed some additional advantage which they could not obtain elsewhere, for North Borneo, through no fault of its own but rather owing to the number of concerns that had failed in the past through mismanagement or lack of capital, had not the best of names in the City. Mr. Cowie, ever astute, determined to take the tide at its flood, so that it might lead the country on to fortune. He saw clearly enough that some additional lure was needed to attract the attention of the thousands who at the moment were anxious to invest their money in rubber and obtain the dazzling profits that were dangling before their eyes. He produced two. The first was a guarantee of a 6 per cent dividend on the paid-up capital of such companies as should be formed. This dividend was to be paid until the estates were producing and in a position to pay a dividend themselves, when the money advanced was to be refunded in instalments. This policy had been tried previously with success; many people were burning to invest their money in rubber, but were faced with the fact that they could not expect a penny back for at least five years. Mr. Cowie's offer solved the problem and gave them an assured interest on their capital every year—incidentally at a higher rate than the Chartered Company itself ever paid. The second lure was also attractive but (from the Company's point of view) not quite so astute. It was the promise that for fifty years no duty would be exacted on plantation rubber exported from the State. This enabled North Borneo companies to compete with those of the Federated

Malay States and elsewhere, as the concession compensated for the extra transport expenses incurred. It was a great boon for the new concerns but rather hasty generosity from the point of view of the Chartered Company's revenue. Even if one per cent export duty had been imposed it would have been a concession worth having (the duty in the Federated Malay States being two and a half per cent) and would have produced a revenue of several thousand pounds a year.

However, Mr. Cowie's policy brought about the desired result, and some ten new companies began operations on the west coast. As his successor said subsequently, the rubber boom put the Company " on velvet." If the country had been more opened up it might have been gold brocade.

§ 7

Mr. Cowie lived long enough to see this change in the fortunes of the country he loved so well. On his death in 1911 he was succeeded by the Right Hon. Sir West Ridgeway, who had been a member of the Court of Directors since 1906. Sir West lost no time in paying a visit to the country in order to see things for himself and to get acquainted in some measure with local conditions. From the first he was for a policy of vigorous development. Regularly at every half-yearly meeting he told the shareholders, in those well-turned phrases and silvery sentences of which he is a master, that unless and until they put money into the country, they could expect to get nothing back. There were cavillers of course, but he got his way, and in 1913 half a million pounds were, at a cost of £36,000, raised in debentures to be especially devoted to development.

Critics of the Company are apt to sneer at the development and ask to be shown results. They point to the Federated Malay States, they draw comparisons with Ceylon. Some of them seem to think that the President (as the Chairman is now called) is a kind of magician who in a night ought to turn Sandakan into a young Singapore, Kudat into a budding Colombo and Jesselton into a miniature Johannesburg. Development has undoubtedly been slow, but it takes more than a few years to change the face of a jungle land the size of Ireland, especially if funds are limited. The chief things to show for

the money that was spent are the wireless stations, the Jesselton Waterworks and the reclamation of a large building-site at Jesselton. The *Lotus* was bought as a steam-yacht for Government purposes and had to be sold at a great loss; a large sum was laid out in a scheme for Chinese immigration: a commissioner was appointed, with an office in Hong Kong and special recruiters, but though a certain number of families were sent down and thrived the result did not justify the expenditure and the scheme failed just as similar ones had failed in 1883 and 1902. In 1914 a twenty-mile railway from Jesselton to Tuaran was sanctioned, but after a petition by the planters it was decided to make a road instead; then the war came and put a stop to everything. Development lay dormant for six years, but now the forward policy is being pursued again. Sandakan is to have its long-promised waterworks, without which it can never offer great attractions as a port of call; it is at last recognized that roads are the country's most urgent need, and among other works the construction of a road that will in time be a grand trunk route across North Borneo has been started from Jesselton and from Sandakan, work being carried on at either end.

Although the country has not advanced as rapidly as it might have done had more money been available, it cannot be too strongly emphasized that the State is no mere looker-on, and that it goes hand in hand with those who seek the hospitality of its shores. It has always been its policy to hold out a helping hand to any subsidiary concern that has got into deep water, not from any benevolent point of view but as a matter of business. Many a lame company that it has helped over a stile is now flourishing and paying a dividend, to the benefit of the State itself. An enterprise in which many thousands of pounds have been invested is not allowed to die when a few thousands would set it on its feet again. From every subsidiary company floated the Chartered Company has indirect advantages, but in the past it has never directly engaged in trade itself, although under the terms of the Charter it has every right to do so. Experience teaches that it is in the best interests of justice and administration that no governing body should trade and that no trading body should govern;

it is a policy of which the greatest statesmen of our time have approved, and one that was followed up to 1920 by the British North Borneo Company. In that year a change of policy was made, partly due to the interest shown in the country by the firm of Harrisons and Crosfield, which had in 1917 bought out the agency business built up in North Borneo by Mr. W. G. Darby at great profit to himself. The decision of the Court of Directors was clearly expressed by Sir West Ridgeway at the seventy-fifth half-yearly meeting of the shareholders held in July, 1920, in the following words: "We think that, instead of helping to float subsidiary companies and contenting ourselves with receiving moderate interest for our advances to different companies and repayment in course of time, we should take an active part in the industrial development of the country, invest our money in sound enterprises, and get our shares of the profits."

This is a most important change of policy. It means that the North Borneo Government no longer maintains its position as an administrative body pure and simple, but becomes a governing-cum-trading concern not unlike the East India Company. "Take an active part in the industrial development of the country" only means one thing, and that is Trade. The first step was to take a large share of the capital of the British Borneo Timber Company, which was given a monopoly to export timber from the State, the Chartered Company subscribing with Messrs. Harrisons and Crosfield £225,000 out of the total capital of £300,000, the balance of £75,000 being put to the public. The same course was taken in the case of the re-constituted Cowie Harbour Coal Company, in which concern Messrs. Harrisons and Crosfield are largely interested. In fact Sir West Ridgeway stated: "We may congratulate ourselves that so eminent a firm as Messrs. Harrisons and Crosfield have become our partners in the development of the country."

This picture of the Walrus (in the shape of the Company) walking hand in hand with the Carpenter (in the shape of Messrs. Harrisons and Crosfield) is one that is undoubtedly open to criticism. It is a bold course on the part of the Walrus, and it must be remembered that the policy of the

Walrus-Carpenter Syndicate was a destructive one: it left no oysters for another day. Will the Chartered Company, entering the arena as traders and by granting monopolies to their partners, kill that competition which is so vital to the industrial progress of every country? What will happen if the Company, in the course of its trading operations, comes in conflict with some subsidiary concern? Will the prestige of a Government which engages in trade be as high as the prestige of a Government which confines itself solely to administration? If the future answers these questions satisfactorily the new policy cannot but turn out remunerative as far as the shareholders are concerned and, as it will mean development to the country that would not otherwise take place, to the State at large.

The Chartered Company has no desire to kill competition: so far from wishing to cramp anybody's style it is only too glad to give him all the elbow-room he wants. But if there are no signs of competition, no indications of elbows wanting room, what is its policy to be? Indeed what can it be but to develop the country as best it may by putting up a proportion of the money and letting Messrs. Harrisons and Crosfield do the work? The granting of monopolies is often a confession of weakness, but the means used by the Company to develop its territory can only be justified by the end; the future will show the success or the failure of the enterprise.

As it is, there are those in North Borneo who look upon the increasing power and interests of Messrs. Harrisons and Crosfield with dismay. It is only natural that they should. No one owning a small but comfortable house and garden with a pleasant outlook is particularly pleased if some one else comes along, buys the adjoining piece of land, builds a larger house and obstructs the view. On the other hand, the small owner might have bought the land himself. If he had neither the enterprise nor the capital he cannot complain, however much he may dislike it, when the bigger man does. So to the cry that "H. and C." will kill competition there is always the reply that North Borneo has been open to competition for forty years and that it was open to any firm to come to the country, ten, twenty or thirty years ago and do what "H.

and C." are doing now. It never came. Now the British North Borneo Company has got what it has always needed and always lacked—a well-known business firm with a large capital. It is the only way that a small and comparatively poor country can develop; it was the way Sarawak was (in some measure) developed by the Borneo Company. I say the only way, but of course if there were *two* business firms of the standing of Messrs. Harrisons and Crosfield competing with one another in the country, things would go ahead considerably faster, and this would undoubtedly be very satisfactory to the ordinary European sojourner in North Borneo. He would be well content to look on and applaud—and incidentally to buy from the firm that sold at the lowest price. As things are, if he is a philosopher he suppresses his personal feelings and, while he waits for that blessed day to dawn, is thankful to see that there is at last a chance of the country going ahead.[1]

There is no doubt that the next decade will see more changes in the country than any previous one has seen, and at the present moment the position of the Chartered Company is stronger than it has ever been before. Its new line of action will be watched closely by all who have the country's interests at heart. There is much still to be done. The coast needs better lighting; the Customs need fast craft; the ports need more facilities for the proper handling of steamers and cargo. New exports must be created; above all, the country needs more roads and more population—the one is dependent upon the other, for though you may bring immigrants to Borneo, without means of transport you will never make them thrive. These things will come. To-day the Company has got its eggs in more than one basket, a precaution so necessary to the prosperity of every tropical country. As the years go on it is to be hoped that more and more baskets may be found for the Company's eggs, until the inevitable day comes when the State of North Borneo is taken over by the Imperial Government. Whether that day be far or near, come it will, and although there are some who seem to think that life under

[1] The firm of Messrs. Guthrie & Company, which has opened an office in Jesselton, has made a start in this direction.

the ægis of the Imperial Government will be a new species of Elysium, yet it may well be that these same people may live to regret the passing of the Chartered Company, and there will be many a manager who, as he struggles in the web of red tape that every Colonial Administration is wont to spin, will murmur to himself, *O mihi præteritos referat si Juppiter annos.*

CHAPTER VI

ADMINISTRATION

THE British North Borneo Company recruits the officers for its Civil Service and Constabulary in London. Appointments are made from nominations, the minimum and maximum ages for candidates being eighteen and twenty-three. There is neither qualifying nor competitive examination, but nominated candidates are interviewed by a Selection Board composed of the President and some of the Directors. This system in the past has had excellent results and is, for a small service like that of North Borneo, an undoubted improvement on the hide-bound methods of the competitive examination. By seeing the candidate and talking to him for fifteen minutes the President and Directors are quite able to ascertain whether he is the man they want or not. The competitive examination system may let in the mere book-worm and exclude the man of action, whereas the personal selection system, while it does not necessarily exclude the man of brains, enables the Court to assure itself that the candidate's antecedents are not undesirable, that he speaks King's English, that he has initiative, some natural power of command and (above all) his share of common sense. These are the qualities that the Court want in a man, and by their present methods they get the right stamp of officer for the Service, for the truth is that whilst a man does not need to be a Greek scholar to be a District Officer, he does need to be a gentleman, and there is no doubt that the English public schoolboy, with his sense of honour and sense of sportsmanship, has given our nation the prestige that it still enjoys among native races.

The pay and prospects of the young cadet have been improved

considerably since the war. He receives an outfit allowance, his passage to North Borneo is paid, and his initial salary is enough to live on carefully, even though it does not leave him much to play with. His first task is to learn Malay. Until he has a passing acquaintance with it he is a nuisance to himself and to every one else, but as Malay is one of the easiest languages in the world, a good working knowledge can be obtained in three months. For this purpose he is usually attached to the Secretariat or to one of the Residents' offices, where he is initiated at the same time into the mysteries of minute papers and the ritual of Government routine. If he is lucky he is posted to an outstation very soon and attached to a District Officer; then he cannot help but speak Malay, for the simple reason that no one speaks anything else. In this manner he prepares himself for his Lower Standard Malay Examination, for though the British North Borneo Company dispenses with entrance examinations, a young man has by no means done with them when he passes into the Service. Besides the Lower Standard test (a simple affair) there is a more formidable obstacle in the shape of the Higher Standard, to pass which a man has to be a fair all-round Malay scholar. Although it presents no great difficulties, Malay is a language which has its pitfalls owing to the fact that many words of widely different meaning are similar in spelling and pronunciation. Many a time this has been the cause of a *faux pas* that has taken the maker years to live down; such was the fate of a Constabulary officer who once when meaning to tell his Sergeant-Major to *Pergi jambatan*—go to the wharf—told him to *pergi jamban*—quite a different place.[1]

Besides being required to pass examinations in Malay the cadet has also to cope with one in the Official Regulations and the Indian Penal and Procedure Codes before he can be appointed a third-class magistrate. These trials negotiated, he may then gain his promotion and blossom out into an Assistant District Officer, when he is given an outstation of his own. It is now that he begins to learn the charm of the little life of a Borneo District Officer. Usually he finds that he is so

[1] The Chartered Company would do well to give its officers more encouragement to learn Murut, Dusun and Bajau.

many officials rolled into one that it would be easier to say what he is not than what he is. First and foremost, he is responsible to his Resident for the administration and well-being of his district, for the maintenance of law and order, for the health of its natives, its animals and its crops. If a turbulent rebel appears upon the scene and collects a few dare-devil followers to disturb the peace of the country-side, it is the D.O. who, as Police Officer of the district, hunts him down; as Magistrate he may try and sentence his quarry when caught, if the case is not beyond his powers; as Superintendent of the District Lock-up he receives the prisoner's commitment warrant that has been signed by him as magistrate, and as Collector of Revenue he takes any fine that may be paid, while as Postmaster he may sign the invoice of the mail which contains his report upon the incident.

In addition to all this he is a Collector of Land Revenue, and has the power to settle disputes as to boundaries and ownership, as well as to register transfers of title deeds and other transactions. In a district where there are estates he is an Assistant Protector of Labour, in which capacity he registers and attests all coolie contracts, investigates any complaints made by labourers and settles coolie troubles generally. There is a wise provision in the local Labour Ordinance as to penalties for frivolous complaints, and these are few; but it is a great proof of the faith both natives and Chinese have in the Government that a coolie who believes himself to have been treated unjustly will go straight to the District Officer and lay a complaint, and it is provided that his manager must afford him every facility for so doing. I remember a Chinese coolie being brought to my office one morning by my Dyak sergeant of police. Without a word he solemnly produced a match-box, out of which he extracted a small paper packet and laid it upon my table. On being opened the packet was found to contain a quite good tooth which (the complainant alleged) had been knocked out that morning by one of the estate assistants. The matter was taken up and in the end settled amicably. On another occasion a gang of seventy Chinese coolies marched fifteen miles to the Government Station in Marudu Bay to lay a complaint. They had left

the estate without permission, so they were promptly shepherded back with a police escort ; I followed, and their grievances (which eventually proved groundless) were thrashed out on the spot. It is needless to say that such wholesale visits are very definitely discouraged.

Estate work, as may be imagined, demands considerable tact. A D.O. has to be just to the manager and to the coolie, but while being just to the coolie he has to bear in mind that the prestige of the European must be upheld. He may have a couple of thousand Chinese coolies in his district and a force of twenty police to cope with them, so that it is obviously fatal for him to be mealy-mouthed. At the same time he looks to the Europeans on estates to support him by treating their coolies fairly. This support is almost unexceptionally forthcoming, and to-day North Borneo labour is as well treated as any in the world. It was not always so, and in the past there have been instances of aggravated assault, managers usurping the powers of the magistrate, tying coolies up, having them beaten and otherwise ill-treated. In such cases the offender receives a short shift, and is heavily fined or deported. Such cases are happily extremely rare. When they do happen they are rigorously dealt with by the Government, not only for the coolie's sake but also for the sake of the Europeans. If severe action were not taken against the ill-treatment of coolies the cases of assaults upon Europeans would increase at once. As one or two people have found to their cost in the past, coolie-beating is a game not always worth the candle. At the same time human nature is human nature, and a malingering coolie is a very exasperating thing—especially in the early morning. Even among the most benevolent planters there must be few who have not been moved to hand out an occasional cuff or box-on-the-ears to what a Dutch manager calls a " stink-rotter." This is of course also quite indefensible, but a wise District Officer realizes that trouble is the easiest thing in the world to find and that it does little good to go and look for it. When a complaint is made it is a different matter. Some magistrates give a planter the chance of compounding the offence if it is not serious, so that he may avoid washing his dirty estate-linen in the public

court, but if this is not done and the coolie makes out his case the planter is of course fined. The reader may say " Naturally. Why not ? " Quite so, but it may take a good deal of moral courage for a young officer to fine a manager perhaps old enough to be his father, especially if he is on terms of friendship with him and accepts his hospitality two or three times a month. At the best it is not a pleasant business, but there are few planters who are not sportsmen and these little matters are usually taken in good part. I have more than once had occasion to fine a planter for assault, but I always asked him up to my bungalow to tiffin after the case was over—and he always came. This is as it should be, for if " shop " can be left behind in the court or the estate office, there is no danger of the friendly relations between planter and Government officer becoming strained.

There are of course many districts which have no estates. This gives the District Officer much more freedom to visit his up-country population. In most outstation districts he travels at least half his time, and the area he has to cover is so great that there need be no fear of going over the same ground too often ; in districts like Tambunan, Keningau, Ranau, North Keppel or Province Clarke a District Officer can travel for three weeks on end without recrossing his tracks.

Governor Pearson once said that he thought a man either loved the jungle or hated the jungle ; there were no half measures. Most men love it. There are few who do not find jungle travelling the greatest of the many charms of an outstation life. As one of his many parts is to be superintendent of the public works of his district a District Officer traces and constructs his own bridle-paths, by means of which he is able to ride over a good part of the country that he has to visit. Once he gets off the beaten track he has to trust to his own feet, and foot-slogging over Borneo hills is an arduous performance at the best, aggravated by leeches and flooded rivers. Nevertheless, there is about jungle travelling a sense of freedom that is worth every discomfort, every hardship. On trek no harassing minute-papers can reach him, no embarrassing queries as to why he has overdrawn his vote for Current Repairs ; for a while he can banish relentless returns from his

thoughts. For a fortnight he is his own master—and that is a great thing to be; he can make his own time, he can go where he likes, as long as he keeps within the confines of his own district (with luck he may be able to arrange a meeting with his next-door neighbour on his boundary) and, above all, he has plenty of work to do. Up-country villages do not get visited too often; at every halting-place there are always disputes to settle, cases to try and affairs of state to be discussed with the village headman or local native chief; medicine is in great demand among all up-country natives, and as soon as it is noised abroad that the District Officer has arrived the *opis* (as the Government halting-house is called) is thronged by a kind of sick parade, the afflictions being for the most part "pains behind pinnies" and sores of every size. Epsom salts and carbolic lotion are the two great stand-bys, nor is it difficult to obtain a cheap reputation as a doctor. Once, far away in the Tuaran hills, I came upon a very old man all alone in a little shack beside an abandoned rice-clearing; he was suffering from sore eyes and seemed nearly blind. He begged for medicine, so I gave him a bottle of carbolic lotion and some cotton-wool; then, having told him to bathe his eyes, I continued my journey. Three months later I passed by that way again to find my old friend cured and my fame as a medicine-man spread far and wide. That night the *opis* was as packed as the pit of a London theatre on a first night; there was a run on the Government medicine-chest that strained its resources to the utmost, but those who could not get Epsom salts got calomel, while the remainder sucked quinine tablets like peppermint drops or found that iodine on open sores produced a pleasant tingle.

Even in the most remote districts there is seldom any shyness shown by the inhabitants; there is no flying into the jungle at the approach of the white man. As a race the Borneo natives are naturally hospitable, and though the consciences of a few may begin to prick them, the majority are genuinely pleased to see the District Officer when he visits a village on his rounds. Most officers make a point of not collecting poll-tax or other revenue while on tour. If it is brought in of course they take it, but a District Officer is not a tax collector

and his advent is more likely to be popular when it is known that he does not come in that guise.

Although a District Officer can travel more or less when and as much as he chooses, he has to be in his head-quarters by the end of the month to pay his people, close his accounts, dispatch his monthly returns and write his monthly reports. This period is the only rift within the lute of district work; the mystic rite of balancing the cash is always fraught with a certain amount of apprehension, the average District Officer being, as they say in Suffolk, " no lawyer's clerk." A Government servant has to make good any unexplained deficiency and hand over any unaccountable surplus, rather an unequal contest. It is extraordinary (to anyone who is not an accountant) how easy it is to make mistakes when paying away money in North Borneo notes, often so filthy and so tattered that they are with difficulty held together by pasted scraps of newspaper.

The tendency of office work is to increase every year, even in outstations. This is a pity, for it leaves an officer less time to get about his district, especially as he is usually not overburdened with good clerks. As a rule he has one Chinese and one native clerk, the Chinese being responsible for the court work, the native for the revenue collections. The latter he takes over at the end of the month, together with those of any substations. The chief items are poll-tax, every adult native male paying one dollar unless he already pays three dollars in other taxes; criminal and civil fines and fees; land rents and licences. The collecting of this revenue exposes the native clerk to considerable temptation to which, even when carefully watched, he not infrequently succumbs. This is in a way inevitable, but these clerks' pay and prospects have recently been improved, and it is to be hoped that the result will be a more contented and more efficient clerical service; formerly the Government was apt to lose its good men owing to the higher salaries offered by estates, while the bad stayed on and either robbed the till or by their inefficiency caused annoyance to the public in general and to the officer responsible for them in particular.

A good chief clerk is essential in a district office, and if he

has details of past correspondence and minute-papers at his finger-ends he can often be of especial help to a new-comer. The lot of a District Officer in North Borneo, if not one of perpetual motion, is usually one of perpetual transfer; it causes a deal of heartburning in the Service, and costs the Government a deal of money. It is the exception for a man to be left in an outstation for over a year, but it takes at least six months for him to learn the ins and outs of most districts and at least twelve for him to have his finger upon its pulse, for natives, though tractable, are diffident about bringing their troubles to him who should be their guide, philosopher and friend until they know him well. Often owing to sickness, leave or promotion transfers are unavoidable, but the "general posts" which take place sometimes, though doubtless equally unavoidable, are as injurious to the welfare of an outstation as they are disheartening to the officer who is keen upon his work.

And the District Officer is deserving of consideration. His lot is in every way a harder one than that of the departmental man at Jesselton or Sandakan, as the latter would be the first to admit. Save for the rare occasions when he visits the coast, there is for him no Club, no cricket, golf or tennis; it is rarely that he gets a game of bridge, more rarely still that he ever sees a white woman. Often for weeks on end he does not speak his own language, and his chief recreation is shooting or a game of football with his police. He is the man in the firing line, the P.B.I. of the Civil Service. He holds a solitary outpost in a lonely land. Yet for all that he leads a life worth the living, he has as fine a task as a young man could hope to have—the administration of his district—and that is worth everything he has to do without; for his district he may count the world well lost. There have been moments in the lives of most outstation officers when, sick with stinging official minutes and over-weary with official "strafes" (for many years under an Eastern sun makes these loom larger than they really are), the thought of his district has been the only thing that has kept his shoulder to the wheel. It is by him and the likes of him that North Borneo has been made. His is the goodly record of patient endeavour and dangerous enterprise; it has been

his to bring, gently and dexterously, untutored tribes under the protection of the British flag; it has been his to end bloodshed and tribal wars, to settle head-hunting feuds, to abolish slavery, to repress injustice and rapacity, to make the country possible for peaceful trade. His have been the long and often bitter journeys across unknown hills, up and down unknown rivers, through unknown jungles; he has established and maintained the distant outstations, he has made the network of bridle-paths which are the country's only roads; he has hunted down criminals and rebels, dealt justice, fought smallpox and cholera; and lastly he stands as a symbol to a people who have known no other white man but him or such as he. Few outside the country know the work he does, but that matters not at all, for in his district his memory does not fade, and his name (as far as it is within reach of their tongues) lives with the natives whom he has ruled and often learnt to love. They are his judges and that is his reward.

§ 2

A District Officer's chance of promotion usually comes in the shape of an acting appointment when a Resident or other senior officer goes on leave. There are only five Residencies in the country, the incumbents of the two senior, Sandakan and the West Coast, being members of the Legislative Council; the second-class Residencies are the Interior, the East Coast and Kudat.

The Resident has under him a group of districts and subdistricts for whose administration he is directly responsible to the Governor. His appointment is no sinecure; it entails a great deal of office work by which he usually finds that he is so tied down that he is not able to visit his outstations as much as he would like. During the past few years there has been an enormous increase of office work in all Government departments; this is especially the case with returns. How many returns are worth the trouble that the compilation of them entails is always a moot point in any service, though they often have a usefulness which is not immediately apparent to the unfortunate from whom they are demanded.

The fountain-head of all this correspondence is the Secretariat,

presided over by the Government Secretary, who acts as chief of Staff to the Governor, aided by an Assistant Government Secretary. Formerly the Governor and his staff spent half the year in Sandakan and half in Jesselton; recently the Secretariat has been stationed at Jesselton, but it is probable that the future will see Sandakan definitely made the capital of the country and the permanent seat of government.

Residents and all other Heads of Departments work direct with the Secretariat, and the Secretariat in turn with the London office of the Company, at 37, Threadneedle Street. In a sense the Court of Directors is to North Borneo what the Colonial Office is to a Crown Colony, but in fact the position of the Governor holding office under the Company is considerably more restricted than that of any Governor holding office under the Crown; it is analogous to that of the General Manager of a commercial concern with a head office in Europe, and consequently the Governor's freedom of action has its limitations. It is true that the business of the British North Borneo Company is to administer the country, but at the same time it is composed of shareholders like any other company, and those shareholders (very naturally) look for their returns in the shape of dividends no less than would the shareholders of a rubber company. It is necessary to bear this fact in mind when considering the position of any Governor of North Borneo. He is responsible to the Court of Directors, and the Court of Directors is responsible to the shareholders that dividend-making revenue is produced. He is responsible for the progress of the country, but that progress is apt to be gauged in terms of revenue rather than in terms of development. There is a large class of shareholders which would prefer to hear that the year's revenue showed an increase of £20,000 rather than be told that twenty miles of new road had been constructed. This is pointed out with no idea of belittling or disparaging the Chartered Company, but rather with the object of making clear a situation which is too often lost sight of—namely, that conditions in a country which is administered by a company for profit cannot be the same as conditions in a country administered by the Crown. If this were more generally understood it would enable civilians in

the little State to make allowances for a good deal more than they do now. No undertaking ever had more loyal shareholders than the Chartered Company; though they had to wait many years before they received a dividend at all they refused to abandon or to sell their property. But it is obvious that no one is so ultra-patriotic as to put his money into an enterprise for administering a country he has probably never seen without expecting some return, and the development that interests him most is that which may be reasonably expected to produce pecuniary results in the near future.

The Governor is, as it were, a buffer between the population of North Borneo on the one side and the Court-cum-shareholders on the other. His path is a thorny one. Those in the country naturally plead for development, but look askance at any increase of direct or indirect taxation; the shareholders, though they wish to hear good reports of progress at the half-yearly meetings, are mainly concerned with the increase of revenue over expenditure. It requires an able Governor not to fall between the two stools on which these parties sit. There have been Governors who have had the country's welfare so much at heart that they have taken a dictatorial line with the Court and have eventually resigned in consequence; there have been others who have had the welfare of the shareholders so much at heart that the community of Borneo has suffered.

The country has many conflicting interests and the freer the hand given him by the Court, the stronger must the Governor's position be; there is an inevitable tendency for all home authority to cramp the style of local administration; for example, it seems hardly necessary that the Governor of the State should have to forward to the Court all applications for over 100 acres of land, especially when the Court in all probability knows nothing either of the land in question or of the applicant. Writing of the Chartered Company in 1902, Mr. Alleyne Ireland considered that the Governor's views in regard to matters of local administration had too often been disregarded, and maintained that "The directors should be content to leave the method of development entirely in the hands of the Governor."[1] Nowadays, by reason of the periodical

[1] *The Far Eastern Tropics*, p. 59.

visits of the President and other directors, the London Office is in closer touch with the local Government than of old. In the main only good can come from the Court allowing its officers as much freedom of action as possible—not only the Governor but also his subordinates.

Mr. A. C. Pearson, C.M.G., who has been Governor since 1915, originally joined the Service as a cadet. Before assuming office he spent two years studying the methods of administration in Hong Kong, the F.M.S. and Ceylon; during this time three Governors were lent temporarily by the Colonial Service. The first was the late Mr. Ellis, C.M.G., who was well known for his delightful Irish wit. He had held an appointment in the financial department of the Ceylon Service, but was not in the country long enough to get a clear insight into local conditions; he was followed by Mr. R. Scott Mason from the F.M.S.; this officer, after having been a fortnight in the country, was thrown from his horse and killed, to the lasting regret of the whole community, in whose hearts he had already found a place. The F.M.S. Service then seconded Mr. (now Major) C. W. P. Parr to take his place. Mr. Parr was a Malay scholar who understood the Malay; he took a great interest in native affairs and was at pains to stimulate improvement in the breeding of native ponies and cattle. His chief mission was to reorganize the local ordinances of the State, especially those relating to land. Mr. Pearson succeeded him and steered the State through the troubled waters of the war; he has the distinction of being the only Governor of North Borneo to be decorated for his services in the country.

§ 3

The Governor is also Commander-in-Chief of the Company's forces. There are no regular troops in the territory, but the British North Borneo Constabulary takes their place, with Head-quarters at Victoria Barracks, Jesselton, under the Commandant, who holds the local rank of Lieut.-Colonel and is also Inspector of Prisons; the sub-Commandant is in charge of the detachment at Sandakan. The Constabulary, which is divided into Military and Civil Police, numbers 800 N.C.O.'s and men, made up of Pathans, Sikhs, Dyaks and natives of

the country. The blend of Sikhs and Pathans is a practical one as there is undying enmity between the two races, and in the event of trouble with one element the other could be relied upon to side against it. As a matter of fact, the Indian police have never been anything but loyal, but there is wisdom in the precaution. The Sarawak Dyaks, of whom only a sprinkling now remains, performed fine service in the pioneer days. They are naturally a more warlike race than the Dusuns or Muruts, and an expedition with a prospect of unlimited heads and a certain amount of loot was looked upon as a kind of picnic. Such picnics are rare nowadays, but the Dyaks still remain the backbone of the native police, and some of the older N.C.O.'s have served the Company loyally and faithfully for twenty years. Few Dyaks join now, and during the war it was impossible to recruit Indians, so that police have been drawn more and more from the native population. The Dusuns and Muruts make excellent little policemen; they are well built and sturdy, and, if not as steady as Indians in an attack or in the rough and tumble of an estate coolie-riot, they are most useful for general outstation and jungle work.

Every recruit from an up-country village forms a bond, as it were, between the natives and the Government, and even five years in the Constabulary is a liberal education for every Bajau, Dusun or Murut who joins. Si Anjar, for instance, one day leaves his village in the hills, greatly daring, with the avowed intention of "taking on." On his arrival at the Government station he is interviewed by the District Officer and sheepishly explains his ambition. He is dirty, has long hair and possesses but a smattering of Malay, but that matters little so long as he has never been in gaol, is five feet tall, and has no trace of *kurap* or other skin disease. He is dispatched to Head-quarters, where he is sworn in and is "issued out with" that for which his heart has been hankering—a khaki uniform (tunic and shorts), puttees and a forage cap with a brass numeral upon it. Human nature is much the same all the world over, and the possession of this uniform goes far to alleviate the days of bitterness through which every recruit, white or brown, has to pass—for the unpleasantness of squad drill and sergeant-majors is also much the same all the world

over. A P.C.'s wages are not over-generous: he gets rather less than a coolie on a rubber estate, but besides his uniform he has his rifle, and that is worth a good many dollars a month especially upon the golden day when he returns with it on some district duty to his village. Then he is the centre of interest; his parents dote on him; certain village belles who have previously been perhaps somewhat haughty now cast upon him glances of open admiration; even the old wiseacres hang upon his words as he discourses upon men and cities, tells the latest news and scandal from the coast, and displays the wonders of his splendid rifle. In a moment of bravado he uses one of the ten cartridges with which he has been served to let fly at a passing pig, recking little of the trouble that he knows will follow. But when haled before his District Officer in Orderly Room on a charge of wrongfully using Government ammunition, he is frank enough (and wise enough) to explain the incident quite simply. "The pig dashed out of the jungle quite close to me, *Tuan*," he says, "and I couldn't resist a shot." Such candour is disarming, and, having aroused a fellow-feeling in his officer's heart, he finds to his relief that his only punishment is to pay the cost of the cartridge.

The native policeman is a man of many parts, a sentry, a server of summonses, a hunter of criminals, a warder of prisoners, a bearer of messages or commands, often orderly, guide and courier to the District Officer on his travels; many a Government officer has cause to bless his patience in getting the laden coolies along through the jungle on a pouring day and his cheerfulness in helping to put the camp to rights when once the day's march is done. He comes of a race amenable to discipline, and his military crimes are few, a surreptitious cigarette whilst on duty being the most common. On his drill we need not dwell; in an outstation there are too many calls upon him for there to be much time for drill save getting through the ritual of changing guard and of presenting arms to the District Officer as he comes to court in the morning, while at Headquarters he contends with heavy odds when he has to march in quarter column cheek by jowl with great Sikhs who take in the ordinary course of nature one stride to his two. He is part and parcel of a district and no District Officer could get on without

him. In the main he is a willing little person not over-burdened with brains, occasionally a nuisance, but often most valorous.

§ 4

. The native policeman is not used only in outstations; as with the Indians, he may be detailed for duty with the Civil Police, who are distributed under Chief Police Officers at Sandakan, Jesselton, and Beaufort. The C.P.O. also acts as Public Prosecutor and the Constabulary Department is in close touch with the Judicial, the head of which is the Judicial Commissioner. This officer, though now specially appointed, is nevertheless like all other judges and magistrates a servant of the Company, and it has often been urged, for reasons sufficiently intelligible, that the chief judiciary of the State should be appointed by the Crown. The Judicial Commissioner may take criminal cases in the first instance, and appeals lie to his court from that of the Sessions Judges, who have the power of inflicting the death-sentence; in civil cases he has jurisdiction in claims of over $2,000. Appeals from his decisions lie to the High Court, which is composed of the Governor, a Sessions Judge and himself, so that in fact he sits upon appeals from his own Court, a procedure which is slightly anomalous, though it certainly obtains elsewhere, as for instance in the Isle of Man. His work is, however, mainly in chambers, and every month he inspects the records of all magistrates' courts throughout the country and of sessions courts in cases where the sentence amounts to seven years. This is an excellent safeguard against mistakes in procedure and miscarriages of justice, for the notes of all cases, written down by the magistrates themselves, are forwarded at the end of each month to the Judicial Commissioner, who returns them after perusal with any remarks he has to make. If there has been a substantial miscarriage of justice or if a magistrate has acted *ultra vires* he has the power to make any order on revision or to direct that a new trial be held. Such cases are rare, for the system makes them so. It was introduced on the recommendation of Sir Richard Dane, K.C.I.E., who made a tour of inspection through the country in 1911. In earlier days

cases were recorded in large tomes, the contents of which were seldom seen by any but the magistrate in charge of them.

Another comparatively recent innovation is the qualifying examination which every officer is required to pass before being appointed a magistrate of the third class (with powers of giving one month's imprisonment and $50 fine), second class (six months and $100 fine), and first class (two years and $500 fine); these examinations are based on the Indian Penal and Procedure Codes, which have been adopted in all courts, supplemented by local ordinances framed from time to time by the Legislative Council. The Indian Penal is perhaps the most ideal code that has ever been drawn up. Though compact and almost fool-proof, it is comprehensive—indeed a prolonged study of it makes the reader wonder if there is anything he can do without being liable to a penalty under one of its long-armed sections.

Besides the European magistrates' courts, there is the excellent institution of the native court for the purpose of trying cases in which questions of native customs are involved. It consists of not less than three recognized chiefs with the powers of a third-class magistrate's court and may hear cases concerning marriage, intermarriage, breach of promise, divorce, adultery and breach of local custom generally.

Adultery cases are not infrequently complicated by the lady, who takes the opportunity to drag in some one against whom she has a grudge, most probably for having been ungallant enough to refuse her tentative advances; this happens even more frequently in breach of promise or paternity cases. I only remember one breach of promise action in which the claim was made by the man, and then the native court very sensibly held that it failed because the claimant had himself married two months before he alleged that he had been cast aside.

As a rule the native court is as fair as any in the world. It is unhampered by any rules of evidence, untrammelled by leading cases; technicalities do not weigh with it, and it has its own methods of coming to its conclusions. Usually these are fairly shrewd. An instance of this once happened at Papar. The native court, presided over by the late Orang Kaya Museh, was engaged in trying to settle an interminable

wrangle about the ownership of a buffalo calf. The court had gone down one lane of evidence and found that it ended in a *cul-de-sac*, and up another only to discover that it opened out into trackless jungle; it found itself in a grave quandary. Finally Museh arose and commanded that the calf should be brought "and," said he to the plaintiff and to the defendant, "bring each of you the buffalo that you say is the mother of the calf." It seemed as though the case was going to end in a kind of second Solomon's judgment, but when Museh came into my office in great glee, with triumph in his eyes, my question "Was he going to cut the calf in two?" only put him (I was relieved to see) into still higher good humour, and he regarded it as a very good joke. The mother buffaloes arrived and the whole village turned out to watch the proceedings. Amid much shouting and laughter the two cows were, by Museh's commands, tethered in front of the court-house about fifty yards apart; the calf was then placed half-way between them and let loose; for a few moments it ambled about uncertainly; then with a pathetic little bleat it decided matters by making a bee-line for the plaintiff's buffalo. It was simply a case of a wise child knowing its own mother.

Although, as in Museh's case, the native court has sometimes a wide interpretation of the laws of evidence, yet it is always a strict observer of native custom or Mohammedan law. I once had to hear an action brought by a Bajau lady against a local "nut" who had come upon her bathing "mit nodings on" in the Tempassuk River. Not only had this Peeping Tom feasted his eyes upon the ravishing spectacle, but he had also been ungentlemanly enough to utter a few ribald remarks, so that the bather was not unnaturally annoyed and, as soon as she could get her clothes, set off to the District Office to take out a summons. I took the case sitting with the native chiefs and after a lengthy and not unamusing hearing (the court was crammed) a verdict was given against the complainant, on the grounds that she was committing a grave breach of Mohammedan law by bathing in a state of nature. I confess that my private sympathies were with the lady (though she did not know it and went off in high dudgeon), but the decision

was applauded by the district luminaries, who in matters of decorum are unwavering.

It is a little interlude like this that brightens a magistrate's daily round, but all district court work is of absorbing interest, for there is no better way of getting into touch with the habits and characteristics, the beliefs and customs of a native race than by trying its cases.

Among the up-country people crime is very rare, especially among the Muruts; the more primitive the people, the fewer the felonies; head-hunting has almost ceased to exist; there are occasional " grievous-hurt " cases as aftermaths of drinking bouts. Theft is almost unknown, and what little property there is in a village is almost communal; the old Murut law was that a thief had his right hand cut off, and in the remoter districts (where the " civilized " native seldom penetrates) it is still customary for any object dropped by the wayside to be hung up on the spot by the finder. Money is seldom seen and save in the Keningau district the buffalo, that grand source of temptation, is as scarce.

Among the coast Dusuns and the Bajaus buffalo and cattle theft is by far the most common of the serious crimes. When a buffalo is sold in the neighbourhood of a Government station the sale is registered and the buffalo is branded, but up-country buffaloes have no brands; they are merely identified by a snick that the owner has cut out of one ear. To a European buffaloes, like sheep, look very much alike, but a native can recognize his own beast instantly. It is on the question of identity that all buffalo cases turn. The complainant (who may be called Tabiko) appears and states that his buffalo, one with a snick on the top of the off-ear and two *ibul ibul* (whorls) disappeared three weeks previously, and that by dint of unremitting search and inquiry he found it at last in the possession of one Saleh, a Bajau living five days' march from his (the complainant's) village. The buffalo is then produced outside the court (were it not so bulky it would be neatly labelled " Exhibit A ") and the complainant proceeds to call six imperturbable witnesses, who swear stolidly that they have been on intimate terms with the buffalo since its birth and that they can identify it as the complainant's by the snick,

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

A WATER-BUFFALO.

[*To face p. 166.*

MALAYSIAN HIGH COMMISSION
LIBRARY. 45, BELGRAVE SQ., S.W.1.

the *ibul ibul* and a lump on the left ear. The accused then produces six equally veracious (and no less imperturbable) witnesses, who claim to have known the buffalo even more intimately and recognize it as Saleh's by a scar on the near hind leg; as to the snick, Saleh's buffalo also had a snick exactly similar to that of the buffalo outside the court.

It is quite obvious that one side is lying, and lying handsomely, but the question for the unfortunate magistrate to decide is—which? It is not impossible that Tabiko has lost a buffalo and that, being one buffalo to the bad, has dropped upon an arch-enemy whom he thinks most probably has taken it (or would have taken it if he had had the chance) and complacently identifies a buffalo of Saleh's as his own. On the other hand it is just as likely that the buffalo in question really is Tabiko's, and that Saleh, if he did not actually steal it himself, received it from a Dusun agent, "well knowing it to be stolen." It is even possible that both sides may be lying and that the buffalo is stolen property (most buffaloes are, at one time or another of their lives), but that it was not stolen from Tabiko. The case is aggravated if the buffalo has been slain, as not infrequently happens, by the time the alleged owner comes upon it, for not even the hardiest liar can identify a buffalo (to the satisfaction of the court) by a pair of horns and a hind-quarter bone. All that a magistrate can do is to give a decision for the side that appears to be lying least and to inflict a severe sentence on the rare occasions that a buffalo thief is caught red-handed. Eighteen months to two years is the usual sentence, which may be accompanied by a fine. At one time, when there was a very bad epidemic, it was found that fifteen strokes with the rattan under the Indian Whipping Act, delivered in full view of the neighbouring notabilities, had a salutary effect.

As a rule, however, whipping is reserved for estate coolies, but it can only be administered at the option of the offender, who has to be given his choice between imprisonment and whipping. It is probable that before many years have passed corporal punishment in North Borneo will be abolished altogether, through the efforts of those well-meaning busybodies whose experience of the Oriental does not extend beyond the

four miles' radius of Charing Cross. When that happens it will be a bad day for the country, because in the opinion of all planters and most magistrates whipping is the only adequate punishment for estate labourers. A coolie malingers, refuses to work, deserts or commits some other offence punishable under the local Labour Ordinance: if he is sent to gaol the estate loses labour it needs while the coolie, with the exception of being deprived of liberty and tobacco, receives little punishment, for the district lock-up is looked upon by a malingering Chinaman as a haven of rest; if the coolie is fined the estate pays and the amount is added to the man's debt, so that he hardly feels his lesson at all. With a sentence of half-a-dozen strokes with the rattan the estate does not lose its labour nor the coolie his pay; the coolie, on the other hand, receives a lesson he is likely to remember for some time, even though the punishment be little more than the "swishings" most of us got at school and is performed with a similar instrument. It may be added that whipping by rattan is nothing like so severe as whipping by the cat-o'-nine-tails; a doctor or apothecary is always present at the operation and there is no danger of after-effects.

Besides the native and the Chinaman North Borneo has another inhabitant who figures largely in the local courts—the native Indian. His fees bring in no little grist to the coffers of the Treasury, but he is the bane of most magistrates' lives. Usually he is an ex-policeman who has married a native wife; he settles down in her neighbourhood, obtains a plot of land in her name, and proceeds to amass a small fortune by keeping cattle and lending money. Litigation is the only recreation that he allows himself and he appeals with regularity if a case goes against him. Among many races of liars he stands out as Kinabalu stands out above the lesser hills; he is an accomplished perjurer. There is a legal maxim, "Facts cannot lie but witnesses can and frequently do." The Indian in Borneo certainly can lie and very seldom does not, but, not content with that, he makes facts lie as well. When I was in the Civil Service an ex-Sikh policeman named Nata Singh once came to my office with a spear covered in blood, "Sahib, my pony has been stabbed," he wailed. Upon inquiry it was found that

the pony had indeed been stabbed and was lying dead inside the compound of another Indian, Mohammed Din. The spear, which had been found sticking in the pony, was identified as belonging to Mohammed Din; it was stated that Mohammed Din had several times driven the pony from his compound, where it had been eating some young maize with much enjoyment. Accordingly Mohammed Din was arrested. The case appeared to be a simple one, but after a hearing which lasted three days it was definitely established that Nata Singh had a private feud of long standing with the accused; that he had got hold of a spear belonging to the accused and, while that worthy was away from home, had taken his own pony to the compound and had slain it there, trusting that the circumstantial evidence so fabricated would do the rest. Mohammed Din was of course promptly acquitted, and as promptly took a case against Nata Singh for malicious prosecution, while the Government proceeded against him for perjury. Unfortunately Mohammed Din, in his eagerness to secure a conviction, himself committed perjury, and so further complications ensued.

Of such things as these is the day of a magistrate in North Borneo made up. It is work which needs infinite patience, much tact and a good deal of horse-sense rather than an extensive legal knowledge. Since these qualities, together with an understanding of local conditions, are forthcoming, there is to be found in the courts of North Borneo as pure a spirit of justice as anywhere in the British Empire. Technicalities and the finer points of law are at a discount, the spirit is administered rather than the letter. If a man is guilty of an offence there are probably more chances of his being convicted than if he were defended by a counsel in an English court, but if he is innocent he has as good a chance of being acquitted, because there is no counsel against him. Lawyers are not encouraged in the State. No lawyer's expenses are allowed as court costs; there have never been more than two legal men practising in the territory and (with all due respect to that learned profession) it will be a sad day for the country in many ways if the number increases to any great extent. The native of the country obtains justice without legal aid and, though it may be said that North Borneo is one of the few countries in which a man

accused of a capital offence is not provided with counsel, yet in all cases the Bench has the interests of the accused at heart in the same way that the President of a court-martial safeguards the rights of an undefended soldier; usually a magistrate is prosecutor, counsel for the defence and judge rolled into one.

§ 5

The only other purely administrative departments in the Civil Service are the Land Office and the Labour Protectorate, of which details are given elsewhere. The Government has its own printing-office at Jesselton, where it issues an official *Gazette* every month and its own organ, the *British North Borneo Herald*, every fortnight, the editor being an administrative officer who fills the appointment "in addition to his other duties." Reference will be found later to the Forestry department, which may be called one of the professional branches, that is to say those in which appointments are given to men of special training. Other professional offices are the Postal, the Public Works, the Development, the Survey, the Railway, the Medical, the Treasury departments. The General Post Office is situated in Jesselton, and the Postmaster-General is also Superintendent of Telegraphs; the overland telegraph lines from Jesselton to Beaufort and Mempakul, and from Sandakan to Lahad Datu, are still maintained, otherwise communication is carried on between the wireless stations at Jesselton, Kudat, Sandakan and Tawau. The outstations are linked up by telephone. The Public Works department undertakes the construction and repairs of all the more important Government buildings, wharves, and roads, while the newly constituted Director of Works has charge of main-road construction and generally supervises the more important developments. The Survey department works in conjunction with the Land Office under a Chief Surveyor, whose head-quarters are in Jesselton; the department is understaffed, with the result that it is often years before new areas and subdivided blocks can be surveyed. There is a good field for independent surveyors in the country, for, even though it might be difficult for a private individual to compete with the Government's

fees, which as survey charges go are moderate, it is not improbable that many owners would be glad to pay an enhanced fee for a survey they were anxious to have carried out. The head-quarters of the Railway department are also in Jesselton under a General Manager; the railway is discussed more fully in another chapter, but it may be noted in passing that the genial officials of the department are inevitably considered by the community at large to be fair game for a good deal of gentle badinage (against which they are well able to hold their own), and the mixture of English and vernacular in which tradition has it that they address their underlings has long been known by the classic phrase "Railway Malay." The Medical department is presided over by the Principal Medical Officer at Sandakan, his duties being chiefly those of organization. Under him are District Surgeons at Sandakan and Jesselton and hospitals at Tawau, Lahad Datu, Kudat, Beaufort and Tenom with Chinese apothecaries in charge. Dr. W. B. Orme, who was lent by the F.M.S. Government from 1913 to 1915, did much to improve and reorganize the department, but it still suffers from being understaffed both in European officers, in native dressers and in vaccinators; it cannot cope with the outbreak of an epidemic among the native population, and a District Surgeon can seldom find time to visit outstations. Natives can obtain treatment for a nominal sum at all Government Hospitals, or without payment if they have no means, but there is an immense field of enterprise before the Government in the matter of teaching the native personal hygiene and village sanitation. It would cost money, but the gain would be an increased population, and so (by degrees) an increased revenue.

The Treasury, the last of the professional departments, is one of the most important. Its head is the Finance Commissioner, whose office is at Sandakan, and under him work the Treasurers of each Residency, while the auditor examines the accounts of all departments and most outstations, also casting an eagle eye over the monthly balance-sheets sent in, and querying the action of any officer who has been unwary enough to draw too much travelling allowance or overspend a vote. North Borneo has its own State Bank and its own notes

and coinage, having adopted the Straits Settlements Currency of the dollar fixed at two shillings and fourpence; the Finance Commissioner is responsible that at least one-third of the amount held by the public is kept in the Treasury, entirely apart from any other reserve deposit or funds of the Company. He is also responsible for the stamp issue, which in the past brought to the Company no little revenue. In his hands also are the final framing of the annual estimates of revenue and expenditure for the sanction of the Court of Directors and the making up of the yearly and half-yearly returns which are put before the shareholders. The figures given in the appendices to this volume showing comparative statements of expenditure and revenue dating from the year 1883, together with the totals of exports and imports, indicate the country's financial progress, while the statement for 1920 shows the amount of revenue derived from each source and the manner in which expenditure is laid out.[1] More detailed figures are to be found in the Company's new handbook on the country, but it will be seen at a glance that seventy per cent of the total revenue of the territory comes under the heading of Customs and Excise, the only department that I have not yet dealt with. It is, from a shareholder's point of view, the most important branch of the Service; without it there would be no dividends. In charge of it is a Commissioner of Customs and Excise, with assistants at all the ports. The functions of the Customs authorities are to collect import and export duty; they also act as Harbour Masters and are in charge of such buoys and beacons as exist. The collection of customs dues has no mysteries. With a few exceptions such as medicines, books, soap and candles, every article imported into North Borneo is taxed from five per cent to fifteen per cent of its value; with the exception of plantation rubber and coffee all produce of the country that is exported is taxed from two and a half per cent to ten per cent. There are few European necessaries of life save fresh meat and eggs, fowls, fish, fruit and vegetables that are not imported and no luxuries, therefore out of every $100

[1] I am indebted to the Chartered Company for giving me these and other figures.

spent on clothes, food, drink, tobacco and personal necessaries about $10 goes into the pocket of the Government. There is very little else to spend money on in North Borneo, so that it may be said roughly that every European pays from seven and a half per cent to ten per cent of what he spends in indirect taxation. This also holds good of Chinese and natives. With the principle of indirect taxation there can be no quarrel. It is undoubtedly the most convenient method of collecting revenue and that least calculated to annoy the native, who does not realize, in most cases, that he pays it. It is usually the European who lifts up his voice at the system because, if he imports (say) a thousand cigarettes himself he has to pay the duty direct to the Customs, and this brings the tax home to him rather more than if he bought them (incidentally at a higher price) in Piccadilly. There is no income-tax, and besides house and road rates in the towns, only customs duty and a few odd licences. Land rents are moderate, railway fares not excessive; in fact the average inhabitant of North Borneo often does not realize how well off he is in this respect, though it is true that since the war prices have gone up and customs duties (naturally) have not been reduced *pro rata*. It is high prices rather than rising volume of trade that enables the President to congratulate the shareholders on their increase of revenue under Customs.

Under the heading of Excise is included the revenue derived from opium, gambling and pawnbroking. In 1915 the Chartered Company, at the request of the Colonial Office, took over the opium traffic, which had been previously farmed out, and now buys direct from India, selling at the rates laid down in Labuan and the Straits Settlements to licensed dealers. The retail price has been gradually raised from 11*s.* per *tahil* of $1\frac{1}{3}$ oz. in 1914 to £1 1*s.* in 1920 in order to discourage the consumption. The traffic is carefully supervised and the opium is only sold to the Chinese adult population, among which the annual consumption averages 15·2 oz. Apart from the point of view of persons interested in stamping out opium-smoking, there is not very much to be said against the Company's trade in the drug. In the past large quantities did undoubtedly find their way out of North Borneo into the Philippine Islands, where

opium is contraband, with the result that the country got a bad name as a base for smuggling. This illicit export is now reported to have ceased, owing to the efforts of the local Government in co-operation with the revenue cutters of the Philippines. As to opium-smoking itself, it is admittedly a vice, but it is one which, practised within limits, is not much more harmful than drinking spirits, and the number of those who indulge in opium-smoking to excess is not nearly so large as is popularly supposed.

The Company derives its revenue from gambling by giving the gaming rights throughout the State to one Chinese "farmer," who sub-leases them in turn. In 1920 the amount paid for these rights was £36,000. When it is considered that the farmer has to pay for buildings, wages and general upkeep and then makes a considerable net profit, it will be seen that a very large sum must be lost in gambling every year for the tender to be worth his while. There is no question that gambling is a very great evil among both the natives and the Chinese; it tends to ruin enterprise, to pauperize the population, to increase infant mortality by robbing the children of food, to divide families; it is the cause of most defalcations and of many thefts. The Chartered Company is quite well aware of these evils, and while it cannot at present eradicate the inherent causes, it does its best to control them.

"If three hundred years of contact with China," wrote Alleyne Ireland,[1] "has taught one lesson more thoroughly than another, it is that no legislation, no measures of repression, however severe (and much has been attempted from time to time in this direction), can turn the Chinaman from opium-smoking and gambling." By granting a monopoly to a farmer, who only held that monopoly so long as he obeyed the Government's restrictions, Mr. Ireland considered that an end was made "to two great evils which always exist in the absence of licensing, namely gambling and opium-smoking by minors, and the use of clothing, tools, and other property for gambling stakes or for the purchase of opium." These contentions though true up to a certain point, are not, however, wholly correct. The farmer certainly does his best to put down

[1] *The Far Eastern Tropics*, p. 47.

gambling elsewhere than on his premises, but the Wah Weh lottery and the pawnbroker's shop (carried on in conjunction with the gambling farm and sometimes under the same roof) neutralize all efforts to prevent minors from gambling, or clothes from being used as stakes. The Wah Weh is a lottery which is held three times a week in the towns, stakes being placed on any of thirty-six numbers, each of which is associated with an animal, the farmer paying twenty-nine times on the number he draws; this is certainly the most popular and at the same time the most pernicious form of gambling in the State, for every man, woman and child can take a ticket and stake from ten cents to fifty dollars, but the Company has wisely decided to abolish it at the end of 1922.

It has also been urged, particularly by the Chinese of the better class, that the farms should be abolished, and that all forms of gambling should be made illegal. If it could be demonstrated that such a course would in fact reduce gambling to any considerable extent, it would certainly merit support, but the comparisons available tend to prove that it would not. The 1919 Police Report for the Straits Settlements (where licensed gambling has recently been abolished) shows that there were, during the year, 8,100 arrests for gambling in Singapore and Penang, out of a total 15,556 criminal cases, and it is stated that in Malacca "gambling also seems to be on the increase."

The Company continues to allow the existence of the farms mainly because it believes that their abolition would not improve matters. If (as seems likely) the suppression of legalized gambling would only cause an increase of private gambling among such races as the Malays and Chinese, it is better in the interests of law and order that play should take place in authorized, properly organized and duly supervised premises rather than in private houses and coolie-lines. There are also other considerations. The country is not a rich one, sources of income are limited and the administration has to be maintained. If licensed gambling were abolished, the resulting loss in revenue would have to be made up somehow, and the only way to do that would be by raising customs duties. Yet if gambling could be stamped out the local population would

benefit enormously and in the long run the Chartered Company would not be the loser, for the gambling public is the spending public, and the dollars saved from the clutches of the farmer would give an immense impetus to local trade and consequently a substantial increase to Customs revenues.

CHAPTER VII

PUNITIVE EXPEDITIONS

LOOKING back through the history of North Borneo it is surprising to see how little resistance has ever been made to the white man's rule. When the British North Borneo Company was first inaugurated its administration was accepted without protest by the natives themselves ; in many cases it was hailed with approval. Such murmurs as there were came from petty chieftains who, accustomed to batten on the people of the country, beheld with dismay the prospect of their wholly unearned increments being sadly reduced. The native population had the sense to see that it was going to fare better by acquiescing in a régime that laid down definite taxes and definite penalties than by continuing to tolerate a reign of terror under which a man might well find his income taxed literally two hundred or three hundred per cent and, when he could not pay, be tied face downwards to a log and be allowed to drift down the river out to sea. Such was one of the rough-and-ready methods adopted by the Brunei princes in dealing with recalcitrant tax-payers before the coming of the Chartered Company.

When the new Government took over the country there was little or no opposition, and such troubles as arose subsequently, with the exception, perhaps, of the Rundum Rebellion in 1915, were caused by one or two malcontents working on the feelings of the natives who were ignorant of the true aims of the Government. In a country like North Borneo, so great is the respect for fire-arms that one man with a gun can soon find a following of a sort, the Borneo native being usually a childlike person who can easily be turned to good or evil by a more dominant personality. Prior to 1915 all the North Borneo

expeditions, great or small, can be traced back to the "bad hat" or fugitive from justice. No rising that the country has ever seen could be justified; there has never been a general rebellion with the object of throwing off the yoke of the Company's rule; minor risings have been confined to a limited area, and to-day there is not a tribe in the territory that has not sworn allegiance to the Government and does not live at peace.

It was not until 1883, five years after the cession, that anything in the nature of a police expedition was necessary. This, the Puroh Expedition, is interesting, not on account of the magnitude of the operations nor the cause involved, but because it was the first organized expedition in which the Constabulary took part.

A Brunei trader had been murdered at Puroh, a village in the hills beyond the head of the Kimanis River. The local headman, when applied to for those concerned, refused to give them up. The Government saw that to pass over such a matter would be a confession of weakness; at the same time there was every prospect of a small party meeting with resistance. It was therefore decided that it would do no harm to give the whole district a lesson, and accordingly a force consisting of twenty-six Sikhs with eighteen Dyaks and Malays, under Chief Inspector de Fontaine, left Kimanis for the Interior on October 14. The party was accompanied by Mr. G. L. Davies, the Assistant Resident of Gaya and Papar, and by Mr. R. M. Little. The track to Puroh was a very rough one and led over the dividing range between the West Coast and the Interior, some 4,200 feet high, then down on to the wide Limbawan Plain, which was reached after a four days' march. Here the expedition was joined by a number of volunteers from the surrounding villages, a fact which proved that the Company's administration was not unpopular, even though the volunteers were tempted by the hope of being able to loot upon the winning side. Having rested for two days the column reached Puroh on the 20th, only to find the village all but deserted. Twelve prisoners, however, were taken, including two who were concerned in the murder; one of these was an uncle of the headman (who had discreetly vanished), the other

bore marks of the unfortunate trader's struggle for his life.

Some little trouble was experienced with the volunteers, who wanted to take the heads of all the women and children. They were restrained, but not without difficulty. It was quite useless to pursue the fugitives into the jungle; the village was accordingly handed over to the Limbawan people to loot and was burnt to the ground. The force then turned its face homewards and reached Kimanis on October 28. The necessary lesson had been inflicted without loss on either side.

The expedition was a lesson not only to the natives but also to the police. It was their first effort. They were like a battalion in action for the first time; they found their feet and showed what they could do. Although there was no actual fighting there were many alarms, many hardships, always the worst part of jungle campaigning or indeed of any other campaigning—short rations, bad shelter and a trying road. The expedition proved that for actual fighting the Indian is invaluable and that the Dyak is essential for rough work in his native jungle.

This little campaign has much in common with most of those that followed it. In all jungle warfare or "bush-whacking" there is the eternal marching over the everlasting Borneo hills; there are a hundred discomforts such as rain, flooded rivers, rough camps, overgrown tracks, leeches and mosquitoes; transport difficulties are a nightmare and baggage has to be reduced to a minimum; sick men present a problem and there is always a chance, in the dense forest, of walking into an ambush, of being sniped by rifle or blow-pipe, or of stepping on to a cunningly concealed *sudah*, a sharpened bamboo-stake that will go right through a man's foot, whether he is shod or not. In this and other accounts of Borneo expeditions the reader need not be moved with undue compassion when he reads of villages being burnt. A village like Puroh, for instance, was not a pleasant place like Potters Bar; it consisted (at the best) of a couple of long shacks roofed with *atap* and could very readily be rebuilt from the abundance of material in the jungle close at hand. I do not mean that burning anybody's house, however humble, is an act to be embarked upon without compunction, but when necessary it has a salutary effect,

and it is as well to make clear the degree of the punishment's severity lest the reader's feelings be unduly harrowed.

§ 2

Inspector de Fontaine, who led the Puroh Expedition, was killed nearly two years later when embarking upon a campaign of a similar kind. The object of this expedition was the capture of a noted cattle-thief and head-hunter, Kandurong, one of the fierce Tegas who dwelt on the lofty slopes of the Crocker Range, the watershed that divides the West Coast from the Interior. A party consisting of Captain de Fontaine, Mr. G. L. Davies, Resident of the West Coast, Dr. Manson Fraser, Mr. R. M. Little and Mr. J. E. G. Wheatley arrived at Kawang with a detachment of police on May 10, 1885.

Owing to there being a shortage of baggage coolies the Bajau headmen of Kawang were asked to supply thirty to meet the deficiency; the carrying of heavy loads being too much like hard work for Bajaus there was a good deal of hanging back, until the Resident had to warn the headmen that the village would be fined unless they complied with his requirements. Matters were not improved when the Dusun carriers, who had come from the neighbouring district of Papar, recognized in the hands of the Bajaus a buffalo which had recently been stolen. They proved their case before the Resident and he had no alternative but to order it to be restored. This incident, although unavoidable, did not tend to diminish the general ill-feeling, and on May 12, as it was found impossible to obtain the required number of coolies, it was decided to postpone the departure of the expedition until more arrived from Papar. The police were dismissed, and the Europeans were standing with some Indian Constabulary officers under a tree near the village when two Bajaus, with guns in their hands, came up and entered into apparently friendly conversation with Dr. Fraser. Suddenly one of them fired point-blank at the doctor, killing him instantly. In a moment the place was in an uproar. Seven more Bajaus started an amok, spearing and killing the Sikh Jemadar, Asa Singh, wounding Mr. Little and eight of the police. Mr. Little disposed of his assailant with his revolver; the remainder turned and fled

across the open plain towards the jungle, pursued by Captain de Fontaine, who unfortunately tripped and fell just as he was on their heels. Before he could rise from the ground the fugitives turned and inflicted no less than nine spear-wounds on him. He dropped three men with his revolver, and the Sikhs, having seized their rifles, opened fire, killing three Bajaus and wounding the remaining two, who succeeded in getting away into the jungle.

The wounded were put on board the Government launch *Kimanis* and sent round to Sandakan, attended by Mr. John Whitehead, a gentleman who was then travelling in North Borneo. All the police subsequently recovered, but their gallant officer, after great suffering, succumbed to his wounds on May 17.

There is no doubt that this outrage was premeditated and that the Bajaus had prepared the previous day for almost certain death. In his description of the attack [1] Mr. Whitehead (who was not actually present) offers up excuses for the Bajaus, indeed from the way in which he writes one might suppose that they were defending their lives, their women and their property, whereas nothing was further from the case, and their onslaught was as unprovoked as it was treacherous. With the exception of the nine Bajaus (all of whom were either killed or wounded) none of the community took part in the disturbance and consequently no fine was imposed upon the village. Two of the gang were noted cattle-thieves, and it is presumed that they were worked up to a pitch by a third, Orang Kaya Awang, who lived in Kinarut, a district then outside the Government sphere of influence. This man was an agent of a Pengiran who had been set against the Company's rule in Brunei, and the occasion probably appeared an auspicious one to attack a party of its officers when they were unprepared.

An obelisk was subsequently set up near the scene of the attack (close to where Kawang Railway Station is to-day) in memory of the three officers who lost their lives, their fate being also commemorated upon another monument in Sandakan. The operations against Kandurong were abandoned and he was not punished until 1888, when an expedition under Captain

[1] *The Exploration of Kina Balu*, p. 28.

R. D. Beeston, Mr. J. E. G. Wheatley and Mr. J. G. G. Wheatley gave him and some neighbouring Tegas villages which were continually on the war-path a salutary lesson. As a result many of the Tegas came in and submitted to Government, but they were to remain a source of considerable trouble for many years.

§ 3

The most extensive operations that the Company had to take in the early days were those connected with the Padas Damit Expedition. By an agreement made between the Sultan of Brunei and Governor Treacher on November 5, 1884, the Padas-Klias district, with the exception of the Padas Damit (or Little Padas) River and its tributaries, was ceded to the Company in consideration of an annual sum of £150. The chief of the Padas Damit was Pengiran Shabandar Hassan, though in fact he merely administered the district as representative of his half-sister Fatima, who had been given it as a dowry by the Sultan of Brunei.

As soon as the Company's officers had taken possession of the newly-acquired territory, Pengiran Shabandar Hassan disputed the title to the land on the right bank of the Padas Besar or Great Padas. As the chiefs and headmen of the district in dispute strongly objected to the Pengiran's interference, having always been under the rule of Brunei, the Company took possession without more ado and referred Shabandar Hassan to the Sultan who, by a clause in the deed of cession, had undertaken to settle any local claims or disputes to which the transfer might give rise. The matter dragged on for two years and finally, in a document dated February 1, 1887, the Brunei Government decided that the cession of the land in dispute was lawful, the district having been inherited by the Sultan from his ancestors. It was admitted that all claims of the various Pengirans in the ceded district had not been paid, but this was because the Sultan (as the document naïvely remarked) had spent all the money set aside for this purpose, and the Brunei Government asked the Company to be good enough to oblige with a loan in order that the claims of those chiefs who still remained unpaid might be settled.

Shabandar refused to accept the decision of Brunei and continued to assert his right to the land between the Padas Damit and the Padas Besar. Three times were the boundaries defined by the local chiefs and three times were the landmarks destroyed by Shabandar and his men. The people who, having transferred their allegiance from Shabandar to the Company, had come to settle in the Company's territory, were subjected to persistent persecution. Armed bands, accompanied by the Pengiran's own police and retainers, marched about in broad daylight destroying houses and property, looting and burning as they listed. Remonstrances and attempts at reconciliation were of no avail. Therefore it was not unnatural that, weary of appealing for redress the Government could not give, the persecuted natives should have taken the law into their own hands and retaliated as best they could. These reprisals in time merged into a little border war, the leading light of which, on Shabandar's side, was one Patek, the murderer of his own brother, a Government servant. Patek had fled and sought protection with Shabandar and, although many applications had been made for his surrender, they had always been refused.

Had the Company been able to act promptly hostilities on a large scale might have been avoided. As it was, its hands were tied because, since the Sultan would take no further action, by the provisions of the Charter the whole matter had to be submitted to the Foreign Office, the trouble being connected with parties outside the jurisdiction of the State. After long delay the Foreign Office declined to interfere or to allow (as had originally been suggested) Sir Hugh Low, the Consul-General, to settle the dispute. It was not until all prospects of obtaining assistance from the Sultan or intercession from the British Government had vanished that the Company took matters into its own hands. Subsequent events showed how the Pengiran had benefited by the delay.

In 1888 matters at length came to a head and Mr. D. D. Daly, who was in charge of the Padas district, was instructed to demand again the surrender or punishment of Patek, and failing that to proceed to arrest the criminal with the assistance of his police. Shabandar, who had for months been collecting

arms and making fortifications, merely sent a defiant answer to the Government's request, and consequently on December 8 Mr. Daly with Captain R. D. Beeston and a force of police set off for Patek's house on the Padas Damit. Before they had gone over their own boundary they were fired on by an ambuscade consisting of some 150 of the Pengiran's henchmen, hidden in a nullah. These were dislodged with some difficulty and were driven back to their own territory. This was the beginning of four months' desultory but arduous fighting which culminated in Shabandar's stronghold, Galela Fort, being captured by the Constabulary on March 10, 1889, after an action in which four were killed on the Government side and at least forty-two on the enemy's, many being wounded. The next day the Consul-General went to Padas Damit and induced Shabandar to negotiate for peace on the basis of Patek's surrender and the transfer of the Padas Damit River to the Company for an annual rent. Patek was given up and subsequently tried at Brunei by a mixed court consisting of the Sultan, his Prime Minister, the Rajah of Sarawak and the Consul-General of Labuan. The decision was not looked upon as particularly satisfactory by the Company, as the miscreant was only condemned to pay £150 blood-money, although found guilty of his brother's murder.

This was the first expedition that the Company had been forced to undertake on a large scale, and it is the only one that has ever been necessary against aggression from without. It was a campaign that might have been avoided had the requests for intercession been complied with. However, the Company raised and landed at Labuan 300 men fully armed and equipped within a few weeks, and the operations showed the native population that the Company was prepared to protect its people and vindicate its rights.

With the downfall of Shabandar a long-standing nuisance was swept away. The taking over of the Padas Damit meant an end to strife about boundaries and the district was no longer allowed to remain a refuge for criminals, a hotbed for conspiracy and a dumping-ground for arms smuggled from Labuan.

§ 4

After the Padas Damit episode the country remained at peace until 1894, when the Dusuns of Mumus, in the Marudu hills, began giving trouble under the rebel leader Si Gunting. A native clerk and seven police were murdered, and Mr. R. M. Little, the Resident, narrowly escaped with his life. Many years afterwards it appeared that, having had friction with the Police, Gunting had made a complaint to Datoh Undok, head chief of the coast. The treacherous Datoh sent a report to the Resident intimating that Gunting was at fault and returned a Delphic reply to Gunting to the effect that "he should know how to deal with a matter like that." Gunting interpreted this to mean that he should blot out the station and did so. An expedition was organized in May under Captain Barnett, who was then Commandant, and the Mumus people submitted after no very serious resistance, but Si Gunting fled to Saiap, a village on the Tempassuk side. He left his wife behind him, and one evening she appeared at the Government camp very ill and asked for medicine. In some notes he wrote me shortly before his death the late Mr. W. H. Hastings thus describes the incident: "We had no doctor, so Barnett and I concocted some. We put in quinine, friar's balsam, iodine, essence of ginger, peppermint, gin, sugar, and bitters, and told the old girl only to take a teaspoonful three times a day. Next day she walked into the camp with the empty bottle and asked for more."

On June 2 the advance against Saiap was begun. As usual the going was made dangerous by the ground being lavishly planted with sharpened bamboo *sudah*. Mr. A. R. Dunlop, with thirty N.C.O.'s and men, formed the advance guard, the main body being composed of the Commandant, Mr. W. H. Hastings and Mr. G. Ormsby, with fifty N.C.O.'s and men. At 8 a.m. the winding track led to an almost perpendicular hill 200 feet above the River Wariu, overlooked by a strong earthwork and rifle pits. A detour was made and the position thus rendered untenable to the enemy, who retreated. The march was continued until at 11 a.m. the sound of gongs and drums was heard; shortly afterwards the enemy was seen to

be occupying a fortified position on another steep hill at the junction of the Wariu with a tributary, a favourite position with the native strategist. A halt was called and flanking parties were told off to hold the far bank of the river and the ford, while the advance guard was ordered to occupy a hill that commanded the interior of the stronghold. Unfortunately this order was misunderstood; some of the party attempted to rush the fort, but coming under a heavy shower of stones and rifle bullets were driven to seek such shelter as the roots of a big tree five yards below the wall of the fort afforded. Captain Barnett then ordered Mr. Hastings to occupy the position which the advance guard should have taken up, but the ground was so thickly covered with *sudah* that half his men were soon out of action with wounded feet, and he failed to get there. In the meantime Mr. Dunlop reported from the advance guard that his casualties were one man killed and one severely wounded; he could make no progress and to retire meant heavy loss. Captain Barnett then went forward and, while pulling a Sikh under cover, received a wound in the head. All efforts to stop the bleeding proved of no avail until Durahman, the guide of the expedition, pounded some jungle leaves into a pulp which he applied to the wound and thereby stopped the bleeding immediately. Mr. Hastings subsequently offered Durahman $500 for the secret of the herbs, but he declined to part with it.

When Captain Barnett recovered he saw that matters were becoming precarious and that the key to the position must be occupied, *sudah* or no *sudah*; a party was therefore told off to make a slight detour and occupy the hill at all costs. This manœuvre was so successfully accomplished that in ten minutes the fort was deserted, the enemy leaving behind seven dead, a rifle and a quantity of ammunition. Fifty men under Mr. Dunlop and Mr. Ormsby were sent on to follow up the enemy and occupy the village of Saiap. The same evening the whole force took up its quarters in the village, the casualties in the day's action having been two killed and eighteen wounded. With their fort captured and their homes occupied the local chiefs quickly submitted and the rebellion was at an end, but the elusive Si Gunting escaped once more.

When he returned to Sandakan, Captain Barnett, in the manner of a Roman general, took with him several chiefs and natives who had been implicated in the rising, in order that they might see with their own eyes something of the Government against which they had been so foolishly advised to fight. They were well fed and looked after, being encouraged to see all they could for themselves. They soon discovered that they had been mistaken as to the intentions of the white man, and went back to their homes declaring that they would spread the truth about the Government and that they gladly accepted its rule. There has never been another rebellion at Saiap, but the Dusuns of that neighbourhood have an evil reputation as cattle-thieves to this day.

§ 5

One of the briefest but best-handled disturbances in the history of North Borneo was undoubtedly the Kwijau Rebellion of 1896.

At this time the Kwijaus, who dwell upon the hills above the Keningau Plain, had not taken the oath of allegiance to the Company, and Mr. E. H. Barraut, then in charge of the Keningau district, was informed early in May that they were preparing to attack him under their chiefs.

Luckily telephone communication had just been established as far as Tenom from the coast, so that Mr. Barraut was able to get a message through asking for assistance. That was several days away, however, and before any reinforcements could arrive he had to act. Armed bands of Kwijaus had blocked the paths to Kimanis and the coast, and the loyal Murut chiefs urged him to take the initiative and attack the enemy as the best defensive measure. Realizing that this was his only chance of saving the station and preventing a very serious rising, Mr. Barraut, with his small available police detachment, surrounded one of the Kwijau villages, and after a demand for surrender had been refused attacked it with complete success. A second village was dealt with in the same way and he then retired, giving the remainder of the tribe a week in which to capitulate. The result was that the rebels were completely cowed, and by the time that the reinforce-

ments which had been dispatched under Mr. P. Wise from Labuan arrived, Mr. Barraut was able to report the whole district peaceful. The eight Kwijau chiefs who had surrendered were tried and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, whilst all the remaining Kwijaus were called in to swear allegiance to the Company by the blood-oath of planting stones and killing buffaloes.

There is no doubt that the Kwijaus' plan was to rush the station and murder the occupants, but apparently nobody had the pluck to carry out these bold designs, which were wisely forestalled before they could be elaborated. There was no question of any grievance against the Government and no definite reason was assigned for the rising. The oath having been taken, all the men (to the number of 200) were put to work carrying from Kimanis to Keningau all the material needed for the telegraph, which was then under construction from Tenom. It was an extremely well-devised retribution (for the Government needed the material quickly) and, as anyone who knows the Kimanis hills will realize, no light one. In fact it is probable that before those Kwijaus had finished carrying wire and insulators they cursed the memory of their scheming chiefs, and wished either that they themselves or the inventor of the telegraph had never been born.

The Company has never had any further trouble with the Kwijaus, indeed they have on more than one occasion proved useful allies. Gunsanad, a friendly Kwijau headman who was of great assistance to Mr. Barraut both before and after the rebellion, was created Government chief after the rising; he has often rendered valuable service to the country and is to-day one of the most wealthy and most respected Government chiefs in the State; several of his sons hold positions in the Government service, and his daughters (of whom he has an apparently inexhaustible supply) are renowned for their good looks.

§ 6

About this time arose the only really formidable enemy that British North Borneo has ever had—the redoubtable Mat (or more properly Mohammed) Saleh, who was a thorn in the Company's side from 1894 until his death in 1900.

Mat Saleh was no ordinary native. His intelligence was far above the average, and in his own way he had a genius for military affairs. In appearance he was tall and good-looking, with a swarthy complexion and a slight moustache. He came of a good family but of mixed parentage, his father, Datoh Butu, chief of a village on the Sugut River, being a Sulu and his mother a Bajau. He was physically very strong, and it is said that in his youth he was able to throw a buffalo by the horns; he was an eloquent speaker and when excited his eyes flashed, a fact which no doubt gave rise to the story that fire came out of his mouth when he spoke. He was popularly supposed to be invulnerable, having (it was said) performed the necessary rites. These consist in spending a lonely vigil of three days and three nights in the jungle, fasting and praying to the spirits of the departed. On the third night the watcher falls into a trance and while in this state converses with the spirits of his ancestors, who impart to him the heavenly secrets and so render him invulnerable.

In his early days Mat Saleh was a trader on the Sugut, and first came in contact with the Government in 1894 when two Dyaks were reported to have been murdered by his followers. Captain Barnett made an unsuccessful atttempt to arrest him, but on November 11 (oddly enough) he made his first armistice with the Government and swore under the Koran before Mr. Hastings that he would obey the laws of the land. Early in 1895, however, he started giving trouble again. He was brought into Sandakan and interviewed by Governor Creagh. This kept him quiet for a few months, but in August, 1895, he appeared in Sandakan with a body of followers all armed to the teeth. The ostensible reason for this visit was to make certain representations to the Government on the subject of native affairs, but a rumour very quickly spread among the natives and Chinese that the real object of his presence was to loot the town. In any case he had committed a distinct breach of the country's rules, as no natives were allowed in Sandakan wearing arms. He was accordingly told to state his grievances in writing and to disperse his followers. He left without causing any trouble, much to the relief of the inhabitants. Even in those days he seems to have been an awe-inspiring personage.

He had not long been gone when it was reported that on the way home his followers had robbed a shop on an island near Sandakan, and as he was still believed to be harbouring the men suspected of murdering the Dyaks it was decided to send an expedition against him. On August 29, 1895, Mr. E. H. Barraut and Mr. Jones left by launch for Jambongan, an island off the north-east coast. Mat Saleh was ordered to hand over the suspects, but answered that they would not allow him to comply. Next morning a party went to arrest the wanted men; it was met by a boat bringing a defiant message, and found Mat Saleh and some 120 followers busily engaged in making a strong stockade. A skirmish ensued. Mat Saleh and his friends bolted into the jungle, leaving behind them one man killed and another wounded. A brass gun, three rifles, a fine boat 70 feet long and many smaller ones, several flags, two large silk umbrellas (insignia of royalty) and a number of gongs were captured. Some of the flags had inscriptions attributing invincibility to Mat Saleh and claiming his right to raise a Moslem rebellion. The village and boats were burnt, a reward was offered for the capture of Mat Saleh and the expedition returned. In a note on the affair the editor of the *British North Borneo Herald* remarked, "It is not expected that Mat Saleh will again cause any serious trouble." It was one of those remarks that tempt Providence.

Mat Saleh kept quiet, leading the existence of an outlaw, until April, 1896, when he was discovered to be hampering trade by intimidating peaceful merchants and smuggling arms into the Labuk district for what looked like an organized rising. He received a backing on the Labuk River from the Dumpas Dusuns, and plans were made to refuse to pay poll-tax, to defy the Government and to make Mat Saleh chief. Early in August Mr. Wheatley was ambushed when coming up the Labuk in his boat and had three of his paddlers killed, himself only escaping through the fact that he was the target at which the native marksmen aimed. A reward of £100 was offered for Mat Saleh's capture and it was decided to send an expedition against him on a larger scale. Mr. Little took a force via the Sugut River and Mr. Dunlop one by way of Paitan, while another party was sent from Kudat to prevent Mat

Saleh joining hands with Si Gunting, the Mumus chief, who was again causing trouble in Marudu. The main expedition under Mr. Raffles Flint advanced up the Labuk, and after peppering Mat Saleh's fort for a day and a half with the maxim, captured it on September 25; Mat Saleh had evacuated it during the night, and Mr. Flint entered the stronghold, which was composed of squared timber six inches thick doubled with turrets at each corner, only to find that the birds had flown, though not without casualties; several prisoners were taken, including one Umang, a hermaphrodite, whom Mat Saleh had forcibly married to his sister-in-law. This worthy was subsequently sentenced to death for waging war. The fort, together with another higher up the river, was destroyed. The second fort was also a well-constructed building, the lower part defended with earthworks, though the upper story (which was intended for the occupation of the ladies during the expected siege), was composed of nothing more substantial than bamboo.

Mat Saleh was located again a fortnight later in the house of a petty chief. The place was attacked but found to be deserted, Mat Saleh, whose intelligence system was always excellent, evidently having got information of what was intended; another house in the same village was also attacked and nine of Mat Saleh's followers killed.

Again said the *Herald*, "Bereft of his followers he can do nothing, as his power is broken." The Government did not yet realize that it had to do with no ordinary man. It is our custom to underestimate the power of our enemies, and no one realized that Mat Saleh was as dangerous as a smouldering log left in the midst of inflammable material.

§ 7

Early in 1897 Mat Saleh had a brush with a Government chief on the Sugut, where he had ensconced himself in another fort with a strong following, but shortly afterwards he seems to have felt that the east coast was getting too hot for him, for he next appeared with dramatic suddenness on the west, and at 4.30 on the morning of July 9 swooped down upon the Government station on the island of Gaya, opposite where Jesselton stands to-day. The attack was as successful as it

was unexpected. All the arms, ammunition, stores, boats and contents of the Treasury were captured; every Government building and Chinese shop was looted and burnt to the ground. A Sikh policeman was killed and one prisoner; two other prisoners were wounded. Mr. Neubronner, the Treasury clerk in charge of the station, was captured and taken to Inanam. Ketek, the Customs clerk, very gallantly swam across to the mainland and gave the alarm. Mr. Ormsby, the District Officer, had a short time previously gone to Ambong, then head-quarters of the Tempassuk district, owing to the fact that two prisoners had escaped from the lock-up there. It was said that this incident had been arranged by Mat Saleh to get the District Officer out of the way and to make the raiders' task an easier one.

In any case the raid itself was undoubtedly most carefully engineered, and Mat Saleh had not only all the coast Bajaus of Mengkabong and Inanam with him to a man but the majority of the Inanam Dusuns as well. The rebels remained in undisputed possession of Gaya until July 12 when the Resident of Labuan, Mr. G. Hewett, arrived with a strong party on board S.S. *Ranee*. He caught the looters red-handed but, though he cut off their retreat by sea, they managed to escape into the jungle and only one man was captured. Six boats were taken loaded full of loot. The Bajau village, which was intact owing to the inhabitants having joined the raiders, was occupied. A garrison was left and the *Ranee* proceeded to Ambong, because Mat Saleh had announced his intention of attacking all the outstations in turn and then setting up a Government of his own. All was well at Ambong, and on his return to Gaya Mr. Hewett found that Ketek had managed to capture eight of Mat Saleh's men, including a Sulu spy who had been sent to Gaya a fortnight before the raid to induce the Gaya Bajaus to join the cause. The man was promptly tried, sentenced and hanged, it being proved that he had taken part in the raid himself.

As the Inanam River was reported to be strongly held by Mat Saleh, Mr. Hewett left a launch to guard the mouth and landing his force at Tanjong Aru (Jesselton's present-day bathing resort) made for the Putatan Office, which was in a state

of defence. Here he collected some more men, bringing the total to seventy-eight police and free Dyaks. The party advanced by way of the upper Putatan to the upper Inanam; as they came down the Inanam River they found all the Dusun villages crammed with loot. On July 15 and 16 two forts were carried and the attack on the main stronghold, a fort guarding the now empty Bajau villages on the river banks, was begun. By nightfall it was silenced; next morning it was occupied and found to be deserted. Governor Beaufort, who had come up-river the same morning with thirty more police under Captain Reddie, the Commandant, took a party and pursued the enemy through Menggatal. At Menggatal Mr. Neubronner was rescued, none the worse for his adventures, and the whole party returned to Gaya the same day.

Mat Saleh, elusive as ever, soon ran back to his old haunts in the Sugut district, and on August 9 a force under Captain Reddie with Messrs. Barraut and Wheatley left Sandakan in pursuit. They found the rebel chief established in a formidable position on Ranau Plain and, as it seemed hopeless to attack with the force at their disposal, they returned for reinforcements, contenting themselves with shelling the fort. A warrant officer and a party of police were left in charge of the stores with orders to keep watch on the rebels' movements.

This watch was not very successful, for in November Mat Saleh made an attack on Ambong Station, of which Mr. Ormsby was in charge. The Europeans and the guard were forced to retire from the Residency for lack of ammunition, and the house was burnt by the raiders, who then fled up the Tempassuk valley. Some 90 Tempassuk Bajaus were concerned in the attack and Mr. Hewett, who arrived from Labuan on November 13, lost no time in burning their villages and in breaking up an unfinished fort at Kota Belud.

As there were rumours of an intended attack on Tuaran Station, it was put into a state of defence. Further reinforcements having arrived from Sandakan under Mr. Jones of the Constabulary and from Labuan under Mr. Wise, it was decided that the only way to put an end to the raids was to attack Mat Saleh's head-quarters at Ranau. Preparations were made and on December 10, after a trying march, the expedition

arrived at Ranau, when a good defensible camp was made at once.

Mat Saleh's fort was a position of great strength and impervious to rifle fire. It was surrounded by a thick earth wall with a high palisade. The whole was some 120 yards long and 60 yards wide, one side having a three-sided strong-point with a watch-tower in the centre. The rest of the enclosure was full of houses with *atap* roofs. The ground in front of the position was thickly sown with *sudah* and the place possessed an excellent water-supply from an old irrigation channel which filled a moat, deep and broad, round the side of the fort facing the Government camp. The first action of the attacking force was to cut off this water supply by erecting a small stockade sufficient for a guard of twenty men.

On December 12 Mr. Barraut arrived with the Sugut police and a 7-pounder. A council of war was held and it was decided to attack the following morning. To prevent those in the fort escaping, Mr. Barraut and Mr. Ormsby were to surround it at a distance with the free Dyaks and Dusuns, who numbered 250; Mr. Jones was to remain with the gun, and the storming party, consisting of thirty-eight Sikhs and Pathans, was to be led by Mr. Hewett and Mr. Wise.

The gun was mounted behind a small redoubt less than 100 yards from the fort, and by dawn all parties were in position, the storming party being placed in readiness behind the dyke of a rice field thirty yards from the rear of the fort. It was a misty morning and the 7-pounder could not open fire till 6.45; there was little reply from the fort, but the shells must have done considerable damage for, as they burst in the enclosure, the cries of the garrison could be plainly heard. At midday only three shells remained and the storming party advanced, Mr. Jones insisting on accompanying it. It was before the days of creeping barrages and sufficient trust was not placed in the Dyak's shooting for them to give covering fire, so that the little party had to advance in broad daylight across the open and very slowly, for fear of *sudah*, almost as effective an obstacle as barbed-wire. The attackers were detained some time effecting an entrance to the palisade, but once inside, having shot a few of the enemy who were seen running towards

the keep, they began burning the houses in the enclosure. All this time not a shot had come from the strong-point where the enemy had concentrated, but as soon as the attacking party came up to it a murderous fire was poured through the loopholed walls. Mr. Jones was killed and with him four Sikhs, and nine more were wounded. The walls of the keep were bullet-proof and the place could not be rushed. To save further loss a withdrawal was made in good order, all the wounded being brought back. The only medical attendant of the expedition was a Chinese dresser, but he performed excellent service, attending to the wounded under fire. Throughout the action the Indian police behaved splendidly, and even after the severe handling they had received they were anxious to make a second attempt. During the action Sergt. Natna Singh, although himself seriously wounded, succeeded after two attempts in picking up Mr. Jones's body and carrying it back to a place of safety, after which he returned to the attack. For this gallant action in face of a point-blank fire he was given a commission and the Company's Cross for Valour. Mr. Jones was buried the same night. In 1914 his bones were disinterred, brought down to the coast and reburied with full military honours in the Jesselton cemetery.

Mr. Jones's death was a great blow. There is no doubt that had the Government party's information been better no attempt would have been made to rush the position. However, the enemy had not had it all his own way. He had suffered severely from the shell fire and everything that would burn in the enclosure had been burnt.

Next morning the garrison was still in its stronghold and appeared determined to hold out. It was therefore decided that Mr. Hewett and Mr. Wise should go to Sandakan for fresh supplies of ammunition and provisions. They left on December 14, reached Sandakan on the 19th, after travelling almost continuously night and day, and returned to Ranau with another 7-pounder, fresh stores and further reinforcements.

On January 8, 1898, the fort was shelled with both guns and preparations for a second attack were made, but in the night the defenders evacuated the stronghold and, eluding the outposts and patrols, got clean away; at dawn all was quiet in

the fort ; it was entered and found empty. The buildings of the fort itself covered three sides of a sixty-foot square, the fourth being closed by a stone wall. The walls were of stone and eight feet thick, with bamboos built in as loopholes. The whole was surrounded with three bamboo fences, on to the outer of which the loopholes were sighted, and the ground between was thickly planted with *sudah*. Over 200 shells had burst inside the fort and had caused considerable damage even to the dugouts that had been made under the houses in the fort itself. The whole place was burnt by levelling the walls and piling the timbers round the high watch-tower, a work which occupied 400 men one entire day.

Though the rebels had got away, they had suffered. Among those killed were Mat Saleh's brother-in-law, Tuan Arib, about 100 followers and Gunga Singh, a Sikh deserter from the Constabulary. The loyal Sikhs looked upon this traitor as a blot upon their fair name and when caught he received no mercy. Mat Saleh, as usual, escaped, but his flight was very damaging to his prestige and had important results, for it was not long before many Dusun villages, hitherto terrorized, came in and took the oath to the Government, and the Tambunan Dusuns refused to receive him. It was proved that the Sultan of Brunei had assisted Mat Saleh with arms and ammunition, and the Company made a claim for £12,000 against him. The matter was eventually compromised by the cession of the districts of Mengkabong and Menggatal, so that the Company got a flourishing slice of territory as the result of a costly expedition. Captain (now Lt.-Col.) C. H. Harington and Mr. A. R. Dunlop were dispatched from Sandakan with a party of sixty N.C.O.'s and men to relieve the Ranau Expedition and continue the pursuit. Mat Saleh was hunted across the Interior and eventually entered into negotiations with the Government. At that time Mr. W. C. Cowie, then Managing Director of the Company, was on a visit to North Borneo and, in consequence of a letter written by Mr. Cowie and Governor Beaufort, Mat Saleh came down to the upper Menggatal in March, 1898, to tender his submission, the extra police having been withdrawn from the Interior.

On April 19 Mr. Cowie went unarmed and alone to the upper

Menggatal to meet the rebel chief. It was a hazardous adventure and not many people expected to see him come back alive. The interview, however, was quite friendly and no attempt was made by Mat Saleh to abuse the confidence Mr. Cowie had placed in him. Terms were discussed and it was finally arranged that a meeting should take place on the following day between the Governor and Mat Saleh at Pengiran Kahar's village on the Menggatal River, a district which had not been formally taken over by the Company. The same evening Mat Saleh sent in his spear and *kris* as tokens of goodwill. They were accepted and gracefully returned by Mr. Cowie with a message to say that he hoped in future they would be used in the Company's service and not against it.

All this was very encouraging, but the next day Mat Saleh gave an indication of how much faith might be put in his good resolutions. Mr. Cowie and the Governor, accompanied by Mr. A. C. Pearson and Mr. P. Wise, went unarmed to Menggatal. Captain Beaumont of H.M.S. *Swift*, which was then in Borneo waters, formally protested against the Governor going without a suitable escort and offered to furnish one, but was overruled; it was agreed, however, that had the party not returned by noon, he would send a landing-force up the river. After keeping the Governor waiting for nearly two hours at Pengiran Kahar's house, Mat Saleh eventually made his appearance followed by a gang of two hundred men armed to the teeth with *kris*, spears and rifles. This was, to say the least of it, a grave breach of etiquette.

His Excellency the present Governor, Mr. A. C. Pearson, has been kind enough to let me have some recollections of the trying afternoon that followed. " On Mat Saleh's arrival," he writes, " one of the first questions he asked was, 'Had we brought any Police?' 'No.' 'Where was the gunboat?' 'In the bay.' 'Had she landed any men?' 'No. We had promised to come alone and unarmed and white men always keep their promises. There were only we four Tuans and four boatmen who had rowed us up.'

" We then settled ourselves on four empty whisky-cases which Pengiran Kahar had produced. Two similar cases were used as seats by the Pengiran and Mat Saleh. These were all

covered with sarongs and placed in a circle. The house was built on piles and stood about five feet from the ground and within a few yards of the river. The floor was of split *nibong* and as we sat we could see all that was going on underneath. Datoh Sahak and about a dozen leaders squatted round forming a larger circle; each, before he squatted, removed the cloth which in polite society covers the hilt of the *parang* and ostentatiously eased the blade in its sheath. Incidentally Datoh Sahak, who was just behind me, was wearing a large revolver in a holster marked 'G. O.' (George Ormsby). During the proceedings an ominous 'click' made me turn round as quickly as dignity would allow and I was not reassured by seeing that the Datoh was absent-mindedly playing with the hammer. Mr. Wise spoke to him sharply and he replaced it in its holster."

Terms were again discussed, but Mat Saleh's attitude, though polite, was very different from his submissive manner of the previous day. "It is not too much to say," continues His Excellency, "that things became distinctly heated at times, and the Governor found it hard to restrain his indignation. At one moment in fact Mr. Wise, who spoke and understood Bajau and who had been listening to the *sotto voce* conversation going on among the gentlemen of the outer ring, intervened very effectively. Turning in his quiet imperturbable way to the Governor he remarked, 'Things are getting pretty nasty at the back, sir, I think you will be wise to change the subject.' At the next 'crisis' he suggested refreshments, and half a dozen bottles of soda were brought from the boat. As he remarked, 'An empty soda-water-bottle is better than nothing if it comes to trouble.'

"And so the long talk dragged on till the sound of paddles or oars was heard coming up the river. Like a flash Mat Saleh turned to Mr. Cowie. 'It is a ship's boat!' A few orders in Bajau were snapped out, a couple of dozen spearmen ran and mounted guard over our boatmen, the hundred or so scallywags beneath the house buzzed like a hive of bees, but upstairs a deadly silence fell. It still lacked some minutes to twelve, and if Captain Beaumont kept to his programme his landing-party could not arrive much before one. But it was

obvious that if he had become impatient and sent the boat off at 11 a.m. we four had only a few minutes and an empty soda-water-bottle each between us and an unpleasant death. It seemed hours before the boat came round the bend. Was it coincidence that we all felt the heat simultaneously and wiped our foreheads when a large *prahu* with eight paddles swung round into view?

"After this incident it was noticeable that Mr. Cowie and the Governor hastened the negotiations, and probably not more than five minutes later we found ourselves climbing into our boat, the bank of the river lined by a couple of hundred armed ruffians, all obviously disappointed at such a tame ending to the show. We took our seats in dignified silence and were slowly—horribly slowly—rowed round the bend. The first word was spoken by Mr. Cowie as the landing-stage at last vanished round the corner: 'Mr. Wise, this time we'll have some whisky with our soda.'

"To complete the story it should be mentioned that on reaching the ships we found fifty stalwart bluejackets in the familiar brown leggings, sitting in the *Swift's* boats with rifles between their knees waiting impatiently to be 'unleashed.' They too were obviously disappointed at the tame ending."

The peace conference had broken up without very much having been effected. But negotiations were continued and finally, after some hesitation, Mat Saleh agreed to be present at the hoisting of the Company's flag at Menggatal on April 22.

The Government party consisted of Mr. Cowie, Governor Beaufort, Mr. A. C. Pearson, Mr. P. Wise, a small body of Sikh police and a landing-party of fifty bluejackets and marines from H.M.S. *Swift*. The men were drawn up on three sides of a square before the flag-staff; Mr. Cowie and the Governor addressed the assembled natives, who, when asked by their chief Pengiran Kahar if they accepted the Company's rule, replied that they were satisfied. The bugle sounded the royal salute and the flag was run up as the troops presented arms. Three cheers were then given in which the natives joined.

As the cheering died away a white flag was seen approaching, and behind it a solitary figure. It was Mat Saleh. He was unarmed and was followed by one or two of his lieutenants.

Mr. Cowie went out to meet him and led him into the centre of the square. Before all the assembly he stated that he submitted absolutely to the authority of the Government; then he took the oath of allegiance under the Koran and subsequently hauled up the permanent flag of the station in the presence of all. Before he left he shook hands with everybody, and the same evening sent in five rifles together with a present of a native knife to both Mr. Cowie and the Governor. The next day he signed a document embodying the terms of his surrender. In consideration for his having submitted he and his followers were pardoned for waging war against the Government; he was to be allowed to live at Tambunan or elsewhere in the Interior, except on the rivers of the Labuk or Sugut; he was to keep the Government informed of his whereabouts, report himself if he visited the coast and agree to render assistance to the Government when required.

This was the end of the second phase. It was certainly a dramatic ending. Mr. Cowie, who undoubtedly took his life in his hands when he went to meet Mat Saleh in the jungle, was very rightly patted on the back at the half-yearly meeting of the Company in London for his clear-sightedness in his dealing with natives, and everybody said what a good thing a little clemency was in the right place. But there were others (chiefly those who had borne the heat and burden of sundry campaigns) who placed little reliance in Mat Saleh's word and held that instead of being given the privileges of a civilized enemy he should have been hunted down and shot out of hand for the rebel and looter that he was. Time showed that they were right.

§ 8

It was not long before reports of Mat Saleh's bad intentions began to come in; it was said that he was collecting poll-tax on his own account and had a large following of bad characters. A letter was sent to him inquiring if these reports were true, to which he replied that he was coming to the coast to pay a visit to the Governor and was bringing with him some people "wanted" for various offences. The poll-tax (he added ingenuously) he was only collecting for the Government.

Towards the end of 1898 Governor Beaufort arranged to meet Mat Saleh on the coast, but at the last moment the reformed rebel sent a message to say that his allies the Tegas were involved in a dispute with the Tiawan Dusuns and that this made it impossible for him to leave. The Tegas and the Tiawans were the inhabitants of the Tambunan Plain, a district which at that time had not come formally under the Company's rule. The Tegas had driven the Tiawans from the whole northern end of the plain, with the exception of the Sonsurun valley, and the two tribes had carried on a guerilla warfare against each other for many years. But when Mat Saleh allied himself with the Tegas the Tiawans, seeing that the odds were against them, became only too anxious to have a Government officer established in their country and sent a deputation to the coast begging the Governor's assistance and protection. They were all terrified of Mat Saleh and the most preposterous stories about his prowess were current. Some said his mouth produced flames, some that his sword emitted a lightning flash, others that rice scattered by him turned into wasps. There was a rumour that he had been set over the Governor and everybody believed him to be invulnerable.

As unpleasant stories and complaints of oppression continued, the Governor finally decided to go and meet Mat Saleh in the Interior himself, and arrived at Keningau, where Mr. F. W. Fraser was District Officer, on February 9, 1899. Gunsanad, the Kwijau chief, had been sent to call Mat Saleh in to meet His Excellency, but he returned bringing a letter of excuse. Governor Beaufort therefore decided to go and visit Mat Saleh himself and reached Tambunan with Mr. Fraser on the 15th.

On January 17 the Tiawan chiefs, with a large following, took the blood oath of allegiance to the Government. I cannot do better than quote Mr. Beaufort's description of the ceremony in a dispatch to the Court of Directors: "A stone about three feet high is brought and a hole dug to place it in, leaving one-half exposed. The Tambunan chiefs and our representative Gunsanad (he talks their language) squat round and mutter for some minutes as if saying a prayer. Then Dumkian first, and afterwards Gunsanad, enter on a curse of

portentous length and scope; may the other villages be swallowed up, may he be drowned, or eaten by a crocodile, his children perish, etc., etc., if he is untrue to his promise, and, in the case of Tambunan, if they do not obey the Government. Every now and then a bystander suggests an additional curse or interposes with a jest as the occasion demands in a magnificent musical voice; this is our friend Senait of Kapeian, in his pointed hat, jacket and *chawat*, with spear ten feet in length and immense *parang* laden with bells. This done, we move a few yards and the police kill a buffalo, the Tiawans another. The buffaloes are thrown and tied to the ground, the police cut the throat of theirs. The natives make a preliminary slit in the thick hide behind the shoulders, then thrust a spear into the heart, and work it leisurely up and down and stir it round and about for five minutes, a horrible sight. Some blood is collected from each in a bamboo and poured over the stone. The police fire three volleys and we return to the shade of the house, after a very trying two hours in the overpowering sun."

Before this ceremony the Governor had sent a letter to Mat Saleh asking him to come to a meeting-place half-way between his fort and Tambunan. On January 19 the Governor and Mr. Fraser set off with an escort of only four police; the Tiawan chiefs were afraid to follow and even tried to persuade the Governor not to go, saying that he and all his party would be killed. Mat Saleh appeared at the appointed place, a spot on the bank of the Pegalan River near Taboh, the last of the Tiawan villages. He expressed himself delighted to see them and invited them to go to his fort, which they did (" not without some chance of our being asked to remain there," as the Governor drily remarks), followed by a crowd of about 300 natives carrying all manner of ancient fire-arms. The fort was found to be about forty feet square, strongly built with earthworks and a palisade of heavy timber.

In a long conversation with the Governor Mat Saleh stated that he had no intention of attacking the Tiawans nor had his allies the Tegas; his only quarrel was with the Tiawans of Sonsurun as they had espoused the cause of two of his lieutenants, Abdurahman and Kalib Banjam, with whom he had

had a dispute. He admitted that he had built five forts round them and would have attacked them that day had he not received the Governor's letter. He promised that if the Sonsurun people would break with his former friends he would burn his forts and live at peace. The Governor agreed to bring this about and also to remove Abdurahman and Kalib Banjam from the district; then, after having drunk Mat Saleh's coconuts and made a lengthy visit, he and Mr. Fraser returned. The whole meeting passed off without an untoward incident and both sides parted amicably.

Although Mat Saleh had been so pleasant to the Governor's face yet he was on the war-path again within a few weeks and, with the Tegas, attacked the Sonsurun people in their rice fields. In April Mr. Fraser arranged a meeting between Mat Saleh, the Tegas and all the Tiawan chiefs, including those in the Sonsurun valley. He tactfully decided to leave the question of actual compensation for loss of heads and property until a later date, as both sides were then much too sore for there to be any chance of a quiet settlement at the moment. It took a whole night's arguing with the Tiawans to get them to agree to this, and then Mat Saleh coolly suggested dispensing with the compensation altogether. As he and his friends had seized during the feud upwards of eighty buffaloes and other property, besides killing over thirty people, while they themselves had lost no goods and very few lives, Mr. Fraser pointed out that the proposal was rather one-sided. Eventually Mat Saleh gave way and peace was sworn. Even during the ceremony things were touch-and-go. "A Tiawan Dusun," to quote Mr. Fraser's report, "dressed in a loin-cloth and a soldier's scarlet tunic with white facings (what regiment I failed to make out), suggested that if a Bajau were caught stealing eggs or fowls might all the curses rest on his head. Mat Saleh unfortunately got annoyed, and it was not until after it had been pointed out to him that there was no reason to take it personally that he quieted down; still it rather spoilt the harmony which up till then had existed."

Even then the sceptical Tiawan chiefs put little faith in Mat Saleh's oath. They were right, for by September he was at his old games again and planning an attack on Keningau.

Efforts were still made by Mr. Fraser to arrange matters peacefully, but Mat Saleh became more and more defiant. In October Mr. Fraser was ordered to build a station at Tambunan. Mat Saleh seemed to look upon this as a breach of faith and from that time onwards he refused to meet the District Officer.

The Government was very reluctant to embark upon another expedition, and finally a letter was sent from the coast by Nakoda Kusau, a trusted Dyak who had some influence with Mat Saleh, with the object of inducing him to come to terms. Nakoda Kusau, taking only one man, Sark, with him, went up the Putatan River and came upon a lieutenant of Mat Saleh's named Langkap with a large band of Illanun and Dusun followers. Langkap told Kusau that he had authority to open letters for Mat Saleh, but Kusau demurred, for, though he knew that Mat Saleh would respect the white flag, he did not trust Langkap. Then Langkap suggested that both parties should disarm, to which Kusau, who was in a precarious position, had to agree. The letter was handed to Langkap, and while he was reading it one of his men, who had previously been concealed behind a bush with a rifle, shot Nakoda Kusau dead. Sark seized his weapons and went amok, selling his life as dearly as he could until he was cut down by force of numbers. Beyond the fact that Kusau and his friend had been the victims of foul play no details were known of their fate until some time later when two Tegas Dusuns admitted that they had been given $5 to cut the head off, and that they had been allowed to keep it together with Kusau's spear.

After this outrage all efforts to come to a peaceful settlement appeared hopeless and it was decided to send a strong expedition under Captain C. H. Harington, the Commandant, to break the power of the troublesome outlaw once and for all.

The force began concentrating on December 11, 1899. Two bands of Mat Saleh's followers were reported in the neighbourhood of Menggatal and Putatan, one of which attacked Mengkabong at dawn on December 15, and burnt the barracks and the office. The rebels when pursued fled up-country. It was decided to use Putatan as a base and the expedition left for Tambunan on December 22. The force

consisted of the Commandant, with Mr. F. Atkinson, Dr. Conyngham as Medical Officer, 140 fighting-men, police and Dyaks, and 550 transport coolies. In this connection the Tuaran Dusuns gave loyal service and turned out to a man nearly 300 strong. The expedition reached the newly built Tambunan office on the 31st after a very hard march over exceptionally rough and hilly country, having been met at the head of the Papar River by Mr. Fraser and 250 more transport coolies.

On surveying the situation Captain Harington saw that no easy task lay before him. The Tambunan valley is some twelve miles in length and three in width at its broadest point. The Tambunan office is six miles from the southern entrance to the plain. Three miles farther north began the hostile Tegas villages, below that point the country was in the hands of the friendly Tiawans. All the Tegas villages had been put into a state of defence under Mat Saleh's supervision and were strongly fortified.

It was decided to use Timbau, a village two and a half miles from the Government office and three hundred yards from the nearest Tegas village, as a jumping-off point, and by January 2 the whole force had concentrated there. The next few days were taken up in reconnaissance, the enemy sniping day and night. "The officers were nearly caught by the snipers whilst playing stump cricket," runs an entry in Captain Harington's diary. On January 10, after a day's bombardment with the 7-pounder on a stockade that had been erected by the enemy, the attack was begun, the first objective being Latud, a strongly fortified Tegas village. The general advance started at noon, but the first charge on the position was held up by the sharp bamboo palisade of the village defences. The first opening was made by Mr. Fraser's Javanese servant, Leiman, who rushed through with a bottle of oil in one hand and a box of matches in the other and set light to the nearest roof protruding over the wall of the defences; in spite of a heavy cross-fire from the corner guard-houses he then ran across the open and lighted another roof, Mr. Fraser getting another one going on the other side. In a few seconds the whole place was in a blaze, and the flames spread so quickly that a

panic on the part of the garrison ensued and the bayonets of the police got a chance. Several of the enemy were burnt in the holes they had excavated in the ground.

Mr. Dansey, who was in command (Captain Harington being ill with fever and under the doctor's orders) reformed his men and pushed on to the second objective, a fort on a hill beyond the village. The attack was developing when suddenly Mr. Dunlop with sixty Dyaks appeared on the other side of the hill, to the surprise of the attacking party and to the dismay of the half-beaten Tegas. "Cease fire" was sounded and, to quote the Commandant, "the excitement was so great that from all sides a rush was made upon the fort by officers, Indians and Dyaks," and the position was speedily carried. In this action the Government lost one man killed and three wounded, as well as forty wounded by the insidious *sudah*.

The day's fighting created a very deep impression upon the natives, and within twenty-four hours all the Tegas villages that were not occupied by Bajaus submitted, and brought in all their guns. This submission was no lukewarm affair, for two days later 300 Tegas were sent down to the coast to bring up stores and ammunition; to their credit not a man bolted nor were any of the loads missing or even pilfered.

Among the villages that surrendered was Taboh, situated half a mile from Mat Saleh's fort. It was occupied by the Dyaks, and Captain Harington decided to make it his next post and base hospital. A second post was established 250 yards from Mat Saleh's main fort and 400 yards from another in charge of his chief of staff, Mat Jator. The forts were shelled by the 7-pounder on January 21, and by a stroke of luck the second shell set light to a roof of a house in Mat Jator's fort; a strong wind was blowing and the whole fort was burnt to the ground. It had been well sited on the edge of a precipice overlooking the river, and undoubtedly Mat Saleh had intended to retire on it if the worst came to the worst. The same night two Chinese carpenters, who had been employed by Mat Saleh for several months, took advantage of the general confusion to escape and gave valuable information.

A third post was made on the site of Mat Jator's fort and

two more north-east of the main stronghold, thus girding it round. The enemy's water-supply was effectually cut off. He was surrounded. By night he was harassed by the Dyak pickets. By day he was worried by the maxim, by the 7-pounder and by snipers. Much damage was done to his fort and guard-houses. Fear of the fort meeting the same fate as Mat Jator's led him to unroof his houses and live in holes in the ground. Yet he held out desperately. Mat Saleh and his men were no cowards, in fact on many occasions they showed that insane pluck which is proverbial among Malays. One evening, for instance, a Bajau came out on to the wall of the fort and stood there, a solitary figure, waving his *kris* and shouting defiance. His words were greeted by a volley and he was seen to fall, but only for a moment, for though shot through the legs, he sat up and, opening his coat, he exposed his breast. The challenge was taken and almost instantly a score of bullets hit the mark.

As the siege went on the defenders kept more to their underground holes, from which they dared not emerge even to beat their *padi*; they began to lose heart; there were no more shouts of defiance from the walls, though one night an abortive effort was made to rush the maxim. On the night of January 31 a Bajau woman named Niuk who had escaped from the fort was captured; she said that Mat Saleh had been killed at noon that day by a bullet from the maxim and that as none of the garrison had had food or water for four days they intended to make a bolt from the fort at 3 a.m. Shortly afterwards a child was heard crying in a rice-field, and it was discovered that the enemy was escaping. The alarm was given, but in the darkness and confusion many got away, taking cover in the *padi*. They were pursued into the jungle where many were killed, including women and children, for there is no stopping a Dyak on the war-path, and in the end not more than ten escaped. When the patrols got into the fort at dawn it was deserted. The outer wall was found to be six feet high and ten feet thick. The two inner walls were equally strong and were surrounded by a stockade and a bamboo network, while the ground in front was planted with the usual *sudah*. Inside the fort the smell was terrible; each family

had had a crude dugout to live in, six to twelve feet deep, and many of these were half-full of dead, while the ground itself was littered with corpses that lay rotting under the blazing sun. Some, more fortunate, had received a hasty burial, and after several graves had been opened the old woman Niuk found the spot where Mat Saleh lay, a hole under the flag-staff. He had been shot through the left temple and his body, according to Mohammedan custom, had been wrapped in white cloth. Mr. Fraser and several natives identified the body. Mat Saleh's uncle was also among the killed and three of his wives were captured, one of them Dayang Bandang, a daughter of the royal house of Sulu. The enemy's casualties were very considerable, and those on the Government side comparatively slight; twenty police were wounded, fifteen from *sudah*, which had also accounted for several camp followers. The only European casualty was Dr. Conyngham, who had been lured away into an ambush and hit. The police who were with him pluckily dragged him into safety and, though seriously wounded, he subsequently recovered.

Pursuing parties were sent out in all directions after the fugitives, but the Tegas themselves had had enough, and now that their leader had been killed they were only too anxious to submit. On February 3, Mat Saleh's fort was burnt by Mr. (now Sir) Hugh Clifford, who had only arrived in North Borneo as Governor a few days previously. He met all the chiefs of the rebel villages two days later. For the part they had played the Tegas were fined £30, twenty-five buffaloes, and one-quarter of their rice crop. They were ordered to demolish all their fortifications and to build a block-house for the Government near the site of Mat Jator's fort. Other matters (mainly connected with compensation) were arranged later by Mr. Fraser. The country rapidly became settled; a European officer was stationed permanently at Tambunan, and to-day the district is one of the most prosperous and peaceable in the territory. In a dispatch to the Court of Directors Governor Clifford wrote: "I have nothing but praise to bestow upon the actions of Captain Harington and his companions. All have shown the greatest zeal, energy, pluck and good sense. They have taken advantage of every opportunity afforded to

them, and the ultimate escape of a portion of the enemy could not have been prevented with an even larger force than that which the Commandant had at his disposal. By thus destroying and breaking up the power of the Bajaus in the Interior these officers have won a firm foothold for the Company in regions which hitherto have only been nominally under the control of the Government, they have paved the way for the pacification of the whole Interior which must result in a certain increase of trade on the west coast. I trust that the Court will see its way to empower me to officially thank the officers of the Expedition in its name for the valuable services rendered."

Thus was the great Mat Saleh's power broken and thus fate proved him only mortal after all. Mr. Fraser is of opinion that neither he nor Dayang Bandang desired the last rupture with Government, but that he was forced into it by his principal Bajau adherents, Lingkong, Mat Jator and Langkap, all congenital criminals who saw that with the advent of the Government their means of living in Tambunan would soon cease; the influence they had over their leader may be judged from the fact that when they were away Mat Saleh's letters were couched in courteous terms, whereas when they were in the fort the language used was the reverse. There is no doubt also that Mat Saleh was greatly influenced by Dayang Bandang herself; she was a lady of exceedingly haughty demeanour, and in all her wanderings never put her foot to the ground, being carried in a chair on a man's back. She had, it was said, poisoned her first husband in order to marry Mat Saleh. She was credited with the gift of clairvoyance and Mat Saleh rarely took any action without seeking her advice; in fact his great influence with the Mohammedans was probably in a large measure due to this daughter of a royal house.

Mat Saleh himself had in him much of the gentleman; in his personal dealings with his enemies he observed his own code of honour; he was a soldier and he respected the simple conventions of war. With his influence and an intelligence so far above the average he might well, could he but have been led in the right direction, have made an excellent native chief and been a tower of strength to the Government. The

ease with which he gained an ascendancy over his followers and played off one set of natives against another was his undoing, and led to that megalomania which made him wage war against the Government without a cause, break his most sacred vows and undertakings, steal, loot and kill. "Personally," wrote Mr. Fraser in some notes he was kind enough to give me on Mat Saleh, "whenever I met him he treated me with every courtesy and agreed to every proposal that I might make, but I cannot recall that he ever carried out any agreement made." In that sentence lies much of Mat Saleh's character. Part man of honour, part traitor; part soldier and part freebooter, and braggart always, yet he is wholly a figure of romance, and it was because in his own way he was a man of genius that the Government tried so often and so long to induce him to become a power in the land for good instead of for evil. With a man of more common clay it would not have been worth while. But a meaner man would have given in, a man less great of heart would have marched out from that girdled fort upon the Tambunan Plain to surrender to his self-made enemies. For though Mat Saleh's word was broken easily enough, it needed a maxim gun to break his spirit.

§ 9

Though the power of the Bajaus was shattered in the Interior with the fall of Mat Saleh, several got away and, not having profited by the lesson they had received, set about hatching plots which culminated in the Kudat Raid. Some aftermath of the rebellion was inevitable and Mat Jator, whose fort had been burnt over him at Tambunan, stepped into Mat Saleh's shoes. With him were Langkap, who had instigated the murder of Nakoda Kusau, Mat Daud, an old supporter of Mat Saleh, Talip, an ex-convict, and Kamunta, another leading light of the old band. Terms had been offered to these outlaws but they had refused them. It followed that they were bound to give further trouble sooner or later. They were desperate men. They had been hounded out of the Interior; they had lost their Dusun supporters; they were short of arms and ammunition. They had to raise a new

following before they could accomplish anything, but they were discredited, for though the Dusun is sometimes a fool, there must be some semblance of butter before he will eat the slice of bread offered to him. Mat Jator and his friends therefore determined that their only chance was to bring off a *coup* which would be so dramatic that their prestige would be re-established immediately, and they would have the whole country-side flocking to their flag.

They decided upon Kudat as their objective. The town was to be captured, the steamer in port to be seized and then the rebels were to attack Sandakan. Plans were laid with such secrecy that it was not until April 27, 1900 (the day before the attack), that warning of the intended raid reached Mr. Barraut, the Resident, from Arsat, the native clerk of Kota Belud. The news was confirmed later in the evening by a Dusun chief named Bladau, who, on the first anniversary of the raid, was murdered by Kamunta and his friends for the part he had played in giving the alarm.

Fortunately there happened to be thirty extra police in Kudat under Mr. G. H. Malcolm, and outposts were set to watch the approaches of the town, with the result that in the early hours of the next morning two of the enemy's scouts were captured. Neither could be induced to speak, but the reality of the danger was now only too clear and the garrison was concentrated on the Treasury. The night was one of intense darkness and a little later a small body of rebels passed the sentry at the gaol by the simple means of giving the watchword "Friend" and, creeping forward, cut down the Sikh stationed at the magazine. Sergeant Futta Singh was also killed in the darkness by an unseen hand, and the remaining five Sikhs, having fired for some time into the darkness, withdrew to the Treasury, leaving the magazine in the raiders' hands.

The enemy now concentrated their fire on the Treasury, but Mr. Barraut decided that it was hopeless to take the offensive until dawn. At 4 a.m. the outposts came in, and shortly afterwards Mr. Malcolm with twenty Indians, divided into two parties, successfully counter-attacked the magazine. During the action one Daim, then Prison Overseer at Kudat,

performed prodigies of valour; holding a spear in front of him he descended the steps of the magazine, which was built into the ground; one man who attacked him had the spear-head driven through his heart, another leapt from the window and was shot by the police, and then Daim settled accounts with Latip and Mat Jator. His description of how he hurled the heads of his enemies up the steps of the magazine as if they had been so many coconuts must be heard to be appreciated, and if the reader has half an hour to while away in Kudat the old warrior will be delighted to give him a graphic story of the fight. In all twelve of the enemy were killed; eleven rifles were captured; the maxim, which fortunately the raiders could not use, the ammunition and all the Government stores were recovered from the raiders, who took to flight, carrying their wounded with them. They were pursued by the police but got away into the jungle, after killing ten unfortunate Chinese vegetable gardeners and firing many of the settlers' houses on the way. Three prisoners who were taken red-handed were tried and subsequently hanged publicly in Kudat. The inhabitants of the town behaved well under trying circumstances and remained within their houses as they had been ordered, thereby preventing indescribable confusion. In fact the night had its comic side, for a Dutch planter who was staying in the Hotel and for some reason or another had not been warned of the attack, was awakened in the early hours by a bullet coming through his bedroom, but after roundly abusing the Constabulary department for letting its recruits use ball ammunition for target practice, he turned over and went to sleep again.

Reports as to the number who took part in the raid vary from 150 to 500. The number of actual fighting-men was probably not more than 180, and the remainder were hangers-on who had joined with the intention of getting as much loot as possible without danger to themselves. Some of them had come 150 miles from the Interior, and their real mission was proved by the number of rattan baskets that were found in the wake of the retreat.

The failure of the raid was evident and complete; the reports of it spread rapidly just as reports of success would

have done, but with very different results. Those who had been sitting as interested spectators on the fence now got down on the Government side and came to the conclusion that freebooting did not pay after all. Had the raid been successful there is no doubt that, besides the seriousness of the affair itself, it would have had far-reaching consequences.

On May 20, Governor Clifford took a strong force of police to Kudat under Captain Harington. The remnants of the raiders were located in the Illanun coast villages at the south-west end of the Kudat Peninsula. A force under Captain Harington, accompanied by Mr. Barraut and Mr. Malcolm, was put on board the *Labuan* and landed near Pindassan. The party, after marching all night, surrounded the village of Ludah at dawn and took the inmates completely by surprise; resistance was impossible and the headman, flustered but conscious that he himself had not taken an active part in the raid, lost no time in giving the names of his guilty friends, not even having sufficient presence of mind to omit the name of his own son. Further arrests were made in other villages and the party then returned to Kudat, all the ringleaders of the raid having been accounted for, with the exception of Kamunta and Langkap. It was a well-conceived piece of staff-work which was executed without a hitch. The Dusun villages in the neighbourhood of Kudat lost no time in swearing allegiance to the Government, and the stones which were planted as witnesses of their oaths may be seen upon the Kudat Golf Course to-day.

§ 10

Nevertheless there still remained a considerable amount of "mopping up" to do. Si Gunting, of Mumus fame, was still at large and proved a focus for fugitive malcontents; Langkap and Kamunta still defied the Government with a small band of satellites. Kamunta, after an ineffective attempt to raid the station at Ambong, surrendered in 1902 and was shot in the presence of a hundred natives on a hill near Abai, where he could see for the last time the whole of the Tampassuk Plain, the scene of his brigandage. Langkap was forced into surrender by his loss of prestige among the Dusuns and his inability

to get food. He was shot on the same hill and having shown himself a treacherous poltroon in life showed himself a coward in death, trying every device to gain another minute or two. This left Si Gunting and a crowd of smaller units, whose hunting-ground was the area south of Kinabalu and the uplands of the North Keppel district. Si Gunting had remained an outlaw since 1894, owing to the double-dealing of the Government chief Datoh Undok, who had prevented any negotiations for his surrender and warned him of any impending attempts to capture him. For years he was regarded as the potential leader of a serious rising and provided the "rough shooting" for a number of District Officers, but finally in 1905 he surrendered to Mr. (now Captain) A. B. C. Francis and gave away a plot that the Datoh was elaborating to murder the District Officer and burn Timbang Batu Station. "Gunting provided a lot of amusement to himself and every one else," writes Captain Francis, "but was never a real danger. As he put it on surrendering, 'I am glad to be at peace and to be able to take out quietly my annual rhino licence.'"

The capture of the remnants of the actual Mat Saleh gang was spread over a number of years. They were recognized as the prey of the District Officer, Tuaran, but he generously gave other guns a free run at them. The gang split up and the difficulty was to get news of these few scattered outlaws, all Bajaus and Illanuns, and, having got news to identify them, or, having identified them, to catch them. Penalties for harbouring were rigorously enforced, for the method of the local natives was too often that of running with the hare and hunting with the hounds. The late Mr. N. Kough once put the matter in a nutshell to a village headman who had suggested planting stones and swearing friendship. "I told the chief of Wasai," he wrote, "that when the various stones planted by him with other people bore fruit, he and I would start gardening. Not before."

The Dusuns, however, gradually began to get tired of kicking against the pricks. To stimulate by loot their flagging loyalty the rebels, led by one Bantah, an escaped prisoner, planned another *coup*, this time on Kawang, a few miles from Jesselton. On March 31, 1904, the Railway Station and shops were looted

and burnt, an engine-driver was killed, also the Tamil station-master and his wife. The rebels decamped up-country and, though they left a hot trail of loot, for the time being escaped. However, Mr. Francis, together with Mr. Kough and Mr. H. W. L. Bunbury, concentrating from their respective districts, Tempassuk, Tuaran and Tambunan, gradually drew a net round the raiders with a force consisting of fourteen police and seven hundred auxiliaries and made things so unpleasant in the neighbourhood that within six months the effect of the raid was gone and the remaining rebels had either been caught, captured or brought in by their unwilling allies. Among those who came in at intervals were several long-forgotten escaped gaol-birds of whom no records existed; such incidents were embarrassing to the officer and always disappointing to the prisoners, who for years had imagined themselves to be much more interesting than they really were.

All this " mopping up " was very hard work and very good work, with much more than a spice of danger in it. The brunt of it fell upon the District Officers and did not always receive the recognition it deserved, for the State had been officially returned as " under control " in 1902. The guerilla tactics employed by the rebels made the business of catching them a long one, for though they made forts they would never hold them. This, however, did not prevent their pursuers from standing a very good chance of being sniped, ambushed, wounded by a sharp *sudah* or falling a victim to a *blatik*; the latter is a bamboo spring-trap of which there are three patterns, one which hits the man who sets it off, one which hits the man ten yards behind the " setter off," and one which when released fires a bouquet of five spears from a tree above on to the path below. Upon sites that lent themselves to the purpose the rebels made elaborate artillery arrangements, large stones being tied by rattans hanging down a steep hill-side under which the path ran. Each rattan could be cut singly, or several brought to one point at the end could be loosed in one grand salvo.

Bush-whacking in North Borneo after rebels did not die out entirely with the last of Mat Saleh's gang. As a whole the country remained at peace till 1915, but there were periodical

operations against occasional outlaws and evil-doers. Such was the Tomani Expedition in 1906 when Mr. (now Major) H. S. Bond took a force against some Muruts who were concerned in a murder and defied the Government. The expedition met with appalling weather, but it was the Muruts' first experience of the 7-pounder, which caused a great impression, and after fleeing for their lives most of the "wanted" parties surrendered. From this expedition a little local legend has grown for the truth of which I cannot vouch. One morning during the march the coolies nearest to a thick patch of jungle by the road were suddenly seen to fling down their loads and scatter in all directions. "Ambush," cried the gallant O.C. and, drawing his revolver, he dashed towards the thicket —only to find that though it was indeed an ambush the enemy happened to be a swarm of infuriated wasps.

More protracted were the operations against the Orang Sungei rebel Musah who at Paitan in June, 1908, while acting as a guide to the police, killed a Sikh lance-corporal and a native policeman to save Kalankau, a near relative, from falling into their hands. Gathering a band of forty worthies round him Musah then attacked Paitan Station; four police were killed, rifles and ammunition were stolen and the shops were looted; the raiders subsequently took to the mangrove swamps in boats. They were pursued for many days and finally the late Mr. P. C. Brackenbury together with Mr. H. Prevost and Mr. R. K. Hardwick suddenly came upon Musah's camp in an uninhabited part of the jungle. In the fight that followed Kalankau was killed, but unfortunately Musah got away and, though hunted periodically by a variety of District Officers, he proved elusive and it was not until 1913 that he surrendered on condition that his life should be spared.

These small expeditions, though they involved considerable trouble and no small expense to the Government, had no great significance, and there was no organized rising in the State until the Murut Rebellion in 1915.

§ 11

The Rundum and Pensiangan districts were the last areas in the territory to come under the sway of the Chartered Company.

In 1915, however, the country had been settled for several years, all the tribes had taken the oath of allegiance to the Government and, save for occasional outbreaks, head-hunting had ceased. The rising was therefore all the more inexplicable. It has been attributed to German influence, but there is no evidence to show that this was anything more than supposition. The late Mr. N. B. Baboneau, in some notes sent me shortly before his death in December, 1920, wrote: " What apparently happened was—Ingkun, a Tagul headman, had a wonderful dream in which he was told that if he made an enormous underground chamber all the Muruts' relations who had ever died would collect there and a new era would dawn." Now there has always been a belief in a millennium among the Muruts, and it is doubtful if anyone had any evil designs at the time, especially as Ingkun had just been greatly assisted by the Government in attacking a village which had raided him. But when the fort had been started and had been seen by various Dyak traders, ever ready to make mischief for their own ends, it so impressed them that they suggested that it would be the very thing in which to defy the Government. Even so matters would not have assumed the proportions they did had not the Muruts had grievances of their own; they had never liked working on bridle-path construction though they got paid for it, and two new measures, a tax on native liquors and the restriction of clearing virgin jungle, had upset them.

Their plans were laid with great secrecy and the first intimation of trouble was at dawn on February 13, when Mr. Baboneau, who was District Officer, was attacked on the Tagul River by a party of Muruts led by Ingkun, the dreamer. Mr. Baboneau was on his way to Pensiangan where a new station was being built, and was just leaving his camp when, from the surrounding jungle, fire was opened by an unseen enemy. The fire was returned by Mr. Baboneau and the two police with him, but the baggage coolies bolted, his orderly fell dead at his feet shot through the head, and one of the police was wounded. By this time his ammunition was nearly exhausted. He decided to get away and make for Pensiangan, so he and his men, after hacking a path through the jungle for some distance, secured a boat and reached the station at 1 p.m.,

having passed large crowds of natives on the river banks. It was soon only too clear that the whole district was in rebellion and there is no doubt that the rebels were on the point of attacking Pensiangan Station when the unexpected appearance of the District Officer disconcerted them and prevented the annihilation of the small police force stationed there. It seemed, however, that the attack was not likely to be long postponed, and several parties were seen prowling round in the jungle. There was no possibility of getting into touch with Rundum, the district head-quarters, or of obtaining reinforcements, and it was decided to abandon Pensiangan (the station consisted of only a few temporary bamboo buildings) and to make for Rundum. The little party left at daybreak on the 15th; it consisted of Mr. Baboneau and his servants, eleven police (together with four of their wives) and two Dusun prisoners. Kawah, a Murut headman, was arrested on the way and taken perforce as guide, for it was necessary to take a devious route over the hills, it being certain that the main track would be ambushed. As it was, an attack was made but beaten off, though as ill-luck would have it one of the Dusun carriers during the confusion threw away his load containing the remainder of the stores and the only lamp. There followed three days of as ghastly a journey as has ever been made in Borneo, through dense jungle, over terrific hills, across a country in which every village was hostile, and in continuous expectation of attack, more especially as Kawah effected his escape. But the little band marched gallantly, making a five days' journey in three, and that on an inadequate ration of cold rice; even the wives forbore to complain and one of them, for lack of transport, girded her *sarong* round her and used it as a sack for her possessions, wearing beneath a pair of football shorts, which gained for her the nickname of the "forward" throughout the march. But it was an exhausting and perilous journey, and only the certain knowledge of what their fate would be if they fell into the hands of an enemy so lately weaned from head-hunting lent determination to their steps.

No attack had been made on Rundum, but it was only a matter of time, for every day reports of outrages on police,

Photo. *N. B. Bateman.*

RUNDOM STATION.

[*To face p. 218.*

overseers, and free traders in various parts of the country made it evident that the whole district was up in arms, even as far as the hills of Province Clarke. Pensiangan Station was reduced to a heap of ashes soon after the departure of the garrison; this fact was discovered by L.-Corp. Impenit who, on hearing that Mr. Baboneau's party had been attacked, took five police and went after him. This man's action in going out several days' march through a hostile country to what he must have thought was almost certain death, was very fine and deserved official recognition.

The only thing now was to wait and prepare for the attack that every one knew was inevitable. It was not a pleasant time. There are more exhilarating forms of amusement than waiting in a little station three days from civilization, surrounded by jungle hills about which are many thousand head-hunters preparing for an attack, and the only communication with the outside world a telephone line which is constantly being cut. Matters were not made easier for Mr. Baboneau by the fact that Head-quarters took a less serious view of affairs than he did. Yet the news certainly was hard to believe. As Mr. Baboneau himself wrote on February 27, "I readily admit that it appears almost incredible that these natives, many of whom had hitherto appeared so friendly and trustworthy, should have combined in a universal rising against us, but to no one can it be more difficult of belief than to myself who, for the past fifteen months, have visited almost every part of the district, and established apparently friendly relations with nearly every chief and headman." Nevertheless the man on the spot was right and subsequent events proved that he was justified in saying that he had fully sixty villages opposed to him and not a single friendly native of the district on whom he could rely as guide or informant.

For nineteen days the little garrison waited on for the attack. It was reinforced by Jemadar Akhbar Khan and some Indian police under Mr. C. H. Pearson. Nevertheless it was a weary wait. There was little sleep at night; every false alarm—a torch or sometimes fireflies, or a fancied sound of footsteps in the jungle—was reported to be the enemy at last. The station is peculiarly ill-adapted for defence, lying as it

does in a hollow girt with jungle hills, but posts were put out and the best dispositions possible made.

Just before dawn on March 6 the attack came, quite unexpectedly, for though the Muruts had massed the night before, they had done so with great secrecy. It was no lukewarm affair, but a determined assault carried out on a pre-arranged plan. Within a few seconds of the sentry's alarm the morning air was rent with a thousand war-cries. The Muruts came on yelling like demons, brandishing swords and spears, shooting with their guns and blow-pipes, athirst for heads. They were held up by the steady fire of the police. After about fifteen minutes they began to concentrate in the river bed thirty yards below one of the posts. Holding the attack himself, the Jemadar told off three men to work their way along the river bank until they could bring enfilade fire to bear from a bend, an operation which was completely successful. The enemy was taken by surprise and panic ensued, numbers being shot as they attempted to bolt back across the river. They did not abandon the attack, however, and fighting was kept up for two hours ; a second attempt was made from the direction of the shops at 10 a.m. and at noon the enemy burnt the shops and looted a quantity of stores (which had been taken back by the Chinese without the District Officer's orders) and then retired to the surrounding hills. Reinforcements from Tenom did not arrive in time for a counter-attack to be delivered, and the little force only numbered twenty-four while the attackers must have run into thousands, the jungle round the station being full of literally beaten tracks. The rebels' losses were known to be twenty killed and many wounded, but the Muruts themselves stated subsequently that their casualties amounted to two hundred. Among the killed was Ingkun, and Mr. Baboneau was delighted to recover from the body his revolver, which had been lost when the coolies bolted with their loads ; besides this, one snider rifle and twelve muzzle-loaders were captured. On the defending side there was only one man wounded. Reporting the conduct of the police Mr. Baboneau wrote as follows : " In spite of the strain to which they had been subjected for the past three weeks the behaviour of every man, both Indian and native, engaged in the defence

was admirable when it is considered that attacks by parties numbering hundreds were kept off by guards consisting of from three to seven men."

The Murut leaders, having shot their bolt, made the inevitable mistake of native strategists and concentrated in Ingkun's stronghold on a sloping hill near the Silangit River, two days' march from Rundum. To quote Resident Mr. Bunbury's official dispatch: "The fort consisted of seven underground houses, closely connected with each other; in the case of one at least the central passage had rooms leading out of it dug out of the sides. The earth so excavated was piled up to either side, and over it a roof of bamboo, earth and wood was placed. In addition to these underground houses were many bamboo *atap* huts with pits dug under them and loopholes covering the approaches. The hill slopes were guarded with *udang* and *sudah* (long and short sharpened stakes) thickly planted, a fence, and innumerable loopholes." The ground rose steeply behind the fort and the whole work extended along the spur for a distance of three hundred yards, while a covered trench gave the inmates access to a small stream. The garrison, which with women and children numbered nearer two thousand than one, included Pulangga—a paid Government chief—a telegraph overseer, Junit—a Dyak Government chief of many years standing—several free Dyaks, and Antanun, who, upon Ingkun's death, had become the leader of the rebels. He was not a chief and before the outbreak was unknown, but by some means or other he had gained an extraordinary ascendancy over the Muruts; his following was drawn from far and wide, and there was reason to believe that many chiefs otherwise loyal sent him tribute.

Some weeks elapsed in making preparations to attack this stronghold, but on April 9 the expedition left Rundum. It consisted of Mr. Bunbury, Mr. C. H. Pearson, the late Mr. R. R. M. Tabuteau (subsequently killed in action in France), fifteen Indians, including the Sikh gun-squad of our old friend the 7-pounder, ten native police, seventy fighting Dyaks and native chiefs and some three hundred carriers. On the 13th the enemy's position was reached and Mr. Tabuteau selected a site for the gun on a small plateau above it; six pickets were placed

commanding paths leading to the fort and the enemy's main water-supply was cut off. The possibility of an assault was abandoned as, even if the natives had joined in, the loss of life would have been very great. Fire was opened by the 7-pounder next morning at a range of 200 yards, and produced great moral effect. The enemy replied with a heavily built muzzle-loader gun of large bore, which sent over showers of nails, bits of wire, stones and broken insulators. On the night of April 15 the 7-pounder began to get on the defenders' nerves to such an extent that about three hundred of them made a bolt for it and escaped during a heavy rainstorm. They were followed the next night by the Dyaks and on the 17th white flags were seen hanging out from the fort. Thereupon two Government chiefs went up unarmed and spent some time in trying to persuade the enemy to give up his arms and surrender. They were only partially successful, but sixteen muzzle-loaders, three sniders, a quantity of ammunition, a medicine-chest and basket of Mr. Baboneau's and $800 in notes were handed over. Later on Antanun and two of his lieutenants came up to the Government camp. They were promptly arrested and handcuffed, for no inducement had been held out to them to come in and the truce was over. Antanun, after making a bid for freedom, was recaptured; the three were then tried on the spot and sentenced to be shot. These sentences were carried out immediately for fear they should escape, and they got as much consideration as they deserved.

Though bereft of their leaders, the main body in the fort would not surrender. On the 18th, a police party succeeded in setting fire to some bamboo huts surrounding the main fort; in the confusion that followed many of the enemy tried to escape with their arms; some succeeded in fighting their way through between the posts, but large numbers were killed and on the Government side seventy were treated for *parang* and *sudah* wounds; a Government chief was hit by four blowpipe darts, but though incapacitated for a time he recovered. The same night many more escaped and parties of the enemy behind the pickets made frequent attacks, the little posts often being surrounded.

On the 19th Mr. Bunbury considered that the purpose of the expedition had been accomplished, for it was not his object to exterminate the rebels; they had had their lesson: over four hundred had been killed and their leaders had met with their deserts. Even had the fort been taken it would have been impossible to occupy or destroy it on account of the overpowering stench. The camp was therefore broken up on April 29, and the three hundred remaining occupants were advised to go to Rundum and submit. The rebels replied, stubbornly enough, that they would disperse as soon as the Government force was gone; no conclusive peace was made, but they were beaten men, and, though it took several months for the district to settle down, the Murut Rebellion was at an end. "The loss of life," wrote Governor Pearson in a dispatch to the Court of Directors, "is much to be regretted, and Mr. Bunbury acted wisely in holding his hand when he did and allowing the remaining three hundred or so in the fort to escape and carry the tale to their friends. At the same time a severe lesson, such as this has been, will probably have the result of confirming the loyalty of any waverers and of bringing the rising to a speedy termination."

While the Rundum Muruts were making trouble in their own particular way, a few choice Illanun and Bajau spirits in the Tempassuk district decided that it would be an auspicious moment to do a little raiding of their own, more especially as the Kota Belud garrison had been reduced in order to find reinforcements for Rundum. The late Mr. P. C. Brackenbury, who was District Officer, providentially got news of the raiders' plans, and the Resident, Mr. E. H. Barraut, pushed up overland to Kota Belud with five Indians and all the Tuaran garrison. He arrived none too soon, for news was obtained that the station was to be raided next day, but he decided to forestall the attack and marched out at dawn the following morning with twenty police towards Pindassan, where the rebels were known to be. On the bridle-path near the village, twelve miles from Kota Belud, the party came upon a mass of eighty men all dressed in white—Illanuns, Bajaus and some Dusuns. When three hundred yards away they were called upon to throw down their arms, but advanced stamping, with their

spears up. The police formed up with the natives kneeling and the Indians standing behind. A second warning was shouted out. It was disregarded. On came the advancing mass, now worked up to an amok frenzy. The police fired a volley, then another. The rebels reeled; some dropped, but the rest came on, and even the third and fourth volleys did not stop half a dozen from rushing to within a few feet of the muzzles of the rifles before they were shot down. At last they drew back, and, as the police opened out, they broke and fled, leaving eighteen dead upon the ground.

The party then hurried back to Kota Belud. Mr. Barraut, the senior officer of the Civil Service, had cause to be pleased with his day's work. He had covered twenty-five miles, fought as successful a little fight as North Borneo has ever seen, and by his prompt and decisive action had nipped in the bud, just as he had in the Kwijau Rebellion nineteen years before, what might have been a serious rising. On these occasions, for every man that appears in the first act there are a hundred waiting to appear in the grand finale—if the play is a success. This one was a failure and since then no other has been staged. The country has been at peace and is likely to remain so, for by object lessons and by bitter experience the native population has learnt that a tranquil life under a kindly government in the long run pays better than an adventurous existence under a pirate or a rebel chief.

CHAPTER VIII

THE JUNGLES

A PHILOSOPHER might well find a world of symbols in a Borneo jungle. As in life itself, the law of the jungle is the survival of the fittest, and the struggle for existence which is the lot of humanity is repeated in the forest; there day after day, year after year, every wild green thing that grows fights desperately for life, battling for space and light and air. Each preys upon the other, and even the mightiest giant of to-day, rising superbly a sheer two hundred feet without a branch, to-morrow may be brought low by the parasites that are its deadly enemies; while the more defenceless may be strangled by creeping things that twine round their slender forms in an embrace which brings death at last. In the jungle there is never room for all.

Yet it is a mistake to suppose that virgin jungle (so happily named) is a tangle of weeds and impenetrable vegetation; under foot are rotting branches and a carpet of dead leaves soft to tread upon, but in that shaded ground so seldom kissed by sunlight few weeds will grow. There are saplings, creepers and twisting coils of rattan, green as snakes; spiky palms and thorny briers to lay a detaining hand upon the passer-by; mantles of emerald moss and clumps of thick bamboo, but it is possible for a traveller to walk almost unimpeded, snicking now and then with a cutting knife at a branch or clinging hindrance that stays his steps. Thus he may walk all day and scarcely feel the sun, of which he catches but fleeting glimpses through the matted branches far above, so locked and interlaced that the monkeys may journey days together without ever coming to the ground; for the denseness of the jungle is overhead, not underfoot. Save for the cicada's

strident song the jungle is strangely silent; sometimes the ripple of a crystal stream, or a crashing, like a salvo of sixty pounders, of some great stricken tree disturbs its mysterious stillness, sometimes the hoarse cough of an *orang utan* or the crackle of dry twigs as a rhino gives a startled plunge and turns to flee. Except at the break of day few birds are heard; there are few butterflies, few flowers save here and there a wicked-looking scarlet blossom or an orchid bursting into bloom high up on a mighty tree-trunk; but though it is rare to find a snake, yet in wet weather every leaf may harbour a leech that waits to attach itself unerringly to the passer-by.

It is in secondary jungle, where the forest has formerly been felled, that the tangle of undergrowth is found. Unhindered by the shade of the great trees, all things that grow start level, and the competition in the struggle for existence is greater, for the contest is entered by all the wild things the tropic earth can bring to life, until the whole ground is choked with *lalang* grass and scrub, with a maze of bushes, dense and stubborn, rising breast or shoulder high and interspersed with half-grown trees. Unfortunately large areas of North Borneo are now under this secondary jungle, thanks to the uneconomic methods of the up-country native, who, as already described, prefers to prepare his fields by felling virgin jungle rather than by clearing this secondary bush. This has been his custom from time immemorial, and being intensely conservative he is hard to wean from his wasteful ways, especially as, by following the example of his fathers, he can expect a large crop with little toil. For this reason the conservation of the forests presents a very difficult problem; old and convenient customs die hard, and while it is one thing to make ordinances it is another to enforce them, especially among scattered up-country tribes such as the Dusuns and Muruts. However, a start has been made in time, and although millions of acres with a stand of valuable timber have been laid waste, more particularly on the west coast where the native population is most dense, millions of acres still remain; it is estimated that within twenty miles of the coast alone there are more than two millions acres of commercial forest, and areas beyond this coast-belt are almost unlimited. The timber is most accessible

Photo *Capt. S. Murray.*

A SHELTER IN THE FOREST.

[*To face p.* 226.

on the east coast, where there are many blocks of 50,000 acres on which, according to Dr. Foxworthy, the stand of marketable timber will average 2,000 cubic feet or more to the acre, while there are even heavier stands running to over 3,000 cubic feet per acre in the neighbourhood of Cowie Harbour.

§ 2

The most famous wood that the forests of the country produce is *belian*,[1] or the Borneo ironwood, a handsome tree with large dark leaves and a torpedo-shaped fruit, which, growing sometimes to the length of fifteen inches, has been known to cause serious accidents by falling upon the heads of those who have lingered unwarily below. The tree, which is of quick and vigorous growth, abounds throughout the low damp forests in the neighbourhood of the sea and of large rivers, and while found all over the country it is most plentiful on the island of Sebattik. It seldom grows to any great size, though trees have been found with a girth of fifteen feet; these, however, are nearly always unsound, and the average tree is from fifteen inches to two feet in diameter. Newly-cut *belian* wood is of a dark sand colour which, when seasoned, turns to a deep red and in time becomes as black as ebony. It bears exposure well, is proof against the machinations of the ubiquitous white ant and is as indestructible as a wood can be. Its breaking strain is the highest of any known wood, and, though it sinks in water it does not swell, nor does it require a long process of seasoning. These characteristics render it peculiarly suitable for railway-sleepers, roof-shingles and posts, indeed for any construction requiring strength and durability, while owing to its resistance to water decay, it is the best of all timbers for piles.

Another timber extensively used in the past for piles is *griting*; it used to be considered second only to *belian* in durability, but it has been overrated. The tree has a bright scarlet flower and is found growing along the swampy banks of rivers. It has a long-grained wood and often attains a diameter of two and a half feet, the logs being used with the bark on.

[1] I follow the Malay spelling when mentioning this and other Borneo woods.

Unlike most woods, it grows lighter instead of darker after exposure, and when first cut it has clinging to it an indefinable scent of roses. *Salangan batu* is also in demand for the construction of wharves, sleepers, flooring, all kinds of building work and for the keels of boats. The tree has a yellowish-brown wood, heavy and very hard, rapidly darkening on exposure to the air. It is seldom found in perfection far from salt water, trees growing inland having a softer and lighter wood. There are many varieties of the tree, but the best (sold in London as Borneo teak) has a strong resemblance to teak wood, though it lacks the teak oil which preserves any iron driven through the latter wood. The inferior varieties, which are numerous, range downwards until they finally become merged in the ordinary soft woods cut indiscriminately for cheap buildings on estates.

Perhaps the most popular wood for building purposes is that of the *merbau* tree, a giant of the forest. The natural wood is a deep yellow which, as it becomes seasoned, quickly darkens to a deep red streaked with brown. It has a considerable resemblance to mahogany but is much heavier. It is ant-proof, and so durable that if posts which have been long in the ground are taken out after a number of years, they will be found undecayed even though no preservative had been applied when they were first erected. When polished the curious grain of the wood is seen at its best and is exceedingly beautiful; it is much used for furniture and cabinet work, while the pride of more than one Borneo manager's bungalow is its polished *merbau* floor. In the jungle the tree is often found overgrown by a species of fig and, when in this state, no native will fell it, believing that it is the dwelling-place of one of the myriad forest spirits, who would wreak vengeance on anyone daring to lay impious hands on his abode.

Another suggested rival to mahogany is *rasak*, a tree which, like *merbau*, attains a great size; when freshly cut the wood is a yellowish colour, turning to red brown upon exposure. *Seraiah*, the most abundant of all Borneo timbers, is also not unlike a soft mahogany, and grows to an even greater size than *rasak*, often having a diameter of five feet and a clear length of eighty. It is a soft red wood with many varieties,

and is sold in England under the name of Borneo cedar; it is very free from knots and easily worked, but it lacks the scent of the true cedar. It has a very pretty grain and the finer grades are especially valued for making furniture. Strange to say, before the demand arose for this wood in the United Kingdom the trees were usually left standing, as the planks were considered locally of little value.

§ 3

As there are several hundred distinct species of timbers in North Borneo it is not possible here, nor is it necessary, to give an account of each.[1] The foregoing are the best known for general purposes, but besides these there are many trees that have their special and more restricted uses: *gagil* for ships' planks; *bintangar* for masts and spars; *kamuning* for weapon handles; *madang* for carvings; *jelutong*, a cork wood, for floats; there is *kayu arang*, the black heartwood of which produces ebony; *kayu garu*, whose horny core is prized by the Chinese for incense; *obar suluk*, the bark of which yields the natives tannin for their fishing lines and dyes; the trees of the swamps—*bakau*, *tengah* and *bius*—for firewood and for making cutch, and *kayu bawang*—or onion tree—whose fruit, round and hard, is used occasionally by the natives as a substitute for onions. In outward appearance this tree closely resembles *belian*, but the wood is of no value and the bark has an almost intolerable smell of garlic. There is *kayu tai*, chiefly remarkable for its overpowering smell which is beyond description; and *rangas*, sometimes called the Borneo rosewood though lacking the characteristic scent. There are two varieties of this tree: one, the common *rangas*, usually found growing in secondary jungle, has a worthless soft white wood; the other, much more scarce and found in primary jungle, contains a rosewood heart. Both trees, however, have a peculiar tar-like sap exuding from the bark; this sap coming in contact with the skin sets up an intense irritation, often followed by

[1] A detailed account of the Timbers and Jungle Produce of North Borneo is to be found in the Forestry Department's *Bulletin* No. 1, by Dr. F. W. Foxworthy, a valuable scientific work to which I am indebted for several particulars.

inflammation which is aggravated by bathing in cold water; it has been known to cause death, but at the same time some people appear to be quite immune from the poison and suffer no bad results even after handling the tree when newly felled.

Another tree famous for its deadly poison is the *upas* tree. Two species are said to exist, the lesser and the greater. The former tree grows to a considerable size with a smooth whitish bark, and from its pink sap the natives prepare the poison with which they tip the arrows of their blow-pipes. The sap is mixed with shavings from the root of the *bina* tree, and the ingredients are allowed to simmer over a fire until a paste is formed; into this the arrow heads are dipped. The process needs considerable care, and the Murut expert is particular to wash his hands after he has done with the poison, the only time in his life, probably, that such an ablution ever appears necessary to him. The virulence of the poison depends a great deal on the length of time it has been exposed; when fresh it is very deadly; an *orang utan*, for instance, will have his first convulsions within two minutes of being hit. Fowls are said to be immune, and the poison has less effect upon dogs than upon any other animals. There are various antidotes. The Muruts often cut the wound and rub it with cucumber, a remedy which, if performed in time, is said to be efficacious; on the east coast *blachan*, a concoction of rotten shrimps, is used.

Upas trees are scarce, and though they have no commercial value natives are slow to inform Europeans of their whereabouts; long journeys may be made to individual trees; there are for instance two well-known *upas* on the Tengkayu River between Simporna and Lahad Datu, and natives come for miles to visit them. Even when dead the tree may not be felled, so great is the awe with which it is regarded. The greater *upas* is even more formidable, and the poison extracted from it, besides being able to inflict a mortal wound, has properties that savour of the blackest magic. According to accounts given to Captain Stewart Murray it is a handsome tree with black bark and dark curling leaves, and its properties are said to be so powerful that anyone even passing beneath its branches would be attacked by a severe illness did he not

hold a counter-charm; the possession of the poison is said to give the holder the power to cause fatal sickness by merely pointing it at the object of his dislike, and a small piece buried by a post of an enemy's house to cause certain death.

As may be imagined, the jungle has many other trees which are the objects of awe to the Oriental mind. The *mengaris* tree, against whose tall trunks the wild bees love to build their nests, is sacred to the Chinese, who have a profound objection to squaring its logs; the casuarina or *kayu aru*, which fringes every sandy beach, is held by the natives to attract lightning, and they will not use it for their houses. Even more dreaded is the mighty banyan, the sacred tree of India. This is hardly strange, for its very appearance is enough to inspire awe into a savage heart. It is a species of fig, but its fruit is not edible; it grows to an enormous size and from its branches throws down suckers which take root and grow until the tree seems to have a hundred trunks, whilst creepers hang from it like an old man's beard. No native cares to linger near its gloomy precincts, for the ghostly guardian of the tree will wreak vengeance upon him who dares to desecrate its dwelling-place. On Victoria Estate, near Kudat, a Javanese coolie once died suddenly from a mysterious contraction of the throat; he had been in the habit of collecting his sticks of firewood beneath the spreading boughs of the great banyan which grows below the coolie lines, and all his comrades swore that it was the banyan spirit's fingers which twined invisibly about the throat of the stricken man and strangled him to death.

No tree in all the jungle is the subject of so many superstitions as the Borneo camphor. This is a different species from the Formosan camphor laurel whence the ordinary camphor of commerce is obtained by boiling small chips of the wood. There are three or more species of Borneo camphor, the most important of which are the black and the red, so named from the colour of the bark, often having the true camphor deposits, the original camphor barus of the *Arabian Nights*. This product still fetches a price very much above that of the ordinary Japanese or Formosan article, being particularly esteemed by the Chinese, who use it for medicinal purposes. Up to the present time its collection has been exclusively in the hands of the natives,

chiefly Dyak hunters, who sell it to the Chinese traders, but the Tambunwha tribe, in whose country, about Paitan, the most extensive stands of camphor occur, sometimes use it for embalming their dead, very much in the manner of the ancient Egyptians.

Sometimes the camphor is found distributed through the grain of the wood in small white sugar-like crystals, when the method of collection is to fell the tree, split the wood up into splinters and scrape off the crystals; at other times it occurs occupying a single cell like a kidney, about the size of a man's forearm. In this case the tree, when felled, is cut into six-foot lengths and split until the prize is found. Nothing definite is known concerning the age at which the tree may develop the crystals, nor is there any outward sign to indicate that the camphor is within. Many trees yield oil but few the precious crystals, and the hunter may have to examine a hundred before he finds the treasure of his quest. The only method of discovery is for him to hew into the grain of the wood with his axe until near the heart and then to cut deeper with a chisel. If oil is present it gushes out and is caught in a bamboo, if crystals the tree is felled.

It is on account of this element of chance and uncertainty in the hunter's life that the collection of camphor has come to be as encrusted with superstitions as a rock with barnacles. In the old days it was believed that no tree would yield camphor unless an animal, or preferably a slave, had been sacrificed at its foot. Even in these more enlightened times there are many taboo which must be observed. Before setting out a party of hunters may neither beat gongs nor even listen to the sound of gongs in the village; they may not use oil before they go nor may they carry with them oil, mirrors or needles upon the journey. During the expedition bathing is forbidden, but the hunter may throw water over his body so long as he is careful not to rub it dry; each man cooks for himself and must abstain from certain kinds of food, eat a little earth and talk only the sacred camphor language; and *kapor*, the Malay word for camphor, may never be used nor may its equivalents in the native dialects. Nor is this all. When actually searching for the camphor tree perfect silence must be observed,

as a single word uttered may turn the crystals back to oil again or even render invisible the tree itself; so stringent was this rule of old that, according to native custom, its violation could be punished by a fine. It is customary to dedicate a share of the find to the camphor spirit, even as a schoolboy with a conscience leaves at least one egg in a rifled nest, and by this means it is hoped that the spirit will indicate in a dream the locality of the quested tree. When a tree has been cut and found to contain camphor, one span above the cut and one below the cut belongs by right to the finder; the remaining camphor extracted is divided into two equal shares, one of which is also the property of the finder; the other being divided equally among the party.

The camphor-tree is very abundant, growing to a great size, and is extensively used for building purposes, though in the past large quantities of the butt logs have been ruined by the chisels of the native hunters. Of the two species the black is usually found on hills distributed among other timbers, whereas the red more often exists in belts composed of little else, and in sandy soil. Unfortunately, although it attains a magnificent growth, this species is apt to be very unsound in the wood. Large quantities of the timber are exported, both sawn and in the log, but the superstitions concerning the tree are not confined to the native collectors, for according to Captain Murray, who has had long experience of Borneo timber-camps, the timber-cutting coolies always have a decided objection to handling a tree which contains crystalline camphor, believing that at this time it is inhabited by a jungle spirit who greatly resents the intruding hand of man and will put every obstacle in the way of the logs being removed. It is to be noted in this connection that the weight per cubic foot of camphor varies considerably, some logs floating easily, others sinking very decidedly, even in salt water.

A tree closely resembling camphor is *kruin*; there are some twenty varieties; none of these contains camphor oil, but all exude instead a gummy sap in great abundance when the tree is cut. Strangely enough, while the varieties of *kruin* differ greatly in appearance, ranging from rough-barked trees with small leaves to smooth-barked with leaves eighteen inches

long, the woods themselves closely resemble one another though they differ somewhat in weight. There has not been any great demand for this timber in the past, indeed it has not achieved the prominence it deserves, for, after *seraiah*, it is the most abundant wood in the country, besides giving clear lengths of eighty feet and diameters of four. It is suitable for all general construction work, cheap furniture and flooring planks, but cannot be used for posts as it quickly decays when placed in water or in the ground.

§ 4

On account of the territory's favourable position both for the Hong Kong and the Australian markets, North Borneo's vast resources of commercial timber attracted attention very soon after the Chartered Company was formed, and at the Adelaide Exhibition in 1888 a gold medal and a first-class diploma were awarded for the country's natural products. In the past, however, lack of capital and difficulties of transport have militated against the timber resources being developed on an extensive scale. For many years the export business was in the hands of the North Borneo Trading Company and the China Borneo Company, which had saw-mills at Sandakan, but the finances were not sufficient to exploit the vast reserves of timber in a comprehensive and up-to-date manner. Consequently scientific exploration to determine the possibilities of the forests was slow. In 1914, however, the Government took a step it might well have taken twenty years before, and instituted a Department of Forestry under Mr. D. M. Matthews, who had had long practical experience of similar administration in the Philippine Islands.[1] A systematic examination of the timber resources was begun; accurate surveys and topographical maps were prepared, detailed plans and estimates for the logging of the more attractive areas were drawn up. The result was to give any concern which chose to interest itself in Borneo timber some definite information upon which to base its calculations. The Government's foresight was well rewarded, and led to the formation of the British Borneo

[1] The present Director is Mr. D. D. Wood, to whom I am indebted for advice on several points.

Timber Company, which bought out the China Borneo Company and received from the Government a monopoly to cut timber for export throughout the State in return for a royalty of ¾*d*. on every cubic foot so exported. This transaction, the share in which Messrs. Harrisons and Crosfield and the Government took in it, and the wisdom of the Government in granting monopolies to private companies have been discussed in a previous chapter, and whatever public opinion may be on these points there is no question that there is now every chance for this important industry to flourish as it has never done before, especially as the time chosen for this development is one when the world's timber resources are low. The old obstacles are things of the past: the money is there, and the transport difficulties, as far as the China and Australian markets are concerned, have been overcome. Moreover, as Borneo timber comes into its own, it is likely that increased facilities will be found for shipping it to Europe.

At present Hong Kong is still the chief market, most of the timber being sent out in the form of logs. The Australian market is also mainly concerned with logs owing to a preferential duty against sawn material, designed to reserve for Australia herself the labour and profits of manufacturing the undressed timber. In 1920 the total amount of timber exported was 1,408,838 cubic feet, value £155,048. The chief export is *seraiah*, the most plentiful timber, but *belian* and camphor, which come next, are exported out of proportion to their abundance. In the future it is probable that the proportion of sawn timber exported will increase, as the new company has installed an up-to-date saw-mill in Sandakan. The company is also taking more up-to-date methods into the jungle. In the old days the mode of extracting the trees from the forest where they had been felled was by means of a skid road. A track was cut through the jungle from the nearest river and wooden skids laid down like sleepers at intervals of eighteen inches, gullies and ravines being spanned by two stout poles supported in the middle with the skids notched into them. The logs, having been levered on to a *kuda* made of two *belian* planks connected by stout cross-pieces, were securely tied; the coolies attached themselves by cord or creeper nooses to the *kuda*, which was

well greased with tallow underneath. A man behind with a turnspike started the log upon its travels and the coolies pulled it out of the forest to the river, where it subsequently formed part of a raft and was floated to the mill. As the timber got farther from the rivers light railways were laid down as central lines and the logs were skidded to them.

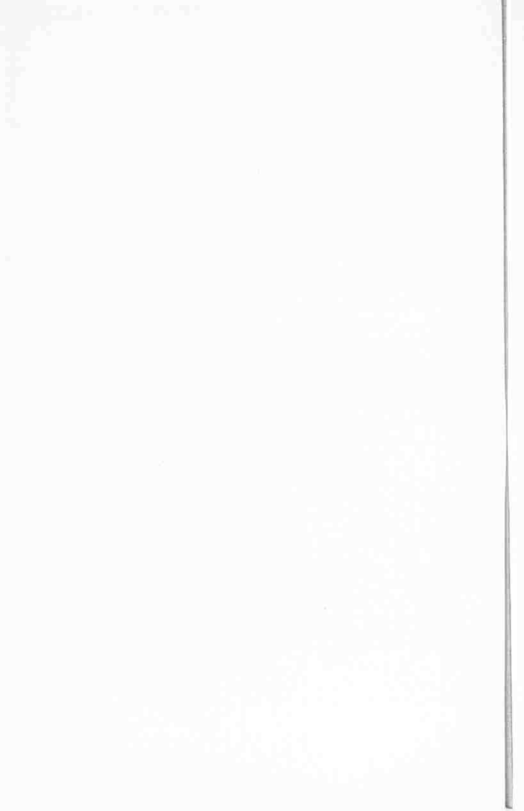
These rough-and ready methods were slow and involved a great deal of labour. By means of up-to-date American appliances a donkey-engine with wire cables draws all the logs that are felled within a radius of 400 yards to a central position where they are trucked and brought to the river. By this power haulage, however, all trees whether ripe or not are removed, and it may be feared whether natural regeneration will take place in as satisfactory a manner as under the old conditions when only small patches were cleared and the parent trees were given an opportunity of natural reproduction. Inspection of areas treated in this manner some years ago has shown that the crop of growing trees is not only as good but even better than those in the original jungle, and the results were as might have been expected had the area been in charge of skilled foresters. Under the new methods some systematic scheme of afforestation will in time be necessary. This is admittedly looking well into the future, for at present there is no fear, so great is their abundance, of the Borneo forests being extinguished. Dr. Foxworthy, for example, referring to an area of 176,006 acres examined on the east coast, states, "It would be possible to remove from the area of forest studied, each year three times as much timber as has ever been exported from the country in any one year and to do so indefinitely without danger of exhausting the forest of that section."[1] For several years to come timber will only be removed from areas that are really agricultural. There is a danger that this land will be reduced in value by forest fires which will take place among the debris and allow the coarse *lalang* grass to obtain a foothold. That may be inevitable, but when cutting on the mountain forests begins, then afforestation will be a problem calling for serious consideration.

[1] "Timbers of British North Borneo," *Bulletin* No. 1, p. 5.

Photo. *Man Sing*

TIMBER RAFTS.

[*To face p. 236.*



§ 5

Mention has been made of the *tengah* and *bakau* trees that fringe the vast swamps of the coast, especially from Marudu Bay to Tawau, with deep belts up the tidal rivers. Besides being valuable for firewood their bark is used for the manufacture of cutch, the only product of the jungle, besides timber, that is worked by European enterprise. The cutch industry first attracted attention in 1892 when the Bakau Syndicate began operations in Sandakan; later a second concern was started with a mill at Mempakad in Marudu Bay. This company got into deep water and was eventually taken over by the Bakau Syndicate, but the mill has been closed owing to scarcity of the bark, the exhaustion of which is always a bogy to a cutch company. The bark is bought from the natives at contract prices, and is reduced to small pieces in breaking machines; it is then treated with hot water in large tanks called extractors, and passes into settling vats where it is concentrated by a secret process into a solid form by means of a vacuum evaporator. Both *tengah* and *bakau* barks contain high percentages of tannin, but *tengah* is the more valuable as it contains more red colouring; three tons of bark moreover produce a ton of cutch as against four tons in the case of *bakau*.[1] The cutch industry had a fillip during the war, when the cheap German alkaline dyes which had previously been able to compete successfully with it went off the market and the demand for cutch dyes was renewed. On the east coast there is no prospect of any serious bark-shortage for many years to come; the industry is firmly established and is likely to have a prosperous future.

Another denizen of the swamps is the *nipah* palm whose leaves, like those of the sago-tree, are used for roofing-material and also in the manufacture of mats and of wrappers for native cigarettes; from the roots salt is made by the Bajaus, whilst from the sap of the flowers' stalks sugar and alcohol can be obtained. This production has never been taken up on a commercial scale in North Borneo, but the *nipah* is found

[1] F. W. Foxworthy's and D. M. Matthews' "Mangrove and Nipa Swamps of North Borneo," *Bulletin* No. 3, Dept. of Forestry.

extending over such vast areas, especially on the east coast, that the supply would be sufficient for a very large industry.[1] In the neighbourhood of the *nipah* is found the spiky *nibong* palm whose stems, split and unsplit, go to the building of many a Dusun or a Bajau house, while even more valuable to the native is the bamboo, found in great clumps throughout the country and particularly abundant upon the banks of rivers. The bamboo, which Wallace called "one of nature's most valuable gifts to uncivilized man," has a thousand uses; in some parts of the country houses are built of little else, and it furnishes material for rafts, fences, water-vessels, pipes, blow-pipe darts, dart cases and household utensils of every kind.

Besides these boons, so necessary to the very existence of the native, the jungles also afford a livelihood to thousands of the up-country population, for they contain many treasures that are the rightful spoil of those who come and take them. Most important of these are the climbing canes or palms known as rattan; there are many varieties, eight of which in North Borneo have a commercial value, the best being the *rotan sagar*, which is even planted by the natives in some districts. The collection of rattan is entirely in the hands of the natives, the buying trade in those of the Chinese. The canes grow wild wherever there is dense forest, clinging to the trunks of giant trees and sometimes attaining a length of two hundred yards. They can be collected all the year round; the process of cutting and preparing presents no difficulty and involves little labour. The canes are laid out in the sun to bleach for four days, then bent and bound up in lengths of from twelve to eighteen feet; in these bundles they are then either carried, made into rafts, or taken by boat to the local market. Good rattan should bend easily without splitting or cracking; it should be bright yellow in colour and fine of grain, with a good length between the knots. In 1920 833 tons, value £11,397, were exported from the State, but rattan also commands a large local market; it has innumerable uses both for the natives, Chinese and Europeans; no *atap* roof can be put

[1] "Mangrove and Nipa Swamps of North Borneo," *Bulletin* No. 3, p. 18 *et seq.*, where the possibilities of the palm are reviewed in detail.

on without it; it is used for baskets, for making furniture, and in North Borneo is the universal substitute for string.

Another valuable product of the jungle is *damar*, namely gum or resin extracted from various trees, particularly from those whose native name begins with *salang*—for example *salangan batu*. The collecting natives usually dig the *damar* out of the ground at the base of the tree in a hard state, or collect it from the hollow of decayed trunks; it is then put into baskets of split bamboo and brought down to the Chinese shops. The product is chiefly used in the manufacture of varnish, and in normal times commands a good price, especially the variety known locally as *mata kuching*. In 1920 1,873 tons, value £18,145, were exported.

A jungle product whose collection has fallen off in recent years is gutta-percha. This is obtained from the trees of the *sapotaceæ* family, the sap of which when dry forms the gutta-percha of commerce. The native method of collecting is as wasteful as were the old methods of extracting para rubber, for the tree is felled and therefore gives but one yield. Only trees over six inches in diameter are worth working. Having felled the tree the collector rings the bark at intervals and catches the latex as it flows out by means of bamboo cups placed below each cut. The finest collecting-ground in the country is the neighbourhood of the Kinabatangan River, but a considerable quantity also comes from the Padas. The property which distinguishes gutta-percha from rubber is "its capability of becoming soft and plastic on immersion in hot water, and retaining any shape then given it on cooling; when it again becomes hard but not brittle. Rubbers on the other hand do not soften in hot water and retain their original elasticity."[1] Jungle rubber, of which there are several varieties, although not so valuable as the plantation product, is mixed with it for industrial purposes. It is collected from a number of jungle trees and vines by the natives, who use salt to coagulate it and then pack it into balls. These, which have the appearance of very dirty snowballs, usually give off an overpowering smell. In 1920 the amount of gutta-percha and rubber exported

[1] C. Curtis, *Agricultural Bulletin of Federated Malay States and Straits Settlements*, 1920, p. 220.

from the State was 69 tons, value £3,672, and 900 lb., value £95, respectively.

At the present time several important items of jungle produce in North Borneo seem to be in danger of becoming worked out. This is a serious matter, particularly in the case of rattan, which is becoming harder and harder to obtain; there are admittedly many difficulties in the way of restricting collection, but the adoption of a "close season" for jungle products, a restriction that has been made occasionally in the past, might have a good effect, and once the native collector understood the reason he would the more readily acquiesce, for at the present time he has to go farther and farther afield for jungle produce of any kind.

In addition to what may be called the vegetable products of the jungles there are the animal products, such as armadillo-skins, ivory, rhinoceros-horn, argus-pheasant feathers and skins of various kinds. All these are collected by the natives and are of comparatively small importance. Far otherwise, however, are the edible birds'-nests which are found in the great limestone caves of North Borneo. The chief caves are at Gomanton on the Kinabatangan River, at Madai in Darvel Bay and on the Mantanani Islands which lie off the north-west coast; the Gomanton caves surpass the others in size and grandeur; they consist of two enormous chambers, Simud Puteh and Simud Hitam, with nineteen smaller caverns leading off them, and they have large deposits of guano as much as fifty feet deep. The nests are built by a species of swift, and are found adhering to the limestone sides often several hundred feet from the ground. The natives believe that the material used by the birds is sea-foam, but the generally accepted theory is that the nests are formed from a glutinous substance produced from an abnormally developed gland of the birds themselves. There are two distinct varieties of nest, the white and the black, said to be made by two different species of bird. The white nests are clean and semi-transparent, while the black are discoloured and often intermixed with feathers; the black nests always predominate, and are usually ten times as numerous as the white, but on the other hand the white variety fetch from ten to fifteen times as much as the black.

The nests are collected at fixed periods by families who claim hereditary rights to the caves. At Gomanton the white nests are collected in March and June, the black in April and August, and in order to preserve the species the second collection does not take place until the young birds have flown. The collection is a perilous business and can only be undertaken by skilled men. A bamboo or rattan staging is stretched across the roof of the cave from which ladders made of the strongest rattan, often as much as 600 feet in length, are let down. The collector descends from above carrying a four-pronged spear about eighteen feet long with a candle attached below the head. By this means the nest is transfixed and detached from the rock, while a second man removes it from the spear, placing it in a basket. At Gomanton the collection of the white nests takes a week to ten days, of the black a month.

When all the nests have been secured they are taken to the nearest town or Government station and sold by auction under the auspices of the Government. The buying trade is entirely in the hands of the Chinese, as the only use the nests have is for making the rather sickly soup so dear to the Celestial palate. The Government derives a large revenue from the sale of birds'-nests, for in 1920 the total value exported was £25,985, and of this Government receives a half-share, the hereditary owners receiving the other half, though, if the amount realized exceeds a certain sum the proportion is three-quarters of the excess to the owners and one-quarter to the Government.[1] The native owners thoroughly understand their business and have enough foresight not to let the birds die out, but at the same time there seems no reason why the quantity of the nests could not be increased and their quality improved if the habits and needs of the birds were studied scientifically.

Another jungle industry which might be improved, though not on such extensive lines, is the collection of beeswax. The Chinese trader is always prepared to pay a good price for beeswax, but it must be considered a jungle product, for it is only in a few districts (such as Tuaran) that bees are kept ; as a

[1] In some cases the proportion is one-third to the owners, one-third to the collectors, and one-third to the Government.

rule they are allowed to swarm in the forest uncontrolled. Occasionally they invade a European bungalow, when, as the native servants consider it unlucky to turn them away, their presence has to be endured, but usually they swarm in the tall *mengaris* trees, which rise to a great height before sending out a branch. The nests are made on the underside of the branches and the collector reaches them by making a ladder of wooden pegs up the trunk of the tree. It is a hazardous and unpleasant business. Mr. R. K. Hardwick, probably the only European who has ever been sufficiently reckless to attempt it, has allowed me to quote the following account of his adventure from a diary made several years ago : " Having completed all the necessary arrangements we selected a tree with several nests and I proceeded to make the ascent. It is most advisable to go up stark-naked, because if you wear clothes the bees in thousands work their way in and may sting so seriously as to cause you to lose your hold in trying to beat them off, and a drop means certain death. You make your ladder as you go up by hammering in a sharpened wooden peg a foot over your head, connecting this with the one on which you are standing with a rattan, mount again, drive a new peg in and so on ; thus you gradually mount your way up step by step. Having arrived at the top, about 120 feet from the ground, I straddled the first branch in which was a large nest and sent down the rattan which had been attached to my waist. The idea is for the men below to send up in a basket torches made of resin, matches, etc., so that on arrival at the bees' nest you brush its huge sides with flaming torches in each hand, thereby causing the sleepy bees inside to come out and drop. This is the only practical way adopted by natives, and if any collect and sting one must bear them with utmost fortitude and never attempt to brush them off because this would probably result in dropping. In my case I suppose thousands of bees followed out this theory by falling in a sleepy state to the ground, but from the innumerable stings I received on my naked body I should gather that most of the swarm found and settled on me. Frantically I worked, yelling loudly with the pain and receiving shouts of consternation and warnings from my men not to care but to hold on. The number of

stings eventually produced a sort of anæsthesia and I became indifferent to them. Breaking off huge lumps of the nest I filled the basket, lowered it and filled it several times again until the whole comb was finished. Having had more than enough by now and being dreadfully swollen and almost fainting I returned; the descent was deadlier than the ascent. Never have I felt such relief as I did when my feet touched terra firma. I now found that my men had had a very rough time from millions of fire-ants, which had collected and were eating the young bees. The ants gave excruciating pain and they are well named. My Dyaks were loath to leave the nest, so Dana, my head tracker, went up, completed what I had left and received about the same punishment. It gave me no small satisfaction to hear him yelling and calling upon various gods to help him up there in the inky blackness. We eventually returned to our camp with about 60 lb. of honey-comb, but I had to lie in my jungle hut for three days, being quite unable to move owing to my swollen condition."

Comb-hunting in all conscience is a precarious and eerie business and it sometimes has eerie results. One night on a newly opened rubber estate there was a tremendous commotion in one of the Chinese coolie lines—the place was haunted, the coolies said; it must be, there were lights moving in the trees. Sure enough the manager looked up and saw, high up among the branches of a dimly outlined jungle tree, a bright light moving uncertainly to and fro. The Chinese gibbered with terror and the manager, who was new to the country, being unable to think of anything better to do, shouted at the light. Then through the darkness came a voice, faint and far away but wholly conciliatory, "*Tidak, Tuan, chari ayer madu sajha*" —"It is nothing, master, I do but search for honey."

Such is the jungle of North Borneo. To many it will always be the most attractive part of the country with its mysterious sounds, its strange sudden crashings, its unforgettable scent in the early dawn, its virginity and utter loneliness. Within its shadowy confines a traveller playing at make-believe might well imagine that he had been transported back to the beginning of the world, for in spite of its eternal birth and dying the primeval forest does not change with the centuries. Year

after year a little of its domain is wrested from it by the hand of man, yet so vast is its expanse that in our time North Borneo will not cease to be a jungle land for—if one may misquote so great a poem as the *Light of Asia*—

> Tree after tree will fall—but there must be
> Tree upon tree behind.

CHAPTER IX

AGRICULTURE

IN the past, European capital has been attracted to North Borneo mainly on account of the country's agricultural possibilities. The most important planting industry in the State to-day is the cultivation of rubber (*hevea braziliensis*); in fact, as already mentioned, the rubber boom of 1909 was instrumental in pulling the Chartered Company out of very deep water.

Even then rubber was not entirely new to the country. As far back as 1882, rubber plants had been imported from the Singapore Botanical Gardens, but there was no serious planting until 1892 when the Mortgage Investment and Contract Corporation Ltd. started operations on the Labuk River and planted seventy-five acres; in 1900 Ceylon seeds were planted at Tenom by the Government and the trees were tapped five years later by Mr. F. E. Lease, about the same time that the first tree was tapped on Sekong Estate. It was then proved beyond doubt that plantation rubber was a sound enterprise in North Borneo. The industry did not advance by leaps and bounds, but between 1905 and 1910 fifteen companies started operations. At the present time there are twenty-three rubber companies operating with a capital of three and a half million pounds. At the end of 1920, 53,000 acres were under cultivation, 25,500 of which were in tapping, while the total rubber exported was 4,105 tons, value £689,403. The Chinese and, in some districts such as Province Clarke, the natives have taken up the cultivation of rubber, and as they can bring their gardens into bearing very cheaply their returns in normal times are good.

In North Borneo new concessions are either under virgin or

secondary jungle and the preliminary work of clearing the land is usually given out to native contractors who thoroughly understand it. There is only one sight more inspiring than a great jungle giant crashing to the ground, and that is a block of jungle burning when it has been felled and stacked. The day for the fire is a most momentous question, for a good clean burn will save the planter thousands and a bad one will leave the estate strewn with useless timber. A burn on a fine day is well worth waiting for. The coolies are in the highest spirits, whooping with glee as they see the long tongues of fire leaping up, crimson as tulips; soon the whole hill-side is ablaze, rising and falling, a sea of flame. The smoke, curling heaven-high, veils the rising sun and makes it glow a rich dull red as in London on a foggy November morning; every now and then there is a series of reports, like a case of ammunition exploding, as a clump of bamboo is caught. The golden tangle runs up the slopes and down the gulleys taking logs, leaves and branches in its stride until at last it comes to a halt in a straight line along a wide cleared belt, like a battalion forming mass on markers. When it is over, which may not be for many days, it leaves behind nothing but a black expanse of smouldering logs and flaky ashes, with here and there the corpses of a few stricken worms. The planter surveys the scene and feels content, for all has gone according to plan; he has tamed the untameable.

All that remains is to collect the fragments left over (so to speak) from the fire's meal, stack them and burn them again, often a long business. Roots have to be extracted, the ground dug over and drains put in, and before any planting can be done the whole block has to be securely fenced. This is an expensive item nowadays, but a fence unless very strong and sufficiently high is useless. Young rubber is a succulent dainty to most animals; cattle and buffaloes are very partial to it; deer and honey-bears love it; pigs come and root about in it; even ponies will make a hearty meal of it, whilst monkeys are even more troublesome, particularly if the planted area adjoins heavy jungle, for they descend and pull up stumps or seedlings out of pure devilment. No fence will keep them out, and the only thing is to shoot them. An estate where a

large sum had been laid out in a six-foot barbed-wire fence was once suddenly raided by hordes of monkeys. The damage they did was considerable and the bill for ammunition used in dispersing them was in proportion. It was passed through the accounts, and the Board of Directors wrote from London no little exercised in their minds to know why, when so much had been spent already on the fence, it could not have been raised eighteen inches, thereby obviating the expenditure on ammunition.

While the land is being drained and fenced lining is started, a peg being put in where each hole is to be. On flat land these lines are straight, but on hills there are now many advocates of contour planting, the lines running at dead level along the slopes. The advantage of this method is that these lines can be terraced easily later on, thereby preventing the wasting away of the surface soil.

Experts will never agree as to the best distance to plant rubber; nowadays planting as close as fifteen feet by fifteen is advocated to allow for thinning out poor yielders, since it has been proved indisputably that something like fifteen per cent of the trees give seventy-five per cent of the rubber, so greatly does the yielding capacity vary. As soon as the block is lined the holes (cubes of two feet or more) are dug. These are left to "air" for a fortnight and are then filled in, not with the soil that was removed but with fresh surface soil, which is much richer in organic matter.

Planting itself can be done with stumps (nursery plants six months to a year old with the tops and roots cut back), young seedlings, seed at stake, or basket seeds. It is generally acknowledged that the last method is the best. As soon as the seed germinates in its nursery (this takes place within ten days) it is placed into a small palm-leaf basket filled with earth; it is kept under shade and watered daily until in a fortnight it is ready to be planted out, basket and all. In this way the tender plant receives no set-back, and, when once in its hole, the basket rots quickly, giving the roots room to spread. A number of basket seedlings are kept in reserve to fill up vacancies, and by this means uniform growth is assured. Stumps, given good weather, start shooting within a month,

but basket seeds soon catch them up in growth. Seed at stake, that is planting the seed itself into the hole, is the most economical method if the planter has luck, but before it can establish itself the young plant has many enemies in the shape of mice and ants which nip the tender shoots. A more even growth can be obtained with basket seeds, and only the most healthy plants need be chosen from the nursery.

Planting seasons vary throughout the country, but usually September is the most favourable. Such definite rainy season as North Borneo has is then beginning, and if planted at that time the young seedlings are fairly certain of rain for several months. At this stage a drought is naturally fatal.

Once planted there comes the long wait of five years before the trees can be tapped. In these years there is much to do. As a rule permanent buildings and roads are left until a considerable area has been brought under cultivation; the planted part of the estate has to be kept clean. It is necessary to eradicate the coarse *lalang* grass which, with its sharp poisonous roots, is one of the planter's curses. The surest method of destroying it is to dig it out and burn the roots. Two diggings, or three at the most, will see the last of it, but these should follow each other within a month, or the weed will regain its vitality and come on as thick as ever. This is expensive, and the small owner often has recourse to planting a crop of potatoes, ground-nuts or tapioca which help to keep down the *lalang* and at the same time bring in a little grist to the mill.

There are many methods of tapping, but the single cut on a quarter of the trunk (known as the "half herring-bone") is usually adopted as being the most economical in the long run and as giving the tree the best chance to renew its bark, without which rubber comes to an end. During the slump of 1921 most estates adopted the system of tapping the trees alternate days to restrict output and reduce expenses. Each coolie has a definite number of trees to tap, varying from three hundred on a hilly estate like Lok Kawi to five hundred on flat land such as Langkon. Latex flows best in the early morning, and the tappers are out in their fields by the time it is getting light. A few strokes of the curved tapping-knife makes the latex ooze out into its groove and trickle down into the cup, the

whitest thing in the world. At about ten the coolie goes round with his buckets, pours in the contents of each cup and takes his latex to the factory. Here it is poured into large pans or sinks and is coagulated by means of acetic acid, dividing slips being inserted so that each section forms a sheet of rubber. Early next morning the latex, which has by then turned into pure white rubber, is put through the rollers and made into sheet or crêpe; nothing is wasted, even the cup washings, the scraps of bark, and the drops of latex that fall at the foot of the tree are all turned into one marketable form of rubber or another, and hung up to dry in a great smoke-house. Gradually the pure white turns dark, gradually it becomes more and more opaque until at the end of a fortnight it is taken out as the finished article, No. 1 smoked sheet, a glorious deep amber and flawless as a topaz. Here the planter's work ends, save for packing his rubber into cases and shipping to his market in Singapore or London.

§ 2

The slump of 1921 hit plantation rubber very hard and it will be interesting to see, in future years, whether the industry will hold its place or whether it will give way to some new form of cultivation, just as coffee did in Ceylon and tobacco in North Borneo.

Tobacco in the eighties played an even more important part in the destinies of the country than rubber has in later years. Until ousted by rubber it was the country's foremost planting industry, and the suitability of the soil for the cultivation of the "wrapper leaf" was what first turned the planters' attention to North Borneo.

A company began operations as early as 1883, an Englishman named Gibson being the pioneer. The first crop went home in 1885, by which time the soil had been proved to be as suitable for tobacco as that of Sumatra; glowing accounts were circulated, and very soon estates on Banggi Island and in Marudu and Darvel Bays were started. These enterprises were followed by many concessions ranging from ten to forty thousand acres. The land was sold at a dollar an acre; company after company was floated, often by speculators who

took an option on the land as a gamble. Gradually all the available tobacco land became taken up, and in 1888 came a small boom which lasted until nearly seventy companies had acquired land with a total of over 600,000 acres, forty being in the Sandakan Residency alone. Most of these were Dutch; some were floated in London, some in Holland, others in Sumatra or Hong Kong. As inevitably happens in any boom of this description many people got stung. Some concessions were never planted up at all, others were under-capitalized and failed through not having enough money. The labour mortality was very high and coolies in the new clearings died in hundreds. Tobacco planting is a gamble at the best of times, and if a company does not possess sufficient capital to make more than one stake the chances are against its winning. In good years the profits may be enormous, but there must be something in hand for the bad years that are bound to come. It was a survival of the fittest, and the best-organized concerns carried on and flourished; such were the New London Borneo Tobacco Company, which was inaugurated by Count Geloes d'Elsoo, and the New Darvel Bay Company. Even the estates which established themselves had their ups and downs. The McKinley tariff, which gave preferential privileges to American-grown tobacco, together with frequent years of drought, hit the industry hard. At one time it looked as though even the New London Borneo Tobacco Company would have to close down, but Count Geloes appeared himself at a meeting of the shareholders and, in a dramatic speech, told them that he had just sold his coffee estate in Java for £60,000 and that he was prepared to put every penny of that sum into the company if they would follow suit. His words met with the response they merited; the company weathered the storm and made some record profits. To-day it is one of the three tobacco companies operating in the State, the other two being New Darvel Bay Company at Lahad Datu and the Batu Puteh Tobacco Company on the Kinabatangan. In 1920 the total tobacco crop was 729 tons, valued at £191,169.

Only wrapper leaf (the most expensive part of the cigar) is grown commercially in the Chartered Company's territory. North Borneo and the Deli plain in East Sumatra are the two

Photo. *Y. Fuji.*

YOUNG TOBACCO PLANTS.

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favoured spots in Asia where the particular species of tobacco plant required will grow to perfection. Wrapper tobacco must have special qualities that are found in no other leaf: it must be silky in appearance and neutral in aroma, for if strongly flavoured it will not blend with the commoner tobacco that forms the inside of the cigar; the ideal wrapper is almost flavourless and can be smoked with any other leaf; it must be strong in texture, but the thinner it is the better.

Tobacco cultivation is undoubtedly the most scientific form of planting in the East. Rubber and coconuts up to a certain point are fool-proof, tobacco never will be, though chance, that is the chance of the right rain at the right moment—the essential of success—really plays a greater part than any head manager, however celebrated he may be.

The organization of a tobacco estate is like nothing else. It is the perfection of planting administration. Each coolie has a field of one and two-thirds acres; this is given him to cultivate and bring into bearing; he gets no wages, only obtaining advances of money for food and tools. At the end of the planting year his crop is bought from him, and so he is paid entirely on results. He breaks up the ground of his field, digging it over a foot deep. He makes his own nursery, which is covered with a shady framework of sticks and grass; in March he sows his seeds, mixing them with wood ashes and watering them morning and evening. After six days the seed germinates. When the plants are large enough they are set out, eighteen inches to two feet apart, in rows three feet distant. Here the coolie has to be watched or he will ruin his crop by planting too closely, for quantity can only be obtained at the expense of quality. The young plant grows rapidly to a height of six feet, but it needs as much care as a baby. It has many enemies, the chief of which is a green caterpillar, similar to that of the English cabbage butterfly; these "worms," as they are called, are picked off every day, native children usually being employed. It is most important that none should be left, for the smallest hole detracts from the market-value of the leaf. As the trees begin to reach maturity (about six weeks after transplanting) the leaves, of which there are thirty or more on each tree, begin to pucker and yellowish

patches appear. As soon as they are ripe they are picked and sewn on strings of bark fibre, about forty to a string, great care being taken not to bruise or break them. They are then hung on light frames and are received and paid for by an assistant. The leaves are hung up for eighteen to twenty-five days in the great *atap* drying-sheds, of which there is one to every ten fields. Then is the time that a coolie with a grievance against the estate settles it to his satisfaction by the simple expedient of setting fire to the shed. There is little or no chance of saving it, and several thousand dollars' worth of tobacco may be destroyed in five minutes. It is of course insured, so that the insurance company really gets the benefit of the coolie's spite, but he does not know that and he usually hands himself over to the police next day quite content, now that he is avenged, to do a couple of years in gaol.

When dry, bundles of about twenty leaves are packed in large open-work rattan baskets lined with matting and are carted to the fermenting-shed, an enormous building with a raised central platform. Here the bundles are piled in regular layers until they form huge square or oblong stacks. A bamboo tube is built into the stack at intervals in order that the temperature can be ascertained with a thermometer, the time for complete fermentation varying from six days to a month according to the size of the stack and the condition of the tobacco. Then comes the final sorting of the leaves, a lengthy and tedious business. There are six recognized qualities of leaf; that growing nearest to the ground being the most valuable. Each quality is subdivided into colours, and each colour is measured in four different lengths. The sorting is done on a long low platform which runs round the sides of the fermenting-shed. Every coolie has a number of wooden pins planted round him in a semicircle dividing the various colours of leaf, and the work is so intricate that it can only be entrusted to the most experienced coolies under close supervision, for it needs as keen an eye to detect the slight differences in shade as it does to pass the colour-test into the Royal Navy. Once the sorted bundles are accepted they are pressed into square mat bales weighing 177 lb., sewn up, marked with the name of the estate and with letters indicating the quality of the

Photo. *Y. Fuji.*

THE FERMENTING-SHED, RANAU ESTATE.

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tobacco. Then nothing more remains but to ship the precious crop to London or Amsterdam.

For the planting the best Chinese coolies are used; they understand the work and the system appeals to them as it never could to a native. The weaker or lazier Chinese are used for weeding, making drains and roads; the Javanese for building work; Javanese women are particularly useful in the fermenting-shed. On a large tobacco estate everything down to the length of a building is done to rule, and the essence of the system is that it is on a profit-sharing basis from the head manager downwards; even assistants get paid small salaries and rely upon their crop commissions. Sometimes large sums are made, sometimes there is nothing to share.

The cultivation of tobacco is not entirely in European hands, for a species of the plant is grown extensively by the Kwijaus and by the hill Dusuns in the districts of Tambunan, Ranau, the upper Labuk and North Keppel. When possible it is planted on virgin soil, though sometimes the same land is used for three years in succession; no ploughing or manuring is done. The inevitable caterpillars are kept down by the women and children who, assisted by the men, also pick the crop. The Dusuns do not understand the narcotic principle of tobacco, and the only fermenting that is done is by piling the leaves into heaps and covering them with banana fronds until they turn brown. The tobacco is then cut up, dried in the sun, packed in small bundles and carried down to the coast where it is sold to the Chinese traders. In 1920 the amount exported was 40½ tons, value £9,207. The North Keppel tobacco is not of such good quality as that produced in the Interior proper, even though the plants are obtained from Ranau. Natives say that this is on account of the sea wind, and experts declare that even the best tobacco is affected when brought down to the coast. Nevertheless, compared with the patience, time and outlay involved by a European estate (all of which frequently culminate in a total loss) the results achieved by the Dusuns with their rough-and-ready ways are little short of marvellous, and if they could be taught more scientific methods the native tobacco industry would have great possibilities.

§ 3

Unlike Para rubber and wrapper-leaf tobacco, the coconut is not an alien plant and North Borneo is its native land. When it is considered how safe an investment coconuts are, it is surprising that they should have been so long in gaining recognition. Even to-day there is only one European coconut company operating in the State. Of late years, however, the Japanese have taken up a large area at Tawau, and Chinese have small blocks ranging from ten to one hundred acres all over the country, while there are a number of privately owned European estates, particularly in the Kudat Residency. In 1914 there were 11,700 acres under coconut cultivation; this figure had risen to 22,570 at the end of 1918 and to 28,700 at the end of 1920, 1,020 tons of copra, value £41,002, having been exported. The soil and climate of the east coast and Marudu Bay are as favourable for coconuts as any in the world; on Mr. C. L. P. Meterlekamp's estate on the Bengkoka River trees have come into bearing in four years, and those of five have had as many as two hundred nuts on them. This is exceptional, but given good soil and a well-distributed rainfall the same results could be obtained with systematic and efficient cultivation. Coconuts are usually planted 30 by 30 feet in a two-foot or three-foot cube. The greatest care should be taken to select seed-nuts from high-yielding trees only and these should be in full bearing, that is to say at least fifteen years old. The seed-nuts are placed in a nursery until they have sprouted well and are then planted out in the fields. While growing, the more carefully the tree is looked after the better will it repay its owner and the sooner will it bear fruit. Green when young, the nuts when ripe turn the tint of autumn leaves, and cluster in bunches about the crown, beneath the slender leaves that sway to and fro in the wind, graceful as dancers; they will fall of their own accord but are usually collected by means of a curved knife fastened to a long bamboo pole, with which they are yanked to the ground. The work needs experience to bring down the ripe fruit only, and agility to dodge half a dozen nuts falling like thunderbolts from aloft. When trees grow too tall to be reached

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

A COCONUT ESTATE.

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PROPERTY OF
NOT TO BE
TAKEN AWAY
THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR MALAYSIA

easily with the knife it is necessary for the coolies to climb up the trunks, but this is a much slower business. The gathered nuts are taken to the drying-ground or smoke-house. The most usual method of making copra in North Borneo is the old-fashioned one of sun-drying, simple in dry seasons but very difficult in wet. The nuts are split in two with axes; the two halves are then opened out to expose the copra—the white meat inside the nut—and are left to dry in the sun. The heat makes the copra shrink as it dries and next day it is scooped out with a kind of bent chisel; one man can deal with about three hundred nuts a day, but it is work that can very well be performed by women and boys. The copra is laid out to dry on sacks or sheets of corrugated iron and, under a hot sun, will be ready for the market in four days. In wet weather it may take any time. When dry the pure white turns to a pearly grey and cracks sharply if bent in the hand. It is then packed up in sacks and either sold in the local market or dispatched to Singapore. With a smoke house the difficulty of preparing copra is lessened, for the split nuts are placed upon racks or trays and dried by means of artificial heat.

There is no tree more grateful for money spent on it than the coconut, and it always pays its debt with interest. A coconut estate over seven years old should bring in an annual income of at least £10 an acre net; local owners have always been hit by the freight, but an oil-mill has started operations in Jesselton, so that owners should be able to command a better price for their produce in the country. It is, however, a great drawback in North Borneo that only the actual copra is marketable: there is no machinery to work the valuable fibre of the husk. To the native every part of the tree has a value, for nature seems to have designed it specially to meet the needs of the dweller in hot countries east of Suez. It has as many good points as are claimed for a patent medicine, and it is said to have three hundred and sixty uses. When plaited its leaves make mats and baskets of every kind; from the husk comes the coir for the making of ropes; the shell makes a convenient drinking-cup and the heart a delightful vegetable or pickle. The meat can be eaten raw, stewed, boiled or grated; the oil itself has a hundred uses, especially for dressing ladies'

hair, and it is even said to be a remedy for toothache; sugar and alcohol can be produced from the spathe before it flowers, yet, for all this, the native cannot be said to cultivate coconuts. Trees are always to be found in the neighbourhood of villages, but the prolific crop which they sometimes yield is due more to the fortuitous manure they receive than to any deliberate cultivation on the owner's part. It is very rarely that copra is made, even though it finds a ready market with the Chinese, and in consequence the neglected trees become infested with beetles and overrun with squirrels, although the Government has travelling coconut-inspectors whose duty it is to order any badly diseased tree to be cut down, and to teach the natives to care for their trees themselves.

Recently the dwarf coconut has been receiving some attention. This bears in four years, but as the nuts, though in some cases more numerous, give less copra than the true coconut it is doubtful whether it would prove more profitable, especially as the fruit is only a few feet from the ground, for no coconut-tree can be regarded as a source of revenue while its nuts are within easy reach of human hand.

Another rival to the true coconut is the African oil-palm. This palm was introduced into North Borneo as far back as 1883 and the climate suits it; conditions favourable to the coconut are favourable to the oil-palm also, whilst the latter has the advantage over the former in that it should come into bearing twelve months sooner. At the time of writing there is nothing but a few stray trees in the country, but the palm is attracting considerable interest, and the Chartered Company, while offering attractive terms for its cultivation, is planting up experimental areas itself.

§ 4

It is strange how many forms of tropical cultivation seem to have their day and to pass. One such is Liberian coffee, which was one of the early hopes of North Borneo. The tree was first introduced into Ceylon and then came to the Straits and Borneo. The first area to be planted was Victoria Estate near Kudat, opened by a Mr. Christian in the early eighties, and several companies followed suit though without con-

Photo. D. J. Rutter.

BAJAU BOY EXTRACTING COPRA.

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spicuous success. To-day coffee is in the hands of the small owner, European or Chinese, though several rubber estates have a few hundred trees. As a product on a large scale it has been jostled out of existence. It is difficult to see why, since both the Liberian variety and coffee *robusta* do well and give quick returns, for two years after planting will see the first crop.

The coffee-tree is short and bushy (unless allowed to straggle), no more than six or seven feet high, usually planted in rows fifteen or eighteen feet apart; its little white flower has the sweetest and most delicate of scents, and the fruit when ripe is the colour of rosy cherries and about the same size, but elongated like a rugby football. Coffee *robusta*, which comes into bearing sooner, is smaller and quite round.

The picking and preparation of coffee can be done by women and small boys. The fruit is brought in and placed to soak for a night in jars full of water. Next morning it is put through the pulper, an arrangement not unlike a primitive instrument of torture, consisting mainly of a great wheel with short spikes on it. The cherries are poured down a narrow channel and the wheel is turned, the spikes tear open the softened skins, separate them from the bean within and send both down a shoot whence they are deposited into a basket below; the beans are put back into the water-jars and left to ferment, being stirred every morning. The water turns the colour of rich mud and, towards the fourth day, acquires a bilious mildewy tinge, giving off a sickly smell. By the fifth day the slippery outer coatings of the beans come off and they are ready to be washed. They are then spread out on mats in the sun to dry for four to five days.

In some parts of Java there is a simpler method of extracting the bean from the cherry. At one time I was in the habit of using an old pulper for the coffee on my estate, and, though it broke the skin, unfortunately it did not always extract the bean, and a fresh coffee-bean is the most slippery thing on earth. I found the process of extraction a long business until an old Javanese dame, the wife of a coolie, helped me out of the difficulty; without a smile she sat down and started popping the cherries in her mouth, giving them a crunch and spitting

out the bean and the skin at an amazing rate. Seeing my surprise she explained that this was in Java the most usual method.

"Why, *Tuan*," she said proudly, "in my young days I could get through five kerosine-oil tins a day easily, and I could do it now if my teeth weren't falling out."

Once dry the beans are contained in little brown parchment covers which are removed by pounding in a kind of wooden mortar with a piece of wood; the broken parchment is finally winnowed away and the bean, in a fine cover called the silver skin, remains; before the coffee is put on the European market this silver skin is removed and the bean is polished, an operation which can only be performed by machinery.

It has been said that the reason why coffee is so comparatively little drunk in England is because it is more trouble to make than tea. This may be true. After all the planter's care and trouble in tending the tree for two years and taking such an infinity of pains in the preparation of the coffee, after all the shipping it and bringing it to the other side of the world, the chances are that it will be spoilt in an English kitchen. It takes two years for a planter to perfect a coffee-bean and just one minute for a cook to mar it.

§ 5

The cultivation of rubber, tobacco, coconuts and coffee are the four main agricultural enterprises which have attracted European capital to North Borneo. In the early days much was expected from the sugar-cane, and among the first land concessions to be granted in the country was one of 20,000 acres to a Mr. de Lissa for sugar planting. Another company was formed in China and there were hopes that sugar might become the staple product of the State. Then came a sudden slump in cane-grown sugar; interest centred in tobacco, the sugar concessions were never taken up, and since then the industry has received no serious attention, though in 1909 the Government planted an experimental patch at Jesselton and offered land on specially attractive terms.

Sugar is one of the oldest cultivations in the world. Its original home was the coastal region extending from Bombay

to Assam, but the cane grows well in North Borneo, though some authorities say the climate is not dry enough. The juice produced, however, is of a high quality, crystallizing easily and containing a minimum of molasses. The chief drawback to its cultivation by Europeans is that the machinery required for a factory is so expensive that the crop would only pay if planted on a large scale. On the other hand natives, even with their wasteful methods, find it profitable. The cane is grown in small lots near the coast, especially by the Bajaus on the wide Tempassuk Plain, where the soil is eminently suitable. It receives no cultivation beyond the original ploughing, and production is easy. The cane is pressed in mills of native make worked by buffaloes ; the juice so obtained is roughly boiled and strained, and the product, sold in the form of molasses, finds a ready market locally and commands a good price. Costs of production could be reduced considerably if owners would co-operate in one district and build a central mill which would be able to deal with the entire crop. Unfortunately, however, co-operation is foreign to Bajau nature, and it is likely to be long before any improvement in this direction will be seen.

Another cultivation which has been abandoned by Europeans is that of cocoa. It is one well worth the attention of the small planter. The cocoa-tree is a native of Mexico, Brazil and the West Indies, but it too grows well in Borneo. There was at one time a number of trees on Taritipan Estate in Marudu Bay. These are now reduced to one, but there is some native cultivation at Tawau and in the neighbourhood of Sandakan Bay. The tree bears in the fourth year, producing two crops annually. The fruit is contained in a large pod (familiar to those at home by the advertisement of Messrs. Fry) hanging by a thick stalk. The pods are hard and green when young, but as they ripen they turn yellow and then deep red ; the pods are gathered when ripe and burst open to enable the closely-packed cocoa-nuts to be extracted and laid out to dry, after which they can be exported.

Other forms of planting are in the hands of the Chinese. One of these is gambier, which might be worth growing on a larger scale. The original outlay is small, the crop is obtained

quickly and does not, like indigo, exhaust the soil; the working expenses are not very great. There is always a ready market for gambier. It is indispensable in the silk and tanning trades, and gives the peculiar gloss to leather not obtainable by other tanning substances; it is used for dyeing the sails of boats the familiar reddish brown; it has medicinal properties and is also sold as small nasty-looking cubes in every native shop of the East for chewing with the betel-nut. The plant will grow anywhere from sea-level up to 500 feet. It lives to an age of thirteen to twenty years and is in its prime at eight, but the first crop can be taken off in six months. The gambier of commerce is prepared from the leaves and small twigs of the plant which, when picked, are put into a large iron cauldron of boiling water; the pot is stirred until the broken leaves turn yellow; they are then removed and the residue is boiled until it becomes a deep brown colour, when it is baled out into tubs to set, in a clay-like mass, like an enormous lump of yellow ochre. It is finally cut into blocks, dried over a fire or in the sun, a process which takes a fortnight, and it is then ready for the market.

Pepper was also a product in which the Chinese formerly interested themselves considerably, for the climate and soil of North Borneo suit it well; the pepper-gardens of Bundu were famous, and even to-day there is a considerable amount planted, for instance near Sandakan. The plant which gives black pepper is a climbing shrub, and is grown from cuttings to climb up posts seven to eight feet apart; the first yield can be taken off in two and a half years, after which two crops can be obtained annually. The pepper grows and is picked in bunches while still green; it is then dried either in the sun or upon mats over a fire, separated by rubbing on a rough surface, put through a fanner, and packed in bags. White pepper is obtained by fermenting or soaking the berries when they are on the point of turning red.

It is surprising that neither Europeans nor Chinese should have interested themselves in Indian or Sea Island cotton. Up to the present both crops have only been grown experimentally, though the Government reports of these operations have always been most optimistic. Cotton requires cheap labour, but in a

district where a good supply of women and boys could be obtained for the picking it should prove profitable if grown on a commercial scale. A crop is obtained in nine months after planting, and the tree continues to yield for three years. The Bajaus and Illanuns in the Tempassuk district grow a certain amount themselves, but use the raw product chiefly for burial ceremonies, when the face, elbows and feet of the deceased are covered with it. Patches are planted in other parts of the country, mainly by the Kwijaus and Tambunan Dusuns, but now that the European article can be obtained so easily the cultivation is dying out, more especially as the plant has many enemies, such as beetles, which concentrate upon the small crops and do much damage. On the other hand *kapok*, or the silk cotton tree, is one of the easiest things in the world to grow; it has great vitality, and lengths cut for fences or telegraph poles will start shooting within a week. It may be grown either from stumps or seed, and bears in about two and a half years. From its pods it produces a silky floss used for stuffing pillows, mattresses and life-saving appliances. There are a considerable number of trees all over the country grown in the spasmodic native fashion, but unfortunately the cultivation is of no great interest commercially, as the Government has given the monopoly of export to a London company which, up to the present, will only buy at prices under those given by the local Chinese tailors. The grant of the monopoly has admittedly stimulated export to a certain degree (50 tons, value £1,456, went out of the country in 1920) but it is nevertheless a restriction on enterprise, and this is to be regretted because the cultivation is one that might be very remunerative, as the trees need little care and the *kapok* can be cleaned cheaply by women and children. A considerable amount is used locally for the stuffing of pillows and mattresses, but it is absolutely necessary to extract all the seeds which cling to the floss when it is removed from the dried pods, otherwise rats will eat through the mattress. Thereby hangs a very old Borneo tale. A Government officer, who may be called Mr. Black, was once staying at the Labuan Residency, where he noticed a strange smell in his bedroom. All attempts to trace it to its source proved fruitless; meantime it became steadily worse

and pervaded the whole house, until finally an amateur sleuth-hound discovered a dead rat in Mr. Black's mattress. The unfortunate rodent (it was supposed) had been having its nightly meal of *kapok* seeds when the occupant of the bed, who was no light weight, turned over. How Mr. Black overlaid the rat was the talk for many weeks.

Another crop which is often spoken of among planters in North Borneo is tea. Like cotton it requires cheap labour, but with native coolies this difficulty could be overcome. Mr. E. H. B. Larkins, of Langkon Estate, recently planted a few acres as an experiment and the crop did well, though close to the sea and only a few hundred feet above sea-level.

At one time the fibres came in for a good deal of attention, and there is no reason why sisal-hemp should not be grown as successfully in North Borneo as anywhere else in the world, but at present it is only cultivated experimentally on the Kuhara Company's estate at Tawau. The plant, whose original home was Mexico, requires a rainfall varying between seventy to ninety inches annually, good drainage and fairly rich soil, when it should start yielding in three years. The fibre, which is used chiefly for binder-twine, is obtained from the leaf of the plant and the machinery required is not expensive; in fact a writer in the *British North Borneo Herald* [1] estimated that a ton could be produced for about £16, the fibre then being quoted at £40.

Sago cultivation is also one that might repay the consideration of the European planter. It is at present in the hands of the natives, and the only people who manufacture the raw product for export are the Chinese. There is no particular reason why this should be so. Borneo is the great sago-producing country of the world, the palm is hardy and does not need so much attention, when once established, as do rubber or coconuts. Three trees are said to yield more nutritive matter than an acre of wheat or half an acre of potatoes, while a single tree will yield 600 lb. of food, enough to support a grown person for a year. Besides being an article of food, sago is used in the manufacture of glucose and confectionery, in starch-making and in dressing cotton fabrics. The palm, whose

[1] April 16, 1920.

Photo. Man Sing.

DUSUNS AT WORK ON SAGO LOGS.

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leaf resembles that of the coconut, does not mature for seven years, though with care this could probably be reduced to five or six. Each parent tree is surrounded, like the banana, by young suckers; these come into bearing in due succession, so that a plantation once made is continually reproducing itself and will never be exhausted. The palm grows best on low-lying swampy ground; it is valued for its trunk alone, and dies if allowed to fruit. Sago is worked in a crude way by the natives of the west coast. The trunk is cut down and split; the sago is then extracted, laid out on mats and broken down by means of a long plank studded with nails; this is drawn backwards and forwards by two men and the sago is afterwards trodden underfoot and placed in a rough mill; water is added until the whole is reduced to a thick paste, then the water is run off and the residue when dried becomes sago flour—not pearly white as it is in milk puddings at home, but a dirty grey colour with a particularly unpleasant smell. The Chinese methods of manufacture are slightly less primitive, but much might be done with up-to-date machinery; nor is there any reason why sago planting itself should not repay European enterprise. An estate of 1,000 acres with fifty trees to the acre would give 50,000 trees, at least 15,000 of which should be ready for cutting after eight years; a tree should produce on an average 200 pounds of raw sago or one hundred pounds of flour, so that with the flour at £20 a ton the annual revenue would be £25,000. There would also be a valuable side-line in *atap* from the leaves, as these are becoming more and more difficult to obtain.

§ 6

This book is not written in the sense of an advertisement for North Borneo, but there is no doubt that besides offering mainly new ground for enterprise on a large scale, the country has many attractions for anyone with a few thousand pounds capital who wishes to plant privately in the tropics. In spite of Sir West Ridgeway's laughing remark as he introduced a Commissioner of Lands, " Mr. X, the hardest man in the East to get land out of and, once he's given it, the quickest to take it

away," the Government encourages the small planter and gives him special terms, as indeed it should, for it is this type that is an asset to the country. For ordinary cultivation a ninety-nine years' lease is granted at 1*s*. 2*d*. per acre for five years and 6*s*. subsequently; for oil-palm cultivation land can be obtained free of rental for the first five years. In these days of course prices are high, but there is not so much to contend with in this respect as in most other parts of the world. The country is a pleasant one, healthy, with good fellows in it and plenty of sport. A man planting up his own estate will not lack work, but it will be lonely, and unless he buys a property wholly or partially in bearing he will find it a very weary wait till his plantation brings him in returns. It needs a great deal of moral courage to plant a couple of hundred acres of coconuts or rubber and then to sit down and wait for five years, putting out money all the time and taking little or nothing in. On the other hand the years until the estate comes into full bearing can be eked out with catch crops and side-lines.

Unfortunately the ideal catch crop has yet to be found. Coffee is attractive but it needs considerable outlay itself and takes two years to mature. Castor-oil, which grows like a weed, has possibilities; it has never been tried on a commercial scale in North Borneo, but might prove remunerative if planted between young rubber or coconuts, as it needs little cultivation and has the advantage of giving a crop in three months. The oil is obtained from the small grey seeds which are enclosed in a spiky shell; besides its familiar use, it yields good lamp-oil and is a valuable ingredient in the manufacture of soap and varnish and in the preparation of Morocco leather.

The safest things (and by reason of dry spells every catch crop is a gamble) are ground-nuts, Indian corn, tapioca and sweet potatoes. For these a local market can always be found. All yield a crop in three months, with the exception of tapioca, which takes nine. The Soyah bean, a native of China and Japan, has lately been receiving attention from the Chinese settlers, and the plant easily accommodates itself to its new conditions. European vegetables grow to perfection in the interior, but even in the lower country tomatoes, radishes and

French beans do excellently and there are sundry forms of cucumbers, marrows and beans that thrive.

The late Mr. W. F. C. Asimont made considerable experiments in planting small crops on Kinarut Estate, and his *Report on the Cultivation of Tropical Products, West Coast, British North Borneo*, is a most valuable little work for all those interested. Even Mr. Asimont, however, was beaten by the onion, which, whether planted from seed obtained from Europe, Japan, northern India or Australia, gave no result, though the common spring onion will grow in the interior. Mr. Asimont had great success with his tomatoes, but the absence of a market is a drawback to the cultivation of this or any other vegetable on a large scale until some one is enterprising enough to start a canning industry. The small market-gardens are almost entirely in the hands of the Chinese, for few vegetables save potatoes are grown by the natives. This is all the more extraordinary because the natives themselves buy all vegetables eagerly in the shops or at a market. This lack of enterprise was once forcibly brought home to me at Tuaran, where a few Chinese started growing ground-nuts. They employed Dusun labour and got excellent crops but, although the Dusuns were content to plant and harvest the Chinamen's nuts for a small wage, they could not be induced to take up the cultivation and reap the profits themselves. Fruit-growing on a large scale presents the same obstacles as vegetable-growing. It is a most difficult thing to sell fruit in large quantities, though the Chinese do a certain amount of export trade in oranges and limes. Pine-apples do well and would lend themselves to canning. In addition custard-apples, pommelo, papaia, sour-sop and many species of banana thrive ; larger fruit-trees such as mango, *tarap* (a kind of bread fruit), the guava, the famed *durian*, the *beluno* and the *rambutan* could not be considered as catch crops. These and many other varieties are mainly in the hands of the natives, though they are preserved rather than cultivated. It would be difficult to say who planted them, but every tree has an owner, even when it grows in the jungle, as many an estate manager has found to his cost. Bananas are planted all over the country, otherwise there is little native fruit cultivation except in the upper Tempassuk,

where a large green thick-skinned orange is grown and sold at markets on the coast. The *pinang* is also grown but is not plentiful, though its fruit is always in demand as betel-nut to be chewed in conjunction with *sireh*, a vine cultivated by the Dusuns, and lime, which the Bajaus make by calcining shell.

There is room for improvement in the fruit of the country and, as Mr. Asimont has pointed out, this can only be done by importing an improved quality of seed. Mr. Asimont himself did a certain amount in this direction, but it is of course more the function of a Government department. At present anyone wanting information about an uncommon product has to write either to Singapore or to the Japanese Kuhara Estate at Tawau, where indigo, cocaine, hemp and many other tropical products are being cultivated on sufficiently large a scale to show whether they are worth planting commercially or not, but the Government is preparing some Experimental Gardens of its own in the neighbourhood of Sandakan.

As catch crops probably spices, which at present receive little attention, would be more profitable than vegetables or other food-stuffs. The Chinese plant a certain amount of ginger, which will produce 2,000 lb. an acre and takes eight months to come into bearing, but it is an exhausting crop; a good market exists for the chilli, which also yields in eight months, and an acre will produce 1,000 lb. of dry chillies if the soil is cultivated; there are possibilities in cinnamon, a native of Ceylon, the dried bark of whose shoots produces the cinnamon of commerce; in vanilla, which grows as a vine and produces in three years; in the nutmeg, which is said to be indigenous to North Borneo, and in that native of the Moluccas, the clove, of which the first European adventurers came in quest. Its dried immature flower-buds are familiar in every kitchen in England but, like the nutmeg, it takes seven years to bear. Even more attractive are the medicinal plants, such as cinchona, *nux vomica*, *kola* (which thrives in the Straits Settlements) and especially *ipecacuanha*, a native of Brazil. In the case of the latter the drug is obtained from the roots; cuttings are expensive and can only be procured with difficulty, but, given a moist atmosphere and plenty of

shade, there seems no reason why the plant should not prove remunerative.

§ 7

In every form of tropical planting the question of labour is of paramount importance. Sir West Ridgeway said recently that there had never been any difficulty about labour in Borneo, but many planters would disagree with this. It is true that contract labour can be had at present from China or from Java. But at what a price! It costs a planter nearly £20 to import a Chinaman and at least £12 to import a Javanese, not more than £4 of which is recoverable. And even so it must be remembered that a time may come when the tap will be turned off, for the days of contract labour are numbered, thanks to the activities of sentimentalists who cannot leave well alone. There is no question of contract labour being slavery, as these good people would have one believe. The labourer signs on to work for three hundred days; this period may not be prolonged whether he has a debt or not, and at the expiration of his contract he may go where he lists; he can even terminate his contract by repaying his debt. Naturally all estates hold out inducements to a man to re-engage, granting him a bonus, just as the Army holds out inducements to a man to re-enlist, but a contract labourer in North Borneo is no nearer being a slave than is a British soldier. He is also protected by all kinds of safeguards and, if he is ill-treated, the Protector of Labour, whose sole function it is to look after his interests, may declare the contract at an end. Though it was not always so there is no doubt that, taken as a whole, labour is now as well treated in North Borneo as it could be. If for no other reason, employers have to treat their labour-force well or they would lose it. The coolies' health and comfort is looked after; several estates have cinematograph shows and Malay theatres, while Langkon Estate has even organized a drum and fife band, which is the source of much joy.

All the imported labour is either Chinese or Javanese, but many estates are fortunate in being able to recruit considerable numbers of natives. With good supervision the average

Bajau or Dusun works well and, if properly handled, there is no one more tractable. He cannot of course get through the same amount of work as a Chinaman—he could never take the place of the Chinese field-coolie in tobacco, for instance—but the Dusuns in particular make very good tappers, and many of their women and children join the labour-force as well. It is, however, quite useless to expect a native to work continually throughout the year. In time he may, but it is necessary to break him in very gently, and sometimes this is where planters new to the country fail. Allowances have to be made for the fact that the native has his private interests and probably a little plantation of his own. He also has a host of relatives, the sickness or death of whom necessitates his presence. If he is allowed to go off he will return in due course; if on the other hand he suspects that his nose is going to be kept to the grindstone for six months on end he and his friends will give the estate a wide berth. But gradually he settles down; he fetches his wife and family, his applications for leave become less frequent, and, as he grows more amenable to discipline, can be discouraged. This leave-taking does not result in such a state of chaos as might appear, for it simply means that the estate keeps a larger number of native coolies on its books than is actually required, counting on some always being away. As a rule these people are honest enough and, although they may be late occasionally, they come back in their good time. A few will try to get away with their advances and give the estate the slip, but the manager knows their villages and can usually lay his hand on them; then a little exemplary "running in" does nothing but good.

In the West Coast, Interior and Kudat Residencies there is a very fair supply of native labour. Langkon Estate, for instance, has a large percentage of its labour force composed of natives, thereby effecting an enormous saving. The Government does not encourage attracting native labour to estates, in fact recruiting of natives outside the district in which an estate is situated is forbidden and no written contracts are allowed. At the same time there is nothing to prevent natives from working where they want to; the Government simply refuses to have them exploited—another instance of how

benevolently it treats its aborigines. The small planter has of course to consider the question of labour very carefully, for it is quite out of the question for him to import coolies, but estate work is quite popular with natives and, by treating his people well, he should have no difficulty in getting as many as he requires.

§ 8

The native, especially the Dusun, is essentially an agriculturist. With the exception of the sea-Bajau and the Sulu, his chief occupation is the cultivation of food-stuffs, by far the most important crop being rice, or *padi*, of which there are two distinct forms, the wet and the dry. Wet *padi* is the highest form of native cultivation to be met with in North Borneo and, as mentioned in Chapter III, is mostly in the hands of the lowland Dusuns, who undoubtedly acquired their methods from the Chinese.

When the Pleiades rise, that is in August or September (in Tambunan the constellation of Orion is watched for), nurseries are made, and are planted by the women from seed of the previous year's crop; a Monday or a Thursday (the Dusuns follow the Malay calendar) is considered a propitious day. Wet rice must be planted on flat alluvial soil; the usual size of a field being from one to three acres, though it may be larger. Each field belongs to a definite owner under a title on which he pays an annual rent of 1*s.* 2*d.* per acre. To retain the water the fields are surrounded by mud banks about six inches high, occasionally wattled with bamboo, and just broad enough for a man to walk along; at Putatan and Tambunan, where the cultivation is seen at its highest, there is an elaborate system of dykes, levels and sluices; fields that are far from streams are supplied with water by means of bamboos, and consequently the crop is not so dependent on the vagaries of the weather as in the districts where the rain is relied upon to flood the fields.

As soon as the hard earth has become softened the ploughing starts. The Dusun plough is a crude enough implement, made of wood with an iron-tipped share, and does little more than

scratch hard ground, but being light is admirably adapted for turning over the mud of a wet rice-field. It is drawn by a water-buffalo controlled by a rope from the nose-ring, and it, plough and driver squelch and splosh round the field until all the mud is well turned over. When this is done the *sisir* is used, a framework with a number of spokes made of hard *nibong* wood; this is also drawn by the buffalo and breaks up any lumps of earth untouched by the plough; the third stage is the *ragus*, a kind of harrow on which the driver stands; by its means the whole field is levelled off and, when the work is finished, the water should lie in an unbroken sheet across the field. These operations take from a week to ten days. With them ends the active part played by the men, for the planting and weeding are done by the women. When they are about six inches high the young shoots are transplanted from the nursery into rough lines about eighteen inches to two feet apart. The plants are then left and the field is weeded only once; the crop is ready for cutting in six months, that is to say about February. The harvesting is done by both men and women; the ripe *padi* is cut by hand, put into baskets and carried into a small hut near-by; later it is threshed by laying it out upon the mats and stamping it. The mats are then swung deftly up and down by the women and the chaff is thus separated from the grain. *Padi* has a good many enemies, among them locusts, by whose insatiable appetites a whole crop may be destroyed in a night; fortunately they are of rare occurrence, but mice often prove great pests, suddenly appearing from nowhere in enormous numbers. When this happens a campaign is organized and the Dusuns (particularly the Tambunan people) are so adept that they might make their fortunes as ratcatchers in England; a long line of them will go through the field at night with torches, catching the rodents in their hands or killing them with sticks. The small sparrow and other birds also commit considerable depredations, and when the rice is ripening it is usual to build in the field a small hut from which a woman or child can control an elaborate arrangement of tins and leaves connected to one long rattan. A continuous watch is kept and, to anyone who has dwelt near a ripening rice-field, the noise made by a small child

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

DUSUN PLOUGHING RICE-FIELD.

[*To face p. 270.*

banging incessantly upon an empty tin-can and periodically emitting shrill yells is one never to be forgotten.

The cultivation of rice, being the life-work of a Dusun, is looked upon as a most serious business and is attended by various rites and festivals which vary both in detail and degree in different districts. The main festivals are six in number, beginning with *simavut*, which takes place before the young shoots are planted out. The ceremony consists of an old woman (for all the rites are conducted by priestesses) spreading rice, eggs and betel-nut upon a mat; then, as if to call the spirit of the rice, she sits tapping at the floor for several hours until the spirit has come and eaten of the feast. When the rice has grown up, but is not yet in ear, there comes the festival of *murumbigi*, the object of which is to ensure a good harvest; the priestess performs some rites in a small hut in the field; a fowl is killed and its feathers are scattered upon the growing crop, and the day ends in feasting and drinking. The third festival is *maganakan*, which occurs when the rice is in ear. A long house is built for the occasion near the fields, all the villagers assisting, one contributing *atap*, one bamboo, one *nibong*, one rattan and so on; here the priestess establishes herself, and to her every member of the community brings a small offering in the shape of a fowl or eggs or fruit. Should anyone dwelling within the confines of the village refuse this contribution, even if he be a Bajau or a Brunei, it is levied from him by force. For one night the priestess remains in the hut performing sacred rites; next day fowls are killed and there are feasting and dancing, in which the whole village joins. For seven days afterwards no one in the community may perform work of any kind, and should he fell a tree, cut down sago or even so much as go into the field he will be required to pay *sagit* or compensation. The fourth ceremony is known as *mohah*. When the rice is ripe the whole village collects in another long house (not that used for *maganakan*), the drums and gongs are beaten and the people dance with the long leaf of the *silat* bush in their hair and in their hands. The party circles round an old rice-basket which is beaten with the leaves, and he who first finds a grain of rice in the palm of his hand is elected master of the ceremonies at the next year's

festival. The stage management is efficient enough to ensure that some one always produces the grain of rice—if none appeared this would be an omen of disaster to the crop. The most important ceremony of all is *manimpohun*, which comes after the harvest when the rice is still in the field-huts, and the threshing is not usually started until it has been performed. A basket is filled with rice, the chaff having first been removed; the priestess mutters an incantation over it and it is then poured into the Dusun granary, a large circular bin made of bark. This ceremony is to propitiate the spirit of the bin and to ensure that the rice shall keep satisfactorily. In some districts no rice may be sold till this ceremony has been performed, and for three days following it no stranger may enter the house. The sixth ceremony is *togongok*, which takes place when all the rice has been stored, and corresponds to our harvest festival. Not only does the whole community take part but a neighbouring village is invited as well. There are mock fights and encounters followed by a feast and the inevitable Dusun "blind," and a few days later the home side plays a return match at the village of its visitors.

Besides these main festivals there are also emergency ceremonies performed by the priestesses in the time of disease or pests; even if a crime is committed in the village, so great is the respect for the rice spirit that a fowl is killed to calm its outraged feelings.

With wet rice the same ground can be and is used year after year, although the natives have no system of manuring and no idea of putting back into the soil what their crops take from it, except that they leave the straw on the fields to be stamped in by grazing buffaloes. Dry or hill rice is a more exhausting crop, however, but the Dusuns and Muruts have a method simpler than manuring: they plant fresh land every season. For years this process has been going on in the hills. A block of virgin jungle is selected, usually some distance from the village so as to be secure from the ravages of pig, fowl and buffalo; it is felled, the heavier timber being left standing, and is burnt off; little stacking or clearing is done and the half-burnt logs are allowed to lie where they fell in glorious confusion; no attempt is made to break up the ground, and the

planting is done by the seed being dropped into small holes punched with a stick, the native counting on the crop getting a good start of the weeds. Indian corn is often interplanted with the rice. Each family has its own allotment in the general clearing, marked off by pieces of wood laid upon the ground. The felling and burning are performed by the men, the planting and weeding by the women. When the crop has been harvested the land is planted up with tapioca, yams or bananas. Once this has borne fruit the clearing is abandoned and a new one is selected for the following year's planting.

Some of the coast Mohammedans also plant dry rice but on defined holdings, which are usually ploughed. They have some distinct customs of their own. Before planting, a bamboo table, about three feet square, is set up in the centre of the field. The seed to be used is placed upon the table very early in the morning by an old man (not the local *imaum* or priest) and the spirit of the rice is asked if planting may be begun. If the answer appears favourable the old man sows the first seed and then retires, but takes no payment for his services; he reappears immediately before the harvest with a white cloth upon his head and, making a pathway through the ripened crop, he plucks a few stalks and hangs them up in the bin that is to receive the harvest, for it is here that the rice spirit is now supposed to take up its abode. Then and not before may the cutting begin, but no one may tread down the ripe stalks and no one may speak to the harvesters while they are at work. The Mohammedans, however, hold no harvest festival such as the pagans have both for the wet and the dry rice. As a Bajau once remarked to me very characteristically, "Once the harvest is in, what more is there to do?"

In spite of the fact that there are roughly 22,000 acres under wet rice and 22,700 under dry, the annual crop, about 12,000 tons, produces less than half the amount of rice consumed in the country, for all the non-European population is a rice-eating one; although up-country natives, who live chiefly on tapioca and Indian corn, use up their rice for making spirit. Many efforts have been made to encourage the natives to plant on a larger scale and during the war a minimum price was guaranteed, but although they have great opportunities of enriching them-

selves it is difficult to induce them to plant more than they require for their immediate needs. Yet to-day every grain of rice finds a buyer and, if they planted two acres for every one, they could still find a ready market for their crop, especially as there is now a mill in Jesselton where the rice can be prepared.

§ 9

Until recently the keeping of stock, like the cultivation of rice, has been almost entirely in the hands of the natives, though a few Europeans, Chinese and Indians own isolated herds of cattle and a few ponies. Goats are common and the Chinese keep pigs, but it is doubtful if pig-keeping as a side line would pay a European. The principal domestic animal of the natives is the water-buffalo, or *kerbau*, which is found throughout the country, save in the hilly Murut districts. The *kerbau* is used by estates and by Chinese for transport purposes, but is a Dusun's most cherished possession, wife not excepted, and is usually given a comical pet name such as *Si Kurus*—Mr. Thin. It is the subject of unending lawsuits and gets stolen more frequently than an actress's jewels. It is a beast of many parts. It may be called upon to perform the functions of hack, hunter or heavy draught; once broken in it is equally tractable whether being ridden to market by its master, whether it is taking part in a deer hunt, pulling a native bamboo sledge, or dragging a plough through a muddy rice-field. It is immensely strong and cares not for wind or storm, but is happiest when lying half-submerged in a fetid wallow. Invaluable in life, it has its uses in death as a substitute for beef, but is only killed by the natives themselves on feast days and other important occasions, when its blood is used to set the seal upon many a solemn oath and buried feud.

The native cattle take a second place. In many parts of the country they are numerous, especially at Papar, Tempassuk and Keningau, but they have not the infinity of uses that buffaloes have, nor do they receive the same attention, with the exception of isolated animals that are used for riding. In the Tempassuk district nearly every native claims to own cattle, but the beasts are allowed to roam wild and uncared for over

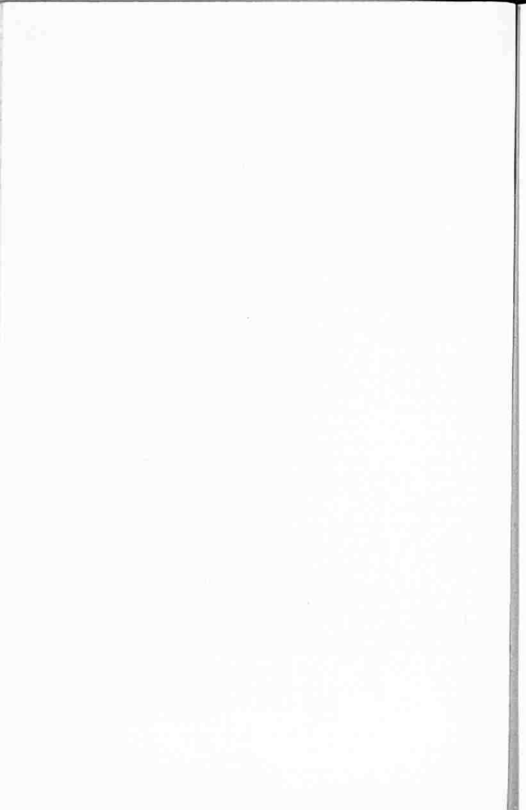
Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

DUSUN WOMAN PLANTING RICE.

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

BAJAU GIRL REAPING.

[*To face p. 274.*



the broad plains from the day they are born until the day they die, unless they are rounded up for sale or slaughter, or are stolen. There is neither science nor forethought in the mating or breeding; no castrating is done; cows in calf or cows with calf at heel receive no attention. As Captain Francis once observed, "The whole process is a medley of luck and negligence which is having a disastrous effect," and the native cattle are becoming inbred to an alarming extent, as is shown by the large percentage of bulls over cows.

To a more limited degree the same is true of the native pony. On the west coast and in the Tambunan and Keningau districts, most natives of substance have one or more ponies. They are hardy little beasts standing between twelve and thirteen hands, sure-footed with a turn of speed, but they are usually pitiful spectacles. They are never groomed or cared for; the only stabling they know is to be tied up occasionally underneath the house, and they are entirely grass-fed. The cruel native bit makes their mouths as hard as iron, the wooden native saddle gives them sore backs and festering galls. They are often covered with ticks, which particularly attack the ears. No gelding is done; there is no attempt at breeding from selected sires or dams. When one of these ponies is taken into a European stable, cared for, groomed and fed on corn it picks up at once and becomes a changed animal in a month; yet with this evidence of what can be done with a little pains before their eyes, few natives ever profit by it, though as horsemen the Bajaus are unsurpassed.

The Government has at heart the question of improving the breed of native stock; Indian bulls and Javanese stallions have been imported, but until the natives learn the value of castrating and gelding on a large scale inbreeding must continue. Good results may be expected from the stud farm which has been started recently by the Government on the Keningau Plain; it is the first serious attempt at raising stock on a large scale and should in time prove not only a boon to the country but a profitable undertaking to the Government.

CHAPTER X

MINERALS

THE unknown is always rich in treasure, and to the chroniclers of old it seemed that El Dorado was waiting to be found somewhere in Borneo's mysterious forests. The companions of Magellan, dazzled by the splendours of the Brunei Court, founded the belief in the island's mineral wealth. Later writers confirmed their statements, later travellers returned with the wildest tales. Even from the report " On the Great and Rich Island of Borneo " handed by Hunt to Sir Stamford Raffles in 1812 it seemed that one had only to go and fill one's pockets with gold and diamonds.[1] The diamond mine at Landa, in what is now Dutch Borneo, was stated to be " after Golconda the most valuable in the world," employing 30,000 people; the rich veins of native gold in Sarawak are mentioned, worked by thousands of Chinese, and reference is made to a valuable gold-mine in the Tempassuk district, where work had been discontinued owing to the activity of the pirates. Ninety years later Mr. W. C. Cowie, in an optimistic speech at the annual Company dinner, said, " Knowing the country as intimately as I do, I should not be surprised if the mineral wealth of North Borneo were to cause the vast riches of Mr. Carnegie to pale into insignificance." Mr. Cowie's hopes and the hopes of many others were doomed to disappointment, for the truth is that so far the quantity of minerals which have been found in North Borneo never caused surprise to either the late Chairman or to anyone else.

It was, however, not unnatural that those interested in the country should have believed that as it became opened up and

[1] *The Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido*, vol. i, pp. 398–403.

wrested from the clutches of the jungle it would reward the pioneer. Borneo had long had the reputation of being rich in gold, and it was gold that first attracted attention after the flotation of the Chartered Company. Many and sanguine were the expectations of getting rich quickly. Gold had been proved in Sarawak and Dutch Borneo and there was no reason to think that it would not occur in North Borneo as well. Occur it did, but, after keeping every one on tenterhooks for several years, it was only found so widely distributed and in such small quantities that it was not sufficiently profitable to work.

The Borneo gold is met with in three different forms: as alluvial gold in the river-beds, as "drift gold" in the diluvial deposits, and in its original state as seams in the parent rock. The latter is of course by far the most valuable. In the territory of the Chartered Company many of the rivers, especially those on the east coast, contain gold sand in greater or lesser quantity. The amount found varies considerably, even in the course of one and the same river. As a rule the gold obtained in the river sand is almost negligible throughout the lower reaches, but it increases in the middle and upper course, and the tributaries are often the richest of all. This obviously points to the matrix or parent reef having its being in the far interior of the country; the heaviest fragments borne along by the river are the first to sink to the bottom, while the relatively lighter portions are swept any distance downstream. The metal obtained by washing these sandy deposits is usually merely in the form of gold-dust, though occasionally scales and larger grains are procured. Drift gold also occurs, especially in the middle basin of the Segama River where the diluvial deposits extend for about one hundred and twenty miles; it is therefore not unreasonable to suppose, there being no smoke without fire, that these deposits must come from gold-veins in the solid rock, but the original place of the gold formation has never yet been found.

This is not for want of trying. In 1881 the Chartered Company established a Mineralogical department and engaged as mineral explorer Mr. Frank Hatton, a young man of twenty, who had already distinguished himself as an analytical chemist.

Mr. Hatton had the misfortune to meet his death through a rifle accident on the Segama River early in 1883. During his brief service he carried out many valuable explorations, but it is to Captain R. D. Beeston that the honour of being the first European to find gold in North Borneo belongs. In 1883 this officer, who had had practical experience on several Australian goldfields, explored the whole of the east coast from Silam to the Segama River and reported it to be of auriferous formation, actually obtaining gold from washings he made. These investigations were continued by Mr. Henry Walker, the Commissioner of Lands, and during 1885 he found gold in the gravel beds of the Segama in sufficient quantities to be remunerative if worked by sluicing, the method practised by the Chinese in Sarawak. The gold obtained was fine and of good quality, though not very plentiful.

As may be imagined, these discoveries caused a flutter in the dovecots of the Chartered Company. Here was a young country which, within a few years of its exploitation by British capital, had yielded up the precious metal which the whole world seeks. There were no limits to what the future might bring. It was like a fairy tale. On the strength of the reports received the Segama Goldfields (as they were called) were proclaimed in the Government *Gazette* of April, 1885, comprising all the land within three miles from the banks of the river lying between the Gold Rock, eighty miles from the mouth, and the Bilang River, one hundred and twenty miles farther upstream. At the same time, although the Company's hopes ran high it was anxious not to encourage a rush of white diggers ignorant of the country and its climate. A number of adventurous spirits did come without the necessary equipment or capital, and Captain Beeston soon found it necessary to warn others that they would find conditions very different from those in Australia and California. As he pointed out, the chief difficulty was food. There were no convenient squatters' homesteads where the digger could put in and replenish his stores; indeed on the Segama there were few native villages where even rice could be obtained. Then again, camping out under the shade of a convenient tree, a nightly occurrence in Australia, could not be done with impunity in

the Borneo jungle. In short, unless miners came fully equipped, able to support themselves for six months and in a position to employ native labour, they were advised to stay away. The matter became so serious that this warning had to be sent to the agents of the Chartered Company and to the Colonial Secretaries of various colonies, and a penalty of £80 was imposed for landing diggers without means. On the other hand the Company was only too anxious to encourage bona fide prospectors, and a Gold Committee was instituted to collect and disseminate information and to assist new-comers generally with advice. No fees were charged to work gold and no export duty was exacted; it was only necessary to obtain a permit for prospecting.

The people to take advantage of these opportunities were the Chinese, many of whom had come from California and Australia whence they had been driven by law and heavy taxation. To them, the ever-hunted, North Borneo was a paradise, for they found the usual conditions reversed, the white miner discouraged and the yellow a *persona grata*. Moreover, if they did not make their fortunes, they found gold-washing worth their while and were able to make from one to five dollars a day.

It was realized, however, that this crude washing was no adequate test of what might be got out of the rivers under better conditions. The washings proved that the gold did exist and it was obvious that the gold could not get into the rivers without there being some fountain-head, whether in the form of reefs, rocky strata or great alluvial deposits. The gold must exist somewhere, even if the reefs were a thousand feet below the surface as in some of the South African Goldfields. It had been traced on the Segama for over a hundred miles and it was certain that it must come from a source within the territory. It seemed only necessary to undertake more systematic and extensive explorations to make a big find. To this end, early in 1886 Captain Beeston made a more extended prospecting trip to the Segama, and ascended the river three days' journey beyond Barrier Falls. He found no reef, but he considered that this was to be explained by the immense amount of alluvial deposits accumulated through the

heavy rainfall; he was able to establish the fact that on the middle and upper Segama, with its tributaries, payable and in places highly remunerative diggings did exist, though the lower reaches of the river only yielded a few specks, taking, as he said, "a ton to make an ounce," and he declared that "Beyond all question the Darvel Bay district will ere long prove to be one large goldfield."

Chiefly on the strength of his report two companies were floated in London to exploit this area, each obtaining gold-mining leases over 1,000 acres of alluvial lands. One of these, the British Borneo Gold-mining Company, with a capital of £100,000, got to work without delay. Mr. S. B. J. Skertchly, who had obtained the original concessions, was appointed its general manager. In company with his assistant, Mr. J. H. Allard, he made his first journey to the Segama in 1887 and in the following vivid words reported their original find of gold: "As the waters assuaged great was the anxiety to try the first pan of 'dirt.' I panned it. Slowly the muddy water flowed off! Swish went the gravel over the sides, then good black sand began to show and lo! there, sparkling in its jetty bed, was gold! It was true then! We had not come, I from teaming Colorado and California, Allard from rich South Africa, for nothing."

It must be remembered that all this prospecting work was done under the most difficult conditions. The Segama country was the wildest part of a wild country, almost uninhabited dense jungle, abounding with leeches; little or no food was obtainable locally, transport difficulties were enormous; the rapids were frequent and dangerous and, as often as not, the river was in flood. The old map of North Borneo testifies to the misfortunes that early pioneers had to endure—Dismal Gorge and Mount Tribulation are but two of the names bestowed by these travellers on parts of the stubborn country that guarded its secret so well. The most daring of all these explorations was made by Captain Beeston, who ascended the Segama for eighteen days beyond the Barrier Falls, accompanied by four European miners. The whole of the upper river was discovered to be one mass of quartz boulders, veins of quartz seaming the rocks. Trials were made and gold

was obtained by pounding the rock in a mortar, but, although the party seemed on the verge of the most important discoveries, the fountain-head still remained a mystery. In their eagerness the explorers pushed on so far that they had to spend twelve days at a spot they named (in the fullness of their hearts only) Starvation Camp, without food except for eight fish, a mouse-deer, shoots of young trees and roots. The bitter part of it was that these hardships were endured in vain. Mr. Sefton, who was prospecting for the Segama Gold Company, refused to lose heart and believed that in the end one of the principal products of the country would prove to be gold, for he said: "There has never been any country yet known where gold exists so generally as it does in the Segama without a payable goldfield being found."[1]

Nevertheless, from that day to this gold has never been discovered in quantities that would pay anybody but Chinese or natives to work. Prospecting was kept up for many years but always with the same result, though nearly every river on the east coast was proved to be auriferous. In 1894 Dr. Seelhort was appointed Government geologist, but he accomplished little more than those who had trodden the arduous Segama country years before. The original gold-mining companies having ceased to exist, the British North Borneo Gold Syndicate was formed in 1898 and a couple of experts were sent out. It was believed that deposits of low-grade alluvial drifts in the Segama would pay handsomely if dealt with on a sufficiently large scale; a dredger was accordingly designed in England and sent out, but when it arrived it proved impossible to get it any distance up the shallow river; the effort was a complete failure and the company suspended operations in 1904. In the following year the British Borneo Exploration Company was floated with a nominal capital of half a million pounds, having obtained the right to prospect for minerals over the whole State on the understanding that a minimum sum of £8,000 should be spent annually on this exploration work. It was considered that this company would prove a boon to the country by examining the mineral resources on a large scale, but, although its attentions were first turned to gold, it was

[1] *British North Borneo Herald*, January, 1888.

no more successful than the early pioneers and, as it had acquired a monopoly over the mineral rights, other concerns were debarred from starting operations on their own account.

Such is the brief record of the gold quest in North Borneo. It is a record of disappointment. At the same time that is no reason why there should not be a fortune still waiting for some individual or company enterprising enough to profit by the experiences of others, and persevering enough to follow up the clues until at last the treasure is wrested from the jungle in which it lies. It has often been years before the first indications of gold resulted in a profitable find, and there are countless examples to show that many a rich discovery has only been made through the pluck and dogged perseverance of prospectors who plodded on, in spite of every disappointment, in a dangerous and unknown country, because they were certain from the indications that persistence was all that was required. Although a handful of brave men have made some perilous journeys little has been accomplished up to the present but flying surveys; the actual head of the Segama River has never been reached. The area to be searched is so vast, so difficult and so far from civilization that the quest presents almost insuperable obstacles but, unless by some gigantic convulsion of nature the seams have become so contorted as to be impossible to locate, the gold must still be waiting, like the princess in the fairy tale, for a deliverer.

§ 2

Gold is not the only treasure that has proved elusive in North Borneo, for diamonds have been equally disappointing. Hunt mentions that diamonds were found in Sarawak, though they rarely exceeded three or four carats in weight, but he describes a diamond of 367 carats from Dutch Borneo for which its owner, a native Sultan, had refused £250,000, two sloops of rice, fifty pieces of cannon and a hundred muskets. This stone was subsequently proved to be nothing more valuable than a rock crystal, but large genuine stones have since been found both in Dutch Borneo and Sarawak, notably one known as the Star of Sarawak, a gem of the purest water weighing seventy carats. These diamonds are found under the same

geological conditions as gold, in the alluvial and diluvial deposits and in the sand of rivers. Their presence not infrequently coincides with rich gold districts and the old prospectors always hoped that one day they might come upon a double find, but nothing more than stray stones weighing a few carats ever came to light. In 1904 a certain amount of excitement was caused by a letter written to the Company by a planter named Jurgens. He had been a tobacco assistant on the Labuk in 1888, and one afternoon during a short trip into the jungle he had come upon blue clay. "It is on the Labuk," he declared, "that I found the real diamond-bearing ground. It is identical with the Kimberley blue clay with all the pieces of carbon and burnt garnets in it. . . . Anybody who has seen diamond-ground will notice it at once; it sticks out in huge boulders as if thrown up by some eruption." It appeared that Jurgens had left the country before he had had time to pursue his investigations, and for sixteen years he had wandered about the world with his secret, hoping always that one day circumstances would enable him to return; but his hopes were never realized and at last, weary with disappointment, he threw himself upon the generosity of the Court. His information was tested at once and the blue clay was located. Samples were sent home but, though no diamonds were found in them, it was pointed out that this did not prove their non-existence, and the mere fact that blue clay had been found in the country did much to help the flotation of the Exploration Company. But Mr. Jurgens never benefited by unburdening himself of his secret, for not a stone was found in the blue clay of the Labuk River; it has been examined, but how thoroughly it is difficult to say, and although blue clay does not necessarily contain diamonds any more than oysters necessarily contain pearls it may yet be found to repay further examination.

§ 3

The search for other minerals has proved even more disappointing than that for gold and diamonds, and even the few indications that were found led to little, except in the case of coal. Mr. Walker once came across what he believed

to be platinum on the Segama; antimony ores were sought for in the Marudu valley and in the basin of the Labuk without success; black chromite sand was found in the Marudu district and Banggi yielding a small percentage of chloritic iron; samples of cinnabar were found on the Segama; specimens of copper were discovered by Frank Hatton near Mumus and by Mr. Little in the foothills of Kinabalu; copper ores are also known to exist on the Labuk River and on Banggi Island, but they have never been found in workable quantities, though in 1907 the Exploration Company started *boring* for copper at Pingan Pingan, an operation which would bring a smile to the lips of most mining engineers; silver ore mixed with galena was found near Beaufort; stream tin is mentioned as occurring in a river emptying into Marudu Bay, but the country would appear to be outside the tin-bearing range. Iron ores are widely distributed in the tertiary beds of North Borneo, and large deposits were found within thirty miles of Sandakan in 1904 but, though a million and a half tons are said to be in sight, transport difficulties have hitherto rendered it impracticable to start operations. Indications of rock salt came to light in Marudu, but information as to its extent is only to be obtained by deep borings and, as cheap salt is easily procurable locally, it is not likely that this will ever be worth while.

One of the very few minerals that have ever been worked to any extent in North Borneo is manganese. It was originally discovered near Tanjong Batu in the Marudu district by Mr. Jack Carnarvon; a bulk sample was sent home which showed on analysis fifty-six per cent pure manganese, a higher percentage than surface deposits usually show. It was found to occur in almost unlimited quantities, and there was every hope of obtaining an even richer ore below. Mr. Carnarvon claimed and received the £1,200 reward offered by the Exploration Company for the discovery of workable minerals; offices were erected at Tanjong Batu, and a wharf was built, connected with the ore deposits by a light railway.

The estimated output was 25,000 tons the first year and 40,000 subsequently, at a profit of ten shillings a ton. Once more hopes ran high. Owing to the difficulty of handling a heavy mineral it was found necessary to charter a ship to

bring the first load to Europe. Unfortunately the transport arrived in Marudu Bay long before the first shipment was ready; day after day she waited, incurring huge sums in demurrage, while frantic efforts were made to get the manganese on board. Supervision of the loading was not what it ought to have been and the Chinese coolies, taking advantage of the general rush and confusion, heaped up rubbish and covered it with manganese. In this state it was shipped and taken to England. It was not until it had been unloaded that the truth of what had happened became apparent and, as the Exploration Company had sold the whole shipment in advance, it had to pay damages for non-delivery as well as incurring heavy expenses with no return. The so-called mineral was dumped into the sea and, first to last, the only person who had any occasion to congratulate himself on the finding of the manganese was Mr. Carnarvon. After this fiasco the Exploration Company remained in a stagnant condition for some years, doing little more than preventing others from pushing ahead with geological exploration. Finally in 1913 it was induced to surrender its concession and came to an inglorious end, having tried many things but accomplished little but the blasting of innumerable expectations.

Some years previous to the Exploration Company's demise the British Borneo Petroleum Syndicate acquired from it a concession to prospect for oil throughout the State. Petroleum shale in Borneo is found in belts of narrow width but of great length. It was first located in the Chartered Company's territory at Sekuati, near Kudat, by Mr. Witti; Frank Hatton also investigated this spring but, though he declared that it would be possible to turn out 100 gallons a day with proper machinery, boring operations were never undertaken, and since then many attempts at irregular intervals have been made to find oil in payable quantities; the Netherlands Colonial Petroleum Company carried out an extensive geological examination of the country in 1913 but without much result, though Sebattik Island and the Klias Peninsula seemed the most promising areas. At present the British Borneo Petroleum Syndicate owns the exclusive oil-rights over the State; it has granted concessions to the Japanese Kuhara Company to work

the Sekuati and Klias areas. Both ventures have great possibilities but, though oil of good quality has been obtained, it has not been struck in sufficient quantity up to the present to justify expensive operations.

§ 4

So far this chapter has been but a record of dismal failure or (at the best) of hopes deferred. There is one bright spot in this clouded story and that is coal, the only mineral in the country that it has ever been found profitable to work. The existence of coal had been known to the natives even before the coming of the Chartered Company, but as they had no means to turn it to account it was left to Europeans to test its value. Coal is the one mineral which has been found in any widespread quantities in North Borneo; it has been located in the neighbourhood of Gaya and Padas Bays, at Sekuati and in Marudu, on the Kinabatangan River, near Sandakan and on the island of Sebattik. "This coal," to quote the Rev. J. E. Tennison Woods,[1] "does not necessarily belong to one age, and fields of different ages may lie very close together. The fossils from some of the beds are identical with those of certain well-known forms common to India and Australia."

The first coal to be worked extensively in North Borneo was at Labuan where mines were opened up soon after the British annexation in 1846, Mr. J. Motley being the first manager. In the course of years these mines were worked by several companies, usually with indifferent profit and success; they were closed down and reopened many times and at the present time they have been abandoned. The mines are an example of how false an economy it is to take large quantities of surface coal in order to obtain a big output without great cost, for the surface excavation leaves behind great holes which become traps for rain-water; in the case of the Labuan coalfield the water thus collected was enabled to percolate the seam and so also to flood the shallow mines that had been sunk in the same neighbourhood.

It was a good many years before coal was successfully

[1] "The Borneo Coalfields," *Nature*, 1885.

worked on the mainland. Masses of true coal have been found in the neighbourhood of Sandakan Bay; they were first brought to light by Mr. Skertchley, who found that they formed a steep-sided basin round Sandakan, and further outcrops were traced in the numerous streams and rivers that flow into the bay. In 1888 the indefatigable Mr. Henry Walker made further investigations. A find was made on a small island where a ton and a half of good lignite was extracted, a solid unconnected block. This was of older formation than that found on the mainland, it burned well and clearly; later, a seam one foot in thickness, increasing to twenty-two inches, was found on the coast within two miles of Sandakan wharf. Nothing was done until 1894 when a seam found by Mr. E. A. Pavitt, the Chief Surveyor, was worked, and in 1898 a syndicate obtained a concession to exploit the coal in Sandakan Bay, but in spite of promising beginnings it met with the same fate that had dogged the footsteps of every mining enterprise in the country. In 1902 Mr. D. Viezee, discovered extensive deposits of young coal on the Melobong peninsula in the Marudu Bay district. It was thought that this would be of assistance in working the manganese and another syndicate was formed, but on examination the coal was found to contain too much iron pyrites, which rendered it liable to spontaneous combustion and also, owing to its comparatively recent geological age, it had too small a percentage of fixed carbon for it to be profitable to work. When Mr. Viezee regretfully told his natives that the coal on which they had built such hopes was too young to be of any use, they only smiled and said reassuringly, "Never mind, *Tuan*, wait another ten years and then all will be well."

Further hopes were raised in 1905, when the Exploration Company discovered what was declared to be smokeless coal on the island of Jambongan, off the north-east coast. This caused something of a sensation, for no smokeless coal had ever been found east of Suez, but beyond the samples nothing more came to light. How they got on to the island is a mystery that is never likely to be explained; possibly they may have been specimens of fossil coal similar to those found by Mr. Viezee embedded in small round pieces of rock on an island near

Malawali, possibly they got washed up from a passing ship; in any case Jambongan well deserved its reputation as the home of "coal-less smoke."

In the neighbourhood of Cowie Harbour, however, there was a different tale to tell, for that is the one district in which minerals have justified the hopes of their discoverers. In 1901 Mr. E. H. Phillips spent eleven months prospecting in the Serudong valley; he found no less than fifty-eight outcrops of coal, including one (named the King seam) containing a pure bituminous coal of consistent quality with a uniform thickness of three feet nine inches. In 1903 further deposits were located on the Silimpopon River, a tributary of the Serudong, and the Cowie Harbour Coal Company was formed in 1905 to exploit the finds. It was decided to work the Silimpopon fields, which lie some distance up the river in the midst of dense jungle. The initial difficulties were very great and for many years the company had a struggle for existence, but it was assisted by the Chartered Company, which did not want to see its only mineral-producing concern fail for the want of a few thousand pounds. In 1920 the share capital was increased and the company is now upon its feet, a paying concern; its coal is said to be equal to the Japanese coal and it has prospects of a profitable future. The total estimated supply has been placed as high as 98,000,000 tons. An up-to-date plant has been installed and the output for 1920 was 65,500 tons. A proportion of this is shipped to Sandakan for bunkering local steamers and the remainder is either exported or used for steamers which turn into Cowie Harbour to coal direct. The colliery lies in a large clearing in the Silimpopon valley and is completely surrounded by jungle. The mines are worked by Chinese (often as stubborn of temper as the miners of Wales) under European supervision; the coal is brought by a light railway from the pit-head to a loading-station on the river and is thence towed in barges to a depot on Sebattik Island which is accessible to large ocean-going steamers.

Silimpopon is the only mineral covert in the country which has not been drawn blank. But because things have been disappointing in the past that is no reason why they should be

so in the future. Somewhere in the embrace of North Borneo's fertile soil the quarry rests and it is not being unduly sanguine to believe that one day it will be found, whether it be gold, diamonds, more coal or other minerals. North Borneo's chances as a mineral-producing country are not over; it is more reasonable to suppose that they have scarce begun.

CHAPTER XI

NATIVE CUSTOMS AND FOLK-LORE

THE religion of the average Dusun and Murut is the vaguest part about him, anyhow to the European. The Dusuns acknowledge a Supreme Being, Kinaringan, who has a wife named Munsummundok and (in the Tempassuk district) a son named Towardakan. These gods, although they have human attributes, are nevertheless omnipotent and live somewhere in the sky. They created the world and are in some measure responsible for it, but they are gods of wrath, to be propitiated ; if you do certain things Kinaringan will be angry and you will receive retribution in one form or another. As far as I have ever been able to discover, the Muruts have no particular deity, but both Dusuns and Muruts have a Paradise whither the soul flees when it quits its earthly body —a permanent, not a temporary home. These resting-places of the dead are found, naturally enough, in the highest mountains of the country ; Kinabalu is the abode of the Dusun dead, Antulai and Mulundayoh, high hills in the far interior, the homes of departed Muruts. All are considered sacred. If Kinabalu is to be ascended various rites must first be performed ; Mr. D. R. Maxwell describes [1] how the night before Miss Gibbs and he made the ascent, seven eggs were laid out as offerings to the guardian of the mountain, and a fowl was killed, while shots were fired off at the summit. It is forbidden even to climb the white-rocked crest of Mulundayoh, but if a passer-by cares to linger near its slopes it is said that he may hear the sound of unearthly voices and the crowing of ghostly cocks.

[1] *British North Borneo Herald*, April 1, 1910.

When life is extinct the spirit, set at liberty, wends its way to the mountain, where it dwells. Some of the Murut tribes believe in seven transmigrations which culminate in a kind of Nirvana, but among the Dusuns there appears to be no definite after-life, and the spirit simply remains upon the mountain like one of the mists that veil its crags. At the same time it is represented as being in a state of happiness and there is no idea of punishment after death for sins committed upon earth. While you are alive Kinaringan may visit you or your whole village with some dreadful fate if you misbehave, but he seems to have no power over you once you have shuffled off this mortal coil. Nevertheless, neither Kinaringan nor Munsummundok appears to be directly worshipped; there are no temples, no priests, no priestesses dedicated to them; no idols are set up in their honour. Save to ward off the evil results of a trespass on their territory no sacrifices are made to them, though in olden days it was not unusual to kill a slave or a prisoner in order that he might take messages to those who dwelt upon the summits of the sacred mountains. In such cases the unfortunate victim was either tied to a tree or confined in a bamboo cage, where he was prodded to death with spears by his captors, who danced round him and accompanied each prod with a message to be delivered to a departed relative. This practice, which is vividly described by Sir Hugh Clifford in *The Quest of the Golden Fleece*,[1] shows no trace of any homage to the deity himself.

Nevertheless, although the pagan gods are not directly worshipped, Kinaringan is credited with being the maker of the world and of the first human beings. Among the Dusuns there are many variations of the legend of the creation. Some say that Kinaringan, seeing that the world he had made was lonely, planted a red *nunuk* tree which, when it grew big, put forth miraculous leaves that became human beings and were swept by the wind to all corners of the earth. Others say that he took his blow-pipe and fired one dart at the sun and brought down to earth a man, another at the moon and brought down a woman; but there is another story which

[1] In *Malayan Monochromes.*

is in some respects curiously parallel to that in the second chapter of Genesis, though those who believe it have never heard of the Holy Writ. According to this version, Kinaringan first of all hewed two rough images out of stone, but so hard and cold were they that even by blowing upon them with his divine breath he could not quicken them with life. So casting them aside, he set to carving two fresh images out of wood, only to find that the wood was no more responsive than the stone. At last he took some earth and mixing it with clay he modelled it into human forms; then he breathed upon it and this time, his material being soft and pliant, the images became human beings. For a while they lived happily together, but at length they began to grieve that they had no children. Kinaringan, who had spent a deal of time and trouble on making his first couple, felt disinclined to begin again. So one night, when the couple was asleep, he took a rib from the man and a rib from the woman and interchanged them. In some strange manner they were by this means able to have children and so became the parents of mankind. As he had made his first couple from earth he decreed that they and all who came after them must return to the earth again; and that is the reason the Dusuns bury their dead.

Both Dusuns and Muruts believe in a host of evil spirits by which their whole life is bound as if by chains. There is never a strange tree or hill or rock but is the abode of some genie, whether visible or invisible; and against these every household has its family charm and most individuals have an amulet of their own if it is only a piece of string tied round the neck or wrist. As a Chinese will make any odd thing from seed pearls to a rhinoceros-horn into medicine, so the North Borneo pagan makes any strange and unfamiliar object into a treasured fetish which no money can buy. One may be seen in any native home, a collection of shells, beads, bells, odd coins, deer hoofs and monkeys' teeth, all bound together, grimy with age yet most precious, while many an uncouth object may be found hung round a baby's neck to ward off the powers of ill. It is the spirits of cholera and smallpox that are most greatly feared, and with good reason, for time after time they have swept through the country like

a fire, wiping out whole villages. When these scourges are abroad the tracks to each village are blocked with little carved posts and grotesque wooden figures, bowls of rice often being set out as well. Thus, pathetically enough, the inmates hope to frighten away the dreaded spirits by these guardians of the path, or perhaps appease them by the offerings laid out.[1]

§ 2

Such evil spirits are not the only things that complicate a pagan's existence, for he pays the greatest attention to omens in the shape of birds, beasts and insects. In fact his life must be one long round of prohibition; he is like a small boy whose parents are always saying, "Willy, you mustn't do that." The up-country people are more scrupulous about these omens than the dwellers near the coast. For instance, if a hill Dusun of the North Keppel district sees a roe-deer or mouse-deer, or if he even hears one bark, when he is on his way to work or on a journey, he must return home for a period varying from five to ten days; if he meets or hears a mouse the taboo is from one to five days; a snake seen moving across the path means one day's taboo, but from four to ten if it disappears into a hole; a return for one day is necessary if he meets a scorpion, a centipede or a millipede, or sees a green lizard fall suddenly to the ground.

Great importance, also, is attached to the flight of birds. It is a good omen to hear the call of the *nahagan* and also to see the bird itself, as long as it does not cross the path; it is also lucky to hear the call of the *lakiu*, but if it shows itself it is a bad sign and the taboo is one day. The *puak*, *kapiotaki* and *langkup* are all bad omens, whether they are seen or whether only their calls are heard, and entail a similar taboo of one day. In these cases the traveller who is more than twenty-four hours out upon a journey may either camp on the spot or may return to his previous night's resting-place and proceed next day. It makes no difference whether the bird is seen

[1] Mr. F. J. Moysey writes: "The smallpox devil was supposed to have been seen in 1905 dancing with a flaming torch along the top of the Kwijau hills. This torch he applied to the posterior of any whom he met—hence the smallpox."

on the right hand or on the left hand, but if it flies across the path the omen becomes intensified.

No work is done on the day of the full moon, and the rainbow, which the Dusuns say is the pathway by means of which the spirits of the dead come down to bathe, is also regarded as an omen. The taboo is one day, but if one is on urgent business (such as an appointment with one's District Officer) one may put a piece of *lalang* grass behind each ear and pursue one's way. The Dusuns also have a widely distributed custom (brought to my notice by Mr. R. M. O. Cook) that forbids their cutting or eating bananas on the day a fowl has been killed.

The Dusuns of the plains have similar beliefs, but the observances are not so strict and are usually only considered necessary when the omen is encountered on the way to work. Among the Tuaran Dusuns a dead mouse constitutes a bad omen, no regard being paid to a live one, and only two snakes, the *pamolam* (black and white) and the *immomuho* (the cobra) have any significance. If these are seen to enter a hole in the rice-field during the planting season a ring of a few feet is made round the spot, which is left untouched till the following year. The iguana is also regarded as an omen reptile and no work may be done on the day that one is encountered. If a person disregards this law and subsequently gets drunk he will certainly meet with evil fortune. On the plains it is looked upon as unlucky to meet a swarm of bees but, though there have been Europeans who heartily concurred, the superstition is not found up-country; on the contrary it is lucky if a swarm settles in a house. On the plains, too, the roe-deer and mouse-deer omens only mean a taboo of one day, but should one cross the path of a man who is bringing posts from the jungle to build his house with, he must throw them down and fetch some more another day. At Papar the centipede is looked upon with such apprehension that, should one appear upon any part of the house that is newly building, the whole structure and even the site may be abandoned.

The Muruts are no less particular than the hill Dusuns. With them it is considered a bad omen to see either the *kisi* (a bird with a strange hissing note) or the *mengapi* (whose note

is *king, king, king, tup, tup, tup*), but if the calls are repeated four times it is a sign of good fortune. If a Murut meets a snake when on a journey this is not such a bad omen as if he sees one from his house, but should a roe-deer, mouse-deer, snake, scorpion or centipede actually cross his path it is a most serious matter and he must postpone his enterprise for four days. If the omen animal does not cross the path he may sit down, light a fire, have a smoke, and then continue his journey. This is the explanation of the extraordinary Murut custom of lighting a fire whenever a halt is made upon the road. As regards deer, the Muruts' observance differs slightly from that of the Dusuns, for if they see the animal before it barks this is taken as a lucky sign, otherwise it foretells disaster.

As it is very difficult to go for a day's walk through the jungle without coming upon one or another of these omens it is not surprising that the average up-country native is not a hustler. One can picture Si Payuk, who has screwed himself up to the pitch of setting off to the coast on some long-standing business, hearing a roe-deer bark as he gets under way. "Kinaringan be praised for that," says Si Payuk piously, and turns his footsteps back to the village for another ten days' loaf at home. Similarly, omens must be a great relief to a party of young Murut bloods who have announced their intention of raiding a distant village. As they are approaching the object of their attentions a mouse-deer barks and bolts across the path, whereupon the party promptly returns home, without a stain upon its honour. At no time are omens more rigorously observed than on a raiding expedition.

For all that, the North Borneo pagan takes his omens very seriously and in this he is no more ridiculous than are those of us who will not walk under ladders, who will not start a journey on a Friday, who wish when they see a piebald horse. At the same time he is prepared to put his prejudices in his pocket when actually travelling with his District Officer. The *tuan*, he admits, is not going back because a green lizard happened to fall off a tree, nor is the *tuan* likely to let him go back—particularly if he happens to be carrying the camp bed. The shoulders of the *tuan* are broad enough to bear

the brunt of retribution and, if everything does go wrong on the trip, well, it will be pleasant to murmur, "I told you so." But if he is summoned to the District Office and meets with bad omens which delay his journey for a few days he expects this to be accepted as a valid excuse for his being late.

The Muruts do not stop at fortuitous omens; they definitely lay themselves out to learn the will of the fates by means of augury, very much in the manner of the ancient Romans. They hold that the secret of the future may be learned from the liver of a pig. Before any action of importance is undertaken by a village community it is customary to slaughter a pig, and in head-hunting times one was killed for every two men engaged upon a raid; the combatants bathed in the blood and the carcase was then cut open for the headman to inspect its liver. If the liver was marked with deep lines it was considered to foretell misfortune; if it contained hollows one of the party at least would surely find a grave; if diseased, the warriors would be wounded; if flabby, their bodies would be sluggish and inert when the time came for action. But if the liver was firm, red and unblemished it portended nothing but success. If a favourable liver was not forthcoming at first two more pigs were cut open, and if these also foreboded disaster the enterprise was abandoned.

Recourse is only had to augury on state occasions, but in the everyday lives of all the pagans the belief in dreams as portents of good or evil is universal. Among the Rundum Muruts, for instance, it is considered unlucky to dream of crocodiles or of falling; to dream of being hurt whilst out hunting foretells a wound on a raiding expedition; equally unpropitious is the vision of a hawk the night before a foray. On the other hand to dream of running after and catching a pretty girl means that good fortune is close at hand. Among the hill Dusuns to dream of a pig dying is the sign of a relative's impending death; to dream of a burning house foretells sickness and misfortune, of hunting wealth and prosperity. The coast Tuarans consider the latter dream a bad sign as it is believed that the soul has been consorting with spectral huntsmen. It is lucky to dream of going up hill and in many cases dreams, as with us, are simply supposed to go by con-

traries. Thus to dream of one dressed in fine clothes portends disaster, of one naked success; to dream of laughter is a sign of sickness, of weeping good health. Lastly, when a Dusun priestess dreams of an old man coming to ask for food this is a certain warning that the time for the festival of the *gusi*, or sacred jar, is at hand.

§ 3

The cult of the *gusi* is by far the most interesting of the religious practices of the North Borneo native; it is confined to the Dusuns of the plains, especially to those of Papar, Putatan and Tuaran, but it is gradually passing into the hands of the Tuarans, who now own most of the *gusi* in the country. There are two varieties of these sacred jars, the large *tompok* and the smaller *haing haing* or *haga*. The *tompok* stand about four feet high and are of a greenish-brown translucent porcelain; to the cold calculating eye of the European they are of Chinese manufacture but to the Dusun every *gusi* has a mythical origin and a history of its own. Some were wrought by dragons, some fell mysteriously from the skies, some were born in the heart of the jungle and were found by those whose eyes were opened when others could not see. It has been estimated that the number of true *gusi* in the country does not exceed thirty; though they are of little intrinsic value as much as £200 or £300 is paid for them, but it is rarely that they are actually sold, for every one is the property of a small limited company of relatives and quasi-relatives, each of whom is a *waris* with rights in the possession of the jar.

Besides the *gusi* there is a host of other jars which are, in Dusun eyes, of varying values, but the *gusi* is the prince and the only one which is actually worshipped.

The rites are in the hands of priestesses, invariably widowed ladies of great age, and are usually performed annually after the dream warning has been received, but in cases of long-continued sickness in a house extra ceremonies may be held. When the date of the festival has been announced all the *waris* from far and near are called together. The *gusi* (which is always kept in a railed-off enclosure out of the way of

drunken frolics) is set out in the house with a number of smaller and lesser jars placed round it or on either side. It is then wrapped round with cloths of gold and hung with valuable old bead necklaces; all the treasures both of the house and of the *waris*, such as brass-ware, gongs and clothes, are laid out, and a small boy is told off as a guard of honour to the *gusi* for the seven days' festival, during which time he is forbidden to leave his post. When all is ready the whole village is invited to attend. Even Mohammedans are not excluded, while a curious *tuan* may be accommodated with a chair, looking as out of place as would a Dusun in St. Paul's. By a generous socialistic custom those who have no fine clothes may borrow from the array that is hanging within the house. Then every night for six nights there is feasting and dancing and much drinking of rice and coconut toddy. On the evening of the sixth day a buffalo is slain as a sacrifice to the spirit of the *gusi*, and after that come forth the aged crones who are priestesses of the sacred jar. They are four or five in number and their wages and food are set out ready for them. Sitting upon the floor they offer up incantations in a strange jargon that no one else can understand. At midnight they rise and each one gives the *gusi* food and drink —a few grains of rice, placed on the jar's lip, and a little toddy, and so on to all the lesser jars in turn. Then they tap the house-posts with the small ceremonial brass knives they carry, and lead a procession round the house cutting with larger knives at the cross-beams, the spectators following suit, as though to drive any evil spirits from the threshold. Outside on the veranda a number of young sago leaves have been fixed upright, and these the people slash down, at the same time exorcizing the evil spirits. Two bamboos about twelve feet long are then taken and split in two, long thorns from the *sukam* tree are attached to these and they are hung outside the house as a sign that the ceremony has been performed. A goat or a fowl is killed and the rites are at an end, the old ladies retiring for a well-earned sleep.

But for the *hoi polloi* the night has only just begun since, like every other Dusun festivity from wake to wedding, the *gusi* ceremony ends up with an orgy, and until dawn the

night is made hideous by drunken shouts and laughter accompanied by furious beating of drum and gong. On the next day the *gusi* and the other jars are moved back to their usual resting-places and the gongs are set up facing them. The party then either get drunk again or remain drunk, as the case may be, and another night's carousal terminates what must be an exhausting festival.

As may be imagined, these affairs are not unattended with expense, with the result that the Papar and Putatan people are becoming disinclined to hold what may be called a full-dress ceremonial except when there is urgent need, so that the feast is sometimes cut down to one day, a goat being killed instead of a buffalo. But the enthusiasts of Tuaran hold their annual festival on the old scale, usually, but not necessarily, after the rice-planting. This is called *mengahou* and with it is connected, as part of the jar worship, a ceremony known as *mobog*, the object of which is to drive out all evil spirits that have collected in the village during the year. As a rule it takes place soon after the harvest. The women again play the chief parts, and a procession in full ceremonial dress parades through the village stopping at each house to perform the rites, which consist of a sacred chant and dance, one woman carrying in a basket a sucking-pig which is supposed to attract evil spirits from their hiding-places. When every house has been visited the procession makes for the river, where a small ceremonial boat, which has been prepared in readiness, is waiting, ornamented with rough carving and decked with flags and streamers; inside have been placed offerings of food and cloth to induce the spirits to embark unoffended and without demur. When the priestesses consider that this has been accomplished the little craft is pushed out into the stream and is allowed to drift down the river. Should anyone encounter it stranded upon the bank it is his bounden duty to push it off again on its journey towards the sea, lest the spirits escape and the exorcism be in vain.[1]

It is to be noted that anyone who has a share in the ownership of a sacred jar is entitled to have it in his house, where

[1] *See also* I. H. N. Evans' *Notes on Religious Beliefs, etc., of the Dusuns of the Tuaran and Tempassuk Districts*, p. 382 *et seq.*

it remains until required by another *waris*. The most elaborate care is taken when it is being transported from house to house; it is carefully wrapped in valuable old scarves; it must be carried; it may not be transported by boat (for the boat would sink with such a precious load) and if it is necessary to ferry it across a river a priestess must be present to perform an incantation.

With so many co-owners in one jar complicated and protracted lawsuits inevitably arise. These suits became so frequent and so tiresome that an ordinance was passed enacting that no *gusi* should be made the subject of litigation except definitely to enforce the rights of the co-owner. This restricted matters considerably, but of course a *waris* may still take his case to court, and if the other parties deny his claim to a share the brain of the magistrate who is unfortunate enough to hear the case reels before complicated Dusun genealogical tables for at least a week.

§ 4

The jar worship is certainly the strongest religious motive to be found among any of the pagans. Beyond their veneration for Kinabalu they stand little in awe of the powers of nature, though an eclipse of the sun or moon always startles them, as they fear that a dragon is devouring the light-giver and, in the manner of the Malays and Chinese, drive him off by yelling and by beating gongs. The Muruts believe that the moon is the sun's wife and the stars their children; but the moon is always flying across the sky from her husband because his embraces are too ardent, and it is only when there is an eclipse that it is certain they are lying in each other's arms. The Papar Dusuns also have the same idea, but think that the eclipse is caused by the sun getting exasperated at the moon's flight and throwing dirty water over her; the Tambunwha think the sun is being married, and fling their brass and gongs out of their houses as wedding-presents; while the Illanuns say that both sun and moon run on a well-defined track in the sky, each being hauled along with an enormous rope pulled by forty holy men. Between the two tracks is a large ditch into which one of the planets occasionally falls, thereby

depriving the world of its full light until an old gentleman swarms up the ropes and raises it.

The pagans have no sacred animals, nor do they show any definite veneration for any, except among families which have a totem. Mr. Moysey has told me of a Keningau family which would not eat tortoise because a tortoise had brought one of their children across a flooded river. Albino deer, which are found occasionally, are believed to be the steeds of the jungle spirits, and as such are left well alone. In several districts, too, the natives do not care to take the life of a crocodile wantonly, probably through fear of retribution from the deceased reptile's friends. Even when a man-eating crocodile starts preying upon villagers retaliation as a rule only takes the form of a head for a head. In such cases the services of a professional crocodile-catcher, usually a Brunei, are requisitioned. A white fowl is cut open and a sharpened stake about six inches long is inserted lengthways; attached to the stake is a long trail of rattan with a wooden float at one end. The fowl is sewn up and perched in a more or less life-like position on a branch a few inches above the river; it is not long before the crocodile comes along, snaps at the bait, swallows it whole and makes off. But the pointed stake sticks fast inside him and all the trapper has to do is to summon assistance, follow up the float, and haul in his catch, which generally resists with great spirit. The body is slashed to bits by the villagers and, if it happens to be a male, the genital organ is greatly prized as a charm or aphrodisiac. A public subscription for the trapper is then got up, both men and women contributing a few cents each.

In much the same way most pagans are loath to kill a snake without good cause. Snake charmers are rare, though they do exist, but Muruts and Dusuns who can charm centipedes or scorpions are not uncommon. Through the good offices of Mr. G. C. Irving, then Resident of Kudat, I came across one not long ago, an exiled Murut from Pensiangan. This man stated that he could do anything with a scorpion and, as luck would have it, we caught one a few days later in our dining-room. It was of medium size, the body measuring two inches, the length from tip of claw to tip of tail being seven; it was imprisoned in a wide-necked bottle, and Mr.

and Mrs. Irving brought out the expert the following day. The scorpion was stirred up and found to be very much alive, with its wicked-looking little bag of poison in its tail. The bottle was handed over to the Murut, who proceeded to blow gently upon the inmate, muttering a few words of incantation. Then he removed it from the bottle with his hand and spat upon it, stroking it gently at the same time. The scorpion remained inactive while this was going on, like a sleepy kitten being petted, but immediately the Murut's hand was removed it became quite lively, running up his arm and round the back of his neck, but making no attempt to sting, though the bag of poison was undoubtedly still there. The charmer assured us that it was now quite harmless, whereupon Mrs. Irving took him at his word and let it run up her arm, without (much to our relief) any ill effects. I was lost in admiration at her courage. The scorpion was then put back into the bottle, where it passed peacefully away a few days later. Our friend said that his influence would not be effective two hours after he had left it, but that if he had it with him he could keep it in a docile condition as long as he pleased. A scorpion was, he said, a very useful thing to put in one's tobacco-box or to keep prying hands off anything else one valued, and for this reason he had taken the trouble to learn the art from an old woman of his village when he was a boy.

§ 5

Although women have great influence in all stages of pagan life, yet in neither coast nor hill villages is a birth an event of great importance, and it calls for few if any ceremonies. In Murut country the expectant mother often goes away into the jungle by herself and reappears with her baby, like Mr. Stacpoole's heroine in *The Blue Lagoon*. In other cases old women are employed as midwives, but unfortunately their knowledge of what is necessary for the mother and her child is of the most rudimentary nature, with the result that infant mortality is very great.

However, the enthusiasm a native lacks in his welcome into the world is compensated by the gusto and pomp with which he is ushered out of it. When a man is dying, his

family assembles and beats the posts of the house, calling his name in the hope of inducing the spirit to remain in its earthly tenement. If these efforts are without avail the corpse is covered up and next morning the household gongs are beaten long and loud, and the women begin their wailing in shrill nasal tones. By these means the relatives and friends of the deceased are apprised of the melancholy event that has taken place, and come to the house with all speed. The body is washed, and then dressed in what were the deceased's best or favourite clothes. If these are not sufficient others are supplied by relatives.

Most of the Dusuns and many of the Muruts bury their dead in large earthenware jars (not the *gusi*) of varying value. If the deceased during his lifetime has expressed a desire to be buried in any particular jar his wish is scrupulously respected, for it is feared that otherwise his ghost might return and make itself unpleasant. The usual method of interment is to cut off the top of the jar to enable it to receive the body in a sitting position, knees drawn up to chin; the jar is then covered with a gong and closed up with gum. Thus sealed it is kept in the house for seven days while the funeral rites are performed. The gongs and drums boom out incessantly; there is feasting and much drinking. As at an Irish wake, every one thoroughly enjoys himself, though of course the lavishness of the entertainment depends largely on the position of the deceased and on the wealth of his relatives. In the meantime the grave has been dug and a kind of unwalled hut erected with a bamboo fence to keep prowling pigs away. This is often carved and elaborately painted with crude scroll work in red on a white ground. The best examples are to be found in the Papar district. When the jar is moved from the house it is customary to pull up the floor planks on which it has rested and to throw them into the jungle. Before the jar is interred the bottom is broken slightly to enable the spirit of the dead man to emerge and set forth on its journey to Kinabalu. When the grave has been filled in, it is sprinkled with the blood of a newly killed fowl; rice and toddy are left by the grave-side to support the spirit upon its journey; the deceased's mats and pillows and spare clothes are hung up

within the little hut, which is decorated with flags of red and white cloth, and over all is set an opened umbrella to keep the soul of the departed dry. Copious libations at the grave terminate the proceedings; the funeral party then returns to the house, all who have taken any active part in the burial being careful to wash before they enter, and the house-steps are slashed with knives as a precaution against the return of the dead man's spirit.

Proceedings are not always so elaborate as this. The family of the deceased may not be in a position to afford a jar sufficiently commodious to contain the corpse, in which case it would be buried in a coffin made of wood or of strips from the trunk of the sago tree, a small jar being placed upon the grave. When the family is not wealthy enough to erect a hut a structure made of cloth is substituted. At Tuaran it is not unusual to take a jar from an old grave when four or five generations have passed away and there is considered little likelihood of there being any remains; if any old bones are found within they are thrown into the river. This custom does not exist outside Tuaran, and the desecration of graves is looked upon by all pagans with the utmost horror, in former times the penalty for such a crime being death. In the Papar neighbourhood, however, if a near relative of a deceased person is troubled with persistent sickness, he attributes it to the jar which contains his relative's remains not being comfortable, and he will disinter it and set it on the side of the open grave for an airing, replacing it in a few days' time.

The peculiar Tambunwha custom of embalming the dead by means of camphor has been noticed already; the legs of the mummy are thrust into the body, which is painted blue, and, to complete the effect, a pig's tusk is put into the mouth.

The Dusuns of Banggi and the Marudu people bury their dead not in jars but in wooden coffins; what they gain by this economy they lose by the extravagant custom of breaking gongs, knives and other useful articles and burying them with the deceased, who, it is said, will take them with him to Kinabalu, where he will find them whole again.

A dead Rundum and Pensiangan Murut is also buried in a wooden coffin, but after a year or so the grave is opened in

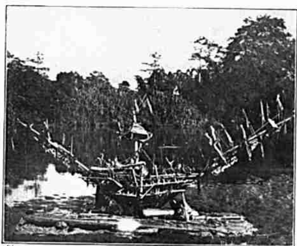


Photo. Dr. I. Nieuwenhuis.

A CEREMONIAL BOAT.

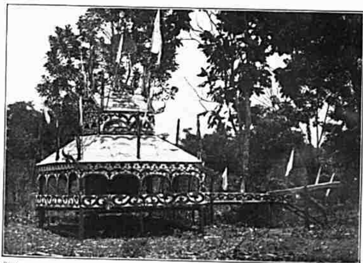
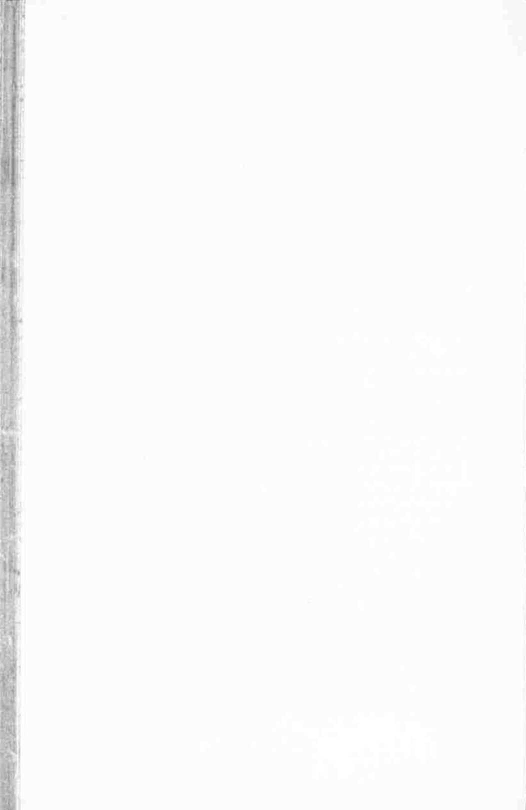


Photo. Man Sing.

A DUSUN GRAVE.

[To face p. 301.



order that the remains of the deceased may be removed to a jar. The mouth of this is closed with a gong in the time-honoured way, and the rude *atap* shelter over the grave is strengthened or renewed, though, since the river trade with Dutch Borneo has been opened up, hideous corrugated iron sheets not infrequently take the place of the soft-toned *atap*. Gongs, clothes and other articles are hung up within but are never desecrated, no matter how far away the grave may be from human habitation. When these matters have been attended to with due ceremony, a second wake is held on a scale even more generous than the first.

The graves of the pagans are found sometimes alone and isolated, sometimes clustered together on a hill-side. They receive little upkeep, and the old ones lie forgotten and neglected, often completely hidden by jungle growth. Of late years the Government has wisely set aside special ground for use as native cemeteries, or called upon the headman to point out the village burial-grounds in order that they may be registered.

§ 6

The average pagan mother has considerable say in the concerns of her children, especially as regards marriage. If she has a son it is she who chooses his bride. She picks out what an English mother would call a "thoroughly nice girl," that is to say one more notable for her industry than for her looks, and, without a word to her son of her intentions, sends by an old woman a present of betel-nut, *sireh* leaf and tobacco to the mother of the selected maid. This gift may not be returned forthwith; in any case it must be kept seven days. During this time the parents of the girl talk things over, and, without mentioning the proposed marriage, the mother asks her daughter what kind of dreams she has been having of late; if her dreams have been bad ones, if for instance she has dreamed of a burning house, or of falling from a tree, or of walking on slippery ground, the gift is returned, and there the matter ends. On the other hand if the girl's dreams have been good the gift is kept, and the prospective bridegroom is packed off to stay for a month at the house of his future parents-in-law. This is the first inkling either of the young couple has that a

marriage is in store for them, but if, after the month has passed, the girl has had no ill-omened dreams, the betrothal is definitely announced. It will be seen that the girl has more loopholes of escape than the man, for, if the selected groom fails to please her fancy, she has but to tell her mother that she dreamt of falling off a log and negotiations cease. But if she is content, the next thing is to arrange the amount of the dowry or *brian*. At Papar this must be identical with the dowry of the girl's mother. If the old lady's portion was twelve buffaloes, six gongs, five jars and four cannon, her daughter must have the same. This *brian*, so far from being a settlement by the father on the bride, is paid over by the bridegroom to her father, so that a daughter is always looked upon as an asset in a native family (the coast Mohammedans follow the same custom) and marriage for a man is an expensive business. When the dowry is a heavy one, not only relatives but even friends must come to his assistance, if for instance only five of the buffaloes demanded are forthcoming it is incumbent on them to put up the remaining seven. Any such loans are paid back when a member of the lender's family gets married himself. This sort of thing often becomes very involved and all manner of complications naturally follow, but nowadays the value of the average *brian* does not exceed £10 ; in some districts, such as Tempassuk, it is not paid till the birth of a child. There is no actual marriage ceremony, but when the bridegroom and his friends approach the bride's house her attendants bar the door and a mimic battle ensues, a symbolical custom also practised by the Mohammedan tribes. During the struggle the bride generally escapes to another house ; she may return that night or, if she be very coy, she may stay there for a period varying from a week to a month until the requirements of modesty are satisfied and she is induced to surrender herself to her husband ; he, poor wretch, may not follow her, but must remain in his father-in-law's house until she condescends to return. Her absence, however, does not prevent the wedding-feast from taking place ; a buffalo is killed, much toddy is produced, and every one becomes extremely intoxicated, the bridegroom paying for the party.

After marriage the bridegroom becomes the liegeman of his

wife's family, dwelling in his father-in-law's house for at least six months, but in districts such as Tuaran and Papar, where the communal village house has been abandoned, he is allowed to move after that period and builds a house of his own. It may be added that bachelors of over twenty-five are almost unknown among the pagans and that old maids do not exist.

If the marriage proves childless the husband may, with the permission of his first wife, take a second, but he must keep her in a separate house; a double establishment involves considerable expense, and a native with two wives is only found in rare instances. But among the Papar people if one of two brothers dies and leaves a widow, the surviving brother, whether he be single or married, is bound to take this woman as his wife. She may subsequently marry another man, but only with her second husband's permission.

The marriage customs throughout the country do not vary to any substantial degree, though in some districts etiquette is considerably relaxed. Among the Muruts especially, affairs are usually more straightforward; a youth may choose his own wife and may propose to her himself, though his mother must approve of his choice before a marriage can take place. According to Mr. E. G. Grant there is an exceptional custom in the Pensiangan district where, as soon as a husband finds that his wife is pregnant, he contracts an alliance with the expected child of another family. If the children turn out to be of the same sex, the second father substitutes the child of a relative. Murut wedding-feasts are often even longer and more convivial than those of the Dusuns, for each guest brings his own contribution, and marriage is a most expensive luxury for the Murut bridegroom as the dowry does not end with marriage, but four more instalments may be claimed by the "in-laws"—the first when a child is born and the others extending over a period of six years provided that the child lives. If a Murut's wife dies his mother-in-law may give him another of her daughters or a second wife who is no relation, but he may not marry again of his own free choice and, by the old Murut law, a breach of this observance rendered him liable to death at the hands of his father-in-law. In the

same way, if there are no children of the marriage he may take to his bosom as many as four wives, but all must be produced by the original mother-in-law.

Although it does not pay such regard to relationship by marriage, the Dusun and Murut Table of Affinity is in many respects much more strict than ours. Not only is incest, as we define it, looked upon with utmost abhorrence, but the marriage of even third cousins is regarded as incestuous. Of old the penalty for a marriage between first cousins (almost an unheard-of thing) would have been either death by drowning or by stabbing, such an act being considered to bring disaster upon the whole community. This prejudice, which is an excellent safeguard against intermarriage, is universal among all the pagans of North Borneo, and the wilder the people the more strictly is the law observed; the Rundum Muruts even go the length of forbidding marriage as long as there exists any remembered relationship between two parties. The penalties for intermarriage vary with the gravity of the offence and in different parts of the country, but the average judgment of a native court would be for the woman to pay a fine of a small pig and a half-grown buffalo, the man a large pig and a full-grown buffalo. The man would also pay a dowry of seven buffaloes, seven pigs, seven cows, seven jars and seven gongs, one part going to the girl herself, one to her mother, and one to the rest of the family; in addition to this a pig would have to be sacrificed annually for seven years. If a child were born both parties would be mulcted of a pig, which would be killed to ward off any evil visitation that might come upon the community. In fact, so great is the horror with which intermarriage is regarded that, if the guilty ones persist in living together, neither their own village nor any village near will harbour them, for fear of divine displeasure, and any plague, flood, drought or famine is invariably ascribed to some undetected act of incest.

As is the case with most savage peoples, the code of morality set up by the North Borneo pagan for his womenfolk is stricter after marriage than before it. The promiscuous love affairs of the Dusun or Murut damsel are usually winked at, but if there are untoward results the man is compelled either to marry

her or to pay a heavy fine, so that there are few illegitimate children. To the credit of the pagan girl it may be said that she is not so frail as her Mohammedan sister, but the ease with which a gallant lover may creep underneath the house in the dead of night and slip through the loose floor into his lady's arms makes virtue rather hard.

Once she is married such incidents are expected to cease and so, to a great extent, they do. Taken as a whole the standard of morality among married Dusuns and Muruts is comparatively high. At the same time divorce is not difficult. It can be obtained by the husband on the grounds of adultery, incompatibility and, usually, of sterility; by the wife on the grounds of adultery, non-support, ill-treatment, and in some districts, such as Papar, if a second wife is taken without her consent. The unwritten law by which a husband may kill both his wife and her lover if he finds them *in flagrante delicto* holds good among both Mohammedans and pagans, and is to some extent countenanced by the courts. Adultery is, both under Islamic and local native law, a criminal offence for which the penalty used to be death, even when the guilty couple was not actually discovered by the husband, the method of execution in one part of the country being to place the lovers upon the ground, face to face, and to drive a stake through the pair of them. To-day measures are less drastic and erring wives possibly more numerous. In olden times a Dusun or a Murut youth was not counted a man until he had acquired at least one head. Now he does not consider himself a man until he has figured as the co-respondent in at least one divorce case. This is especially the case at Keningau, where the standard of pagan morality is possibly lowest. In most parts of the country the native law is similar; if the injured husband is willing to take back his lady, and if she is willing to go, she is fined £3 and the co-respondent £6; if, however, her better half will have none of her the fine is £6, and £12 or six months' imprisonment for her lover. Of the latter fines half goes to the Government and half as damages to the husband, who is also entitled to the return of the *brian*. It may be said that native husbands are, as a class, long-suffering, and it is only in aggravated cases that a decree *a mensa et thoro* is pronounced, but in some

districts, such as Keningau and Papar, a divorced wife may not marry the co-respondent, and an interesting fact has been noted by Mr. Grant among the Pensiangan Muruts, namely that if a widow errs during her period of mourning she is liable to the same penalty as for incest.

§ 7

The religious and domestic customs of the Bajaus, Sulus, Illanuns and other Mohammedans follow the law of Islam and so need little comment. Almost every village has its mosque; marriage ceremonies and funeral rites are performed by the local *imaum*. At the same time the savage superstitions of an older day still lie beneath the veneer of Islam and play an important part in the lives of the common people.

The ghosts of the departed are particularly feared, and it is believed that an evil-liver who cannot gain admission into Paradise will come back and haunt the village in which he dwelt. Usually he is invisible, but sometimes his presence is unmistakably made known by the very earthly smell which clings to him as he flits through his accustomed haunts. The late Mr. W. H. Hastings, who was an officer of the British North Borneo Service for over twenty years and one time Deputy-Governor of Labuan, once encountered such a case on the Labuk River. He was sitting down to dinner one night when he was aroused by yells from his Sulu servants' quarters, a small house about one hundred yards across the garden. Taking his revolver he ran over in the moonlight to the house, which consisted of a verandah and one room, with walls of split bamboo and a floor of *nibong* slats, raised several feet off the ground. On climbing the ladder Mr. Hastings found four women huddled together in abject terror, screaming that a ghost was abroad and that it stank. Mr. Hastings did what he could to reassure them, then, shutting the door of the house, he sat down and waited for the ghost. A quarter of an hour passed and nothing happened; the stillness of the evening was only broken by the droning of the mosquitoes and an occasional moan from one of the women. Mr. Hastings was beginning to think that he might as well go back to his interrupted meal when, without any warning, it came, pervad-

ing the whole house and turning him sick and cold—the suffocating stench of a dead body. At the same time there was a rapping at the door. The women shrieked and Mr. Hastings flung the door open, but saw not a sign of ghost or beast or man; yet no one could have got across the wide verandah and through the garden unseen in the clear moonlight. Search under the house revealed only the coconut husks and other refuse inevitable to every native dwelling. Mr. Hastings shouted out that he would shoot at anyone he found playing the fool, and sat down once more in no very pleasant frame of mind to wait—for what he hardly knew. All was still for half an hour and then, as suddenly as before, the sickening, stifling smell was in the house again; the horror of it was that he could see nothing, there was only the unseen filthiness that seemed to envelop the whole house. With his heart going chunk-chunk like the paddles of a native boat he waited by the door for the knocking; it never came, but the centre post rocked. Mr. Hastings sprang to the post and emptied his revolver through the opening of the floor. The shaking ceased and the thing faded as before, leaving no sign behind, nor did it come again.

I have told this story as Mr. Hastings told it to me one evening many years ago on the verandah of the Kudat Residency. He offered no explanation, but the affair was beyond the realm of practical joke, for in the tropics (as he truly observed) there is no mistaking the indescribable smell of a rotting corpse. The Sulus said that it was a slave who had been buried ten days before, returning from the grave because the Gates of Paradise were barred. They averred that such cases were not rare and I have met natives who testified to having had similar experiences. When the Sulus fill in a grave they leave a small aperture by means of which a spirit unaccepted by Allah may return to earth, and I have often wondered if this may not be a contributory cause of the apparitions.

Not only do the coast Mohammedans firmly believe in these graveyard ghosts, but they are no whit behind the pagans in peopling rock and stream and jungle with evil spirits. The chief of these is the Spectral Huntsman, whose story is known to all Malays. Long ago he was a Kadayan and was sent

out into the jungle by his wife to catch a doe mouse-deer with young. Catch one he did, but, being hungry and far from home, he ate it, thinking he would be sure to kill another on the morrow. But from that day to this he has never found a second *plandok* and his spirit ranges ever through the jungle on its fruitless quest, a warning to all husbands not to fail in missions set them by their wives.

It is strange how *Si Plandok*—Mr. Mouse-deer—figures in Malayan stories. The Bajaus, Illanuns and Sulus know them all, and many of the pagans have learnt them too. Usually *Si Plandok* himself is the hero, and whether he is pitting his cleverness against man or beast he always wins the day with the aid of a very simple ruse. He is the exact counterpart of the Brer Rabbit of our folk tales, for every one who has read those little pink pennyworths called " Books for the Bairns " remembers how those who tried conclusions with Brer Rabbit always came off second-best.

Si Plandok is quite dauntless. The bigger his opponent the better he is pleased. He goes on a fishing expedition with the elephant, the buffalo, the goat and the stag, and manages to decamp with the whole catch by the simple expedient of plastering his friends' eyes with fish scales while they are sleeping after their exertions, and then yelling out that the hunters are upon them. He falls down an old well, but by persuading the buffalo, the goat and the stag (his favourite dupes) to come down for a feed of " earth's liver " he gets them standing on top of one another, clambers up and gets away. He makes a bet with the bear that he will be the first to kick a hole in a tree. They start kicking on opposite sides, but *Si Plandok* has persuaded his friend the beetle to do the work for him, and only has to displace the earth with which the hole has been plastered up.

As a rule there is nothing very dramatic about *Si Plandok* and his exploits. Most of his victories are due to the stupidity of his adversaries, but he is quick to snatch an opportunity, quick to size up a weak spot in his opponent's armour. *Si Plandok* is a type found in every folk-lore. He might be called the symbol of consolation. Folk-lore and fairy tales in the past have grown up among the people. They are the product

of the cottage rather than of the court. Through them runs, like a pattern through a fabric, the triumph of the weak over the strong, of the small over the great, of the poor over the rich. *Si Plandok* getting the better of the bear is Brer Rabbit getting the better of the Wolf, of Little Claus getting the better of Great Claus, of the youngest son getting the better of the world. In the fairy tale it must always be the person underneath who comes out on top, just because in real life that generally does not happen. In the world to-day the bear and the wolf would have eaten *Si Plandok* and Brer Rabbit, Great Claus would have bested Little Claus in the end, and the eldest son would have married the king's daughter while his youngest brother would have been glad to get a job as a planter somewhere east of Suez. And because life is like that the humble people who were the inventors of the fairy tale made the weak win simply as a consolation to themselves, so that in the people's stories, if nowhere else, the poor man might taste the fruits of riches and the downtrodden the pleasures of success.

The simple Malayan *plandok* stories contrast strangely with the Sulu ghosts or with the very ghastly stories of vampirism that the Bajaus of Tempassuk tell of their neighbours the Illanuns. A vampire, properly speaking, is a dead man who returns from the grave to suck the blood of the living. The Illanuns, on the contrary, while living are said to prey upon the dead, but I will call them vampires for want of a better word. No Bajau cares to stay a night in an Illanun village unless he is well acquainted with his host, and if an Illanun stranger comes to a Bajau house the inmates will go off and privily burn some cock's feathers or shavings of buffalo-horn to test their visitor; for no vampire is proof against either of these charms and, as soon as the smoke reaches his nostrils, he will flee away out of the house as if pursued. The Bajaus watch their dead for many days, but they declare that the vampires have the power of changing themselves into spirits, and that even when a man is dying they will come wheeling round the house at night; so ravenous are they for human flesh that they will devour every part of a dead body save one. That alone is fatal for them to eat.

Once, so the Bajau story goes, retribution overtook a gang of these ghouls through the stratagem of a very brave small boy. An old Bajau called Kembura died in Tempassuk, leaving behind him seven sons. When he was buried, according to the Bajau custom, his eldest son Ali was set to watch beside the grave. All night long he watched, and all night the Illanun vampires were circling round eager for their newly-buried prey. It was all that Ali could do not to run away, and in the morning he swore that he dared not face another night. On the second evening Ahmat, Kembura's second son, took up his post, and the same thing happened over again; the vampires became more daring than before and even began to scratch away the earth.

So it went on for six nights; every night the vampires came nearer to their prey and every morning each watcher vowed that he dared not watch again. On the seventh night it was the turn of Daud, the youngest of the seven sons. His brothers tried to persuade him to stay at home, "For," said they, "to-night nothing can stop the evil ones from snatching our father's body from its resting-place and, should they find you, perhaps you will not see the dawn."

But little Daud answered stoutly that even if he could not stop the evil ones he would find a way to avenge his father. As the moon was rising he set off to the lonely graveyard upon the hill and hid himself in some bushes that fringed the clearing. It was not long before the vampires came screeching through the air until there were thirty of them clustered round the grave. Their shapes were not those of human beings, and were terrible to behold; Daud's heart grew sick within him, and as he saw them drag his father's body from the earth he crouched lower still behind the leaves that covered him.

The vampires were too busy to notice him, for they were mad with unholy glee at having got their prey at last. Some fetched sticks to make a fire, some drew water from a stream near-by, others began to cut the body into little pieces for the pot. All was chopped up, all save that one part which even vampires may not eat. This was flung away into the night, and no one saw Daud steal away to find it as all gathered round and made merry over Kembura's bones.

When the vampires had gorged themselves they put aside what remained of their repast for the morning and laid down and slept. Then Daud stole out of his hiding-place and, with his knife, cut into little pieces that which the vampires had flung away. These he threw into the cooking-pot and, having mixed them well with the remains, went back again to watch.

An hour before dawn the vampires bestirred themselves and made ready for a morning meal before they vanished to their homes. Once more they gathered round the fire, and once more they stuffed themselves with old Kembura's flesh. But as soon as each one had eaten his share straightway he dropped down prostrate, for unwittingly he had eaten the forbidden thing that Daud had mixed within the pot.

As soon as the last had fallen lifeless Daud ran back and roused the villagers, and when they reached the graveyard the sun had risen behind the hill so that all could see the bodies of thirty dead Illanuns stretched upon the ground in human form.

The superstition against these unpleasant gentry dies very hard in Tempassuk. Not long ago I engaged an Illanun as a coolie on my estate at Kudat. He was rather an unprepossessing-looking person with a shifty eye, and it was not long before I was told in confidence by the Bajaus that he was well known to be a dangerous vampire. It appeared that his neighbours in Tempassuk had been greatly relieved to see the last of him, and I began to feel some concern that my peaceful plantation should be made a dumping-ground for body-snatchers. No untoward incident occurred, however, and though the Bajaus said that his heart reverberated like a gong when anybody in the neighbourhood gave up the ghost, he did his daily quota of work. But periodically, for no particular reason given, he would come and ask for leave to return to his district, often regardless of whether there was a boat or not. There were those who said he flew to and fro, but he always reappeared in four or five days' time and that was all I wanted. At the same time I often wondered if his mysterious absences were in any way connected, as his enemies confidently avowed, with funerals in Tempassuk.

CHAPTER XII

NATIVE AFFAIRS

ALTHOUGH the natives of North Borneo must be called savages, they have a primitive culture of a comparatively high order. They build boats and houses, they are farmers, they weave cloth, make mats and baskets, forge many of the rough tools and weapons they require and, in addition to this, they have a sense of the artistic, crude though it may be, as is shown in rude carvings, in paintings on their graves and in the ornamentation of their weapons.

It might be supposed that the Mohammedans would be the most advanced and consequently the most prosperous, but this is not the case. They are mainly dependent on the sea for a livelihood and all make boats of a kind, but the best builders are the Bruneis of Sipitong and Bongawan; they are noted in particular for the *pakerangan*, a canoe-shaped boat, but wide of beam and about thirty feet long, with a single square sail, or paddles for river work. *Prahu* is the general Malay word for boat, but the *prahu* proper is essentially a sea-going craft, built for long journeys, with a high figure-head and a carved stern, long sweeps and one or more large sails. It was the old piratical craft and is rarely seen to-day. The *gobang*, on the other hand, is merely a dug-out or hollowed log and is used for river work. The *sapit* is built more in the European style with a keel and rudder; it has a small cabin and is usually owned by a chief or other native of some substance. But the most picturesque boat to be seen in Borneo waters is undoubtedly the *dapang* of the Sulus, long and very narrow with double or single outriggers of bamboo set four feet from the side to prevent it from capsizing. Akin to the *dapang*

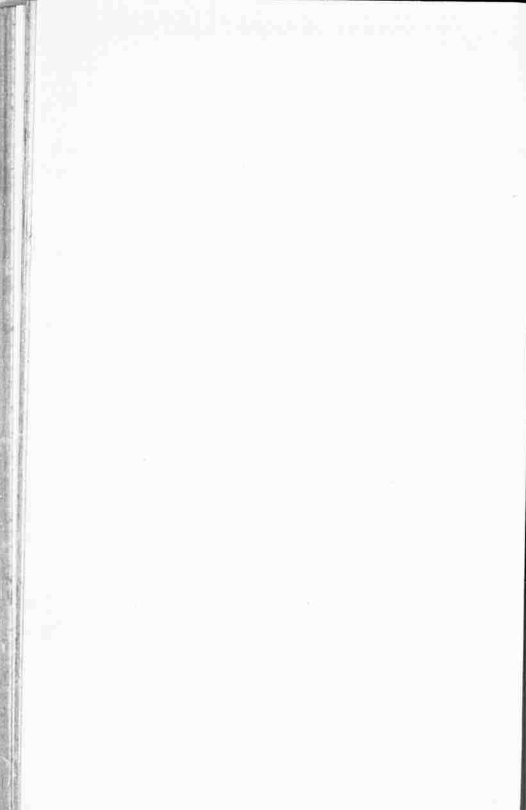
Photo. D. J. Rutter.

A Bajau boat.

Photo. D. J. Rutter.

Under sail.

[To face p. 316.



are the *lipa lipa*, the favourite boats of the Simporna Bajaus, who take great pride in them, often carving the gunwale elaborately and adorning the sail (which is in the shape of a horseshoe with a square top) by sewing on to it a dragon or similar device. With this single spread of canvas both *dapang* and *lipa lipa* can sail at a tremendous pace with a fair breeze, but few if any of the native boats have the power to beat up against wind.

The chief occupation of the coast native is fishing. He excels in flinging his three-pronged bamboo spear, and any calm evening you may see him balancing himself gracefully in the bows of his boat as it glides through the water with a torch flaming in the bows to attract the fish. He is equally adept at throwing the *rambat*, a small casting-net with weighted sides, or fishing with a line from a kind of crow's nest on three posts set tripod-fashion over the water. From the same tripod he will hang a small seine net or he may use a trawl net, either with boats in deep water or walking breast deep along the beach, or sweep for fish with a long net one end of which is fastened to a stake. His ordinary method, however, is by means of the *kilong*, a series of bamboo enclosures, the outer one led up to by long fences slanting seawards; each enclosure leads by a narrow neck to one smaller than the last until the fish, deflected by the fences as they go out to sea with the ebb tide, find themselves at length in a small cage about six feet square from which there is no escape. These *kilong* are often elaborately made and are usually set just inside the mouths of rivers or upon sand-banks in sheltered bays. Once erected there is a steady income for the owner without undue toil, for all he has to do is to keep the stakes in repair and remove the catch when he feels inclined. Among the Sulus custom allows any passer-by to take enough fish for a meal from a *kilong*, provided that the fish are speared.

The important fishing industry of North Borneo has been long neglected. It is entirely in the hands of the natives and of a few Chinamen who have neither system nor enterprise. The seas teem with fish, yet it is often difficult in the coast towns to obtain enough for breakfast; there is also an enormous demand for dried fish which is not half met. The fisheries have

great possibilities, and the Chartered Company would do well to encourage their development.

The seas which wash the shores of Borneo also yield much besides fish. Perhaps in all the world there is none whose produce is so abundant. The coasts are fringed with shoals and reefs and little islands, and it is here that the treasures of the deep are to be found. The coast people collect edible seaweed, which is dried and sent to China to be converted into a slightly insipid jelly ; turtles' eggs and tortoise-shell, torn most cruelly from the living flesh ; sharks' fins, to be boiled down as soup for the Chinese epicure ; sea-slug or *bêche-de-mer*, which is split open, dried and likewise sold for soup, and a variety of other sea produce which may be found lying in the sun outside the Chinese shops, strange to see but stranger still to smell.

Such pearl-oyster beds as there are in North Borneo waters are the hereditary rights of certain native chiefs ; the Government stipulates that all pearls found must be sold by auction, and claims ten per cent of the amount realized. Beds, usually to be found on shoals where the strongest currents run, and lying from five to twenty fathoms down on a sandy or coral bottom, exist in Marudu Bay, in the Malawali Channel and on the east coast, and are at present entirely worked by natives, who use no apparatus and can dive to a depth of six fathoms. Where the shell lies too deep the bottom is dragged with a kind of rake with curved prongs. One or two attempts have been made to exploit the beds in the past by Europeans and by Japanese, but without success, for the pearls found cannot compare in size or lustre with those of the neighbouring Sulu Islands. Most of them are sold to the Chinese, who value them very highly, and China is also the chief market for seed pearls, which are used chiefly for medicinal purposes. Mother-of-pearl shells are themselves valuable, especially the larger ones, which reach ten and sometimes twelve inches in diameter, the finest coming from Simporna ; they have a variety of trade uses, such as for inlaying cabinet work, for knife-handles and for buttons ; and they may be found on many a Borneo dinner-table, polished and set with silver, as desert-plates.

All along the coast of North Borneo are groups of natives who obtain a living by making salt from the *nipah* palm,

which grows in the brackish waters of the tidal rivers. The roots of the palm are boiled and the residue is a coarse grey salt which, though unpalatable enough to look at, always finds a ready market with the Dusuns. The methods employed are very crude, and with a little more outlay and trouble the quality of the salt might be improved considerably.

On the west coast many of the Mohammedans, particularly the Bruneis and the Bajaus of North Keppel, are become, as it were, amphibious. While remaining a sea-going people they have settled on the land. There, to parody Mr. Kipling, each has turned into—

> A kind of ruddy harumphrodite,
> Fisher and farmer too.

In a small way they cultivate dry rice and bananas, sugar-cane, potatoes and the like, and own a few head of cattle and a pony or two.

§ 2

The agricultural activities of the natives, both Mohammedan and pagan, as well as the collection of jungle produce, have been described already. The native gets his living, usually a bare one, from either the sea, the land or the jungle. Although he certainly has a crude sense of the decorative, he has few arts and crafts that he practises on a large scale, and several of these are fast dying out. When they are gone there will be but little record of them, except perhaps here and there in the collections of private individuals, for, strange as it may seem, North Borneo does not possess a museum. This is a matter which the Chartered Company should take up without delay. The outlay required would not be large, and the country has so many treasures in the way of curios, arts and crafts and natural history that it could not but be attractive to the general public and of great value to the ethnologist and naturalist. In a few years it will be too late. Even to-day there are many scarce things, such as shields and native armour, which could have been obtained without difficulty ten years ago; in another ten years much of what is left now will have been

washed away by the waves of time, and many of the arts and crafts may have vanished altogether.

First and foremost among these must be placed the weaving done by the Illanun and (to a lesser extent) by the Bajau women of the Tempassuk district. The looms are primitive enough, yet they turn out head-cloths, handkerchiefs, and *sarong* (known locally as *kain ampik* and *kain moga*), the work of which is excellent. The designs are formal and the colours a little bright, yet the effect is very pleasing, for what would not harmonize in a London drawing-room seems to fit in with the scheme of things when looked at under an Eastern sun. In the old days the thread was spun from native cotton but, nowadays, it is less trouble to buy it at the Chinese shops. These women also embroider the coats and trousers of their menfolk with great skill. The Dusun weaving is much coarser and less artistic; in some parts of the country native-spun cotton is still used, in others a substitute is found in the *lamba* grass, which makes a kind of calico, stiff and very durable; this is dyed dark-blue or black, being made into hoods and short skirts for the women, and (more rarely) into coats for the men. Less weaving is done by the Muruts. In former years what few clothes they wore were made from tree-bark, which was soft and warm though it soon became inexpressibly filthy; war-coats were decorated by the women with shells, beads and pieces of looking-glass. Many of the old men still cling to their bark, but the younger generation get cloth from the Chinese.

The Pagans manufacture their own dyes from various roots, blue and black being used for cloth, red and black for rattan. This coloured rattan is worn round the waist in ample coils and is used in the manufacture of native hats, an industry also in the hands of the women. Districts have their own distinctive shape, size and design, but all give protection both from the sun and rain except perhaps the Murut raiding-hats, which are small and round with loose ends of rattan rising above the crown and tipped with white cocks' feathers. The hats are made with great skill, and with their tassels and coloured patterns they have a very decorative effect, so much so that there are in North Borneo few European bungalows

which have not at least a couple as ornaments upon their walls.

The weaving of mats from rattan or various coloured grasses is also in the hands of the women. Here again different districts, especially up-country, have their own designs, each of which has a definite representation and meaning. Innumerable baskets and receptacles are also made; this and mat-making being the chief occupation of the young girls.

Among the industries and crafts practised by the men the manufacture of weapons and native implements is important, although, like weaving, it is on the wane owing to the enterprise of the ubiquitous Chinese trader. In many villages, however, native blacksmiths are still to be found, though they rarely turn out such weapons as the Illanuns and Bajaus turned out in days gone by—blades cunningly damascened, ivory hilts inlaid with gold and silver, sheaths delicately carved. Now it is only in exceptional cases that any weapon beyond the *parang*, or universal cutting-knife, is forged. Rude ploughs are made on the plains, iron-tipped, but no ponies are shod.

The Muruts and some of the Dusuns still make their own blow-pipes, which usually have spear-heads attached to them. The pipe itself is about eight feet in length, a piece of hard wood bored very carefully with a kind of awl; a mark for sighting is sometimes put on to the spear-head end and a brass mouthpiece to the other. The darts are thin sticks of bamboo about six inches long; at one end they are pointed and barbed, and smeared with poison from the *upas* tree, while the other end is embedded in a piece of circular pith or softwood to make them carry true; they are kept in a watertight bamboo case which is conveniently made so that it can hang on the loin-cloth. No bows and arrows are either made or used by the pagans, but I once came across an old Dusun of Pau who made me a bow; it had a single arrow attached to it by rattan, and was apparently a type used long ago for spearing fish.

The importation of western goods, besides affecting the manufacture of native weapons, has caused a falling-off in the silversmith's business. The art of working in silver is known both to the Bruneis and to the Illanuns, whilst some work in

brass as well. Oblong and crescent-shaped silver *chelapa*—betel-nut boxes—and round *chupu*—tobacco boxes—are made occasionally and are much sought by European collectors, but silver is difficult to obtain, as the simple expedient of melting down dollars of Straits Settlements currency has now been forbidden. Long hairpins of silver, and sometimes gold, are made, and gold ear-rings, and, if the sovereigns are forthcoming, the ornament which every Malayan damsel covets—a brooch made of "pouns" or, better still, a set of buttons for her coat. The brass pots and boxes made by the Illanuns are very artistic, but genuine examples are becoming hard to find.

North Borneo has a distinct craft of its own in the making of rings and bracelets from the *kima* and *sulau* shells. The ornaments turned out are a pure dull white, and the work is as symmetrical as if it had been machine-turned, though the *kima* is chipped with a chisel and the *sulau* worked with stone, the polishing of both being done with stones and sand. Kolumbai, in the Tempassuk district, was formerly the seat of the industry, and the clinking of the chisel against the shell used to be a distinctive sound of the village, but now most of the Illanuns and Tempassuk Bajaus have learnt the work, and many of the Dusuns have followed their example.

Another industry in the Tempassuk district, which is the most interesting in the country for native arts and crafts, is pottery. This is chiefly in the hands of the women, and the main output consists of cooking-pots and other articles for household use. The clay is mixed with sand, shaped with a stone (for no potter's wheel is used) and finished off with a piece of wood. It is set to dry in the sun, baked by burning leaves and refuse underneath it and is then glazed with resin. The work is primitive but it serves its purpose. It is a great pity that the natives cannot be induced to take up the industry on a large scale. A zealous District Officer recently tried to start the manufacture of flower-pots. He created a demand among the ladies of Jesselton, but unfortunately he could never persuade his people to produce the supply and the industry had to be abandoned. A potter is occasionally met with among the Dusuns; at Tiong there used to be an old woman who,

although quite blind, still pursued her calling which she declined to teach anyone else; she was in the habit of declaring that her art would die out with her, and used to cackle with laughter at the thought.

In a country where there is no written language such things are easy, and I have never found any trace of native writing among the pagans, nor even any serious examples of drawing, though their efforts in decoration by means of scrolls and designs are constantly in evidence. Most natives, if given a sharp knife and a piece of wood, can carve a rough pattern. This is particularly the case with the Sulus, who take great pains over the decoration of their boats and paddles and erect elaborately carved wooden posts on the graves of their dead. In fact carving among the Bajaus and Sulus might almost be called a hobby.

§ 3

Carving is, to all intents and purposes, the only hobby that serves any useful purpose, and they have few others. Among all the Mohammedans gambling in every shape and form is the king of indoor pastimes. All Bajaus, Illanuns and Sulus are born gamblers; all are *habitués* of the local gambling-farm and, besides playing in the farm, they have a number of card games of their own. *Pakau*, the most common, may be played by any number; each player is dealt three cards, and the highest aggregate of pips wins, disregarding the tens—thus nine takes precedence of twenty-six—a poor kind of whisky-poker; *padis* is similar to "old maid," *chabut* modified *trente-et-un*, *ongkien* three-handed nap elaborated, *tugal bunoh* played by six is whist with a tinge of euchre. In *padal* there are three players who have eight cards each. The game resembles nap but the declaration of trumps (which run diamonds, hearts, clubs and spades) smacks of bridge, red cards taking lower values than themselves, black higher; that is to say a ten of hearts will take a seven as with us, but a seven of clubs will take a ten.

Any pastime that lends itself to a gamble appeals to the

coast Mohammedan, and consequently cockfighting, so popular in Malaya proper, is a favourite amusement, especially among the Illanuns. Saigon fowls are the favourite birds as they have few feathers and good legs. They are kept specially for fighting purposes, but no particular pains are taken about breeding, though cockerels from famous birds are sought after. The great day for contests is Sunday. Bets amounting to as much as £20 are sometimes laid, but the usual sum is ten shillings or less. These wagers form the stakes, but the crowd also has its flutter. There are no cockpits, nor are spurs used, as the owners do not want their birds to be killed; if during the fight one cock is wounded his master may at his discretion take him up and, having washed him, either put him into the ring again or rest him for half an hour. This may happen twice, but after that unless, as frequently happens, the owner stops the contest, the cock has to fight to a finish or run away, calling *niuk niuk* as admission of defeat, in which case he is hailed with shouts of derision from the onlookers.

Pony-racing also goes on in a desultory manner, chiefly in Tempassuk; matches are sometimes arranged with bets up to £12 or £15 a side, but the distance rarely exceeds a straight two furlongs. No odds are laid, but a couple of lengths start is sometimes conceded to the weaker pony. As a rule nothing in the way of training is done, the animals being caught one day and raced the next.

Some years ago a district Turf Club was started at Tuaran, membership of which was open to all, and a meeting was held with races for European and native-owned ponies; it produced good entries and aroused considerable enthusiasm. The war stopped its development, but it was an experiment that would bear repeating, for it would undoubtedly stimulate the native's interest in his ponies, and teach him how much a little care can do.

In the Tuaran and Tempassuk districts ponies are also used for hunting deer. The meet assembles at some convenient rendezvous in the early morning. It is a strange gathering. Perhaps a dozen wild-looking warriors on ragged ponies, some riding bare-back, some with the high-backed wooden saddle; one or two stoutish chiefs are mounted on bulls; a few others

are on buffaloes and there is always a large collection of followers on foot; everybody is armed with a spear and at least one knife, and the visitor is apt to wonder whether he is off to an agricultural show or another war. The pack consists of ten or twelve sharp-nosed native dogs, mostly pariah yellow; they are all as thin as rakes and their ribs leave little to the imagination; they are a snarling lot, and there are usually half a dozen fights before the hunt moves off to the first covert. The ideal spot to draw is a patch of jungle with a stretch of open ground beyond; here the huntsmen take up their positions while the beaters wait with the hounds on the far side; a rifle or two may be posted at convenient spots in case a stag should break away. All is ready. The word is given. At once the air is rent with the whoops and long-drawn-out yells of the beaters as they make their way through the undergrowth. The huntsmen pat their restive, ever-alert ponies; an old chief on a bull edges up for a better position. Suddenly a pariah gives tongue and the pack gets busy. A few seconds later out comes a doe, but the main hunt let her clear away for they know the stag will follow. The yells and yapping increase and at last the stag breaks covert and goes away all out across the plain, with the native huntsmen closing in upon its flanks. The ponies know the game as well as their riders; up hill and down they go, surefooted and never faltering; across gullies and ditches, over broken country without a stumble. At last the stag begins to tire and shows distress; the pace slackens. The leading horseman draws abreast. Leaning forward he thrusts his spear well home behind his quarry's shoulder-blade and the stag drops. Its throat is cut before it dies; he who drew first blood takes the head, the second horseman takes the neck, and the body is divided up among the remainder of the hunt. On such a day you see the Bajau at his best; a good sportsman, for once unselfish, keen and, in his fashion, a rough-rider hard to equal.

Another form of deer-hunt which is popular in particular among the Marudu Dusuns is with the *jaring*. This consists of a series of rattan slip nooses of which a number of coils may be joined to form any length. A likely-looking piece of scrub

or jungle is selected; the *jaring* is stretched across at one end, the beaters and dogs go in at the other. If a deer is put up and goes straight forward it is almost certain to get its head entangled in one of the nooses, from which it cannot extricate itself and is slain by two waiting members of the hunt. Sometimes a deer will make for the flanks and afford a shot to any rifles that have come out, but an old stag which has been hunted many times will often break back on the beaters and get clean away.

§ 4

Gambling, cockfighting, hunting and lovemaking are the chief amusements of the North Borneo Malay. Given these he wants little else, for even as a child he seldom knows what it is to play a game. He may be given a toy boat to sail, but his highest effort at a game is throwing copper cents into a hole—a combination of deck quoits and shove halfpenny—or *main galau*, a kind of "French and English" played with five or more a side.

The only native ball game is the Malay *sipak*, which consists in keeping a little rattan ball in the air by kicking it with the side of the foot. It is a game at which a small European boy would turn up his nose, yet it is played by grown men, and a party of five or six good players will keep the ball off the ground for an hour at a time.

With encouragement all natives become keen on association football, and kick as well without boots as with them. Every Government station has a football ground; at Rundum it used to be one of the District Officer's few amusements to collect a crowd of Muruts who had come down from the hills with jungle produce and teach them how to play. They also took kindly to "rugger," and it was a moving sight to see a Murut break away with the ball and go tearing down the field, the tail end of his new red *chawat* streaming in the wind, followed by a howling horde of compatriots who fell upon him a few moments later. Every one used to get very excited and we did not always play strict Rugby Union rules, but there was never any bad blood.

In the same way all natives enter enthusiastically into any form of running and athletic sports. It used to be the custom, now unfortunately on the wane, for native sports to be held annually at the head-quarters of each district. Originally these took place in the New Year, and now they are always known as the *Januari*, whether they happen to be held in January or in June. They seldom if ever fall flat and are always well attended provided that plenty of notice is given to the up-country villages. For this purpose police are sent out weeks beforehand with carefully prepared *tembuku*—pieces of rattan with as many knots tied in them as there are days before the *Januari*. One of these is undone every night, and by this means the owner knows exactly when to start. Reckonings thus kept are wonderfully accurate, and the regularity with which the knots are untied would surprise even the most redoubtable Pelmanist. Needless to say it is the natives whose homes lie farthest afield that the District Officer likes most to see, and a large number of these is always to be found at the " Highland Gathering " held, not at Oban or Inverness, but at Tenom for the whole Interior Residency. For this function natives often come ten or more days' journey, bringing with them their food and (more important) their drink as well. On their arrival they find arrangements are made for their accommodation in huts built specially for the purpose. The *Januari* usually starts in the morning with water sports on the river—boat races, swimming races, greasy pole, catching the duck (a feat more difficult than it looks), and that never-ending source of amusement, the bolster bar. There is always a certain amount of diffidence at first about entries and it is then that the roustabouts (or clerks of the course) get to work, and, thanks to their persuasive methods, the ice is soon broken. As the last splash dies away a rush is made for the special train provided to take the crowd from the river-side to the main sports-ground. It is packed to overflowing; every one is in the highest spirits (many have never been in a train before) and all the way those who have war-cries yell them, and those who have none yell as they will.

The next item is the blow-pipe competition. Competitors shoot in pairs at life-sized heads which form disappearing

targets, five shots being allowed in thirty seconds. This is the most interesting and picturesque event of the day, and is worth going far to see: here you have the real Murut; in the hurdle race, the sack race or the greasy pole he is playing your game and (having been born a sportsman) he plays it with a will, but in the blow-pipe competition he is competing with his own weapons and, as he draws the dart from its resting-place behind his ear, sights his long pipe and, taking a deep breath, winds (there is no other word for it) his lips round the mouthpiece, the light of battle kindles in his eye and he loses all self-consciousness. Every one is very serious; the scene is as impressive as it is barbaric, and the waiting Muruts standing round intent, clad only in their native *chawat* with the spear-heads on their blow-pipes aglitter in the sun, make a picture not easy to forget.

After the luncheon interval come the more commonplace events—the 100-yards races for natives of the various Interior districts, the winner of each competing in a final for the championship. The high jump and long jump are usually won by Chinese clerks or Indian police; the obstacle race always has a good field, and a thread-the-needle race does not long find the Murut ladies shy.

Soon after the prize-giving the whole gathering congregates in the great hall with the springing dancing-floor that is always kept for the *Januari*. The air becomes thick, there is a babel of talk and *tapai*-tasting begins. To anyone but a connoisseur rice liquor resembles a mixture of bad beer and rotten cider, but every village, almost every family, has brought a jar containing its own particular brew, and visitors are expected to taste each one. The jars are ranged in serried rows along the sides of the dancing-hall; stooping to one, the Resident declares the meeting well and truly open by taking a pull through a bamboo, trying to look as if he liked it. It is not long before the dancing is literally in full swing upon the swaying floor, and the Murut cry *Gan-di-lo* comes booming through the hall as the ring of dancers upon the platform moves slowly round. The meaning of *gan-di-lo* (if it has one) is unknown, but it is perhaps the most perfect word to make a noise with that has ever been invented, and

when chanted by a couple of thousand Muruts it is an impressive sound.

As the night wears on the Europeans, who have been having their own celebration in the Rest-house, put in an appearance. By this time every Murut is intensely friendly; the older he is the more brotherly and hospitable he becomes. The visitors are expected to sample each brew. The newcomer is apt to take, unthinkingly, a strong pull at the bamboo tube; at the worst he finds something odd in his mouth that turns out to be cockroach, at the best it makes him wonder how it is possible to get such a horrible taste out of rice. Among the experienced one may see an otherwise perfectly honourable gentleman taking long pulls without imbibing any liquor whatsoever, smacking his lips and saying "*amis kepioh*"—a phrase best interpreted "a very good wine"—and then passing on to do likewise with the next. But the friendly Murut is far too happy to notice a little thing like that. It is his night of the year, he has not walked ten days across jungle hills for nothing; he is out to enjoy himself. Faster go the gongs, louder rise the shouts and heavier sounds the tramping on the swaying floor until the dawn is near to breaking. Although it is a night spent in a way that would horrify a temperance reformer, yet the Interior prides itself that there has never been a fight or a disturbance at a *Januari*.

These meetings, held all over the country, have excellent results. They make for good feeling between Europeans and natives; they make men of different districts rub shoulders with each other in friendly rivalry; they make the far up-country people realize that the Government is something more than an avenging hand which shoots out periodically to clutch a tax or an offender, and moreover they make the natives laugh and it is a great thing to have a happy population. As a rule the *Januari* is organized entirely by subscriptions from Europeans and Chinese in the district; every one lays himself out to give the natives a good time (ending by enjoying himself as much as they), and these simple people carry back to their jungle homes pleasant memories that last a year. So great an event is it, in fact, in the life of an up-country Dusun or Murut that he uses it to reckon time,

and it is not uncommon to hear a witness, who is having a little trouble in recalling a date, refer in desperation to a day so many months before or after the previous year's *Januari*. The man who instituted the *Januari* was wiser than he knew, and the District Officer who lets a year slip by without organizing one loses one of his best chances of keeping in touch with his native population and earning its goodwill. The Government would do well to give a small vote to each district for the purpose. The money would not be spent in vain.

Although dancing is a feature of most native functions there is usually nothing very striking about it. Among the Mohammedans the *berunsai* is the most popular form, though a dull enough business to watch for more than half an hour. The chief performer is a girl who is celebrated for what is commonly known as " back chat " ; there may be two or even three others, and they are joined by twenty to thirty men ; all move slowly round in a circle, hands on each other's shoulders, taking a few steps forward and one backwards in time. In a shrill nasal voice the leading lady sings a verse generally in the form of a question, to which the men chant a refrain as they go round. As the night wears on the fun grows fast and furious, the questions and replies becoming of a more and more doubtful character, and respectable Bajaus prefer to leave their wives at home or send them early to bed.

Most Dusun dances are extremely crude performances, for the reason that, by the time the dancing stage is reached at a feast or festival, everybody is drunk. The Muruts take dancing much more seriously, and every Murut house has its springing dancing-floor. Here a company of men and girls wheel slowly round in a circle, chanting by turns. The circle is joined by others and the floor sways to the rhythm of the dance. There is little variation, and the performers show little grace or skill, yet the memory of such a dance which I saw one night in a Murut village, when in pursuit of some raiders, will long remain in my mind—the long dim-lit house, its roof black with the grime of ages ; the cluster of smoked heads hanging above me ; the fire flickering upon the

central hearth and throwing weird shadows across the half-naked bodies of the hill people as they moved slowly round singing their solemn chant, first the high-pitched voices of the women, then the deep response of the men.

As a rule the only things in the shape of musical instruments used at native festivals and dances are gongs and drums. There are numerous varieties of gongs, the dragon-gong of the Bruneis, the huge deep-toned *tawak tawak* often used, like the beacons of old England, for signalling from hill to hill; the hammered *chenang Kimanis* and the *gulin tangan*, a row of seven small gongs which give most melodious notes when played by a practised hand.

Gongs are usually played in unison. For solos a bamboo flute is occasionally used. Some Bajaus are accomplished players and have been known to move their audiences to tears. The flute is also played by the Dusuns but, instead of blowing from the mouth, they blow from the nose by means of a specially designed hole—hardly a romantic method of serenading one's lady-love. Both Dusuns and Bajaus have a crude jew's-harp also made from bamboo. To Dusuns and Muruts is common the *sendatong*, a cross between a violin and a banjo. The body is made of wood, rather in the shape of a coffin, and it has three wire strings from which the player produces melancholy sounds. The instrument which always takes the fancy of the European because of its quaintness is the *sempoton*, the large gourd into which are fitted six or seven bamboo tubes, the end of the gourd forming the mouthpiece. The tones are soft and sweet as an organ if the instrument is well played, as it can be in the hands of a Murut youth.

§ 5

There is one " native affair " difficult to classify and that is head-hunting. I hardly know whether to call it an art, a craft, a sport, a religious practice or an amusement. To a Murut it is a little of all these things, but, for the benefit of the slightly nervous traveller who has a visit to North Borneo in his mind, let it be said at once that head-hunting has ceased, though it is probable that there may be spasmodic outbreaks

in the districts adjoining the Dutch Border for several years to come.

A custom like head-hunting dies hard. When the Chartered Company took over the country head-hunting was rife throughout the interior and many of the coast districts. Even to-day the Tuaran Dusuns hold feasts every few years for heads taken in olden days, but they are careful not to parade these trophies, as, when the district became settled, the Government issued an order for their burial. The coastal regions, being in closer touch with civilizing influences, were the first to abandon head-hunting for good and all, but the remote Muruts kept up the merry game for years. The people of the Rundum and Pensiangan districts were the last to desist, and then only through the unremitting efforts of the Government officers stationed among them.

It must be understood that the Dusun or Murut when head-hunting never collected heads as a small boy collects birds' eggs. He only took the heads belonging to inhabitants of a hostile village against which he and his people had a blood feud. That was the normal aspect; occasionally runaway coolies have strayed into Murut territory and lost their heads for their pains, but this was quite exceptional. In the ordinary way, the District Officer or the Chinese trader was perfectly safe among the head-hunters. They certainly took Mr. Witti's head, but those were days when the white man was quite unknown to them; they also did their best to kill Mr. Baboneau, but the attack on him would never have taken place had not the whole district been a mass of intrigue and the Muruts made the catspaws of schemers.

The blood feuds which led to head-hunting had their origins in a variety of ways. Suppose, for instance, that A, from the village of B, while on a visit to the village of X, got involved in a drunken brawl with Y who knocked him backwards down the house-ladder and broke his neck. A's relatives at B were not unnaturally incensed. They demanded blood-money, but the amount appeared unreasonably high to the people of X, who felt that Y might just as easily have gone down the steps instead of A; moreover, in their opinion A was the aggressor and received no more than his deserts. Further

(said the men of X) all A got was a tap on the head with the blunt end of an axe, and if he had not been so drunk he would never have fallen down the house-ladder at all. Now there was no one in authority to settle this dispute, for it was before the days of settled Government, and no one cared to take on the thorny task of arbitration. But neither side gave way and B bided its time. Before long it came. Things had blown over (as X thought) and an old lady was bringing water from the stream early one morning when a brave from B leapt out of the jungle and, with one blow of his knife, severed her head from her body; grasping it by its scanty locks he returned elated to his village where he became the hero of the day. As far as B was concerned the game was "all square." It was now X's turn to bide its time. Some weeks afterwards an elderly gentleman of B village was doing a little weeding in his plantation. There was a sudden movement behind him, but before he had time to turn the avenger from X had slashed his head off, seized it and made off down the hill. X was "one up." A few days later two men of X were ambushed as they were going along a jungle path. B in its turn then became one up and the feud may be said to have started in earnest. Neither village dared go out except in bands of considerable numbers, jungle round the villages was cleared, the ground was planted with bamboo *sudah*, and the beaks of the cocks were tied up at night to prevent their giving away the position of the village in the darkness.

In the old days such feuds as these existed by the score among the Dusuns and the Muruts. In their early stages they were analogous to the vendetta of Sicily; they started as purely family affairs and subsequently, when the community to which the family belonged took the matter up, they were carried on between villages. One village might have long-standing feuds of this description with several in its own and neighbouring districts, and yet be on friendly terms with others, or again a group of villages in one locality might form an offensive and defensive alliance against another group—this was of course an evolution of the original family feud.

Although the methods employed by raiders were far from chivalrous, yet head-hunting was not murder. It was war. Every feud was a private campaign, fought on military lines. When this is borne in mind the business does not seem quite so barbarous. The main point is that there is no trace of cannibalism in North Borneo; the Murut does not practise what might be called the gentle art of baking enemies. Such head-hunters as I have personally questioned on the subject were genuinely horrified at the suggestion. Occasionally, when the head was being prepared, a finger might be put into the brains and licked with the object of attaining courage in battle; or a small piece of the liver of a brave man might be eaten to acquire similar virtue; I have also heard of the arm of a young child being boiled and the water drunk in a case of sickness at Keningau, but this was quite exceptional and the person concerned was punished by his own people.

As a rule the procedure when the trophy was brought back to the village was of a religious nature. It varied slightly. The Kiau Dusuns were in the habit of taking the head to the river, where the flesh and hair were cleaned off and the eyes removed. The head was then hung up to dry beyond the reach of pigs and dogs. Once dry, it was moved into a small hut which was the sacred resting-place of all the heads taken in battle; a pig was sacrificed, the women performed various rites and all the heads had food and drink offered to them. Among the Muruts the captured head was put into a pot and heated up. The skin and brains were then removed and buried, after which the skull was smoked. In some cases a pig's tusk was inserted in the nose cavity, giving the skull a most gruesome effect. Some tribes kept the lower jaw in place by tying it up with rattan; others threw it away and retained the skull only. While the skulls were being smoked over the fire, women priestesses killed sacrificial pigs and there followed dancing and feasting for four nights. When fully smoked the ghastly relics were hung from the rafters of the long village house, where they remained from generation to generation, the most treasured possessions of the community. There are few far-away Murut houses in which you will not see a cluster of them still dangling grimly from the roof.

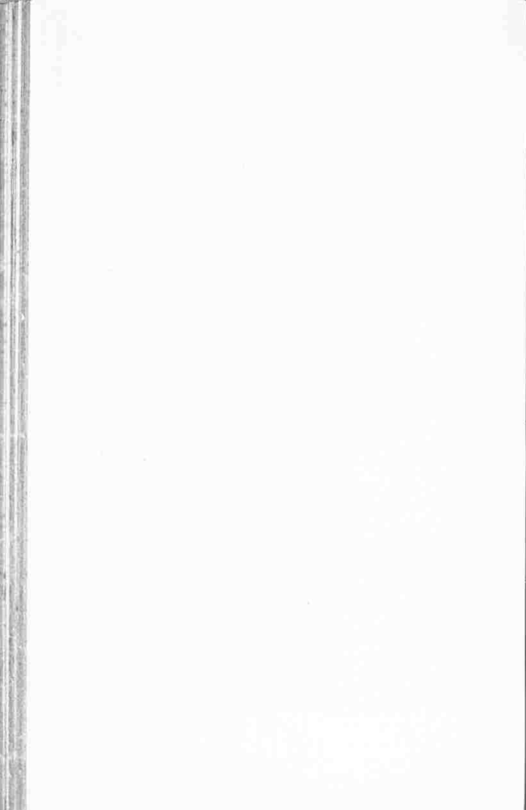
Photo. *Man Sing.*

A MURUT HEAD-HUNTER WITH HEAD.

Photo. *Man Sing.*

A MURUT PRIESTESS.

[*To face p.* 334.



When I left the Rundum district in 1913 after six months as District Officer there, an old chief called Ansan appeared to say good-bye, carrying in his hand a mysterious bundle wrapped up in the long *lamba* grass. After wringing my hand and expressing his regret at my departure he said, "We've always been friends, *Tuan*, you and I, and I much appreciated that white coat you gave me the other day. According to our custom a present must be returned, but I am very poor and did not know what to offer, so I have brought you this as a parting gift." Here he solemnly unwrapped the parcel and disclosed a blackened skull. It grinned horribly and it had a long, ugly-looking gash at the back. "It used to be called Si Kaus," pursued Ansan reminiscently. "It was the first head I ever took, and I remember as if it were but yesterday how I waited beneath his house as the dawn was breaking and sliced him as he was coming down the steps. Ah, *Tuan*, in those days I was a devil of a lad."

I could not help being touched. Ansan, it is true, had abandoned head-hunting; but only recently, and a Murut's first head is the most cherished thing he has. So, bearing in mind the North Borneo Official Regulations which state that presents of fruit, cakes "and other articles of trifling value" may be accepted from native headmen, I thanked him warmly and gave him another coat from my already depleted wardrobe as a *quid pro quo*.

In olden days the taking of the first head was the great event of a Murut's youth. It corresponded to his being promoted from Eton collars to "stick-ups." He became a man and was allowed to be tattooed. North Borneo tattooing is very primitive and the designs vary with different tribes. After the first head the Tambunans used to tattoo the whole front of the body with a scroll design forming a kind of waistcoat. Among the Muruts a simple star on the shoulder denoted a single head; next the other shoulder received a star, then the throat. As the tale of heads mounted up, the forearms and thighs were tattooed, but with no special designs. Occasionally a scorpion or centipede is seen on old men, but as a rule the tattooing consists only of decorative patterns. It is performed by means of a small hammer and four or six

needles lashed into a piece of bamboo, the design being drawn with lampblack. It is a painful operation, and the practice is on the wane, though to-day occasionally a " nut " may be seen with his name crudely tattooed upon his forearm.

Besides giving him recognized manhood and his right to symbolical tattooing, the first head had an even more important influence on a young blood's life for it brought him his wife. Before he had laid at her feet the proof of his prowess and his cunning he could not expect his suit to be looked upon with favour by the lady of his affections. In this way the Dusun and Murut damsels undoubtedly did a good deal to foster the feuds. They certainly took as much interest in them as the men (since they were apt to pay the same penalty one can hardly blame them) and, like Helen of Troy, a native damsel was not infrequently the cause of the feud herself when she ran away with, or was carried off by, a lover of whom her father did not approve, or when she cast aside her own husband for a gay Lothario from another village. The aggrieved father or injured husband, as the case might be, wasted no time in tracking the seducer down and killing him; relatives retaliated and the feud began. Those who know the attractions of the Murut female might well say—

> Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
> And burned the topmost towers of Ilium ?

These feuds, once started, often lingered on for many years. There was little open fighting, operations usually being confined to ambushes and surprise attacks on individuals. Occasionally a party of seven or so would descend upon an enemy village; they might get half-way or they might get as far as the hill on which the village stood and frighten its inhabitants almost out of their wits by waving torches in the darkness, but in nine cases out of ten they found that the omens were against an assault, and I have never heard of a whole village being actually captured, looted and burnt. Heads were the main object of the enemy; with these his outraged feelings were assuaged. Children, however, were sometimes captured and kept as slaves, but as a rule they were well treated and looked upon as members of the family.

When the Rundum district was opened up in 1911 the District Officer's most important work was the settling of these feuds, as had been done in other parts of the country years before. It needed considerable tact and patience, and would have been easier if it had been possible to dispense with interpreters. The only method of laying a feud was by payment of blood-money and the taking of a solemn oath. The blood-money was paid in kind; formerly it was a slave for each head, the slave being of the same sex and age as the victim. Later it was reduced to a buffalo or a good hunting-dog and a gong. The District Officer acted as intermediary between the parties. He collected evidence as to the history of the feud and the number of heads that had been taken by each side. Having done this he made his count. If he found the two villages were "all square" in the matter of heads a settlement was not so difficult. But if (as usually happened) one village was several heads to the good, then he had need of all his persuasive powers. One of his most useful cards was to point out to the victors that though they were "three up," their turn might come again. Having induced them, after much haranguing and argument, to agree to pay so many gongs or buffaloes on account of the surplus heads, the next thing was to persuade the vanquished, now thirsting for revenge, to take the blood-money offered. Force or threats of course were out of the question, and it could only be done by lengthy negotiations. Once a basis for settlement had been reached, a meeting-place convenient to both parties was named and thither on the specified day the District Officer repaired. He saw that the blood-money was paid over and accepted. Each village then slew a buffalo with due ceremony. Both parties bathed in the blood while the headmen recited binding oaths to cease raiding. "And," said they, leaping about and striking palm with clenched fist to emphasize their words, "when we go to the water may we not be able to drink, when we go to the jungle may we not be able to eat, may our *padi* not grow, may we catch no fish, may we be eaten by crocodiles, may we be devoured by tigers —if we break this oath." As witnesses of the pact, stones were planted on the spot and sprinkled with buffaloes' blood.

This brought an impressive ceremony to a close, and the most satisfactory part of it from the District Officer's point of view was that, unless some one happened to open up old wounds, the oaths were kept.

So effectual were the efforts of a few European officers that, within a short time, raiding within the district came to an end. But there still remained some seemingly incorrigible head-hunters on the Selalir River, in what was then recognized as Dutch territory. These gentry had long-standing feuds with the Rundum people and attacked them whenever an opportunity occurred. It was a trying time for the Rundum Muruts. They had abandoned raiding themselves at the instance of the Government and had put themselves under its protection, paying poll-tax as evidence of the fact, but they found it very galling to have to sit still and let themselves be raided by the warlike people of the Selalir of whom Mukang was chief. Nor was it a comfortable position for the District Officer. He felt that the least he could do was to give the State's new adherents the protection they sought, but he dared not enter Dutch territory and attack the Selalir folk for fear of causing international complications. The Dutch Government itself took no steps in the matter. Mukang and his friends, realizing the state of affairs, played a kind of "Tom Tiddler's Ground" by making unexpected raids and gathering human heads, successfully evading police patrols. Many efforts were made to get Mukang and his friends to come in, but they only sent back offensive messages. One emissary of peace returned with the reply that if Mukang caught the District Officer he would make hairpins out of his shin bones; another response was that he would not come in and meet the District Officer, but that he would be pleased if the *tuan* would go over and see him for then he would gouge out his eyes and see what the eyes of a white man were really like. He arrogantly returned presents and other tokens of goodwill, saying that he would ask for them when he wanted them; he was in fact a thorn in the district's side. When the boundary between North Borneo and Dutch territory actually came to be delimited, however, it was found that Mukang and his friends were well within the Company's

sphere of influence, but it was not until 1914 that he was met by Mr. Baboneau, who found him a mild-mannered personage and settled up his feuds, so that to-day the whole district is at peace, and head-hunting, though it may break out occasionally like an attack of malaria, is a thing of the past. Even so its memories are likely to live long in the Murut hills, and it will be many a year before those human relics cease to hang as honoured trophies from the rafters of the Murut houses, many a year before Murut fathers cease to point to them with pride, just as British fathers might point to German helmets hanging in their halls as relics of the Great War.

§ 6

By putting an end to slavery and head-hunting the North Borneo Government has done much to give its natives a more enlightened view of life. A certain amount has also been done in the way of more definite education by missions. The first missionary to come to the country was a Roman Catholic, one Cuarteron, a Spaniard, in 1859.[1] He had a little church at Gantisan, near Jesselton, and his principal aim was to free the Christian slaves, who at that time were found in large numbers among the Bruneis and Bajaus. He remained in the country for twenty years, and the Catholic mission-field was then given St. Joseph's Foreign Mission Society of Mill Hill. A mission was founded at Papar in 1881, and was followed by two in the Putatan district and one at Sandakan; there are now convents and schools for boys and girls at all these places. The Sandakan convent dates back to 1889, and Mother Teresa, when she died in 1919, had completed thirty years' Superiorship there. There are smaller chapels and schools elsewhere, from Tawau to Tambunan. The Roman Catholic mission is the only one which works among the natives; it confines itself to the Dusuns, and the Muruts are still untouched, though there was a S.P.G. Mission at Keningau from 1896 to 1899, under the Rev. F. Perry. Father Wachter, of the Enabong Mission at Putatan, has told me that he always finds

[1] An account of this missionary is to be found in St. John's *Forests of the Far East*, vol. i, p. 370.

his Dusuns eager to learn ; they leave their homes for four or five weeks and stop at the mission while they receive instruction, bringing their own food with them ; some of them walk five miles to Mass on Sundays. Drink is the great evil to be overcome, now that raiding is no more—and in the latter connection the Father tells a story of an old Dusun chief who lay upon his death-bed ; he had received the Sacrament and the priest bent down and asked him if he had any enemies to forgive.

" No, Father," replied the aged warrior, " I have killed them all."

Into the controversial subject of foreign missions I do not propose to enter. It is enough to say that the Roman Catholic Mission has undoubtedly done much for the Dusuns in many ways besides converting them. It is true that the District Officer and the missionary do not always see eye to eye, and it is unfortunate that the missionary should sometimes be regarded by a District Officer as his rival when both might be working together for the cause each has at heart, namely, the welfare of the native. It is perhaps natural for the missionary to wish to intervene in matters affecting his flock ; it is equally natural for the District Officer to resent such interference. There is nothing to be gained by dwelling on these points. Whatever a man feels on the subject of missionaries he cannot but respect and honour those in North Borneo as very gallant men and women who have devoted their whole lives to their work, who live among the Dusuns, speak their language and probably understand them as no one else does.

Besides the Roman Catholic Mission there are the S.P.G., the Basel Mission and the Seventh Day Adventist Mission, all of which confine their work entirely to the Chinese, and their success may be gauged by the behaviour of their converts, who are law-abiding and industrious people. The Basel Mission throve at Kudat and during the war its German chief was deported, but it is still active. North Borneo is part of the See of the Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak, and the S.P.G. has churches and schools at Jesselton, Kudat, Sandakan and in several of the outstations as well. The Society will always be associated in North Borneo with the name of Mr. W. H.

Elton, the pioneer missionary chaplain of North Borneo, who made his life-work the building of the stone church of St. Michael and All Angels at Sandakan, and was once well described by Mr. Nimmo Wardrop as his own " master-builder, master-mason, master-carpenter and master-beggar."

The State gives aid to all missions and schools irrespective of creed. Mohammedans have private schools of their own, and the Government has a school at Jesselton for the sons of native chiefs, who are trained for subordinate positions in the Civil Service, and Government schools have been opened at Papar and Kota Belud. There remains much to be done to establish State schools in the more remote localities. It is a moot point whether a native does not lose more than he gains by being " civilized " and educated on European lines, but there are many other roads of improvement open, for much might be done to better him in his own walk of life without transferring him to another. The fisherman might be made a better fisherman by organizing his industry on more up-to-date and systematic lines; salt-making might be developed on a larger scale. The farmer might be made a better farmer; by means of practical courses held in his own district he might be shown how to improve his crude methods of agriculture; new cultivations, such as the oil-palm, might be introduced, and old ones, such as sago, cotton, sugar and tobacco, stimulated; bee-keeping might be encouraged; he might be taught the elements of breeding and of raising stock. Frequent agricultural shows, such as have been held occasionally in the past, would help to increase his interest in planting and in livestock; frequent exhibitions of native arts and crafts would lead to a revival they sadly need. Markets could be arranged for native products both agricultural and industrial, and the Government might do worse than start a shop, to which manufactured articles such as hats, pottery, cloths, mats, carvings, weapons, brass and silverware could be sent for sale. It would be well patronized. Lastly, and most important of all, the elements of hygiene, sanitation and personal cleanliness might be taught. Infant mortality is one of the great menaces to the native population; it presents peculiar difficulties; a Chinese apothecary at the head-quarters of the district can

do little or no good, and it is a case for women missionary doctors.

These suggestions may sound Utopian, but they are not so impracticable as they might appear at first. The native, if difficult to help, is intelligent and, if he sees actual results demonstrated before his eyes instead of merely being told about them, he has enough *nous* to apply what he has learned.

He is, it is true, a disappointing person to do anything for, as most people who have tried know. It is not so hard to interest him as to keep him interested. The latter is an uphill task, but it can be done. All natives are, of course, intensely conservative, but at least with the younger generation it would not be long before time-honoured prejudices could be broken down. The outlay might be considerable to the Chartered Company, but in the long run it would more than be repaid by results. The country needs greater local food production and increased native population. So far no really systematic attempts have been made to encourage either. Other countries at the present time are giving us object-lessons of what "advancement" in one direction can do, and it will be better to improve the North Borneo natives in their own lives and affairs, thereby keeping them the simple folk they are, rather than turn the coming generation into a race of clerks and potential agitators.

CHAPTER XIII

TRAVEL

BEFORE the war North Borneo was better served by steamships than it is to-day. The North German Lloyd Company used to run a subsidiary line from Singapore in connection with its main line to the East. This run was subsidized by the German Government, which was content as long as one of its own companies captured the local trade. These boats gave a weekly service and were well organized; they were as regular as clockwork, the service and accommodation were good and some of the skippers were very popular. One German Lloyd steamer also used to make a round trip from Hong Kong, calling at Sandakan, Kudat and Jesselton. In 1914 the only British boat on a regular run to and from North Borneo was Messrs. Jardine, Matheson and Company's *Mausang*, an aged craft which came down to Sandakan once a month from Hong Kong for lumber. She rolled more than it is reasonable to suppose any boat could roll without actually turning turtle; even her master admitted that she was "a performer," and she afforded a refuge to an incredible number of cockroaches and rats. For all that she was a British boat and, as soon as war broke out, it became evident how short-sighted a policy it had been not to attract a British company to put boats on the Singapore-Sandakan run. With one accord the German skippers made for the Philippines where they were interned. One of the boats was captured at Labuan, but the North Borneo authorities were not so fortunate, and those which were in Sandakan and Jesselton Harbours got away in time. Then arose a very unpleasant situation. With the exception of the old *Mausang* the country was entirely cut off from the outside world, and as the estates depend chiefly upon

imported rice to feed their labour forces, matters assumed a serious aspect, for there were no large stocks on hand. This was all the more serious because business and shipping were dislocated and every one had enough to think of without worrying about the affairs of North Borneo. The Government of the Straits Settlements, however, came to the country's assistance, and it was arranged for the Straits Steamship Company to divert some of its ships to the Borneo run, a course the company has kept up ever since, running three boats a month at slightly erratic intervals, two going on as far as Zamboanga in the Philippines when sufficient inducement is offered. To-day the line is not as popular as it might be (though in justice it must be admitted that it saved the country in a crisis), and it is the general opinion that some competition would be an excellent thing. What is wanted in particular is a regular connection with one of the main lines running from Europe to Singapore.

There is, however, growing communication between Sandakan, Manila and Hong Kong. Sandakan has at last been recognized as a port of call between Australia and China, and, among others, the fine boats of the Eastern and Australia Steamship Company touch there; Messrs. Jardine, Matheson and Company run a boat, chiefly for the timber trade, from Hong Kong. The Osaka Shosen Kaisha also makes Sandakan a port of call on its Kobe, Formosa, Hong Kong and Java run.

In addition to this, interport communication is maintained by what the President once rather euphemistically termed "the fleet of the Sabah Steamship Company." The three small coasting steamers of which it is composed run at somewhat irregular intervals between Labuan and Tawau, calling as well at Jesselton, Usukan, Kudat, Lahad Datu and Simporna. They are not floating palaces, but what they lack in luxury they make up in utility, and the country would be in a bad way without them, for travellers in North Borneo are largely dependent on the services of steamers, as there are at present no trunk roads in the country.

§ 2

On the west coast the railway takes the place of roads, to the best of its ability. It is undoubtedly a very great asset to the country, for in the course of its 125 miles it passes many rubber estates and Government stations; indeed, as already mentioned, it was only by having a railway up his sleeve that Mr. Cowie was able to float off company after company during the rubber boom of 1909.

In days of old the British North Borneo State Railway was a standing joke, generally starting late and arriving later still. The traveller was lucky if he reached his destination the same day, and passengers not infrequently had to camp for the night in the coaches owing to a bridge having collapsed, a tree having fallen across the line, or the driver having forgotten to bring enough firewood; while the unevenness of the rails made any journey, especially that from Beaufort to Tenom, a period of intense discomfort. New-comers to the country used to revile it, but the old stagers, though they reviled it too, remembered the ten days' trek from Jesselton to Tenom, and realized that, in the words of the old adage, "Third-class riding is always better than first-class walking."

These are things of the past, and though it has no Pullman cars there is little to quarrel with in regard to the North Borneo State Railway of to-day. Under the able supervision of Captain J. W. Watson, the General Manager, extensive improvements have been carried out. Since 1911 the line has been relaid with heavier rails, a reconstruction which has almost amounted to rebuilding; permanent bridges have been erected, new rolling-stock procured, and up-to-date workshops built, so that the line is now a comfort to travel by instead of an ordeal. It has always been popular with the native public, and the daily train from Jesselton to Beaufort is usually packed. For all that, the railway does not pay. It has always remained in the hands of the Government and it has been run at a loss since it started, though every year it approaches nearer to paying its expenses. In spite of this it must be recorded to the credit of the Government that, throughout the war, rates were not raised, and it was not until 1920 that

freight charges were increased fifty per cent beyond those ruling in 1914.

Before the war the question of running a branch line to Tuaran, twenty miles from Jesselton, was discussed because certain authorities considered that the only method of making the railway pay was to extend it, on the grounds that increased traffic would be obtained without greatly increasing the overhead charges. The public, however, had always been in favour of a road, and the project was finally abandoned in favour of the latter, when the war began and put a stop to construction of any kind.

§ 3

It seems to be a logical sequence to the development of a country that roads should precede railways, not that railways should precede roads. Making railways first is like putting a lift into a building before putting in the stairs. The fact remains that the railway came into existence first; it served and still serves its purpose, but the Company has now definitely decided on a policy of road-making, and in view of the present possibilities of motor-transport, few will say that it is wrong. For years the country has been crying out for roads; until recently North Borneo might truthfully have been described as the land without a road, and a land in that condition is as little likely to grow as a plant without water. Save for a few miles of metalled road in the neighbourhood of Jesselton, Kudat and Sandakan, there was not a single Government highway in the country. There were a few earth-roads which became impassable in wet weather, but otherwise the only roads in the country were those made by estates in or adjoining their properties and laid down for their own convenience.

The British North Borneo Company has always been the subject of severe criticism for its neglect to construct roads. It has been pointed out how the country would have developed if even one grand trunk road had been constructed, and how great would have been the profits reaped from such an outlay. In this connection it is interesting to note that the Chartered Company of Rhodesia, which was established in

1890, constructed no less than 4,000 miles of metalled roads in its territory during thirty years.

On the other hand, the Rhodesia Company was a wealthy one, and the critics of the British North Borneo Company are not wholly fair when all the circumstances are considered, for it was and is far from wealthy. They might as well ask a poor city clerk why he had not assisted the country and secured a comfortable income by investing £10,000 in War Bonds, as ask the Chartered Company why it did not develop the country and secure large returns by building roads. Once the railway had been built there was nothing to spare for roads; the capital of the Company was limited and, though the shareholders had been patient, there is a limit even to the patience of the most sanguine shareholders, and any profits that could be spared had to go in paying dividends.

It is true that a start, even though only on a small scale, might have been made, but one thing after another happened to prevent it and until recently nothing was done. Now there is in hand a triple programme: first, a twenty-foot road, with sixteen feet of metal, from Jesselton to Tuaran; secondly, a similar road from Sandakan to the Labuk; and thirdly, a twenty-foot road, with eleven feet of metal, from Melalap, the railhead, to Keningau. Of the first two several miles have already been constructed; the work on the Labuk road, being through dense jungle and needing heavy earthworks and many bridges, presents greater difficulties than the Tuaran road, which is mainly flat. The Keningau branch is more in the nature of a mountain road, crossing several divides with broken ground between. In time it is proposed that these three roads shall be linked up to form highways up and down the land, but progress is slow and, as it is not less than 250 miles from Jesselton to Sandakan, it will still be many years before one will be able to motor from the west coast to the east. Nevertheless, it is comforting to feel that at last the Chartered Company is in a position to treat the road problem as seriously as it deserves.

Though North Borneo is at present badly served by roads it possesses over 500 miles of excellent bridle-paths, which are to be found chiefly on the west coast, in the interior and

in Marudu. It is possible to ride from Jesselton to Pensiangan, a few miles from the Dutch Border (*via* Tuaran, Tempassuk and Tenom), a distance of 300 miles, or to Pitas Estate in Marudu, a distance of 120 miles. The latter journey would take one week, the former nearer three. The paths are traced, constructed and upkept entirely under the supervision of the District Officers, of whose zeal they are a mirror. The actual construction and upkeep is done with local native labour, the method being either to employ regular gangs or to allot to each village, in accordance with its population, a definite chainage for the repairing and cleaning of which it is responsible. In the latter case payment per chain is made to the headmen, and any recalcitrant person failing to turn out when called upon by them is liable to fine. Bridle-path work is not popular with the natives and never will be, but as they have the benefit of the paths (though woe betide a native if the District Officer turns a corner and finds him leisurely riding his buffalo along one) and as the labour involved only amounts to a few days' work a year for each man, they have not much ground for legitimate complaint, even though they do not always appreciate the opportunities put in their way for earning a little ready money. Without native labour the paths could never have been made, and they are a great asset to the country.

§ 4

On the east coast bridle-paths are few, for the great rivers—the Labuk, Sugut, Kinabatangan and Segama—form the highways. All the east coast estates can use launches on their rivers, and travel by launch is better than riding along a winding bridle-path. There is no more delightful way of spending a few days than to go for a trip by launch round the islands which lie north of Marudu Bay, or between Lahad Datu and Cowie Harbour. Here you may catch something of the atmosphere of the South Seas; the water is so clear that you may look down and see the coral far beneath with strange striped fishes flitting in and out. The islands themselves are more like the islands of romance than you would think any real island could be; the palm-leaf houses rising from the

water, the coral beach and the rustling coconut-trees lovely in sunlight, but most lovely when touched by the slanting rays of evening, each leaf standing out as if it had been cut from black paper and pasted on the salmon-tinted background of the western sky.

Those who would go above launch limit on the rivers must go, as the District Officer does, by native boat. Whether one likes or dislikes boat travelling is a matter of temperament. As long as a good spot to camp for the night can be found it is not unpleasant. The most convenient form of native boat is the long *pakerangan*. The helmsman sits in the stern using his paddle as a rudder, whilst from four to eight coolies paddle forward; amidships is an awning underneath which, upon a mattress and propped up by a couple of pillows, the passenger lies. The main baggage is stored just behind this cabin, the overflow being disposed of as may be most convenient. A *pakerangan* can be made extremely comfortable and, with a good supply of literature and a capacity for sleep that is not broken by the chunk of the paddles or the chanting of the boatmen, the long day's journey passes easily enough; moreover, there is always the chance of being able to break the monotony by getting a shot at a crocodile basking upon the muddy bank. As long as time is no particular object there are worse methods of travelling, and the only drawback is that, in districts like the Labuk or the Kinabatangan, the passenger may be days without getting any exercise unless he is sufficiently energetic to take his turn at paddling with the crew. In open waters like those of Marudu Bay, the great square sail of the *pakerangan* can be hoisted, and it is good indeed to skim along in the cool evening breeze or under the moon, the crew dosing and the helmsman whistling softly to call back the wind if it dies away.

In small streams *sampan* of shallow draft are necessary, and are correspondingly less comfortable; the journey, however, is usually more productive of incident, for there are frequent rapids to be negotiated, and shooting the rapids of a Borneo river in a native boat, with the prospect of losing both food and baggage if (as it often does) the craft capsizes, is thrilling enough for the most hardened lover of excitement.

Above boat limit bamboo rafts are used, an even more romantic and adventurous mode of travel. These rafts are from fifteen to twenty feet long, made of a double layer of bamboo tied together with rattan or jungle fibres. Bamboo usually abounds on the river bank, so that a raft can be put together in half an hour. A little platform is made for the baggage, as the raft is awash all the time, and two men with long poles stand at either end. Where the water is shallow the action is punting pure and simple. Keeping a punt straight is no easy matter, but it is child's play to steering a bamboo raft. Downstream the raft is borne by the current easily enough (the Malays have a characteristic proverb that even the crocodiles laugh at those who pole downstream), but every reach ends in a tumble of foaming rapids, and it is then that the excitement begins. It is hard to capsize a raft, but it may strike a snag which causes the unwary to lose his balance, or it may become jammed upon a projecting ledge. This does not often happen, for the steersmen, who maintain their balance in a manner that is little short of marvellous, guide it deftly with their poles, lightly touching each convenient boulder as it flashes past, and, yelling shrilly, send it straight for an open space between the rocks; next, with an ever-increasing speed, towards a kind of natural weir; for an instant it is poised almost motionless upon the brink; then, to the deafening clamour of the snowy rapids, it tilts downwards and flops suddenly on to the great still green pool below. The raft like a living thing seems to shake itself and after a lurch or two goes gliding on, while the passenger casts an anxious glance to see how much of his precious baggage still remains. It is great sport, and people pay good money to get half the amusement at home, though a Dyak policeman who had been a member of the Coronation Contingent that came to London in 1902, was once heard to crush an apprehensive Murut with the remark that, at a place called Earl's Court, he had been through the most dangerous rapids in the whole world.

§ 5

Unless you happen to be too heavy a weight for a Borneo pony, and follow the example of a well-known and very ample

Photo *N. B. Baboneau.*

A MURUT RAFT.

[*To face p. 350.*

planter who rides a buffalo, there is only one other method of travelling in North Borneo, and that is the primitive one of going on foot. It is, for the able-bodied (and none but the able-bodied are advised to try it), in many ways the most pleasant mode of all, given good weather and rivers that are not in flood.

A traveller in Borneo goes with no great pomp and circumstance, and his preparations do not take long to make. On the other hand, as a certain Resident is fond of saying, there is no need to go about like a pedlar, for keeping fit depends very much on being as comfortable as possible and having plenty to eat. Even in the jungle there is no sense in playing the Spartan until one has to, but, for a fortnight's trip, ten or eleven coolies, two native police and a couple of servants are sufficient for one's needs. The secret of jungle packing is to know what not to take and at the same time to bear in mind that anything forgotten has to be done without for the whole journey. The fate of the "boy" who forgets to put in the tin-opener or the mustard is known to be a fearful one, and as a rule very little gets left behind. One Government officer of my acquaintance used to make a point of sending his servants home for any necessary of life which they might have forgotten to bring. The third day out a wooden-faced "boy" reported that no more butter was to be found. "Go and fetch it, then!" said his master. Bakir accordingly departed and a few days later reappeared with the butter. It was rather drastic, but Bakir did not forget a second time.

Clothes, tins and cooking-pots are packed in holders of native workmanship called *bongon*. In shape these are not unlike inverted milk-cans, only smaller, made of the stout bark of the sago palm with rattan fittings, wide at the top and tapering to the base, with tightly fitting lids of thin wood; when well made they are waterproof and are carried on the coolies' backs, being kept in place with bands of woven rattan, which are passed over the shoulders and under the armpits. They are things that would startle a London porter, but are eminently suited for Dusun carriers. Two are filled with tins, of which fish, meat, vegetables, fruit, butter, milk and biscuits form the main part; the ubiquitous fowl and perhaps

Indian corn are the only food to be depended on by the way. Clothes and shoes (the latter most important) fill two more; one is allowed for the pots and pans, one for drinks—whisky, gin and, as a great luxury, an odd bottle or two of beer—one for the servants, and yet another for the police. The camp bed, mattress, pillow and mosquito-net make up one load and the camp table and chair another; a small medicine-chest, a dispatch-box with plenty of good reading matter in it, a bucket, lamps, and a few bottles of oil are distributed to any coolie who happens to have a light load, and are tied on the *bongon* in much the same fashion as the private soldier used to tie on to his pack parcels that arrived inconveniently late before a move. Thus with ten coolies you not only have all the necessaries of life for a fortnight, but are on the way to being tolerably comfortable as well. The eleventh man you may take as your personal coolie, whose rôle is either to follow you like a shadow or to lead the way. He is carefully chosen as a person of some intelligence, and should be able to speak both Malay and Dusun. He is given a light *bongon*, containing a change of clothes, a towel, a book, a raincoat, some cigarettes, some sandwiches and a bottle of cold tea or cocoa. With this you are independent of your coolies and can make your own pace; if you get into camp an hour before they do you have all you need until they appear, instead of having to wait about in wet clothes, while, if you want to turn aside from the beaten track, it will not matter if they leave you far behind. The servants should be natives (few Chinamen are of any use in the jungle) and handy men. A marine engineer, at one time well known on the Borneo coast, once informed the world that he was going to be married, and referring to his fiancée said, "Agnes ain't much to look at, but she can cook a bit." You will not be damning your henchmen with faint praise if you are able to say the same of them. It is most important that they should both be able to "cook a bit," for then, if one of them by some mischance gets sick or lost, you have another upon whom you can fall back. They must be good walkers and long-suffering, for their work begins when that of the rest is over, and there is nothing more trying in the jungle than a dismal face. The police must be cheerful, intelligent, and

Photo. D. J. Rutter.

DUSUN CARRYING BONGUN.

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ready to lend the boys a hand at packing, unpacking and putting up camp beds; it is useful if one at least is a native of the district. Beyond this, it only needs a dog to make the expedition complete.

§ 6

To show you what a few days' typical footslogging in North Borneo jungle entails I propose to send you, reader, thus equipped, on a little journey from the coast up to the Tuaran hills. These hills will not break your heart as some of those in the Interior might, and I will choose the month of April for your trip, for then you will have cause for disappointment if the weather is not fair.

On the morning of the start you are up early, and breakfast at 5.45. By the time you have finished the coolies have divided up their loads after much shouting and clamour, fastened them securely with the inevitable rattan, and are threading their way in single file down the hill from the Tuaran house. The first part of the day's journey lies over the open plain and may be done on pony-back, for it is as well to make the first day out an easy one. The track runs through a prosperous and well-cultivated country; past Dusun houses that stand upon the river banks surrounded by a collection of banana, cotton and coconut trees, across open rice-fields from which the harvest has recently been taken; here is a clump of feathery bamboo, there a grove of fruit trees or a tangled garden; on all sides little whisps of white fluff from the ripening cotton trees float softly through the air until they come delicately to rest and make the ground look for all the world as if it were lying under a fall of snow.

It may happen that you start your trip on the day of Tamu Pampang, a market held three times a month at Pampang village, two hours from Tuaran and half-way between the coast and the nearer hills. These markets are organized entirely by the natives themselves and are held in many parts of the Dusun country; in Tuaran and Tempassuk, the chief *tamu* districts, the attendance often numbers several hundreds, but strangely enough no *tamu* are ever held by the Muruts. The Bajaus from the coast take up their fish and salt to barter

at Tamu Pampang, the coast Dusuns sugar-cane, fruit, eggs and fowls, and the up-country people bring down their tobacco, *padi* and other produce. A few Chinese have vegetables to sell, or cloth and beads. But no one may begin trading until the presiding native chief hoists his flag; once that signal is given there is a rush to business. Every one becomes intent; from every side rises the clink of coin and the clamour of voices raised high in bargaining. But though there may be arguments, it is an orderly and good-natured gathering, for it is an unwritten law that no one with a grievance may settle it at a *tamu*.

When you arrive proceedings are in full swing, and you make a short halt to give the coolies a rest and to let the police and servants buy a few bananas or any other odds and ends they want, while you stroll round and watch the busy scene or pass the time of day with any local chiefs who happen to be there.

At the *tamu* you leave your pony with the syce, for the rest of the journey must be done on foot. From Pampang to Melangan, the day's destination, there are two routes, one (the shorter) over a stiff hill, the other along the banks of the Tuaran River. The lowland Dusun is no hill-climber, so it is prudent to take the river track, which crosses and recrosses the Tuaran many times. After much rain the river may be impassable for days, and comes pouring down in flood, a swirling yellow stream, but in dry weather, such as April nearly always brings, the water is low and hardly above the knees, so that wading across is nothing but refreshing.

After each ford there is a mile or so of track, mostly along the shady bank, sometimes, to cut off a bend, over a little hill or past a village nestling amidst a cluster of coconut-trees, then down to the stream again. The idea of walking all day with wet feet might make some people shudder, but it is not unpleasant if the right clothes are worn. A pair of shorts, a flannel shirt, stockings (over socks), light canvas shoes and a sun-helmet or double *terei*—though you may be laughed at for a boy scout by those whose daily walk does not take them beyond the office or the club, you will go a long way before you find a better kit in which to travel. The shirt

leaves your arms free when you have to climb, as you often do; in shorts no wet clammy cloth clings to your knees, which soon get hardened to scratches and the sun, and the water pours out of the canvas shoes as easily as it pours in. The chief argument against shorts is that in a leech country they leave you badly exposed, which is true, but it is also true that the leech can be the more easily seen and disposed of. The Borneo leech is the most loathsome of creatures; nothing, not even a puttee, can keep it out, and it will work its way through the eyelets of shoes and draw blood through a thick stocking and a sock. One does not feel it, for a leech is quite unobtrusive, but when the shoes are removed at the end of the day's march its ordinarily lean body will be found gorged with blood and as fat as one's little finger. It may be persuaded to decamp if touched with a lighted cigarette or a pinch of salt; if pulled off it leaves an ulcer which takes long to heal, and in any case it is difficult to stop the flow of blood from the puncture that has been made. The trying part is that next day any more leeches which find their way in make straight for the old wound, and so render it more and more difficult to heal. In some parts of the country, especially in wet weather, leeches are so bad that it is necessary to soak one's shoes in brine or tobacco juice before starting on the morning tramp. Every jungle leaf seems to harbour half a dozen, and it has always seemed to me that they hear one coming and hurry to meet one with looping strides, and then lie in wait, waving their heads to and fro like weaving horses. I can conceive no more ghastly fate than to lie alone in the jungle with a sprained ankle near one of these leech breeding-places.

The banks of the Tuaran, however, present no such terrors, and after a pleasant walk you reach Melangan about noon. On the river bank, a short distance from the village, stands the Government rest-house or *opis*, as the natives call it. It sounds grander than it really is, for it only consists of two small rooms, a verandah and a kitchen built of split bamboo with an *atap* roof. Most recognized halting-places have a little house of this description, to be used by anyone who chances to pass through. Tents are heavy things for coolies

to carry on their backs, and little suited to a country in which it rains four afternoons out of seven, for there is no special travelling season in North Borneo as in India. Failing a rest-house, the traveller has to make the best of it under a Dusun roof or must build a *sulap*, a little jungle hut of leaves and bamboo (here a canvas fly comes in very useful), as best he can.

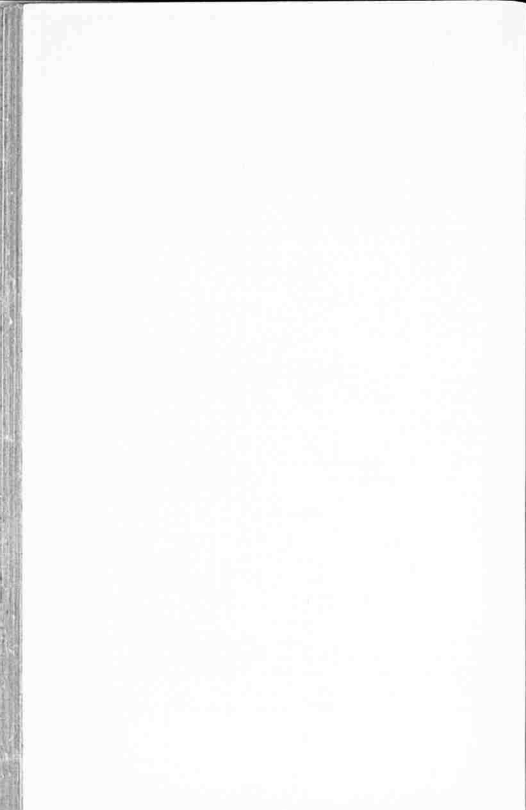
So you are glad enough to clamber up the crazy steps of the Melagan rest-house. From the village is procured a green coconut which affords refreshing drink and, by the time you have had your bathe in the river, the coolies have arrived. They set down their loads with many a good-tempered lamentation. Baggage is soon unpacked and the camp put in order, and in twenty minutes you are sitting down to a cold tiffin which tastes very good indeed.

A rest, a read and perhaps a short sleep until four o'clock; then, after a cup of tea, you set off to dynamite for fish in a pool downstream. This method of fishing, admittedly unsporting, appeals to the native mind as a method of getting a big haul without trouble; the idea is not entirely new to them, for both Dusuns and Muruts are in the habit of stupefying river fish by means of *tuba*, a generic name given to several jungle plants which possess toxic properties. The roots are pounded on a bamboo platform set over a pool, and the resulting milky pulp drops into the river, very soon rendering the fish insensible, though not unfit for human consumption. Dynamiting, however, is much more exciting and, moreover, the whole operation creates a deep and lasting impression on those who have never witnessed it before; consequently you have a good following from the village. As you go along all mention of your object is carefully avoided, lest the birds should overhear your fell projects and whisper them to the fish, which in that case would be off downstream. Just below some rapids you come to a likely pool, still, dark and overhung with jungle trees. The fuse is carefully lighted and the charge heaved in. The water is deep and there is a *phut* as the dynamite explodes; then splash after splash as the natives dive in to catch the silver loot that rises from below—big fish and little fish, some dead, some stunned, some still struggling; the game causes vast excitement as the

Photo. A. C. Corbetta.

THE TUARAN RIVER.

[To face p. 356.



Dusuns dive and dive again. Enough is obtained for every one, and you return to the *opis* with the spoil.

By this time the village headman, who has been away at the *tamu*, puts in an appearance, bringing a small offering of fowls, eggs and fruit. He greets you in Dusun, whereupon you remind him that when you met him at the *tamu* in the morning he had a passing knowledge of Malay. "Ah, yes, *Tuan*," he says simply, "but surely you noticed that I was a little drunk just then." You give him a cigarette and find him a little present in return for his (a tattered white coat or an old shirt is most appreciated) and then have a talk about affairs of state. The rice harvest, he tells you, is not as good as it might have been owing to a plague of mice. He does not quite know whence these mice came nor whither, now the harvest is over, they are gone. He only knows that there were a great many of them, and his own private belief is that it rained mice one night. You sympathize, and, having retailed a few other tit-bits of local news, he departs, having shaken you warmly by the hand with many protestations of goodwill.

§ 7

Next morning you have breakfasted by six, and are on the way, with a change of coolies, by a quarter past. There are several schools of travelling in North Borneo and each has its own adherents. The early start school has many, but others prefer to breakfast in what they call peace, and set off at about nine, when the sun is high in the heavens. They stop their coolies and have tiffin on the way and get into camp, usually in the pouring rain, at about four or five; this means that the baggage arrives an hour later, and that, until tea is produced, every one is very tired and irritable. No one gets much rest and little time is left for such business as there may be to do. Some, again, prefer to walk always behind the last coolie, but this is a tedious business at the best, though admittedly in this way one cannot lose one's kit. Others like travelling by moonlight, a method not without its advantages—so long as the moon is shining.

The march from Melangan to Ratau, the next halting-house, is an uneventful one, the track still following the course of the Tuaran River with never a glimpse of Kinabalu, which is shut out by the steepness of the nearer hills. At about eight o'clock you come to Baiag village and just beside it a fine deep pool, the shallows into which it runs walled off with slanting barriers of stones, so that the water rushes downstream through a bottle neck, at the end of which are set long bamboo fish traps, rather like elongated lobster pots, baited with coconut every night. A splendid place to dynamite for fish, because everything that drifts down with the current must be caught in the traps. It is too good a chance to miss, for there are few fish in the higher reaches of the river. In goes a charge and the result is beyond your wildest hopes; the pool is teeming and you get some splendid fellows, many of a good three pounds weight. The police are insatiable and can scarcely be torn away. It breaks their hearts to leave anything behind, but eventually you get on your way again, taking as much as you can carry conveniently and leaving the rest for the villagers, for after all it is their pool. At about ten o'clock you come to Tenampok village, which is the limit for raft navigation, and soon afterwards leave the Tuaran to follow its tributary the Mulau; yet another hour and you reach Ratau village, where a resting-place similar to that of Melangan awaits you, and you camp for the night.

All next day the path lies along the banks of the River Mulau. Mulau means "mad" in Dusun, and I rather think that the river's eccentricities got on the nerves of the Dusuns of old and that they called it *mulau* because of its winding, headlong course, for between Ratau and Pau, the day's destination, you ford the wretched stream no less than five-and-twenty times. In fact Stevenson's description of the Landwasser at Davos might have been written of the Mulau:

> A river that from morn to night
> Down all the valley plays the fool;
> Not once she pauses in her flight
> Nor knows the comfort of a pool;

> But still keeps up by straight or bend
> The self-same pace she hath begun,
> Still hurry, hurry to the end—
> Good God, is that the way to run ?

Some of the crossings are fairly swift and the expedition's dog fares worst as, refusing assistance, he usually gets washed away, fetching up against a rock with a dull thud a few yards downstream, where he is rescued by a coolie.

Pau village straggles for about half a mile on either bank of the river and has a population of about 250. The river banks are green and fertile, with grass close-cropped by grazing buffaloes ; there are a few terraced fields of wet rice, and above them the hills rise steeply on either side, the even green being broken here and there by stray clearings, like a vast piece of baize that has been patched with brown.

The village, a collection of rather dilapidated bamboo huts, stands upon a gentle grassy slope on the right bank of the rocky stream, shaded by coconut-trees. Fifty yards beyond is a substantial *opis* built upon a delightful site. It is such an attractive spot that you decide to stay a couple of days, and so the next morning is one of peace. Pau is about 1,000 feet above sea-level and, though it is not cold, for the village is sheltered, the morning air is crisp and fresh. The rest-house looks downstream to the north ; south, east and west are hills, so the sun comes late into the valley. As it rises it first lights up the tip of the western peaks ; next the whole hill down to the river comes out of the shadow, and then the shadow rises from the eastern hills as though some one were slowly pulling up a blind and letting the sunlight in.

After a bathe in the stream and a leisurely breakfast, you take a stroll round the village ; its picturesqueness atones for its lack of sanitation. The Paus are a cheerful, friendly lot. Many of the younger men work on the coast estates ; these may be known by their carefully parted hair and their white suits. One who has just returned greets you in Malay and tells you he is glad to be home again. " *Bukan main, Tuan,*" he adds feelingly, " they don't half make you work down there."

Everywhere you go you receive a smile. Somebody climbs

a tree to get you a green coconut, some one else produces a chunk of native honey from his private hive. You soon have a following of small and very dirty children who keep at a safe distance at first, but forget their fears when you throw them a few copper cents to scramble for. On your return to the *opis* you find a gathering of both sexes and all ages waiting, with childlike faith in the white man's medicine, to be doctored. After iodine, carbolic lotion, quinine and Epsom salts have been dispensed judiciously to the satisfaction of all, the wiseacres become talkative and disposed to yarn. One old man remembers the origin of the village. In bygone days, he tells you, the forebears of the Paus lived on the Ranau Plain, but as there was much sickness there they decided to move. This they did in two parties; the first left a basket of fowls as a signpost at a spot where the path branched, but a practical-joking spirit of the jungle moved the basket so that those behind missed the way, and instead of going down the Tempassuk and settling where the village of Genambur now is, they made their way across the hills until they came to the valley of the Mulau, which then contained no sign of human habitation, and there made their home.

In the afternoon, having nothing better to do, you make the police organize some sports for the children; they are a great success with both the young and old, for the easiest way to make a native unbend is to take a little interest in his offspring; a few bead necklaces and toys from one of the Japanese shops in Jesselton come in useful as prizes, and soon the air is filled with the rasping sound of tin trumpets. To escape, you wander downstream with your gun, and before the sun has set you are unlucky if you have not secured half a dozen green pigeons, a welcome change from the ordinary jungle fare.

§ 8

Early next morning you leave for Tiong. The track lies straight up Peninkarun, a steep hill that rises abruptly behind the arcadian village of the Paus, and a stiff climb (all the stiffer because there is no time to get into your stride first) brings you to the top in three-quarters of an hour. Not a

glimpse of Kinabalu do you get all the way up, but, just as you come over the crest of the hill, it greets you, towering up sheer and black and wonderful in the morning sun, while beneath you, as far as the eye can see, the billowy jungle hills rise and fall, cleft by tumbling streams. It is worth climbing up many hills to see Kinabalu like that. It is grander far than the distant view from the coast, the suddenness with which you come upon it makes the scene more impressive still, and although perhaps not a dozen people have seen Kinabalu from where you stand you cannot help wishing that you had been the first.

Below the crest of the ridge the mountain is soon lost to view again, for the path drops down to the Koriyau River, then follows its course upstream as far as the site of Tamu Geruntong. This market, held every thirty days, is one of the most interesting in the district; it is under no Government supervision and all the arrangements are made by the natives, who keep accurate count of the days by means of *tembuku*, the knots tied in strips of rattan. No Chinese or Bajaus have access to it, but Dusuns who have just returned from the coast barter again the goods they have brought back, such as salt, dried fish and matches, for tobacco and other products of the hills.

An hour's climb from the *Tamu* ground brings you to Tiong village, perched 2,500 feet above the sea on the hills that divide the North Keppel district from the Interior. High up on the down-like slope is set the *opis*—rather an elaborate one this time—and, as you halt panting, half-way up, you ask your policeman-guide rather querulously why on earth the District Officer who built it stuck it away on this infernal hill. The policeman smirks as if to dissociate himself entirely with such madness and replies, " So that he could see Kinabalu, *Tuan*." Cursing the architect's æsthetic tastes you plod perspiringly on up the shadeless track, but once you have clambered up the *opis* steps you realize that there was a little method in his madness after all, for there once more is Kinabalu, just showing its peaks over the eastern hills, like a giant peering over a gigantic wall.

Not far from the rest-house lies the sacred pool of Tiong,

an object of awe to the villagers, for it is said never to run dry. In olden days, on the spot where the pool now stands, there was a large house, part of the Dusun village of Sempodon. On the night of a great festival the whole village was gathered in this house and many Dusuns from the surrounding hills as well. A buffalo had been killed and the air was filled with the thunder of the drums and the booming of the great native gongs. As the night wore on, huge jars of coconut toddy were produced and libations were passed round in long bamboo tubes; men's hearts began to grow warm; the feast grew more riotous and the booming of the gongs waxed louder and more furious than before. Then the dancing began; longer and longer became the pulls at the bamboos, the night was rent with drunken shouts and wild laughter, and the stifling air in the house became still thicker and more redolent of *bahr* and human bodies. When the excitement was at its height the village chief, now very drunk indeed, came staggering into the ring round the fire with a dog in his arms; it was dressed up in an old coat and a tattered pair of trousers, and a cap was set upon its head; then out of a coconut husk it was given toddy to drink. It was not long before the dog was drunk as its master and reeled about from side to side. The chief, laughing boisterously, took it by its paws and made it dance upon the hearth. This caused peal after peal of laughter, and all rocked to and fro in paroxysms of mirth as they beheld the spectacle of the dancing dog.

But Kinaringan, looking down from his dwelling in the skies, was moved to anger at this unseemly sight, and caused a great storm to arise. The sky was split in two with the lightning, and the thunder seemed as though it would break the hills; a mighty wind came tearing and screaming up the valley and the rain lashed down upon the earth. It made the mountain torrents come tumbling down the hill-sides, tossing great boulders in their course. Such a tempest no Dusun had ever seen before, even in that land of sudden storms; then, without warning, the posts of the house crashed to the ground; at the same moment the earth opened and swallowed house, revellers, dog and all. In their place was formed the pool and not a vestige of the habitation remained,

and though, when the storm was over, weighted ropes were let down into the pool to try to extricate the unfortunate people, yet the bottom was never touched and never has been to this day. So the spot was called Tiong Tiong and the village was known ever afterwards as Tiong Sempodon, *nationg* in Dusun meaning "hidden from sight."

Such is the tale of Tiong Pool. The rivers may fall to trickles and the mountain streams may cease to run, but no drought has ever yet dried Tiong Pool. It is become little more than a wallow for buffaloes, black and slimy and very unlike what a sacred pool should be, yet even to this day the Dusuns fear to make a laughing-stock of any animal, mindful of their forebears' fate and dreading the wrath of Kinaringan. Personally I have always thought that Kinaringan was a little hard on the Dusun dog; he might at least have let the unfortunate pariah get away. But I suppose if you are a Dusun deity you do not think of little things like that.

Tiong is a very populous neighbourhood as North Borneo goes, and there are many villages dotted about the grassy hills. The Dusuns grow tobacco on their slopes and are comparatively well-to-do for up-country folk, but their prosperity has not spoiled them, and they are no less friendly than the men of Pau. The nights and mornings here are deliciously cool, and you find it necessary to unearth a second blanket from the depths of a *bongon*, while the wild raspberries that abound everywhere make a pleasant change from bananas when eaten raw with sugar and tinned milk.

§ 9

The easiest path from Tiong over the divide between the Tuaran and Tempassuk districts is by the way of Tamis village, which you reach after a short and easy march along the hill slopes, through the tobacco gardens of the Tiongs. Tamis, which is on the Tuaran side of the divide, is off the beaten track and is rarely visited. There is no rest-house there, but the headman obligingly finds a room for you in a comparatively uncongested Dusun house, raised on posts two feet from the ground and passing small. The floor is made of split bamboo, the walls of roughly-hewn planks, the roof

is thatched with *atap*. The eaves come down to within a few feet of the floor and, as you enter the house, you bang your head against as intricate a system of rafters as ever the ingenuity of man devised; chimney and windows there are none, and the smoke has to escape through what crannies it may, so that the roof gleams with the grime of ages. As nothing can get out, by a like token nothing can get in, and such fresh air as there is in the house has to make its way through the small doorway or filter through the chinks and openings in the walls. The verandah runs the length of the house, and the living-rooms, each of which has its own hearth, are shut off by a wooden partition with two doors. Over the partition is a kind of ceiling where the goods and chattels of the family are stored away, a weird and wonderful collection —bamboo fish traps, old buffalo horns, jars, *padi*, spare pieces of *atap*, firewood, casting-nets, gongs, spears and knives all jumbled in confusion. In every corner belongings of one kind or another are stowed away. There is little room for you and your camp bed, but jungle servants are equal to most things and squeeze in somehow. It is hard to conceive a human habitation more filthy; upon the ground lies the refuse of ages; underneath the house is the village pigsty; fowls, dogs and babies roam everywhere within and without, whilst outside the door in a hive made of tree bark is a swarm of bees. A cock crows noisily upon a rafter, an old hen clucks away to her family near the steps and another emerges raucously from one of the cubicles in which she has just laid an egg; the babies are yelling, the pigs grunting and snuffling, a cat is wailing, old men are coughing (nearly every Dusun gaffer has a nasty hacking cough), women shouting at the top of their voices, the bees swarming angrily, and there are at least three dog fights in progress, the combatants being kicked impartially down the steps every now and then. The village is well known for its native industries, and you spend a profitable hour watching the ladies of the house spinning native-grown cotton, weaving coarse cloth from the *lamba* grass, and making round hats of curious design with rattan which they dye red and black.

A climb from Tamis brings you to the top of the divide,

where you look down upon the glorious valley of the Tempassuk and the foothills of Kinabalu. The mountain itself, growing in grandeur as you draw nearer to its granite slopes, looms above, though you are lucky if it is not veiled in mist. You drop down on to the Government bridle-path and follow it as far as the Dallas rest-house, which is built upon a buttress of the valley at a height of 3,000 feet. From its verandah you find spread out before your eyes as enchanting a spectacle as any in the world. Away to the east lies the coast and Kota Belud Station; to the west the path winds through the divide to Bundu Tuhan. From below comes the murmur of the Kadamaian River as it tumbles in headlong course towards the Tempassuk plains, and, far across the wide valley, the brown houses of Kiau village, where live the children of the mountain, cluster together upon the slope. To the north-east Nunkuk Hill, seemingly cone-shaped but in reality triple-peaked, rises 5,000 feet, jungle-clad, but it is Kinabalu that holds your gaze, for it is here that you may see the full glory of its granite mass and the splendour of its beetling crags, "whose fall would shake the world." It would take a Lafcadio Hearn to paint in words the colours of those dewy mornings, when, before the mists creep up, the sunlight comes glinting on the mountain, lights up its shimmering waterfalls which from the coast seem streaks of snow, and brings out of the shadows its hidden caverns and ravines. Seen thus Kinabalu becomes a lasting memory, a symbol of North Borneo no less than snow-capped Fujiyama is a symbol of Japan.

§ 10

If you had brought equipment in the shape of palm-leaf *kajang* for shelter, warm underclothes and many blankets you might climb across the valley to Kiau and thence make the ascent of Kinabalu—for there are few having seen the mountain close at hand who do not feel a desire to explore its summit. If, again, you had brought an infinity of stores you might follow the bridle-path across the divide to Bundu Tuhan and so come by easy stages to Tambunan, Tenom and the coast, if the spirit moved you, to the Dutch Border. Your trip, however, is to be a short one, and so you turn your

face towards the sea. Ponies have been sent to Dallas, for you may ride all the way down the Tempassuk valley. The bridle-path winds round the swelling sides of the great hills, in and out of a hundred little gullies; it is well graded, but there is scarcely a stretch of flat, for you are working down to the plains all the time; trotting downhill is not exhilarating for long, and Borneo ponies as a rule are not fast walkers, so that many prefer the shade and coolness of the track along the river bank. For those on foot it is far shorter, and that is why the native usually avoids the bridle-path except when the river is in flood. Then the path is invaluable indeed, for it follows the left bank of the main river all the way without a crossing, whereas, by the native track, crossings are many, and even the fords become formidable when the streams are high, particularly to a European, who slips and slithers in his shoes upon the rocks as he breasts the foaming torrents and learns not to disdain a helping hand.

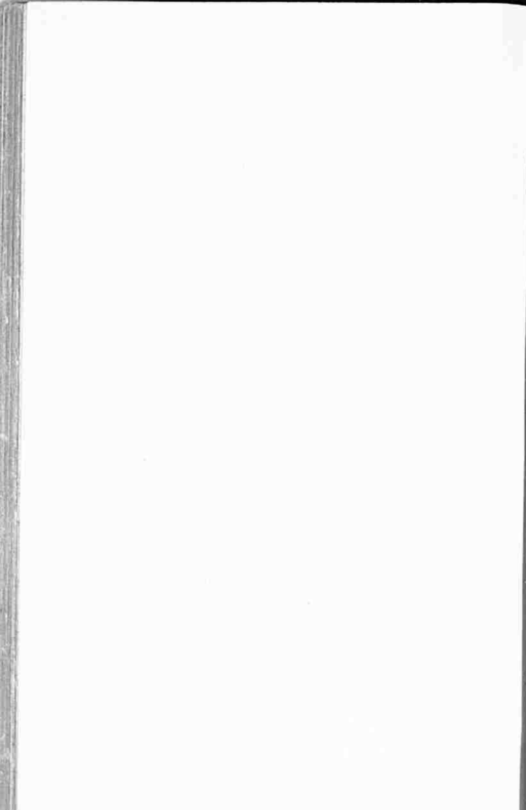
In any case the first day towards the coast from Dallas is a short one, and in less than three hours you are at Koung, where there is a good rest-house upon a home-like stretch of turf beside the foaming Kadamaian, the site of the police station of old. Below Koung the Kadamaian becomes the Tempassuk, and the roar of the river as it hurls itself against the boulders that strew its bed lulls you to sleep and also drowns the interminable conversation of your followers and, when that has at length subsided, their snores as well. From Koung a branch bridle-path runs up to Kiau, and the main path goes on to Kabaiau and Genambur. The journey from Koung to the coast has been described by many an early traveller, most notably by St. John in the *Forests of the Far East*, a book which no traveller who follows in his footsteps should be without. Save for the bridle-path and the convenient rest-houses at Kabaiau and Genambur, outward conditions of the country have scarcely altered since he and Hugh Low were the first white men to pass that way in 1847, though what was then a hazardous adventure in an unknown land without any form of Government, is now as safe as a walk from London to Brighton and a good deal more enjoyable.

The last day from Genambur into Kota Belud is a long one;

Photo. *D. J. Rutter.*

DUSUN COOLIES CROSSING STREAM.

[*To face p. 306.*



the coolies are left far behind, for the path is flat and you can let your pony go. Eight miles from the Government Station is Tamu Darat, the up-country Tempassuk market, held every ten days, always well-attended and always worth attending, for it attracts every type of native from Ranau to the coast. From Tamu Darat rafts can be used on the Tempassuk, and any day when the river is not too high you may see great loads of rattan being poled down to the Chinese shops. The last eight miles of the path are good going; here it crosses a little stream, there it winds round a broken hill above the pebbly river, but for the most part it takes you across the broad fertile plain. By the time you draw near the station the sun is high and you canter along the last two miles thinking how pleasant will be a long glass of beer in that cool bungalow upon the hill. It does not fail your expectations, nor do the bath and tiffin that follow it, nor yet the lazy afternoon spent lying in a long chair clad in nothing but a *sarong* and a shirt. For the best part of going away is the coming home again, and homecoming from the jungle is best of all.

Such is a brief glimpse of a few days' journey in one of the up-country districts of North Borneo. All such travels are very much the same, varying only in the matter of hills and rain and leeches. In good weather there is nothing more delightful than a few days' jungle trip, in bad few things are more uncomfortable. All travel, even travelling first-class from London to Singapore, is an adventure, and although travelling in the now peaceful uplands of North Borneo is not beset with dangers either from man or beast, there are moments, such as crossing a flooded river or shooting rapids in a bamboo raft, that are as near the real thing as one could wish to find. Better still, once away from the amenities of Government stations the traveller is in a land that is much as it was a hundred years ago; he will find in the jungle no signs of civilization save, perhaps, if he strikes a Government bridle-path or a rest-house; in no country in the world, except perhaps in Papua, may he leave the centuries so soon behind. For a few days he may wander, beyond reach of telephones and the petty urgencies of modern life, among a

primitive people of such simplicity that, though their habits may be uncouth, their friendliness cannot fail to charm; for a few days his are the mysteries of the forests and the glory of the mountain streams, the cool starry nights and the dewy freshness of the dawns, combined with a feeling of open spaces that is worth all the comforts of travel in a western land.

CHAPTER XIV

NORTH BORNEO DAY BY DAY

NORTH BORNEO is a country in which no European should remain longer than four years on end; for the majority three would be long enough. During the war leave was difficult and many had to remain six years or more without a holiday. The strain told, but those were abnormal days, and there were others who were undergoing as great a strain elsewhere. Normally, even though fares are high and the journey to Europe long, it would be worth employers' while to aim at sending their men home after each spell of three years' service. There would be a fitter and a more contented community if this could be done. It is as easy to get into a groove if one lives too long in a place like Borneo as it is if one lives too long in a place like Balham, and "mental sloth" is, in the East, a very insidious disease. Moreover, North Borneo is a young country; it will be long before it possesses a holiday resort like Honolulu or a hive of business like Hong Kong. The amenities and comforts of civilization are not as easy to obtain as they are in the Federated Malay States or in Ceylon; there are no hill stations and few gaieties; it is difficult and expensive to get away for short trips to the Philippines, Java or Hong Kong. There are under 500 white people in the State, so that even in Jesselton and Sandakan European communities are small, while up-country a man is lucky if his neighbours amount to half a dozen. Government outstations are more lonely than most estates, yet monotony is more apt to tell upon the planter than upon the District Officer; the latter has a variety of work to do and may be travelling half the month, while the planter's life, particularly on the older

estates where the clearing and planting is finished, consists in doing much the same things every day.

Against all this there are many compensations—compensations such as only a young country can give. Freedom is a great thing, and in North Borneo there is a sense of freedom which has to be known to be understood, freedom from irksome convention and restraint. In the Federated Malay States or Ceylon a man certainly leads a life more nearly approaching what is commonly known as a "good time"; in North Borneo, on the other hand, he stands a reasonable chance, while living comfortably, of being able to save a little money, and those to whom the saving of money is a constitutional impossibility have the consolation of knowing that they would be twice as deep in debt if they lived elsewhere. It is a fact that most planters who have come from other countries take kindly to the jungle land and have no longing to return whence they came, while some of those who have left North Borneo to settle under other skies would, one hears, be glad enough to return to its sunny shores.

§ 2

Wherever one finds a few Britons gathered together, no matter how small the communities they form, there one will find sport of some kind or another. North Borneo is no exception. Cricket is played regularly in Sandakan, Jesselton and Beaufort; football is played everywhere. The clerical community—Chinese, Tamil and Eurasian—are keen on both; they turn out some good players and have their own recreation clubs. Every outstation and estate has its own football ground, and "soccer" is very popular with the natives. "Rugger" is a strenuous game for Europeans in the tropics; I believe the one and only match played in the country was in 1913, when a team was brought in from Tuaran to play Jesselton. At half-time the Tuaran side, which consisted of a native scrum and European outsides, was a goal to the bad and the natives divested themselves of their shirts. This was a clever move on their part because they rendered themselves almost uncollarable unless their opponents went low, but decorum prevailed and they were induced to re-clothe them-

selves. Eventually Tuaran lost by a try to a goal, after a struggle which aroused great enthusiasm among the watching crowd. The players of course were picked men, but it says a great deal for the Borneo natives that Europeans can play football on equal terms with them without losing caste in any way. I have never seen an untoward incident at a football match in which Europeans and natives were taking part.

Tennis is played in the towns and on many of the estates; there are nine-hole golf courses at Jesselton, Beaufort, Tenom, Kudat and Sandakan; good sailing can be had in any of the innumerable bays with which the coast is indented; deep-sea fishing and fly fishing are both obtainable; there are rifle clubs in Jesselton and Sandakan, where frequent competitions are shot off on the Constabulary ranges.

Government officers in the wilds and planters on estates that lie in more out-of-the-way districts, such as Marudu, have big-game shooting. Sambur-deer are plentiful in most parts of the country; they do considerable damage to plantations, and are regarded as vermin; a Government licence to shoot them is 25s. a year, but owners of gardens and estates are allowed to protect their property. Deer may be hunted on ponies or driven towards a *jaring*, as already described, or tracked; they seldom fail to provide good sport. The horns have six points and are thick and heavy though usually short. Large numbers are slaughtered by valorous Chinese sportsmen, who put a lamp in the jungle and wait near-by till the head of the inquisitive animal comes into the circle of the light.

Wild pig are also vermin and no licence is required to shoot them. They are even a greater curse than deer, as the owners of most coconut estates know to their cost; they teem all over Borneo wherever there is scrub or jungle; even islands are not free from their ravages, for they swim out long distances from the mainland. The popular idea that a pig cuts its own throat with its hoofs when swimming is a fallacy. I remember once coming down the Serudong river with Mr. F. J. Moysey and seeing an old sow swimming across the river with ten sounders in tow, each grasping another's tail with its teeth. The sow was holding a short piece of stick in her jaws, and

the natives said this was used as a protection against crocodiles, but it is more likely that she was using it instinctively as a float.

Pigs are sometimes hunted with a pack of native dogs, which bring their beast to bay in an amazingly clever manner, yapping and snapping round it until it is dispatched by spear or rifle. The Borneo boar weighs as much as four hundred pounds and is usually of a dirty grey colour, but Mr. G. C. Irving once shot a white boar standing 42½ in. at the shoulder.

The dun-coloured *tembadau*, or wild cattle, are also sometimes hunted with dogs, but more usually tracked. They are slightly smaller than the *sladang* of the Federated Malay States, though of the same species, and afford some of the best shooting in the country. Their horns rarely exceed 24 in., and they are to be found, either in small families or in herds of considerable size, travelling over the flat country of Marudu and the east coast. They are not easy to shoot and, when wounded, they are often dangerous customers to tackle. For £2 10s. the Government grants a licence to shoot three, combined with a 25s. penalty for shooting a cow. A rhinoceros licence costs £3 for two, with 25s. fine for a cow, while for elephant the permit is £6, together with £12 for every bull shot and a penalty of £60 for a cow. These penalties are seldom enforced, and a cow elephant was shot a few miles outside Sandakan quite recently with the permission of the Government.

For the keen big-game hunter the North Borneo *tembadau*, rhinoceros and elephant give as good sport as any country in the world, but big-game shooting in North Borneo is not a pastime for the amateur who expects to get heads from his verandah. To shoot a *tembadau* a hunter has to work hard; he has to work harder still to shoot a rhino or an elephant. Shooting in virgin jungle is an arduous business, and it often requires an expedition of several weeks to get a good bag. Except on rare occasions, game is only to be found in the forest away from the haunt of man, country far from bridle-paths and rest-houses and even native villages. The trackless jungle, through whose tangled branches one rarely feels the sun or sees the stars, is full of thorns and leeches; the hunter is wet all day long from rain or from fording swollen streams; at

night he may sleep upon a mat in a tiny hut built of leaves, for his only hope is to travel light and keep his comforts at a base, from which he may be absent many days. He needs a good constitution to withstand the rigours of such a life; an infinity of patience, as he may follow up a fresh spoor for days only to find it obliterated by a sudden storm of rain; strong nerves, for to shoot a big animal in dense jungle it is necessary to get within a few yards even to see a vital spot at which to aim.

The natives admire and respect a great hunter. Mr. G. C. Irving's name is always a household word in districts where he has been stationed, and the people never tire of recounting his prowess to his successors. Mr. R. K. Hardwick earned his natives' esteem by tracking barefoot. To most people this will seem the height of intrepidity, but he found that it was well worth the first fortnight of pain and discomfort for, once his feet became hardened, he was able to tread as softly and as surely as a cat. No one in North Borneo has ever taken up big-game shooting as determinedly or as thoroughly as Mr. Hardwick did in his day, and to give some idea of what this means I cannot do better than quote from his diary a passage in which he describes his first encounter with elephants: " . . . In these jungles one can hear a long way ahead the noise of a mob of elephants. They are continually feeding and pulling down small trees or branches, which causes quite a commotion in the usually deadly stillness of the jungle. Going straight for the sound which was distinguished by various crashes, I came upon the mob, which was walking slowly along, feeding as it went. The nearest elephant to me was a cow with a calf at foot no higher than its mother's stomach. It was my first sight of Borneo elephants, and in the density and half-gloom of the jungle their hugeness appeared to be greatly intensified. I had to proceed with the utmost caution in order not to alarm the mob, but as the wind was favourable this was not a difficult task. Unfortunately the mob was in rather a dense patch of scrub, and I had to make a detour and inspect each one to see if any had tusks. This inspection took at least an hour and, although the mob consisted of five elephants, I found to my great disappointment that not a

single beast carried ivory. For the novelty of the thing, the freshness of which wore off in subsequent encounters, I crept up to a tuskless bull to watch him, and although I could not have been more than six yards off him he could not see me, owing to the dense undergrowth which separated us, but he had immediately obtained a strong hold of my smell for he continued to wave his trunk about and always pointed it towards me. I could even see the bristles on the end, while his ears eventually became fixed and he no longer used them to flap away the flies. Now and again he would give vent to a low quivering growl, but he remained for the best part of five minutes in absolute silence. It was impossible for me to withdraw until he made his first move—I was too close to him to get away without being charged at once. Again and again he would wave his trunk, but always after waving it he would suddenly stick it out straight before him, pointing directly at me. It reminded me for all the world of a leech one sees on a leaf on a wet day continually waving its sucker in search of food. It was perhaps after ten minutes that the other members of the mob got a hold of our smell, for suddenly they swung round and bolted with terrific crashes into the farther depths of the jungle. My beast immediately turned about and after trumpeting shrilly joined his friends, and they were soon out of sight and hearing."

Mr. Hardwick secured his first tusker several months later, chasing it the whole of one day and till noon the next. The tusks were 5 ft. 3 in. in length, weighing 63 pounds, and the height of the elephant was 7 ft. 10½ in. from the sole of the foot to the withers.

"On this expedition," wrote Mr. Hardwick, "I have brought very little equipment with me. I have no camp bed, not even a decent blanket, an old tablecloth serving this function About two changes, a small box of medicine, a few toilet necessities comprise my entire personal belongings. But on the other hand my battery is a good one and my ammunition plenty, and that is all I care about."

There speaks the true hunter. In the opinion of those less ardent, big-game shooting is rather an overrated amusement and too much like hard work. A district noted for its big game

is always a trial to the officer in charge on account of the distinguished visitors who from time to time want to come and shoot it without enduring too many hardships. It is not always possible to ensure a good bag, and there is a story of one zealous officer who, unwilling to see his guest go home empty-handed, had a large bull water-buffalo skilfully tied up in a clearing. The shooting party drew blank the whole day and as the dusk was falling approached the edge of the forest glade. A bulky figure loomed black in the failing light. There was a report and the guides rushed in, ostensibly (as good Mohammedans) to slit the throat of the dying beast. At any rate, when the great man got to the spot there was no sign of any tell-tale rope; he was told that he had brought down a prize—one of the few remaining wild buffaloes in the district—and probably (if this tale be true) has the head hanging in his ancestral hall to-day.

For the less adventurous sportsman there is the shot-gun and plenty of pigeon, which are good shooting and better eating; also quail, snipe and occasionally wild duck.

Last but not least for recreation there is racing, which in North Borneo is the sport of poor men as well as rich. The Sandakan Turf Club is the oldest in the country, though it is at present in a dormant condition, but Spring and Autumn Meetings are held by the Jesselton and Kudat clubs. Until a few years ago North Borneo racing was in that ideal stage where a pony could be hacked most of the year, trained a few weeks before a meeting and entered with the best, the owner probably riding it himself. Every one enjoyed himself as much as if he had been to Newmarket, and that was the main thing. Even nowadays, although racing is becoming more expensive and the tendency is to keep ponies for racing purposes only, the small owner with only one pony is often as successful as the owner with a string.

A race meeting at Jesselton or Kudat is one of the great days of the year. Every one who can get leave from "up the line" or from "over the bay" comes in, and a good many from other coasts as well, if boats are convenient. The meeting is no less popular with the natives, who attend in large numbers, their bright coats and *sarong* sprinkling the grass with colour

like confetti. No bookmakers are to be found, but the totalizator never fails to do a brisk business both with Europeans and non-Europeans. There are good fields for every race and the ponies, with either their owners or native jockeys up, seldom fail to give exciting finishes, and as they sometimes run three races in an afternoon they earn the cups they win.

It is to be regretted that for the time being interest in racing has died out in Sandakan, which has the largest European population, because this means that interest in ponies dies out too, and riding is one of the best and most delightful forms of exercise in the tropics. It is the coming of the motor-car that is to blame, and the riding parties that were once a feature of Sandakan life at present are heard of no more. Their place is taken by bathing parties to Taganac—an island about two hours by launch from the town, where the sand is perfect and the water clear, where lurks neither shark nor crocodile, though at certain seasons of the year the loathsome jelly-fish are found. These are most poisonous and the worst are those that float like vast transparent puddings, their colourless bulk tinged with mauve or green or blue, and their long wicked tentacles streaming out as they move sluggishly through the water or are carried by the current of the sea. Woe betide the hapless bather who comes in contact with one without having had the foresight to bring with him a lime. The clinging suckers produce long burning weals and, though sand rubbed on the wound will, according to the Bajaus, allay the pain, there has been many a bather laid up for days after being stung.

§ 3

It will be seen that outdoor sports and recreations are not few and, as North Borneo is a country in which most people rise early and as early seek their beds, indoor amusements do not present a great problem. Even that section of the community which—so to speak—

> Frequently breakfasts at five o'clock tea
> And dines on the following day,

does not find time hang heavy on its hands, for it plays poker or snooker pool.

Bridge is also to be had and, though there are no theatres, there are the now inevitable cinemas in Sandakan and Jesselton; here also are held all too infrequent dances, and the boiled shirt, that abomination of the bachelor (and for that matter of the married man), is seen at dinner-parties, save when hostesses are kind and allow white suits. Unless one owns a car, dining out is rather an undertaking, for most houses are set upon their private hills, and guests usually reach them in a breathless condition with their coats over their arms and their unwonted collars already wilting, a " boy " with a hurricane-lamp leading the way.

I have spoken of the free and unconventional life of North Borneo, but this does not apply so much to the towns, where no man may set aside the sacred rites of calling and shooting cards.

In these small matters the *Mem* should have her way, for she has more to put up with than any man, and in small things or great there is nothing either bachelor or benedict should leave undone to make her path more smooth. It is unfair to say (as some have said) that North Borneo is not a white woman's country, when it has been good enough for many splendid women who have loved it. It is a land, true enough, to which a woman has to be very brave to go, but that does not prevent a great many from being very happy there. At first the life seems a startling change from everything at home—it is cruder, with fewer amusements, altogether strange. It is unwise for a woman to go out between nine and four; when the rains come she will not be able to go out at all; the ways of native servants may at first appal her; at first she may miss her friends and, except in Jesselton and Sandakan, she will not see many of her own sex. Yet the country has a fascination of its own to which few white people do not become captive very soon. All will hold out their hands to her and she will make new friends, build up new interests; besides the morning skirmish with the Chinese cook she will find a hundred little things to do until the days are not long enough, and gradually she will learn to love this land on the other side

of the world as others have loved it before her. It is just what she cares to make it and nothing else.

The best motto for a white woman in Borneo is, "What the eye doesn't see, the heart doesn't grieve over." That is to say, she must be broad-minded and prepared to view with an unseeing eye the slightly unconventional doings of her husband's bachelor friends, as long as certain things are not thrust too prominently under her nose. It is a course that will save friction and many heartburnings. Thus she may live and let live in everyday life, but there may be occasions when a limit is overstepped, and then she may show her disapproval quite relentlessly. In a community mainly composed of men there is often little popular opinion, and on popular opinion hang the common decencies of our social life. This is hers to mould judiciously and with good sense, for in these matters, rightly wielded, her influence can be unbounded.

As the country grows and becomes more developed her lot will not be so isolated; the coast and the towns will be more accessible, and a hill-station will make all the difference in the world to her climate-resisting powers. As a rule white women stand the climate well, for North Borneo is as healthy a country as any in the tropics, indeed, a good deal more so than most. There are, for instance, several European ladies who have stayed five years before going home, and that with no ill results, while one, save for a brief trip to Ceylon, remained seven years without (if I may say so) turning a hair. But these cases are exceptional, and three years should be the limit; two are safer still.

European children cannot, of course, stand the climate for anything like five years. It is one of the saddest things about the East to see how children complicate married life, which becomes, after they are two or three years old, a series of partings, and the pale cheeks of most white children who dwell in tropical lands are a tragedy. But their faded roses soon bloom again under English skies, and in North Borneo they are happy enough, and usually learn to lisp Malay from their Javanese *babu* or Chinese *amah* before they can speak English. These worthy dames are of great assistance to their mistresses. As a rule they are old because, until they reach mature years,

their love affairs with other members of the staff are liable to upset the calm of an otherwise unruffled *ménage*. They are fond of children, they can sew, wash and iron, and they make themselves generally useful, in return for which they demand high salaries, and to-day an experienced *amah* can command £4 a month.

§ 4

Good servants in North Borneo are hard to find and, once found, are worth paying well. An ordinary household consists of a cook, one or two " boys," a water-carrier, a gardener and a syce. The majority of cooks and many of the house-boys are Chinese, Hylams from the island of Hainam. A cook's wages range from £2 10s. to £3 15s. a month, including food, which he usually finds himself. The Hylams make excellent servants; they are clean, hardworking and (within the limits of an Oriental) honest. Most of them are what is known as " good plain cooks." The resources of the Borneo larder are enough to cramp any cook's style, and after about a month one recognizes that his various efforts come round in a cycle as unvarying as that of the planets themselves. Fowl, pork chop and French beans; " mincee," buffalo kidney, anæmic scrambled eggs and a slab of beef from the local Indian's kill —how well the exile knows them all—and those everlasting pancakes, that seaweed jelly or the batter in which half a hard-boiled egg is shrouded on days when there is no fish. Sojourners in Jesselton or Sandakan have cold storage and incoming ships to fall back upon, and so fare passing well with fresh cheese and butter, legs of mutton and other luxuries, but in outstations or on distant estates the *pièce de résistance* of almost every day is usually the Borneo fowl or *ayam*, a hardy bird which never seems to have a youth. It was in *Alice through the Looking-glass* that they had " jam yesterday and jam to-morrow, but never jam to-day." In North Borneo it is *ayam* yesterday, *ayam* to-morrow and always *ayam* to-day. *Kuki* does his best with it and his dishes, until they become too painfully familiar, are palatable enough, but it is on Sunday that he produces, by immemorial custom, his curry tiffin. Most people enjoy a curry tiffin; the soup-plates are piled

high with snowy rice that soon turns to yellow ochre as the curried eggs or prawns are added, and then follows an assortment of *sambul* from the little dishes—Bombay duck, chutney, grated coconut, shreds of cucumber and browned onion, egg, sliced banana, pine-apple and the like, all mixed together in one glorious mass. A Chinese cannot make a curry as an Indian or Malay can but he comes a very good third and after his Sunday *tour de force* there follows (as inevitably as the moon follows the sun) *gula malacca*—pearl-grey sago, compact as a blancmange, with sauces of coconut milk and burnt molasses. Custom ordains that beer shall be drunk with a curry tiffin and that after it shall come a long chair and a short sleep.

The Hylam house-boy, whose wages, including food, are between £2 and £3 a month, is usually clean and well mannered, and makes a good servant, particularly when he has the vigilant eye of a *Mem* upon him, but few Chinese can stand jungle work, and the outstation man as a rule keeps native boys who soon learn a little cooking, sufficient for their lord's needs when he is on tour. If caught young, both Dusuns and Muruts make good house-boys; they are seldom as clean as Chinese but they are far more resourceful, and are often invaluable when travelling, the real test of a native servant.

Chinese are generally used for water-carriers, who are hewers of wood and drawers of water, sweepers of the house, washers up, and performers of any odd jobs outside the sphere of the "boy." The lot of the water-carrier is a hard one, for he is lorded over by the other servants and blamed for most mishaps. If he is a wise man it is not long before he picks up a little cooking in the kitchen and seeks his emancipation (and £3 a month instead of £2) as another "good plain cook." The wages of the gardeners and syces also average £2 a month or less; these men are usually Javanese, though the Bajau, if carefully trained, looks after ponies well.

The servants live in separate quarters, usually adjoining the kitchen behind the main building; the average Borneo bungalow is built of wood raised, for the sake of coolness, on posts a few feet from the ground, so that one lives, as

somebody once described it, in "mid-air." The roof is either made with split wooden shingles or thatched with *atap*; corrugated iron is sometimes used, but it is very hot and rubberoid is as bad. There are many doors and windows to let the breezes in and open verandahs with long rattan blinds to keep the sun out. Every bedroom has its own bathroom, but one's bath consists in pouring water over oneself with a dipper, a process which, though it may not sound attractive, is most refreshing. The rooms of most bungalows have no ceilings (again for the sake of coolness), but two-storied buildings with cement floors are becoming more popular. Mats take the place of carpets, paint or distemper the place of wallpaper. A punkah is hardly ever seen, but in Jesselton and Sandakan there are electric fans; save in these favoured spots lamps have to be used for lighting purposes; it is always necessary to sleep under a net and some bungalows are furnished with mosquito-houses.

Housekeeping presents difficulties of its own. The cook does the marketing every morning, a certain number of domestic requirements such as tins, soap, sugar, oil and matches can be obtained from the Chinese shops, and liquor from them or from the local agents, but to satisfy any needs beyond these it is necessary to write to Singapore, without hope of getting the goods for three weeks, or to England without hope of getting them for three months. A good European shop in Jesselton or Sandakan would be a boon to the country, and, as at the moment it would meet with little competition, it is surprising that no firm is enterprising enough to open one.

§ 5

In spite of minor trials, there is no doubt that North Borneo has its charms as a land to live in at the present time. There is no income-tax; there are no strikes; there are no remnants of war-time restrictions. A man may dwell there in comfort with everything, or nearly everything, he wants at less expense than almost anywhere else in the world. Servants' wages are comparatively low; household and living expenses, though they have risen since 1914, compare favourably with other countries. The Government, the estates and the commercial

firms provide their men with furnished houses or with allowances in their stead. White drill suits, or khaki for rough work, are worn universally, with white or brown canvas shoes; these can be obtained locally at reasonable prices, and clothes consequently are not a serious item. Club bills may be large or small according to the member's inclination and, unless one plays poker, there are few expensive amusements.

There are four main openings for men in North Borneo—the Civil Service, planting, business and private enterprise. Each has its own opportunities. Though he may not make his fortune a man might go farther and fare worse. North Borneo is still a land of possibilities. Its little settlements and such development as it can show to-day have risen out of the jungle, but even now, after over forty years, only one per cent of its vast expanse has been opened up, the rest still lies within the jungle's arms. There are not many lands—healthy lands, fertile lands—which hold a future so unprobed.

There has been a great deal of nonsense written about the Call of the East. The truth is that the East has no special call; as a race we are a restless people, yet so adaptable to our surroundings that any land in which we make even a temporary home gets deep into our hearts. That is the reason why the wanderer, back in England, longs to feel the sun of the tropics beating down once again, but it is the reason too why the exile feels the Call of the West before he has been East of Suez for a year. There have been as many sighs heaved for the " mountains of Piccadilly and the wilds of Leicester Square," as for any little coral island set in any southern sea. There is always something calling a man, whether it is a little outstation in the jungle on the other side of the world or whether it is the pavements of St. James's on a sunny afternoon in spring.

There will be moments when the adventurer who goes to North Borneo will be sorry he did not stay at home, he may be very sure, but that is no reason why he should not go. Many of the drawbacks he may have known if he has been a soldier—the sighing for the green fields of England and for the stir and bustle of its towns; the heat and all the trials that come pressing in its train; the long wait for Mail Day

and (perhaps) the heartache for the Girl at Home, without whom no true adventurer is complete; but the compensations are so many, though often made up of little things. His first sight of a flying fish or of that slightly overrated constellation, the Southern Cross; his first rickshaw ride and his first glimpse of a coconut-tree; the colours, the sights, sounds and even smells of the East; the freshness of the morning breeze and the brief still hour when the shadows lengthen and tell that it is whisky-and-soda time; soft-footed servants to do his lightest bidding, and perhaps a shady bungalow looking across the gleaming rice-fields with palm leaves flapping idly to and fro in a garden where hibiscus blooms.

If these seem but fleeting charms he must remember that there are others which endure—the free life that is his to live under the tropical sky, away from the cold and fogs and blizzards of the north; ponies to ride and dogs to love; the joy of opening the English Mail when it comes at last; the delight of morning tea and a cigarette on a cool verandah; gin-slings, such as they know not at home; the excellence of curry-tiffins; ease-giving long chairs; the pleasantness of signing a "chit" for every need; the comfort of a *sarong*; the cheerful people who take him as they find him and give him their hospitality, boundless as the Pacific and spontaneous as laughter; new friends; new points of view; new interests that come every day, and much else besides, until he learns that, as Stevenson said, "Life is far better than people dream who fall asleep among the chimney-stacks and telegraph wires."

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APPENDIX I

STATEMENTS OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, 1883-1920

Year.	*Revenue.*	*Expenditure.*
	£	£
1883	13,679	51,995
1885	19,077	35,029
1890	99,686	78,276
1895	37,121	42,200
1900	62,483	147,268
1905	113,517	112,356
1910	221,271	131,863
1915	234,413	120,864
1920	425,334	215,224

APPENDIX II

STATEMENT OF IMPORTS AND EXPORTS, 1883-1920

Year.	*Imports.*	*Exports.*
	£	£
1883	80,422	29,836
1885	109,402	67,776
1890	336,345	140,214
1895	176,789	226,376
1900	337,761	353,453
1905	313,215	501,013
1910	443,486	537,720
1915	522,648	865,561
1920	1,284,438	1,405,722

APPENDIX III

DÉTAILS OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE, 1920

Revenue.

	£	s.	d.
Excise	193,954	4	11
Customs	105,179	7	6
Poll-Tax	3,915	15	11
Land Revenue	15,304	0	3
Forest Revenue	11,521	3	5
House, Store, and other Rents	9,450	15	9
Fines and Fees	4,769	14	10
Local Rates	8,786	0	11
Interest and Commission	1,242	18	9
Postal and Inland Revenue	2,914	10	1
Harbour Fees	3,960	17	9
Fees of Office	1,890	0	3
Telegraph Revenue	8,157	2	0
Reimbursements	12,999	16	2
Railway Earnings	35,232	15	2
Profit on Nickel Coin	561	4	5
Railway Hotel Revenue	1,536	12	7
	£421,377	0	8
Land Sales	3,956	18	6
	£425,333	19	2

Expenditure.

	£	s.	d.
Public Works Dept.	16,780	4	10
Harbour Dept.	2,099	0	2
Postal Dept.	2,239	13	4
Medical Dept.	16,585	6	2
Constabulary	29,472	4	5
Gaols	11,718	7	7
Printing Dept.	3,673	13	7
Govt. Vessels	2,464	5	9
Transport	10,195	4	1
Stationery	3,726	4	1
Misc. Expenses	4,543	6	0
Agency Charges	1,148	13	1
Salaries and Allowances	50,633	9	5
Land and Survey Dept.	2,792	11	0
Cession Money and Native Chiefs	3,569	7	0
Telegraph Dept.	8,454	18	8
Municipal Dept.	2,866	0	10
Immigration	959	2	7
Railway Working Expenses	39,941	0	1
Railway Hotel Expenses	1,361	0	10
	£215,223	13	5

APPENDIX IV

Comparison of Native Dialects

English	man	woman	head	foot	house
Malay	orang	perempuan	kepala	kaki	rumah
Illanun	tau	batai	ulu	lima wai	rumah
Sulu	tau	babai	ulu	siki	walai
Bajau	jemoh	dendoh	ooh	paat	bai
Orang Sungei	labu	winoi	tekok	utis	rumah
			ulu		waloi
Marudu Dusun	ulun	angandu	ulu	akud	walai
Tempassuk Dusun	ulun	kiganob	ulu	lapap	walai
Tuaran Dusun	ulun	andu andu	ulu	lapap	lamin
Kiau Dusun	ulun	angandu	ulu	lapap	walai
Putatan Dusun	uhun	andu	uhu	akud	hamin
Papar Dusun	ohun	andu	uhu	akud	suhap
Tambunan Dusun	uhun	andu	ahu	hukap	hamin
Tenggara	ulun	duandu	ulu	kalaiam	balai
Kwijau	ulun	angandu	ulu	kukur	balai
Keningau Murut	ulun	duandu	uluh	karaiab	balai
Dalit Murut	ulun	duandu	ulu	kalaiam	langkau
Tenom Murut	ulun	duandu	ulu	kalaiam	balai
Rundum Murut	ulun	duandu	ulu	palar	mensala

ENGLISH	boat	bird	fish	fire	water
MALAY	prau	burong	ikan	api	ayer
ILLANUN	awang	papanok	sada	apui	aig
SULU	dapang	manok manok	ista	kayu	tubig
BAJAU	bidu	manok	diing	api	bowai
ORANG SUNGEI	alud	manok	pait	api	sungoi
MARUDU DUSUN	alud	manok manok	sada	apui	waig
TEMPASSUK DUSUN	bintah	ambolog	sada	apui	waig
TUARAN DUSUN	dilus	manok manok	sada	apui	waig
KIAU DUSUN	padau	ambolog	sada	apui	waig
PUTATAN DUSUN	padau	ambohog	sada	apui	vaig
PAPAR DUSUN	padahau	ambohog	sada	apui	waig
TAMBUNAN DUSUN	padau	ambohug	sada	apui	waig
TENGGARA	alud	mamanuk	papait	apui	siang
KWIJAU	padau	dangal	sada	apui	waig
KENINGAU MURUT	padau	sisirak	ladag	apui	timog
DALIT MURUT	padau	sesuit	pait	apui	sungoi
TENOM MURUT	prau	sesuit	pait	apui	timug
RUNDUM MURUT	prau	sesuit	pait	apui	siang

ENGLISH	day	night	large	small	light
MALAY	hari	malam	besar	kechil	ringan
ILLANUN	alungan	magabi	malah	maitu	maga-an
SULU	adlau	dum	dakolah	masibi	magaban
BAJAU	alau	songom	oyoh	diki	ampul
ORANG SUNGEI	runat	awi	aioh	orus	ampul
MARUDU DUSUN	adoh	atuong	agaioh	opodoh	aringan
TEMPASSUK DUSUN	adau	atuong	agaioh	ataki	agaan
TUARAN DUSUN	adau	asadop	agaioh	ataioh	agaan
KIAU DUSUN	adau	atuong	agaioh	akorok	agan
PUTATAN DUSUN	adau	sodop	agazoh	anini	agaan
PAPAR DUSUN	adau	sodop	agazoh	anini	agaan
TAMBUNAN DUSUN	adau	tatuong	agaioh	akorok	agan
TENGGARA	adau	lanam	maioh	itik	langkar
KWIJAU	adau	sadat	agaioh	akorok	agaan
KENINGAU MURUT	adau	marondom	mavoh	madorok	mamad
DALIT MURUT	arau	lundom	aioh	borok	langkar
TENOM MURUT	arau	lundom	maioh	borok	maman
RUNDUM MURUT	arau	lundom	maioh	brok	alangkar

ENGLISH	heavy	black	white	good	bad
MALAY	brat	hitam	puteh	baik	jahat
ILLANUN	mapanat	maitam	maputeh	mapia	marata
SULU	mabogat	itom	maputeh	maraiau	mangi
BAJAU	buat	iram	puteh	alap	raat
ORANG SUNGEI	augat	itom	puteh	warong	arai
MARUDU DUSUN	wagat	hitam	apurak	wasi	araat
TEMPASSUK DUSUN	awagat	aitam	purak	agirat	raat
TUARAN DUSUN	awagat	maitam	purak	aranggoi	araat
KIAU DUSUN	augat	itom	apurak	asenang	araat
PUTATAN DUSUN	avagat	aitam	apuak	avasi	alaat
PAPAR DUSUN	avagat	maitam	apuak	avasi	ayaat
TAMBUNAN DUSUN	augat	aitom	apurak	asenang	araat
TENGGARA	wagat	tadang	apulak	aunsoi	alad
KWIJAU	awagat	taitom	apurak	awasi	malai
KENINGAU MURUT	magat	matom	mapurak	mansiu	maraat
DALIT MURUT	agat	atarom	apulak	onsoi	alaat
TENOM MURUT	magat	aitom	apulak	onsoi	araat
RUNDUM MURUT	agat	alinsom	apurak	atalah	alaat

ENGLISH	see	hear	eat	drink	sleep
MALAY	nampak	dengar	makan	minum	tidor
ILLANUN	kailai	makinug	kuman	maginum	turug
SULU	kita	dungag	kamaun	minum	matog
BAJAU	takitoh	takalih	mangan	nginum	turi
ORANG SUNGEI	asihoh	korungau	makan	minum	manturau
MARUDU DUSUN	nampak	nakali	memakan	minum	maturu
TEMPASSUK DUSUN	kaintong	korungau	makan	minum	madop
TUARAN DUSUN	akitoh	korungau	dumohum	manginom	madop
KIAU DUSUN	kitoh	arangau	makan	maginom	adop
PUTATAN DUSUN	akitoh	kongoh	makan	minom	madop
PAPAR DUSUN	nakitoh	limongau	mangakan	monginum	madop
TAMBUNAN DUSUN	nakitoh	narangau	makan	maginum	madop
TENGGARA	laipa	ininga	angkan	anginum	along
KWIJAU	akitoh	arangau	makan	maginum	madop
KENINGAU MURUT	akitoh	aining	makan	maginum	malong
DALIT MURUT	akitoh	aining	makan	anginum	along
TENOM MURUT	akitoh	maining	angakan	anginum	along
RUNDUM MURUT	akitoh	alongoh	angkan	ananggah	along

MAP OF THE STATE OF NORTH BORNEO

Scale of Miles

5 0 10 20 30 40 50

REFERENCE.

Railway
Bridle Paths
Telegraph Line
Telephone Line
State Boundary
Residency do.
Wireless Stations

KUDAT RESIDENCY

WEST COAST RESIDENCY

INTERIOR RESIDENCY

SANDAKAN RESIDENCY

EAST COAST RESIDENCY

DUTCH TERRITORY

SARAWAK

SIBUKO OR ST. LUCIA BAY

Longitude East of Greenwich.

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