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FANG AND CLAW

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

BRING 'EM BACK ALIVE (Filmed)
WILD CARGO (Filmed)

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

FRANK BUCK INSPECTING A NEWLY BORN MOUSE DEER WHILE A WHITE-HANDED GIBBON APE, ANOTHER PET, LOOKS CURIOUSLY OVER BUCK'S SHOULDER AT THE LITTLE STRANGER

FANG AND CLAW

BY
FRANK BUCK

WITH
FERRIN FRASER

BOOK NO.
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Illustrated

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FOREWORD

IN my previous books, *Bring 'Em Back Alive* and *Wild Cargo*, I told a great many of my true experiences with animals. All of these stories involved myself to a greater or lesser extent, because you can't deal with, capture and live with wild animals for a period of over twenty years without playing a part in the lives of those animals. After a time they seem to become half-human, take on human traits, and I can tell pretty well just what a newly-caged tiger or a freshly-kraaled wild elephant will do and how he will react to his new life which, until he is delivered to the zoo or circus which has ordered him, naturally runs in close conjunction with mine.

But in all my previous writing I have never told about the *people* who live in the Far East and the jungle country where I get my wild cargoes to bring back alive. These people are fully as interesting, if not more so, than the animals, snakes and birds I capture. For the most part they are transplanted from a different world, and their reactions are as interesting as those of a black leopard that might be taken from his native Malayan forests and turned loose on foreign Western plains. What would he do there? How would he live? Would he be meek or savage? If he survived, in a year or two years would he be the same lithe cat, with the same instincts and the same habits, as when he was put there fresh from his far-off home?

Occidentals who go to the East have in general very nearly the same problems as this hypothetical black leopard. A new and strange world is spread out around them—a fascinating, exotic, yet hostile world—and they react to it just as a leopard or other animal might react to a new and unknown environment.

Following up this idea, I can't help feeling that Dick Arbuthnot, whom I tell about in the chapter, "Tit for Tat," might very easily have been a strong bull elephant given its freedom in Alaska, just as Old Man Guy in the "Animal

Fights" chapter is a perfect example of the timid yet wily mouse deer who invariably falls before the greater power of subtler or stronger creatures. Sir Ringrose, whom you'll read about, was definitely a cobra; Lal Bahuda had all the faith and loyalty of the dog Binji; Inspector Garahan, if placed in a corner, would, I am convinced, have acted very much as the great Bearer of the Tooth acted when his *mahout* Marku was missing; George Stanhope had all the weakness of the rafflii squirrel, yet when necessary all the strength of the tiger; his wife, Dora, was very like that fighting clouded leopard that went to any unnatural length to guard its young; and I can think of no better comparison than of Mrs. Ralph Randall with the *naga besar* of Sandakan Bay.

My theory is that humans as well as the animals of the jungle have fangs and claws. These experiences of mine, many of which I saw with my own eyes, will, I think, bear out my idea that the best or worst of us will some day bare our fangs and claws if we are transplanted—like that imaginary black leopard—to the strange and mysterious Far East.

FRANK BUCK

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I

JUNGLE TRAILS

LIFE in the jungle is a constant struggle for the survival of the fittest. It all looks very beautiful to the casual visitor to the Far East who happens to get to the edge of one of the great forests, or perhaps even goes a short way up a jungle trail. He sees deep green shadows and weirdly lovely and fantastic formations of creepers and vines and ferns. Occasionally he catches glimpses of gorgeous-coloured birds—red and green and yellow plumage flying through patches of golden sunlight. He sees and hears cute little rhesus monkeys playing and chattering in the trees, and if he is lucky he may even hear the sweet, musical call of the argus pheasant coming through the mists of dawn.

But the casual visitor always misses the struggle for life constantly waged in the jungle. Events may be moving very smoothly for some animal or bird. He discovers good feeding, builds a fine nest or den, finds a compatible mate, raises a young family—and then the jungle, like Alice's Queen, roars with terrible suddenness, "*Off with his head!*" And his head invariably comes off.

After more than twenty years spent mostly in the jungle country of southern Asia, I still love it. It's savage, wild, ruthless; it's dangerous as only poisonous malarial swamps and animal-infested forests can be dangerous. But it's rugged, virile and strong as the earth it grows from. Anyone with red blood in his veins can't help but thrill to

untracked territory, and feel awe and respect for a jungle that stretches hundreds of miles ahead of him, parts of it unknown and unexplored, knowing that perhaps he is the first man to set his foot in this particular patch of damp turf.

If Ali, my Number-One boy, spoke slang he probably would say: "My *tuan*—he *nuts* about jungle!" Ali is in a position to know. He has been with me on expeditions capturing wild animals and birds for many years. He has seen with me the great *terai* of Nepal, the dense jungles of Ceylon and Sumatra, the wilds of Borneo, as well as the deep, green, creeper-twisted forests of his native Malaya.

He knows my habits now, and my love for this land where I have spent so many years. But I'll never forget the look on his round, brown, Malay face when he was learning the queer habits of his strange white *tuan*. The greatest of all his shocks came with my institution of the Sunday Walk.

We had been working hard all week in my permanent camp in Northern Johore with a gang of natives building log traps for black leopards. We had caught our leopards on Saturday—two fine specimens—had carried them back to camp on poles and put them in cages we had built. And then, early Sunday morning, I called Ali.

"Come on, Ali," I said, "let's take a walk up the jungle trail."

I think for a moment he thought I was *gila babasa*, which is Malay for "slightly mad." He had never heard of the postman taking a hike on his vacation. Malays don't take any hikes or do any kind of work that can be avoided.

"*Tuan* not feel well?" he asked.

"I feel grand, Ali. I just want to saunter through the jungle and look around."

He knew then that I was not just *gila babasa*, but plain *gila*. He came along, a queer look on his brown face which suggested that he was ready to run at the slightest strange gesture I might make.

Ali and I have had many Sunday morning walks since then, but to this day I don't think he understands that it is simply because I love the jungle, like to observe its dark interior and watch what goes on in its shadows, that makes me hike an unnecessary four or five miles through early Sunday morning heat.

A Malayan jungle is a fearsome thing to the uninitiated. On both sides of the trail—a trail probably made by animals hundreds of years ago—the trees grow so thickly together that you have the feeling of being encircled by a wall of black trunks. Between them are tangled masses of bushes and undergrowth, and swaying down from their branches are matted screens of vines and creepers. The most awesome thing about it is that you know this dense, weird growth goes on for miles and miles in all directions, a perpetual twilight of leaves and ferns that is practically impenetrable except by the trail on which you've come.

If you have keen eyes a walk up a jungle trail toward some native village or rubber plantation can be as interesting as a three-ring circus. In fact, more goes on around you than ever occurred in sawdust rings. You merely need to have eyes to see it, and know where to look.

The first Sunday walk that Ali and I took when Ali thought I was *gila* is typical of many. A great many things happen every day and hour in the damp shadows of a jungle,

things which mean life, survival, or death in the grim struggle of jungle creatures.

We had gone perhaps half a mile from camp—a camp which had comfortable chairs, lamps, a stove, even ice brought up from Johore Bahru twice a week—when I noticed what looked like a shadow moving on the narrow trail ahead. It was crossing the cleared space obliquely, and for a moment I thought a python was climbing in the branches of a tree overhead and throwing his moving shadow on the ground below.

But on going closer I saw that it was no shadow at all. It was an actual moving thing, joined yet disjointed, with one purpose, yet with millions of individual units to carry out that purpose. An army of marching red ants.

I have seen many armies of marching ants. Sometimes they cover vast distances on their tiny legs. They move in a steady column about eight inches wide, which may be a mile or two miles long. It is difficult to estimate the number of ants in one of these armies, but five hundred million would be a fair guess. They advance as nearly as possible in a straight line, and instead of going around obstacles, they go *over* them. I have seen columns of ants moving steadily and smoothly over immense jungle logs, and even up and down the sides of tall rubber plantation fences.

I was watching the ants when Ali touched my arm and pointed toward the underbrush.

" Here come Pangolin ! " he whispered.

I watched a little scaled animal move out on the jungle trail and look about. Ali and I stood so still that he didn't notice us. But he saw the ants all at once, and he moved toward them eagerly.

Now a pangolin is the red ant's deadliest enemy. He is

commonly called the scaly ant-eater, for a very good reason. He is armour-plated with scales like a fish, only these scales are strong and hard as metal. He can move them at will, open them wide by the use of skin muscles such as the porcupine employs when bristling his quills, or shut them tight as little steel doors. When in danger he rolls himself into a ball with his scales tightly closed, and it takes a pretty husky animal to penetrate that metal-like coat-of-mail to the flesh below.

The pangolin is a steel-grey colour that blends nicely into the jungle foliage. He has a stream-lined body and a long, powerful tail more useful than ornamental. He can climb trees like a cat, and often feeds on buds and the insects that swarm over the great ferns that grow from the water-soaked crotches of the jungle trees. He can attach his long, strong tail to a limb, swing head downward, and with his long, sticky tongue capture and devour insects from the tree trunk.

I was interested to see what this pangolin was going to do with this army of red ants. Here was a meal all ready-made and waiting for him on a jungle platter—if he could handle it. I doubt if that pangolin had ever seen so much food before in his life. Millions of ants were swarming steadily by, and all he had to do was stop and eat.

But this pangolin was a gourmet. Perhaps he objected to lapping up bits of jungle dirt with his dinner. At any rate, he didn't start eating. He walked up to that moving column of ants, watched it a moment, then calmly lay down across it.

The ants never paused. The pangolin apparently was just another obstacle to be crossed, and they started crossing. But now the pangolin slyly opened his scales and

left them open. This meant that the ants had the feel of flesh under their tiny feet and instinct told them to start biting the enemy that lay in their path. Thousands of ants swarmed over that pangolin. They gathered in groups under every scale on his body to pinch and bite away at his tough hide.

The business moved along very nicely for a time—until the pangolin decided he had enough ants under his scales. Then he closed them tightly, and with what looked like a smile of satisfaction on his long snout, calmly arose. He had his dinner now—*under his scales*—the question was, how would he eat it?

It didn't take long to decide that. Perhaps he had eaten many delicious Sunday dinners in the same way. There was a little water hole on one side of the trail—rain water that had collected in a swampy hollow—and the pangolin walked over to it, waded in and lay down.

He opened his scales. The ants caught beneath them floated to the top of the water in a mass. Opening his mouth and putting out his long, sticky tongue, he devoured a nice, water-washed dinner. It was very convenient for that pangolin, but tough on the ants.

Ali and I stepped over the still moving army of ants and continued up the trail. Patches of yellow sunlight fell through the dark jungle leaves overhead and splashed on the damp ground. Ferns waved a frond at a time. Vines and creepers swayed back and forth with nothing visible moving them.

We had gone about a quarter of a mile when I heard what sounded like a sharp hammering on cement. It came from a little to the left, and above. We stopped and looked

FRANK BUCK AND TWO OF HIS NATIVE "BOYS" STRUGGLING TO PUT AN ESCAPED PYTHON BACK IN ITS BOX

This snake, weighing close on 300 pounds, managed to lift the lid from the box, but was caught before it could do serious damage.

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up. I knew the sound, and I wanted to get a glimpse of the hornbills.

They were about thirty feet up on the side of an immense jungle tree. A hornbill was perched on a limb clasping it with his claw-like bird's feet, and with his wide, huge beak he was hammering at what looked like cement—and was almost as hard—in the side of the tree. I heard other sounds from inside the tree itself, and I knew that his wife was helping him tear down that wall of hardened mud from within.

" Little hornbill also inside," said Ali.

There was, of course. Hornbills—large birds, almost as big as eagles—breed very strangely. A pair will fly about the jungle together until they find a large hollow tree. It has to be a pretty big hollow, and even this doesn't satisfy them for a home. They go inside together and clean the trunk out, peck away every bit of decayed wood with their strong bills and drop the pieces outside. Then they build a nest, solid but soft nest of dead, damp leaves and moss.

When the home is completed according to the best hornbill specifications, the female hornbill goes in and sits down. Life becomes pretty easy for her from then on and mighty tough on the old man. Papa hornbill works like a beaver to protect his family; or maybe it's just that he doesn't trust his wife. At any rate, he makes countless journeys to the nearest swamp or creek, brings damp sticky clay a mouthful at a time, and literally seals up his wife on her home nest.

He leaves a hole just big enough for the female's beak to come out, and then he sets himself to work to feed that beak. It takes a lot of frogs and mice and jungle fruit to satisfy the appetite of a lady hornbill, and the old man has

to eat sometimes himself. And all this to hatch out that *single* egg the female has laid !

Even when the egg is hatched the work isn't over. By this time the clay wall papa built has hardened so that it is almost as solid as one of brick. This was the sound Ali and I had heard—the hornbills tearing down the wall so their squab could see the jungle world that was to be his home.

We stood and looked up at them working in that great tree above our heads. Presently I glimpsed a small, fluffy head with a grotesquely large beak. Bright little black eyes peered out over the rim of the mud wall and blinked blindly in the sunlight.

" There's the baby ! " I whispered to Ali.

My voice must have carried in the stillness, for mama hornbill jerked her young hopeful back into the tree, and papa set up a loud and furious chattering that would have discouraged any home-breaker.

" Come on," I said to Ali. " Those birds are going to have trouble enough without thinking that we're going to hurt them."

It was a lovely family picture, a tin-type of a certain phase of jungle life. But I knew that before the parent hornbills had finished giving their squab his hunting lessons —before he learned to catch frogs and mice for himself— the chances were about ten to one that some bigger animal was going to eat the bird that ate the frogs.

I think Ali enjoyed that first Sunday jungle walk almost as much as I did. Living so close to the jungle all his life he probably had never noticed it with a stranger's eyes. At any rate, he never again indicated even by a look that I was *gila*, although the *babasa* part of it lingered in his round

face. But he was always ready and at my side after that when Sunday morning came around.

I remembered one stroll Ali and I took my last trip out. It ended with a whirlwind, furious battle to the death, but it began as calmly as a New England Sunday should. Monkeys chattered, birds sang, and the sunlight fell in leafy patterns on the deep and vivid greens of ferns and jungle grass.

We paused a moment to watch two rafflii squirrels playing on a branch overhead. Almost every country in the world has its squirrels. You'll find them in North and South America, in Europe, Asia and Africa. They are among the most common of the rodent family.

But the rafflii squirrel of the Malay Peninsula is by far the most beautiful of all squirrels. It is as highly-coloured as any tropical bird. It is a vivid mixture of pure white, inky black, with a belly of rich russet red. Its head, back and bushy tail are black as coal, while its flanks and shoulders are a pure snow-white.

The rafflii probably has the easiest time of all his family. Squirrels in cold climates have the seasonal problem of winter food. They must scurry about and put away nuts enough to last them while the long snows are on the ground in the cold countries.

But not the rafflii. He lives where it is always warm and where food is abundant. The rafflii does not even have to find or hollow-out a house to live in. His dwelling is ready-made for him in almost any jungle tree. All he has to do is discover a damp tree crotch, hop in the centre of the basket fern that invariably grows there, and be rocked to sleep in a soft, green cradle swaying in the jungle breeze.

It all sounds very lovely, but I shivered slightly as I

watched those two happy, gaily-coloured rafflii playing above my head. This might very likely be their last bit of romping. To-night perhaps a civet cat, or a leopard, or a moosang, would get them for a tit-bit of dessert. And the squirrels that ate the orchid roots that lived on the tree, would become part of the Jungle-House-That-Jack-Built and supply food for the moosang that the leopard would eventually eat in order to survive.

Ali and I had just started on from where the squirrels were playing when we heard what is probably the loveliest of all jungle sounds. The newcomer to the Far East is usually amazed by the constant noise in the great forests. There is almost never a silence. A steady chattering and jibbering of birds and monkeys can always be heard. And these sounds are shrill and harsh, beating on the ears with steady monotony.

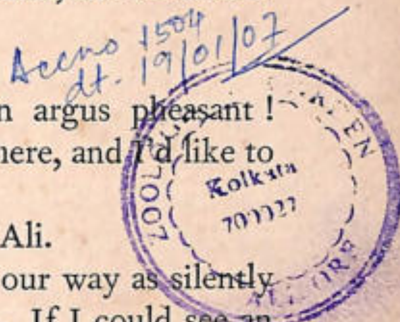
What Ali and I heard now was a lovely sound. There are only two sweet calls in the jungle—one is the voice of the gibbon ape, and the other the call of the argus pheasant. Very few white people, even those who have lived all their lives in the East, have seen an argus pheasant in its wild state. But most of the rubber planters and others living near the jungle have heard its beautiful, whistling call just at daybreak and dusk. Around Mt. Opir, and other upland districts of Malaya, these birds call across to one another from hill to hill, and the beautiful sound can be heard a mile away across the cleared places.

Argus pheasants are almost as beautiful as their call. They are large birds, coloured in lovely soft browns—light and dark, with streaks of buff running through. Each feather on the enormous wing primaries has a long series of dark brown " eyes "—and when the bird struts, with his

tremendous wings spread, and his two seven-foot long tail feathers stretched out like a pair of scissors, he is as gorgeous a live sight as anyone can hope to see.

But very few white people have ever seen these birds. They are very shy, keep close to the ground, and take alarm at the slightest sound.

I touched Ali's arm.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"Ali," I whispered, "that was an argus pheasant! There may be a strutting ground near here, and I'd like to have a look."

"Sound come from left, *tuan*," said Ali.

We moved from the trail and made our way as silently as we could through the undergrowth. If I could see an argus pheasant actually strutting on a strutting ground I would have seen a sight few white men have ever gazed upon.

In breeding season all male birds more or less strut before their females. Roosters, turkeys and peacocks carry out the idea more than tree birds, but the argus pheasant makes a definite and elaborate ceremony of his parade.

In the first place, he is very particular as to the parade ground he selects to exhibit his finery. He finds a level stretch of jungle turf, and then proceeds carefully to clear it. And clear it he does—of every blade of grass and twig and weed. Not satisfied with this, he levels out every minute bump and bulge of earth, scratches it down, and even goes to the extent of rolling stones and pebbles to one side.

With his beak he pulls out the grass. With his feet he kicks the twigs off his floor. And on the larger stalks and weeds he actually uses his long neck. He winds his strong throat about some particularly stubborn weed and literally uproots it, later carrying it to one side. When he has

finished his work he has levelled and cleared a stretch of jungle ground twelve or fifteen feet square until it is as smooth as a billiard table.

Then he struts. His mate sits admiringly on one edge of his little clearing while he does a dignified cake-walk like a darkie on a levee, his gorgeous wings spread, his immense brown tail feathers held high and proudly over his back.

I had always wanted to see one of these argus pheasant parades, and I led Ali silently through the jungle toward the sound of that lovely note. We came to the place presently, crawling on hands and knees at a snail's pace so as not to rustle a leaf or break a twig, for the slightest sound would have disturbed the birds.

Through a fringe of leaves I saw an open space, bare as a rolled field. Just across from me the brown female was squatting, admiring dark eyes on her mate. He was working steadily on the place he hoped to strut. Apparently the ground, smooth as it was, didn't quite suit him. He was still at it. All at once I saw the danger too late to let out a cry to warn him.

In the centre of the strutting grounds was a bamboo stick. The *sakai*, the native people who inhabit the Malayan jungle, like nothing better than argus pheasant for their pot. I knew the moment I saw it that this bamboo stick was a trap. But the argus pheasant didn't know it, and already his neck was wrapped tightly around that stick to pull it out of the ground.

I let out a cry—but it was too late. The female pheasant flushed and whirled away at the sound. But that argus male had given a pull at the bamboo stick. And with that pull he cut his own throat.

For the bamboo, set there by a native *sakai*, was cleverly

sharpened to razor temper on two edges. The pheasant had cut his own throat in attempting to show off to advantage before his lady love. To-night that beautiful bird would be in some *sakai* pot over a jungle fire in the nearest *kompong*.

"Too bad," Ali said softly. "*Tuan* hoped to see parade."

We went back to the jungle trail and continued our walk. But I couldn't help thinking that if another wild creature didn't kill these animals and birds in their beautiful home, apparently the animal called man did. For even the Malay *sakai* has to struggle and fight and kill to live.

"Now coming to *sungai*," said Ali presently, and we moved out onto the bank of a large tidal river.

It was a lovely stretch of water, smooth and clear, with trees and vines reflected mirror-like in its calm surface. Playing about near the surface I saw several large *ikan anjing*, a kind of dogfish found in Malayan waters. These *ikan anjing* come up from the sea to feed and breed in the shallow, brackish water of the tidal rivers. They are a large fish, many of them enormous. They are not particularly good for food, although the natives eat them when more palatable fish are scarce.

Here, I thought, at any rate is a creature that is safe. If he wants to survive, he can live forever in this river. Maybe not in the sea—there are sharks there—but in this river he is the largest fish, and there is nothing that can harm him.

Suddenly I saw a swift shadow moving across the water. An immense eagle was gliding silently across the cloudless sky over the river.

At Sabang once, in northern Sumatra, I had seen two of these great eagles fight in the air—literally tear each other to pieces over a blue bay. They are about the size of an

American bald eagle, with a smaller head but a sharper beak and more powerful talons. They eat squirrels and rats, even monkeys—any small animal they can fly off with and devour later. They are as clever at catching fish as the American fish hawk. In the East they are the fiercest of all birds that fly—the true rulers and kings of the air.

I saw all at once that my *ikan anjing* weren't as safe as I had thought. This eagle was out hunting, and from his height he could see those shadowy fish moving just under the surface of the river water.

All at once he folded his wings and dropped like a stone. Straight down he came, swift as a bullet. He spread his tremendous wings just as his feet hit the water. But his cruel, hook-like talons went far enough under the surface to fasten themselves into the back of one of those big *ikan anjing* which I had thought so safe. I mentally said good-bye to the fish. I confidently expected the eagle to rise and fly swiftly away with his prey and his meal that would keep him alive for another day.

But this eagle had made a slight and deadly mistake. He beat his wings and attempted to fly up and leave the water. But something held him down. His long wings churned the river to a white foam, but still he did not rise. He stayed there fighting on the river, twisting and flapping in a supreme effort to live. I held my breath as I saw him moving slowly, as if guided by some invisible force, toward the centre of the stream and deep water.

I saw then what was wrong. The king of the air had dropped down out of the skies and fastened his talons in a fish a little too big for him. And in his eagerness for food and living, and in his savage cruelty of attack, he had sunk those long talons of his so deeply into the fish's back that

he couldn't let go. They were twisted into the *ikan anjing's* bones, embedded in flesh, sunk there so deeply that they would stay forever.

And now he was being pulled into deep water by a fish fighting as grimly and desperately for its life as the eagle was for his.

With a final piercing scream, and a last frantic beating of wings, that eagle—the ruler of the skies—disappeared beneath the surface and into the depths of that jungle river. No rival in the air, he had met his master in his intended prey, and had gone to his death where birds seldom go in the grim struggle of jungle existence.

II

TIT FOR TAT

I HAVE just told of the great and constant struggle animals have for existence in the Jungle-House-That-Jack-Built of the East. But did you ever think that man has the same sort of a struggle? Man, a puny though noble sort of creature, with his codes of right and wrong and honour, goes into this queer, exotic, eastern country as a child goes into life, not knowing of the care and caution and vigilance that are necessary for survival. And even if he knows them he is likely to regard them with his strange man sense of what is fair, and as a consequence he goes the way of other flesh in the jungle.

In the many years I have spent in the wild countries of the Far East, I have naturally seen fantastic and strange things. A man who keeps his eyes open—and a man *has* to in the East if he wants to stay alive and fairly healthy—is bound through his observations to develop a philosophy of naturalness and nature, a philosophy which accepts cause and effect as the logical outcome of life. It becomes the same sort of philosophy animals have in their perpetual struggle for existence. Yet while animals strike with fang and claw to live and protect themselves, men very often strike for no reason at all.

It's a ruthless country, and as yet man has made little progress in conquering the overwhelming obstacles Nature put in his path, or the savage animals that roam the great forests. Yet I often wonder just how far men themselves have progressed in civilizing that queer animal called Man?

I first saw Dick Arbuthnot when he had just come out to India from England. You couldn't help but see Arbuth-

not if you were anywhere near him. He stood six-feet-two, and he had hair so blond it always looked as if a ray of sunlight somehow fell on it from the blue Indian sky. He had a laugh that rang like a pure bell across a gaily-lit room, or warmed the cold Far East moonlight if you happened to hear it in a jungle clearing, as I later did.

The first time I saw him, and the first time I heard that young, rollicking laugh, was in the bar-room of the Grand Hotel in Calcutta. The day before I had come down from northern India with a sizeable collection of wild animals and birds, and having arranged shipping details for taking my specimens to the United States I was bidding a brief farewell to the town. Both Arbuthnot and the laugh were so arresting that I lowered the brandy-and-soda that was half-way to my lips and turned to Bill Corbin of the Consular Service.

" Corbin," I said, " who is that young man ? "

Bill, who had also come up in his chair at the sound of the laugh, answered without taking his eyes from the young face that was still half-way across the big room.

" It's Dick Arbuthnot," he said. " You know the London Arbuthnots ?—grandfather in the Colonial Service, father one of the big-wigs in the British Government——"

I nodded. " New here, isn't he ? "

" Arrived this afternoon. But was out here when he was a kid. Like to meet him ? I was introduced over at the Consulate."

" I would," I said.

You couldn't help but want to meet that boy. He had everything—youth, good looks, the kind that carries with it a fine strength of character, a stature like a young god, and an honoured name. Whether he had a mind that matched

his outward bearing I didn't know at the time. I had seen offspring of honoured names go to pot in one generation—which is where the human animal differs from his brothers of the jungle.

Arbuthnot came over on Corbin's arm and we shook hands. He was very cordial.

"I once met your grandfather, the Colonel," I told him, "at Delhi. He was a great man. Knew India inside-out."

"I wonder?" young Arbuthnot said, smiling.

"You wonder? Ever talk with that grandfather of yours?"

"Oh, yes. Lots of times. And I think perhaps he had the wrong slant entirely."

It was my turn to smile, and I did. If any white man ever knew India it was the old Colonel. Yet here was his grandson, twenty-six years old, just out from Oxford, questioning and sceptical. I motioned a boy and ordered drinks, still smiling.

"None for me, thanks," Arbuthnot said.

"You will in time," I said, "out here."

Everyone does, you see, and I couldn't yet believe that this young man was different from the rest.

"If you've talked with the Colonel," I said, "you know the story. Your country has spent years of work, millions of pounds, and the lives of a hundred thousand soldiers to bring India out of a state of chaos. There used to be slaughter here, wholesale massacre, loot and murder. All that's gone now. Yet I've heard your grandfather say that if the British got out to-morrow, within three months India would sink back into its old state. And after all this there isn't one Hindu grateful for what your country's done."

He looked at me queerly.

" Grateful ? No. We don't do it for thanks—or even for trade. At least that isn't the way I look at it. That's what I meant about my grandfather having the wrong slant. I feel it's our mission."

" Mission ! "

He nodded. " Mine, at least. I'm an engineer, you see. I feel that I can do something for this country, something big "—he spread his fine hands wide—" and that's the only reason I'm here."

I stared at him and, I'm afraid, smiled again at his youth. But nevertheless, I was beginning to take this earnest young man very seriously.

" Well, Arbuthnot, I certainly wish you luck."

I didn't see Dick Arbuthnot again for two years. I took my collection of animals and birds back to America, and on my next trip to India Arbuthnot had left Calcutta and was somewhere up in the interior of Nepal.

" What for ? " I asked Corbin.

" He's got an idea," said Corbin, " of *building a railroad* across the Himalayas from Tibet down through Nepal to Calcutta.

I whistled softly. " It can't be done, Corbin. I know that country, and some of it's impassable."

" That's what Arbuthnot's gone to see about. And you know, I'd hate to say anything ' couldn't be done ' where that boy's concerned."

I felt a little the same when I recalled Arbuthnot's six-feet-two, the clear light in his blue eyes, and the great laugh that was as much a part of him as his serious earnestness. But perhaps all this had changed. I had seen India do queer things to white men in a year.

" How is he standing the country ? " I asked.

"Standing it? He was born for it. Honestly, Frank, I never before saw a man take to India—or India take to a man, for that matter—as in Arbuthnot's case. I think he loves every filthy street in Calcutta and every malaria-infected swamp and jungle up country. And the people? Well, the American Colony has gone for him hook, line and sinker, of course. The British think he is a wonder. They're proud as Punch of the boy, and they've got more confidence in him than in the Viceroy himself. But the natives——"

"What about the natives?"

"It's downright weird the way they have accepted him. All classes and castes from rajahs to babums and from the Brahmins to the sweepers. You know most of them *have* to kowtow to a white man—but they *enjoy* serving Dick Sahib, as they call him. His name's spread all the way from Burma to Baluchistan and from northern Kashmir down to Ceylon. It's damn near a miracle, Frank. I've never seen the like of it and I have been out here twenty years."

I went back to America that trip without seeing Arbuthnot, but I began to feel the miracle of the man even there. I read in the New York newspapers of his railroad. It was pretty far along by this time—that is, the surveying and planning end of it—and the thing was news. He had got his concession through all right, with full support and co-operation of the British Indian Government at Delhi, as well as the Maharajah's court at Katmander Nepal. It began to look like a sure thing.

Then I heard that he had made a trip to England to arrange for a bond issue and had returned to India with definite promises from half a dozen great London bankers to float the bonds. A line crossing the Himalayas would

open up enormous sections of jungle and mountain country, rich in all kinds of resources, and would greatly affect England and the whole world more or less in a trade way. And besides this, the line would be a commercial god-send to India herself.

I crossed eastward on my next trip and heard little stories of Arbuthnot all along the route. He had become a sort of international hero—like Stanley, or Lindbergh—and people talked about him almost as if they knew him. I heard his name in Gibraltar, in Marseilles, in Port Said. And I found all Calcutta talking about him when I got there.

"He's going to do it, Frank," Bill Corbin said. "He's going to do it."

"I certainly hope so," I answered. "Where is he now?"

"Somewhere up in the Himalayas, between Katmander and Gartak along the Tibet border. That's as far northward as the road will run. There's a tremendous gorge up there where one of the tributaries of the Ganges cuts through east of the Kansanganga mountains. He's got to span that."

"Bridge the greatest of all Himalayan canyons?"

I was thinking of that rushing torrent of water that comes charging down Nepal, flooded with the melting snow from three of the world's highest crests—Everest, Janu and Kansanganga—and then dashes through a great rock gorge cut by the centuries.

"If any man alive can do it," Corbin said, "Dick Arbuthnot can."

I nodded. I firmly believed with Corbin that if any man

could engineer that project, Arbuthnot could. Yet I had only met the man once.

"If he's up that way," I said, "I may see him. I'm going to Nepal after rhinos this trip. I may run across him."

I did see him. I had no sooner arrived at Raxaul, on India's northern frontier, when news reached me through many native acquaintances of the big headquarters camp that the great *Bara Sahib* and all his assistant *sahibs* had established north of Bilgange, the first town across the border in Nepal.

A few days later at Bilgange I met one of Arbuthnot's assistant engineers. As soon as he found out that I knew his chief he insisted upon my returning with him to visit their camp. I was, of course, delighted to accept his invitation, for I definitely wanted to see Arbuthnot again. Something about the man from that first talk two years before fascinated me—his belief in himself, his faith in the people and the country that then were so little known to him, his "mission." He now knew something about this country and its hundreds of million people. I wanted to see him again. I had a sneaking feeling that he might have changed, that all the stories the world was hearing were somehow exaggerated or false.

That feeling went when I first laid eyes on him. He was standing in a clearing before his camp headquarters, and a ray of sunshine fell through the jungle trees squarely across his face and lit his hair, just as I had imagined it had first been coloured gold.

"Buck!" he cried. "Frank Buck! I'm certainly glad to see you!"

It was not merely that he was glad to see any white man in that jungle; he had remembered all this time and was

FRANK BUCK HOLDING A GIANT SPECIES OF BAT KNOWN AS THE FLYING FOX
These huge half-bird, half-animal creatures, destroy fruit crops and are captured in huge nets.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

genuinely glad to see *me*. We shook hands and he led me into his camp bungalow.

"A drink?"

"Thanks. Are you still off it, Arbuthnot?"

"Still off it," he smiled.

"Still feel the same about India? You've been here two years now——"

"Still the same," he said. "I'm not thinking of thanks —I'm thinking of what I can do."

I knew then that this man would never change as long as he lived.

"And how's the road coming?" I asked. "Corbin was telling me you'd got to the gorge."

His eyes lighted like twin blue candles.

"Look," he said.

The table was littered with plans and blue-prints, but on top was a large architect's drawing of a bridge. It was a beautiful thing—sweeping, graceful, with an immense wide curve swinging grandly across the deep chasm.

"You can do it?" I asked at last.

"I'm going to do it," he said.

The way he said it made me feel that that great structure of iron and steel already stood, already carried trains on its rails from far-off Tibet to Calcutta. I had that much confidence in the mere voice of the man.

I carried that feeling with me next morning when I went on my way. He walked with me across the camp clearing and a little distance up the jungle trail towards Bilgange.

We shook hands and said good-bye.

"The best of luck," I said.

"Thanks," he smiled. "Cheerio!"

I stood for a moment and watched him start back toward

his camp. He strode like a young god, his wide shoulders swinging through the damp jungle, his feet treading boldly through the long grass. All through India this boy was loved and respected. Back in England he was spoken of in Parliament and in Downing Street. Throughout the earth his name was known and his work was already having an affect on world markets. There was no limit to where this boy could go—the greatest engineer of his time—Viceroy of India—Prime Minister of England ! His future was as wide as the earth. When his shoulders had disappeared in the jungle shadows I turned and went on with my boys.

Nepal is a wild country. What news there is travels slowly there. No railroads, no telegraph, and the only mail service is by runners, handled in much the same way as our own early-day express. The *kirka*, or native Nepalese, is swift of foot and long of endurance. Telegrams sent from Calcutta to the capital at Kitmandu are taken by runners in relays up over the first chain of the Himalayas into Nepal's capital. On a jungle trail one sometimes meets these official runners, built like greyhounds, and wearing their typical bright red jackets.

Returning from Arbuthnot's headquarters, I had established a temporary camp on the outskirts of Bilgange and started preparations for my rhino hunt. Two days later a runner dashed into my camp, tearing as if the hand of Vishnu and seven tigers were behind him.

" Doctor Sahib ! Doctor Sahib ! " he panted.

The boy could speak some English, but in his excitement he began to blurt out sentences in Nepalese. I called one of my boys to find out what he was talking about. He wanted a doctor quickly. If I hadn't a doctor in my camp he would

hurry on to Bilgange where there were one or two Indian doctors.

I detained him.

"What is it?" I said. "What's happened?"

"Oh, Sahib, I must get doctor quick!" he said. "Dick Sahib, he——!"

I caught his arm so tightly that he cried out in pain.

His eyes rolled until only the whites showed.

"Dick Sahib—he walking through the jungle—a cobra—oh, master, a shiny, little cobra—raised his head from the grass and struck!—"

I dropped the Hindu's arm, gathered a few things quickly, called to Lal Bahuda, my head boy in India, and started immediately toward the jungle trail and Arbuthnot's camp.

I found Dick Arbuthnot on a cot in front of his bungalow. His boys had carried him there and he was lying pale in the Indian sun, his hair tossed back and his eyes closed.

He was dead.

I knelt beside him. For a moment I saw the picture of that great bridge, that sweeping mass of beautiful steel that would now never be built, for there was no other man who could carry on this "mission" of Arbuthnot's. I saw newspaper headlines all the way around the world from Calcutta—Hong Kong, New York, Paris, London—"Richard Arbuthnot Killed in Jungle by Cobra."

I realized in that moment that for years to come the name of *Dick Sahib* would be spoken by brown Hindus with deep and tender reverence—that the name of Richard Arbuthnot would, for a long time, be heard in Government offices, on hotel terraces, on the frontiers, and even in

the deepest recesses of the jungles. The man was that great, that powerful even in his unfinished youth, that I knew memories of him would linger long in India. They do to this day.

That cobra—that little cobra—that slimy little cobra—had raised its head from the jungle grass and snuffed out the life of one of the world's most valuable men.

And all the world mourned.

I was in Colombo last year before going into the interior of Ceylon to Kandy. A friend of mine, Tracy Hutchins, one of Ceylon's district officers, was talking elephants with me, because that was my business in Ceylon at that time. I was there to catch alive two young males, rare in America where I intended to take them, and rare even in the jungle. Suddenly Hutchins motioned across the hotel lobby toward a small, pasty-faced man sitting in a corner.

"Speaking of elephants," Hutchins said, "there's another man after them, Buck. Only he doesn't want them alive—he wants to shoot them. And a big tusker at that."

I looked at the hunter, dressed in white and obviously expensive tailor-made duck. He was a small man, with quick, nervous hands, and little grey eyes set close together. He was talking angrily to the boy who had just brought his drink, and for a moment I thought he was going to strike the servant. A hot flush came over his pasty face and his little eyes gleamed.

"He can't shoot a tusker," I said. "It's against the law."

Hutchins smiled sourly and spread his hands. "He's Sir Ralph Ringrose."

"Oh," I said.

" He's come out with Government permits and I've got to let him go ahead. He wants to shoot a fine big bull, the biggest elephant he can find—for the thrill of it."

Hutchins swore softly under his breath.

" That puny little ironmonger—that's how he got his money, and his title, in fact; bought it with profits from the iron-works his father left him, and which he's never seen—is going out and drop one of my big bull elephants. And there are not so many left as there used to be."

Hutchins loved those elephants in that district. One of his duties as D. O. was to keep a close check-up and protect the elephants. The great pachyderms are so valuable an asset to Ceylon that they are guarded carefully. Hutchins knew those beasts, and respected them. There is something fine about elephants—they're great workers, docile when tamed, and gentle and affectionate creatures all the years of their working lives.

" Maybe he'll miss."

" Not *that* chap ! He's sat on his estate in England and done nothing but pot driven partridges for years ! Fancies himself a great hunter ! " Hutchins sneered. " I'd like to choke him ! "

I carried Hutchins' thoughts with me when I went into the interior. It seemed pretty rotten that this puny little nobleman, who had bought his title, could go into the jungle with a high-powered rifle in his weak hands and kill a bull elephant. These great herd leaders of the elephants are very rare. They are, to my way of thinking, the most magnificent of all animals. A bull attains his high position in the elephant world by sheer force and power, and he is accepted in his herd—his family—only so long as he remains powerful. When a young male of the herd

becomes grown, his father drives him out with trunk and tusks and sheer weight, throws him on his own in the jungle, and whether he survives or dies is up to his stamina and strength.

He must fight his way to a family of his own. When his tusks have grown long enough, and his body sufficiently muscular, he must challenge some great bull herd leader, and if he is the victor, he becomes the leader of that herd, the leader of some eight to twenty-five cows, their protector and warrior.

I have often heard the lion called the King of Beasts. But I can think of no greater King of the Jungle than a magnificent bull elephant, his herd behind him, his head and trunk high, ready to charge with his five tons of power any foe that may be threatening.

I have seen the greatest of all Ceylon's bull elephants in such a position—seen him twice, in fact, many years ago. His name in the jungle regions of Ceylon, a name given only to white men and one he had borne for nearly seventy years—was Sahib. And he *was* a Sahib of that whole jungle. The greatest animal there, strong as an Indian mountain, and brave as a regiment of Ghurkas. No creature dared face Sahib. Savage leopards slunk away into the shadows. All enemies turned tail and ran when they heard Sahib's mighty trumpeting in the jungle.

As far north as Burma, and over the water, I have seen young elephants that owed their parentage to Sahib toiling on the Government jungle trails and roads. I have seen young females of the Military, proud of their trappings, who were daughters of Sahib. In the far-off teak-wood forests I have seen elephant children of Sahib carrying the valuable logs to the rivers; and again at the end of a thous-

and miles of river trail I have seen other of Sahib's offspring hauling the teak from the water to the sawmills.

I have voyaged across the Atlantic on great ocean liners with smooth, white decks of teak—teak brought down to the sea by elephants sired by Sahib.

As I remembered this great leader of elephants, he was still in the full vigour of life, and would go on for years and years to come breeding more and more splendid elephants. No animal, wild or domestic, was ever more useful to the world and the jungle than Sahib.

The natives from one end of Ceylon to the other knew Sahib and respected him. They told little stories of Sahib and his greatness, stories of combat in the jungle, stories of his wisdom and cleverness. Young elephants captured in the Rattna Pura district and so known to have been sired by Sahib brought a higher price in the market. Blood tells, even in the jungle.

I was in the interior, fifty miles from Kandy, when the news came. It travelled like fire through the great forests. It sprang from lip to lip, from village to village all across Ceylon.

Sahib was dead.

"How did it happen?" I asked one of the natives.

He looked at me, his eyes red and burning.

"A man—a little man—a little man in white—he went out to shoot—he raised his rifle and fired one shot—one shot it struck Sahib in his brain and he lay down and die——"

For a moment I saw a picture of Sahib as I had seen him, sunlight falling through jungle leaves on his magnificent grey body, his head and trunk high, ready to fight and defend his herd. And I saw his children up in the teak

forests, and on the rice plantations, and in the Military Service, working for the good of man.

And yet a man—a little man, almost chinless and entirely useless—a man who probably had never done a single thing for the good of his fellows—had raised a rifle and with one shot snuffed out the life of one of the world's most valuable elephants.

And all the jungle mourned.

III

BULL STRENGTH

I JUST told of an elephant that died. I should like to tell now of twenty-two elephants that lived. I know they lived, because I captured the whole twenty-two myself.

I am rather proud of my business of bringing back animals alive. Anyone, like Sir Ralph Ringrose, can go out with a high-powered rifle and bring to its knees the strongest of beasts. But it takes infinite time and work and patience to capture alive the animal you might so easily shoot with a gun you can buy for five pounds anywhere in the world.

I am not praising my trade, or any feelings I may have toward animals. I am simply saying that to me a live, healthy, strong elephant is a great deal more interesting than a lifeless, dead one.

There is a strangely romantic sound to the word "elephant." It conjures up visions of all the old maharajahs of India, riding down ancient streets in all their glory—jewelled trappings flapping in the tropic sunlight, and natives prostrating themselves before their ancestral rulers.

There's still a lot of romance in an elephant even to-day, in this age of streamlined motor cars and trans-continental aeroplanes. I know, because last year I brought two back alive from the jungles of Ceylon. It's over ten thousand miles from Ceylon to New York, which may make it more romantic for you—but after all, it's business with me. Capturing animals is my stock in trade.

Yet there was an element of romance in these two elephants, because they were male elephants. It isn't

generally known, but there are very few bull elephants in America. As a rule circuses and zoos will have nothing to do with them. A bull elephant is apt to go "must" at any time, get rough, and wreck everything about him. So you're pretty safe in betting ten-to-one that in the next red and gold circus parade you see, with the bands playing and the clowns clowning, all of those big, grey pachyderms that shuffle along your asphalt city streets will be nice, gentle females.

Before I left America on my last trip into the jungles I had an order for two fine, husky male elephants. Now this was a pretty big order; I don't mean in numbers, I mean big in pounds and shillings, because it meant an elephant drive of a whole herd to get my two bulls. And it was big in the element of work, because an elephant drive is no child's play. Yet my order called specifically for two male elephants, and even though I had to capture twenty-two to fill it—*I filled it.* Filling orders is my business.

Ali wasn't any too pleased when I showed him the order in Singapore. He made a queer Malay face and pretended to wipe imaginary perspiration from his brown forehead. "*Kerja sukar!*" he said, and looked as if he already had been working for many weeks.

"Certainly it's work," I told him. "That's what we live for, Ali."

Ali looked a little bewildered at the idea of anyone living for work. Not that I could ever accuse Ali of being lazy; he's been very useful to me for many years, and pitches into a job as hard as I do. His was merely the Malayan attitude toward work, and after a time a Westerner thinks nothing of it.

Malays have a peculiar attitude toward work. If neces-

sity will let them avoid it, they do so with the greatest of confidence. For years the British and the Chinese, who are great merchandisers, have been peacefully invading Malaya. They have built railroads, dug great tin mines, exploited the country in every modern sense. Yet the Malays, to whom it really belongs, have accepted the invasion with equanimity. To them to be *senang*, to have peace of soul, is better than to have work and great riches.

But before I had my two male elephants in their training cages, I had wiped my forehead actually—and wiped it many times—as Ali had wiped his in gesture. And with all my heart I had wished, like a Malay, that I might be *senang!*

I had orders for a great many animals my last trip, so fortunately I could time my elephant drive. I decided on Ceylon rather than India, Siam or Burma, because of the Festival of the Tooth. This Festival of the Tooth is held each year at Kandy, and is a survival of the most ancient rites of the Buddhists. A supposed tooth of Buddha himself is paraded amid much pomp. There is a string of elephants that makes American circuses look like cheap editions. And gathered there at Kandy are all the big elephant men of Ceylon.

So I planned my arrival at Colombo, the capital of the island, when the moon was right for the annual Festival of the Tooth. From there I journeyed nearly two hundred miles into the hills and the land of the ancient Kandy kings. This interior section of Ceylon is as wild as any country anywhere in the world. It is the centre of hundreds of square miles of solid jungle, practically untracked by white men, and as primitive as when Nature first made it.

I knew all the elephant men of Ceylon would be at Kandy

for the Festival, and it didn't take me long to single out Ratwatti, an old acquaintance of mine. The Ratwatti family dates back to the Kandy kings themselves, and is one of the oldest and most respected in the district.

After the customary eastern preliminaries were over, I approached Ratwatti on the idea of an elephant drive. This is not as easy as it sounds. You can't go into the jungle and take elephants the way you can other game. In Ceylon, and all through the Far East, the elephant is one of the most valued possessions of the country. I don't mean in a sacred way—I mean from a pure business standpoint. The elephants caught and shipped to American and European zoos and circuses make up a very small percentage of captured elephants.

By far the majority of these animals are taken by native princes, rajahs and other Asiatic rulers for court functions and ceremonies. Many are required, as I've explained, by the Government, the planters, the teak-wood business. They are extremely useful and necessary in hauling heavy teak logs from the forests to the rivers, where the logs are floated sometimes as far as a thousand miles to the sawmills, where elephants again handle them. Elephants are used on plantations, for Government road work, and even by the military. A good work-elephant is worth about five hundred pounds almost anywhere in Asia, and is a bargain in working-life to the man who gets him. When you realize that our horses and mules have a working span of about fifteen years, and that an elephant is serviceable for over fifty, you'll understand these prices—and the bargain.

Now you can easily see why the wild elephant business is carefully regulated by the Government. That is where Ratwatti came in. Ratwatti was headman of the district—

and a business man in every other respect. Before I could get him to agree to a drive I had to promise to put him in full charge, his brother in charge of the logging and kraal-building operations, a cousin of his as leader of the beaters, and a twice-removed-uncle as head of the scouts. A family business if ever there was one.

But this was only the beginning. The next man to see in this difficult business of capturing elephants was the District Officer. From a herd of wild elephants you can't take females over a certain size; all that are driven into the kraal must be turned loose again as breeders. You can't take male herd leaders. In fact, the Government does not encourage taking any elephant over eight feet tall, as the death rate of elephants captured as large as this is over forty per cent.

"How big a kraal do you intend to build?" was the first question the D.O. asked.

"All I want are two good husky young males."

But I figured that just to get these two bulls I would have to enclose a jungle space of about eight acres. This was a fairly large kraal, and would cost plenty. The actual building cost is not so great, as native labour is comparatively cheap. But for an eight-acre kraal a great many logs are necessary, and you have to pay the Government for the privilege of chopping these logs out of the jungle.

Fortunately politics in the East are few and simple, and graft is practically unknown where the various Governments are concerned. I knew that the money I paid the D.O. for the chopping of those kraal logs would go back into the jungle, and next time I came to Ceylon there would be a clear, fine trail built where there was no trail.

With these political preliminaries over I settled down to the actual work of elephant catching. With thirty of the Ratwatti family's tame elephants, I left Kandy and went fifty miles into the dense Ceylon jungles. Thirty elephants can kick up a lot of dust on even a jungle trail, but I ate it and breathed it willingly. I knew these tame elephants would later be indispensable.

We finally selected a site for the kraal in the depths of the jungle and Ratwatti got busy. He sent his scouts out into the forest to get on the track of the various herds. These scouts cover an area of over a thousand square miles of wilderness, and once they spot a herd they never leave it—*for months*. They eat, sleep and live on the trail of that herd. They send runners into camp, to the *sahib*, to report, and the runners take the scouts back their food.

The popular conception that elephants travel in enormous herds is a fallacy. A herd of ten or twelve is normal; one of twenty-five is large. Elephants are family animals. They stick together much closer than we humans. An old bull elephant will get a few cows around him, and they will remain together for the rest of their long lives.

This sounds as if life were rather easy for that bull. It isn't—and it wasn't from the time he was born; even before he was born. Of all the animals I know, the elephant is the only one in which the period of gestation varies between male and female. A healthy girl elephant is born in nineteen months, while a male doesn't see the light of jungle day for twenty to twenty-one months. That additional struggle before he walks on jungle ground seems to be the keynote of his entire life.

That bull has to *fight* his way to the head of his family—and he has to fight all his life. As soon as a young male

elephant grows up—among elephants he's considered a man when he's sixteen or eighteen—his dad chases him away from home. Kicks him out literally, and slams the jungle door behind him. His dad has a large harem all his own, and he brooks no interference.

The young man has to travel alone then, until he gets big enough and strong enough to tear into some strange herd and say with his trunk, and his tusks, and his feet: "Old man, make yourself scarce! I'm the new bull of the woods! Your harem is mine now!"

If he whips the old bull he's the family leader. And the old bull's herd, switching its fidelity, accepts him as its new lord and master.

It's then that the old bull becomes what jungle people call a "rogue." He's mad, he's frustrated, and he runs amuck. He takes out his spite on anything he comes across—plantations, natives' houses, or even man himself. When there's a rogue on the loose in the jungles he's immediately reported and, unless the local Forest Officer can dispose of him, soldiers are called in to hunt him down and kill him. He's just no good to anybody, least of all himself, so he has to be killed. That is the forest penalty for being too tough. We have electric chairs ourselves; but it works more quickly in the jungle, and with absolute justice.

But to get back to my twenty-two elephants. Ratwatti's scouts were out, and in the meantime *we* got busy—with the aid of Ratwatti's cousins and his uncles and his aunts—on the kraal. I sent out word of the building and in no time at all we had over two hundred elephant coolies willing and anxious to work for fifteen cents gold a day. There's no Government regulation in Ceylon and gold is still and always has been legal tender.

Ratwatti and I put half of them to work digging post holes around the eight acres I had selected, and the other half to cutting down trees. The logs had to be about fifteen feet long, and, for solidity and strength against an elephant charge, at least a foot thick.

When a log is cut and trimmed, a five-foot pole is chained loosely to its side. A mahout rides up on his elephant, the elephant takes the pole in his mouth and walks away with it. The mahout, a bare toe hooked behind the elephant's ear, guides every move. Elephants trained to this work will unerringly put the end of the log into the hole dug for it, and with their forehead and trunk raise that solid ton of jungle wood into an erect position.

When you realise that these logs were set only eighteen inches apart around that entire eight acres of my kraal, you'll see why I needed so much help. And the eight acres weren't all. There had to be two fanlike flange fences—each four hundred feet long—spreading out on either side of the kraal gate. These fan-shaped fences are absolutely necessary; if wild elephants suspect they are being driven into a pen they are apt to turn back at any moment and charge the beaters. You need a wide, long runway to get them to that gate that means capture.

It was over two months before I had that kraal of mine finished, got the flange fences covered with brushwood and branches, and got the sliding gate built. And then my stockade had to be tested. A mahout rode in on a big tusker and had that five tons of trained power throw his whole weight against my tediously-built fence. Again and again, at different spots, that elephant rammed his head against those logs. I heaved a great sigh when they barely quivered. Ratwatti's cousin had done a good job.

FRANK BUCK AND HIS NUMBER 1 BOY, ALI, FORCING A GIANT PYTHON BACK INTO THE CRATE FROM WHICH IT ESCAPED

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

All this time Ratwatti's scouts had been out watching the herds. I decided finally to drive the largest one. It would mean more work, but there were twenty-two elephants in it, and I'd be fairly certain to get my two young males—if everything went well.

As Sir Ringrose did, you can kill an elephant with a single shot of a rifle. But an elephant drive to capture them alive starts slowly and takes infinite patience and days to complete. A hundred or more beaters form a semi-circle behind the herd, gradually working it in the direction it is finally to be driven by merely breaking a stick now and then. The old bull does not actually lead the herd. He is the boss, fights for it, and keeps it together; but it is always a wise old cow who takes alarm at the breaking stick, hears the sound, and starts slowly off, the rest following.

You do this for days, not letting them stop for water, and getting them slowly toward your kraal and in the position you want them.

Before the actual drive into the kraal, however, there is a solemn ceremony that has to be gone through. There's a good bit of danger in an elephant drive, and nobody knows it better than the native mahouts. Mahouts are elephant men. They live with elephants all their lives. When a wild herd is first captured the young elephants are segregated and put in "training." And to each of these young elephants is assigned a boy—a mahout. The boy—about ten or twelve years old then—lives with that elephant until one or the other dies.

Young elephants, captured at the age of five or six, do not become good working animals for ten or fifteen years. During this training period the mahout literally eats, sleeps, and lives with his beast. By the time the elephant is ready

for work, so is the mahout. The boy is a man then, and his elephant is four or five tons of trained and efficient muscle.

The Ceylon mahouts are true Buddhists. But before a drive they invariably revert, as do all jungle people, to the habits of their primitive ancestors. They call upon all the old forest gods and spirits to protect them from danger. And they pray to their own elephants to carry them safely through. There is something rather grand in seeing a mahout on his knees before the tremendous animal he's cared for and lived with for perhaps the last forty years, asking that animal now to care for and protect him.

This ceremony over, we were finally ready for the drive. Ratwatti's men had carefully got the herd into position a few miles away and were working it closer. I sent more beaters out in a long circle to get behind the beasts, for more beaters are needed as the elephants get nearer to the kraal. It's when they approach those big flange fences that they sense danger, are likely to become panicky, and stampede furiously off into the jungle. I went with the beaters myself, as I wanted to be certain nothing went wrong.

I've seen a lot go wrong on elephant drives. I remember that once, when the main drive started, a cow didn't move fast enough. She had a newly born calf at her side and was a little slow in keeping up with the rest of the herd. A mahout, more daring than was good for him, ran up and prodded her with a long bamboo pole. She turned in a flash. Before I could get my rifle up she had that mahout in her trunk, threw him down in front of her, and literally slid on him. Then she trumpeted and stamped him deep into the jungle mud with her great, flat feet.

I didn't want anything like that to happen again. Nor

did I want the herd to sense it was being driven into a pen and turn and charge my beaters. I'd had three glimpses of the elephants we were to drive, and I'd seen two of the finest specimens of young males I'd ever laid eyes on.

We slowly got the herd up close to the kraal. In fact through the trees I could just see the masked ends of my flange fences. For a second I looked around at the beaters near me. Then I raised my hand, fired my revolver, and gave the signal.

All hell broke loose in that jungle. It was as if seven Battles of the Marne had started at once. Five hundred coolies let out bloodcurdling yells. They beat on tin pans, they pounded on hollow tree trunks—and they kept on yelling. I fired blank cartridges from my revolver as fast as I could pull the trigger.

And the elephants? The elephants started running straight ahead, away from the sound, for the kraal.

If they had stampeded back toward us it would have been just too bad. But they didn't. They ran straight into the fan opening of my fences. If you've never heard twenty-two elephants pounding along at once, as fast as they can run, you've never heard thunder. They tore straight ahead, the fences narrowing on either side of them, and plunged headlong through the narrow gate.

My boys threw matches into piles of prepared oil-soaked brush, and the flames flared up grandly. I knew the elephants wouldn't charge back through those fires. But I had a few bad moments until we got the heavy bars of the gate into place. It wasn't until the last bar was wedged in solidly that I took time out even to sigh.

But at last the bar was in, and after three months I had

my herd of twenty-two wild elephants—every single one of them.

It was quite a time before that herd began acting up. The kraal was so big that the elephants hardly realized they were in a pen. Those eight acres were purposely left thick with undergrowth and creepers, with even the original huge jungle trees still standing.

But in their milling around a young bull suddenly discovered he was in a pen. He took one look at my man-made fence, lowered his head, and charged. You see now why I had tested that fence by even a stronger, trained bull. The wild one rammed his poundage as hard as he could at those logs again and again. Another joined him, and for a few minutes they raised hob with themselves and my stockade, while I held my breath and prayed to a jungle god or two myself.

But the logs remained firm and the whole herd gradually quieted down. That is where elephants are a bit more than human—their nature is such that they can accept any situation with calm and poise. They have a philosophical animal sense which allows them to accept reverses, even captivity, with enviable dignity. Some of them even began to feed.

If you think this ended my job, you're mistaken. All I wanted from that herd were two young males—and I had twenty-two mad, savage, fighting elephants in my kraal. You don't just walk into a herd of wild elephants, pick what you want, and say, " Come on out of there ! " Here is where the Ratwatti family's tame elephants came in again.

After the herd had calmed down a bit, I had the gate opened and decoy elephants, with mahouts on their backs,

went into the kraal. Decoys work like automatons—with brains.

A wild elephant, seeing a decoy, doesn't recognise him for a traitor and a fake any more than a wild duck recognizes a wooden brother planted in a shallow lake. An elephant is an elephant—he's grey, he's big, and he smells as any self-respecting pachyderm should smell.

I singled out the first male I wanted, and the mahouts guided their decoys closer and closer to him on either side. It was a dangerous business, as he *might* charge at any second. But the mahouts worked so carefully that before the bull really knew what was happening they had him penned in between the decoys and held fast against their sides.

Other decoys closed in at his head and tail, and he was literally held motionless by a wall of elephants. He had to be noosed then—a ticklish business. A mahout, quick as a cat, had to get a rope about one hind leg and fasten the rope to a tree growing inside the kraal.

This done, the worst was over. With ropes on him, the decoy elephants marched the bad boy out between them—one guiding and pushing him from the rear—until I got him in a training cage I'd had built just outside the kraal.

It wasn't until I had my second young bull in a cage beside his brother that I really took time out to wipe my forehead as Ali had been doing in gesture for the last two months.

The job was done—providing you don't count a two-hundred-mile trip with those wild elephants back through the jungle to Kandy and Colombo, a boat journey to Singapore, and then a march to northern Johore where I always establish main camp. If you want to you can picture

another jaunt with those elephants back to Singapore, and then add nine thousand miles of ocean to New York.

Twenty-two elephants to get two ! Actually, the natives took three young ones, which was agreeable to me, and allowed by government regulations. The rest of the herd, seventeen of them, were turned back to their native jungle.

I can still see them stampeding out of that kraal when we let down the bars of the gate, their tails up grandly, trumpeting, and as downright happy as an elephant can be to get back into his own home.

As I said, it's business with me, but just the same I still think there's a strangely romantic sound to the word "elephant." But I can't see any romance in putting a rifle to your shoulder and dropping one of these great beasts, even though a little five-foot jungle snake may strike a promising young engineer.

IV

BINJI

I HAVE talked now of animals and people—pangolins, hornbills, argus pheasants, fish, eagles, elephants, not to mention the Dick Arbuthnots and Sir Ralph Ringroses. You can't give a real picture of the Far East without painting both animals and people, and to give that picture truly and in all its proportions, you have to mention and paint, as well as you can, its Binjis and its Johnsons.

Whether this story belongs to Binji or Johnson I'm not sure. Anyhow, I'm quite positive it's true—if Johnson's word can be believed, which I think it can. After all, he's hardly the hero of the affair, and it doesn't seem likely he'd make up a yarn like this on himself. Here's the story as he told it to me.

Johnson and I were sitting on the terrace of the Keppel Harbour Golf Club having a "stingah" when a little yellow dog ran across the ninth green, grabbed a rolling golf ball in his mangy mouth, and made off with it. There was loud consternation. The ball happened to be the last one of a foursome that would have tied the match at the ninth, and a British officer in civies threw a golf club farther than he could have driven a ball after that poor, little cur.

I laughed, glad to see the dog get successfully away with his prize. But Johnson's eyes were serious, a bit wistful, as he said:

"Frank, why don't you come up on my plantation and get a tiger?"

I looked at him curiously.

"Don't tell me that that little yellow dog reminded you of a tiger?" I asked.

"Yes," he admitted. "It did. The dog—and that Dutch mail boat out there."

I stared across the blue water at the white-hulled ship steaming slowly by. She was bound for Singapore—which is just behind the Keppel Harbour Club—Singapore, the fourth largest shipping port in the world, the clearing post for all the tin and rubber of south-eastern Asia.

"But what has that Dutch boat got to do with the little yellow dog—and a tiger?"

Johnson looked thoughtfully across the water between us and the boat.

"Nothing," he said. "Except that she's from Australia—and's got sheep on her."

There is nothing unusual about a Dutch boat coming into Singapore with sheep from Australia. In fact, both the Royal Dutch Mail and the Burns-Phillips Lines bring plenty of Australian sheep into Malaya. There is quite a trade in sheep. Whenever there is deck space on a boat bound for Singapore the shipper can add pounds to his profit by filling the space with sheep.

There is a big demand for live sheep in Singapore. All through Malaya are the *klings*—a caste of Hindu from southern India—who are the small merchants, the general merchandisers, and the money-lenders of each district. Every village throughout the Malay Straits has its *kling* section. There is even a Kling Street in Singapore where most of these people of the island live and carry on their business.

The *klings* are a strange mixture of Mohammedan and Hindu. As Mohammedans they may eat no pork, as

Hindus they may eat no beef. So about all the meat that is left them is mutton. And while there is a large trade in frozen Australian sheep, the *klings* prefer fresh mutton when they can get it.

So ships from Australia bring to Singapore deck cargoes of two or three hundred live sheep, and find a ready market in Tanjong Pajar, the dock section of the city.

But I couldn't see any connection between a sheep ship, a tiger, and a little, playful, yellow dog at whom a British major had just tossed a golf club.

"What are you talking about, Johnson?"

He looked across the half-burned grass of the links to where the puppy had dropped the white ball and was toying with it with clumsy forepaws.

"About that dog, mainly," he said. And then he branched off. "If you really want a tiger, Frank, there's one on my rubber plantation up at Kukum. Trap set and everything ready to catch the beast."

"Of course I want a tiger, Johnson," I told him. "I'm always in the market for tigers. You know that's my business."

"You can have this one free, Frank. He killed a very good friend of mine."

"You mean he's a man-eater?"

"No, just an ordinary tiger that's been bothering the natives up on my rubber plantation."

"Tell me about him."

"Oh, there's not much to tell about the tiger. Do you think I'm a hard man, Frank?"

"Hard?"

"Cruel."

"I never thought so—no."

He took cigars from his pocket and handed me one, taking his eyes from the mongrel puppy as he did so.

"Know Dick Scott?" he asked.

"Yes. Lives up in the Tanglin District."

"That's right. Best residence section in Singapore. Well, Dick's got two kids, grand little kids—Bob and Betty. They go out with an *amah* every day, and Dick got to thinking it would be a good idea if they had a dog along with the nurse-maid—a big, trustworthy watchdog. A sort of protector and pal in one."

"A lot of people up Tanglin-way have dogs," I ventured.

"But not like Dick's."

"He got a dog? I didn't know it."

"Yes—he got a dog. Went to Bondoeng for it."

I had heard of the dogs of Bondoeng. Bondoeng is in Java, in the hills, over five thousand feet above the sea. It has a climate comparable with northern Europe, and is quite a holiday resort for people in Malaya who can get away for a cooling vacation. Inter-island boats run between Batavia, the capital of Java, and Singapore. And there are Royal Dutch Mail planes, which connect Java with Europe, Singapore being the first stop.

At Bondoeng there is a Dutchman who breeds marvellous dogs—Alsatians—strong, sturdy, as well-bred as any dogs in Europe or America. Many Tanglin residents, who have not imported dogs from England, have gone to Bondoeng for them.

"Dick Scott got one," Johnson said. "He was on a vacation in Java, and he picked out one for his kids. Strong, grey and lean as a wolf. He wouldn't trust it to the boats; had it shipped back to Singapore by plane. I hear there was

a whole reception committee of white residents at the flying field to meet it, and no wonder ! Binji was one of the finest Alsatians that ever came to Singapore."

" Binji ? " I asked.

Johnson laughed.

" That was the name Betty Scott, Dick's kid, gave him. For no reason. She calls everything Binji—from her pet teddy-bear to her mother. He turned out to be a wonderful dog—gentle, a grand watchdog, and a perfect playmate for Dick's children. Used to pull them around in a little cart Dick had made—a red-leather harness and a silver bell around his big neck. He had a dog-house in the yard—a blue and white affair, with blinds on the windows if you please !—where he was chained-up at night. Dick tells me the animal used to watch the house like an eagle. And he was grand with the children—a regular old *Nana* who could almost talk."

I looked at Johnson over the smoke of my cigar.

" You're putting all this in the past tense," I said.

Johnson's eyes moved across the blue water to the disappearing boat.

" Yes," he said. " And *that's* the reason."

" That boat ? "

" Others like it. As you know, the Tanglin District is near the old Singapore Race Track. It's been dismantled now that we have the new one, but there are sixty acres of good grazing land there. And that's where the *klings* drive the sheep that come in on those boats—up to that old race track on the southern edge of town to graze awhile and fatten-up after their voyage."

" I know that," I said. " What about it ? "

" One night the sheep were stampeded. The *kling* boys

who were watching them went half-mad. They claimed some wolf had come into Singapore and slaughtered the sheep under their very eyes. They had half-a-dozen dead sheep with torn throats as evidence. They'd been killed all right, by a wolf—or a dog."

"It was Binji?"

"Yes—it was Binji. There's no doubt of it. It was traced to him. He had shreds of wool and blood on his muzzle, and his chain on the dog-house was broken. That normally gentle and affectionate dog had run amok and become a sheep-killer."

"What happened?"

"Dick Scott paid for the sheep. He was mad, plenty—but he had to pay for them. And after that he kept Binji chained-up much of the time. He only let the dog loose when he himself was around, and nights he kept him on a chain strong enough to hold a leopard."

"What's it all about then?" I asked.

"You never saw that dog. He was strong, Frank—gentle but strong. And he'd tasted sheep's blood. Dick says he thinks Binji could smell one of those sheep-ships coming into the harbour. Anyhow, whenever one did, Binji got restless, he wouldn't eat, and he tugged constantly at his chain. And then one night he broke loose again. They found his broken chain in the morning. And the *klings* were all gathered around Scott's house, raving mad, with the Singapore police, and with news that a cool dozen sheep had been slaughtered during the night. They demanded payment, and as proof of their demands there was Binji with his tail between his legs, and his tail drooping—ashamed, mute testimony of his crime. What could Scott do?"

"Pay for the sheep," I suggested.

"Yes—he had to pay for the sheep. And of course this was the last straw. He didn't want butcher bills coming in monthly, and he didn't want a dog that was a killer. So, that afternoon he took Binji down to the Raffles Hotel. This is where I come in."

"You?"

His eyes were now on the distant Major who had thrown the club at the yellow mongrel. The Major, fat and cumbersome, was getting ready to drive. He drove badly into the rough.

"Serves him right," Johnson said, "for throwing a golf club at a dog."

I stared at Johnson curiously.

"What's got into you?" I demanded. "I never heard you talk like this before."

"I guess I never did," he admitted. "I was pretty close to death last night, Frank."

"Death?"

"I'll tell you about it."

The Dutch mail ship had passed from sight, and the Major was walking—cussing, I imagine—down the fairway.

"It was that dog Binji. I'd never seen him until I walked into the Raffles bar. Dick Scott was there, and he asked me to have a *pahit.* The dog was curled up at his feet, half snoozing, half-watching Dick, with the other eye on me. He was a beautiful animal, and I admired him.

"'You can have him if you want him,' Dick said.

"'What do you mean, have him?' I asked.

"'I don't want him. He's a killer. I've paid for eighteen sheep now and I don't intend to pay for any more. I'm not

going to keep him. Either I'm going to give him away or put a bullet in his head. He's no use to anybody.'

"I didn't want a 'killer' on my plantation. He'd be no good to me. But all at once I remembered something a dog *would* be good for.

"'You really want to get rid of him, Dick?"

"'So much that I intend to shoot him if you don't take him. He's a savage animal, and I don't want him around my children any longer.'

"'All right,' I said. 'I'll take him.'

"Without a word Dick handed me the chain. It was a heavy chain, and it fitted around the dog's neck in a choke collar.

"'Come on!' I ordered sharply, and pulled Binji to his feet.

"The dog looked first at Dick and then at me. His eyes weren't reproachful—just questioning. Maybe Dick had beaten him for that sheep business—I don't know. Anyway, the dog went off with me easily enough, and seemed rather pleased when I put him in the back seat of my car."

Johnson ceased speaking and took up his stingah for a quick sip.

"You know what I wanted that dog for, Frank?" he said, without looking at me, as if he were ashamed.

"No."

"Ttger bait."

He put down the stingah and rubbed his hands together as if they were cold.

"I told you I had a tiger on my plantation. He's mangled a couple of bullocks and has been carrying off my chickens. I've got a permit in at Johore Bahru asking permission to shoot him; but you know how much red tape

there is to getting permission to shoot a tiger in Johore. It may be a week before the Sultan says I can do it. But there's no law against trapping a tiger alive, so I had my boys build a log trap. But unless I had some pretty good bait—something that would howl and make a racket at night—I knew I'd never get this tiger into a trap. So I decided to use the sheepkiller."

Johnson looked over at me as if waiting for a nod. I puffed at my cigar and looked out over the blue water of the Straits.

"Well," he said slowly, "we started off in the car, the dog and I. My *syce* was driving, and I sat on the back seat with Binji. You've got to understand, Frank, that I'd never seen this dog before. I thought he'd be savage—a sheep-killer. And there we were, sitting on the same leather seat, with Binji first putting his head out the side for air, and then looking at me with big, brown eyes and laying his muzzle in my lap.

"He was a wonderful dog. I found my hand snuggling its way behind his ears. And his quivering black nose lay on my lap—the black nose that the night before had fastened into a cool dozen sheep. It seemed impossible to believe that this gentle, loving dog—this dog who so enjoyed this motor-car ride—was really a sheep-killer.

"You know my plantation, Frank. It's isolated—deep in the jungle. I get out at the landing on the river, and it's eight miles across and up the stream to my rubber plantation.

"I didn't have to coax Binji into the motor launch. That was the trouble. He came as if he trusted me—as if it would be a great lark riding in that motor boat. As if he had been hoping for a ride in such a boat all his life.

" It's pretty rough across that wide stretch of river. The breeze gets in—and the ocean, too—and heaves it up plenty. But Binji didn't mind. For a dog that had lived all his years on dry land he did beautifully. He barked at the waves, and caught bits of white foam in his teeth. He really loved that ride, with the motor kicking, the bow of the launch slapping the river, and my *syce* spinning the wheel to keep the boat's bow headed up-stream. Every now and then Binji would slip his muzzle under my hand and look into my face with big, brown eyes as if to say: 'We're having a swell time, aren't we, pal?'

" We got to the plantation landing finally, and the launch ran along-side. Binji was the first out, his head back, looking up, and barking joyfully at an eagle that swooped in the blue sky far over our heads.

" It's four miles from the river landing to my bungalow, and we walked it together. Binji ran ahead, nosing in the underbrush, like a city dog on a spree. I caught myself smiling at his eagerness, at his downright pleasure in getting jungle smells and sniffiing them down that long, grey nose of his. Every now and then he would run back to me and look up and bark. It was as if he were inviting me to run with him, and smell the damp jungle and the sunshine, and let the fresh ferns brush my head as I ran at his side.

" We reached the bungalow and my headboy met me. He looked curiously at Binji.

" 'We're not going to keep him,' I said. 'He's tiger-bait.'

" The boy's eyes glowed.

" 'Very good bait, *tuan*,' he said. 'Dog fine for tiger. He make plenty noise.'

" In fact, Binji was making plenty of noise at the time.

A TIGER, KING OF THE ASIATIC JUNGLES, RESENTING THE APPROACH OF BUCK AND CAMERA PARTY

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

He hadn't taken a fancy to my boy, and he was showing it in dog terms. There's no doubt—Binji had a personality. He'd begun to get me. You can't have a soft, cold muzzle pressed into the palm of your hand, and big, brown eyes look at you, without feeling *something*—no matter how hard you are.

"I had supper. Binji lay on the floor at one side of the table, his head on his forepaws, looking up at me. He didn't beg for food—he just sort of *hoped*, if you get what I mean. And I'm afraid I threw him a few scraps—something I never do to dogs at table. It was—well, he was going to die, you see. He was a killer, and he was about to be killed. But that was no reason why he shouldn't have his last meal—even condemned criminals have that. And it was nice to see the grateful look in his eyes when he caught a scrap.

"I went out on the bungalow porch afterwards. It was fairly cool for Malaya. The breeze was off the river and it brought a vast, soft hum of insects with it. I lit my pipe and sat watching the stars a while. They look pretty blue in the jungle—as you know—blue above the black tops of the trees, and a bit lonesome.

"Presently I heard a stirring beside me, and the next minute Binji's head was on my knee. He didn't expect to be petted; he just put his big head there for companionship. It was as if he were as alone as I—away from all familiar things, and lonesome.

"I let my hand scratch his ears a moment before I got hastily to my feet. This was no way to catch a tiger. That *empty* trap out there in the jungle would do no good. It had to be *baited*.

"I steeled myself and called my boy.

" 'Come on,' I said. 'We're going to bait that trap. Come on, Binji.'

" Binji came gladly. He bounded down off the bungalow porch, lithe and slim in the light of my electric torch. He delighted in this extra and unlooked-for walk up the jungle trail. His nose explored the underbrush as we went along. I could see the white-grey of his tail waving, now far ahead, now close as the boy and I caught up with his eagerness. He was a happy dog—loose, free—but with a man behind to call his name now and then and keep him from going too far astray. I think a dog loves that more than anything—the man behind who calls his name in the dark.

" We got to the tiger trap finally. You know the kind—the heavy, log-type of trap the Malay natives build—big, roomy, with a sliding log door that works when a trigger is pulled.

" 'All right,' I said to the boy. 'Take him in and tie him.'

" It was no job to get Binji in the cage. It was as if this, were some new kind of a game. He went in, eager, sniffing and the boy tied him by his collar. It was only after the boy came out of the trap that Binji began to realize there was something queer in this business. He started to whine through the bars.

" Now you've got to understand this, Frank. Binji was a killer—a bad dog. He'd gone after sheep and ripped their throats open. Dick Scott had been going to shoot him anyway. What I was doing was only another way of death for the dog.

" I told myself all this as I walked back down the jungle trail. Behind I could hear Binji. He was howling now—

howling loudly. I suppose it was the first time he had been left alone—*all* alone—in the dark and the jungle.

" 'Dog make very fine tiger bait,' my boy said. 'He howl loud. Tiger come sure.'

" Somehow that didn't do much to comfort me. The picture of Binji, that beautiful Alsatian, alone and helpless in that log trap in the dark, wasn't a pretty one. Not with a striped tiger somewhere near—a tiger that could strike him into silence with one blow of a cruel, savage paw.

" I undressed and went to bed. The insect hum sounded louder. The night was very still except for that queer, low symphony of the jungle. It droned in at the screened windows—alive, moving, ceaseless.

" I couldn't sleep. I thought of all sorts of queer things —Harrow as a boy, my first boat race at Oxford, the traffic roar of Trafalgar Square on a foggy afternoon—things I hadn't thought of since I was a young man. And through all these jumbled pictures I saw that dog—great, brown eyes, a long, wrinkled nose, big paws that felt warm and friendly against my leg.

" I began to reason. I had started out with the idea of using this dog for bait; until now nothing else had entered my mind. But I hadn't a dog on the plantation. Binji might be a sheep-killer, but there were *no sheep* here to kill. Why shouldn't I *keep him?* Why shouldn't I have him here, rubbing himself against my leg, his big eyes looking up brown and soft through the dusk?

" It's strange how quickly a man can change his ideas and his wishes. Until now I had been hoping to trap that tiger that had been annoying my coolies. Now I hoped that I *hadn't* trapped him! Call it sentiment, if you like; call it Binji's wet muzzle on my knee in the car, his eagerness in

the boat, the look in his eyes as he had lain at my feet on the porch in the dusk. Or call it just plain dog-consciousness.

"I routed out my headboy with the point of my rifle.

"'Come on! We're going to get the dog out of that trap.'

"He came, but I'm certain he thought I'd gone *gila*. Why take perfectly good tiger bait out of a tiger trap? What was the object in life of a dog if not to catch a tiger?

"We had moved fairly rapidly through the jungle before. Now we covered that half-mile on a dead run. I could feel the sweat standing out on my forehead. Brushwood scratched me as I went by without taking time to duck. You'll understand if you've ever had a dog. I didn't have this one—but I wanted him, now, and as long as he lived.

"As we got near the trap there was no sound of Binji. Only the night hum in the air, and the swish of bushes as we went through them. There was just one answer—the tiger had got him.

"I heard a low whine in the dark—a plaintive sort of whine, the whine I imagine babies make when they're left alone. Flashing my light ahead I saw Binji, his black nose through the bars of the tiger cage, his eyes—shining and eager—staring straight into the beam of the torch. And behind that grey-white tail was wagging full of friendship, full of confidence, as if to say: 'Well, we've played *this* game long enough—let's try *another!*'

"'Untie him,' I said to the boy.

"Binji came bounding out of that tiger cage. He didn't jump on me. He just came running up, eager, glad to see

me, his tail swishing the bushes, and his red tongue hanging out between shiny, white teeth.

" ' Come on,' I said. ' We're going home, Binji.'

He ran down the trail ahead just as he had come up it—frisking, smelling, investigating. Now he was far ahead, barely visible in the ray of the torch. Now he was close up, just under my feet, sniffing and being pure dog.

" Suddenly something happened. It came so quickly, and was so close, that I couldn't even get the torch up. It was like a clouded dream—a dusky, rushing movement in the dark. I saw two five-inch spears of ivory gleaming in the moonlight ! They came straight towards me—cruel, piercing, terrible, sharp as needles !

" I knew I had stumbled in the dark on a wild boar with a litter. Two hundred pounds of fierce animal dynamite was about to gore me in the next split second.

" There was no getting my rifle up. Even the torch hung motionless in my hand. It was all so quick—so sudden—that movement would have been futile. That savage wild boar—coming with the speed of an express train—wasn't twelve feet away in the moonlight.

" And then a grey streak sprang from the black. It came swift as a blown leaf, and as silently. I heard the boar grunt with the impact. I saw two gleaming tusks disappear in the dark. And then I heard Binji's cry of pain, followed by his low, savage growl. His sheep-growl.

" I shot the boar," Johnson said slowly. " And after I shot him I found Binji—both those tusks through his breast, but with his great, white teeth firm and fast in the boar's throat."

Johnson stopped speaking. His eyes looked out across the empty golf course. The Major was somewhere down

around the thirteenth hole by this time. But the little yellow mongrel was still playing happily on the green, toying with the stolen golf ball, and probably dreaming of a mellow bone he had buried safely somewhere on the Island of Singapore.

V

CROCODILE TEARS

THERE is an old fiction in the Far East that crocodiles weep over the victims they devour. This is pretty generally conceded and believed by a great number of the natives in Malaya. The idea is that the crocodile feels so sorry for the man or animal he must eat that he weeps copiously before making his attack, and again afterwards at the memory of a delicious meal. I have had natives swear to me that they have seen crocodiles weeping bitterly on the banks of jungle streams. Whether it was before or after the meal they couldn't say.

It is from this old belief that we get our expression, "crocodile tears," which we use to mean false or affected weeping and hypocritical sorrow.

At any rate, you gather that it is no news when a crocodile weeps over a man; it has been done for hundreds of years, and is an accepted fact, at least in the East. The news element in this story is of a man weeping over a crocodile.

Now I have no love for crocodiles. In fact, I detest these aquatic reptiles more than any creature that swims, crawls, runs, or flies in the jungle country. They are sly as serpents and fierce as tigers, and although there are no statistics, I think it safe to say that many more natives are killed each year by crocodiles than all the species of jungle cats put together.

At any rate, the Dyaks of Borneo, the tribesmen who live along the sea coasts and the island rivers, look upon the crocodile as their deadliest enemy. If they catch one alive they are savage beyond measure, often torturing it to a

cruel and lingering death. They can't exactly be blamed—it may be the crocodile that last week devoured the head-man's sister.

The crocodile apparently is very partial to human flesh. The alligator, the American kind, is largely a fish-eater. The alligator has a shorter and broader snout than the crocodile, and the teeth of the lower jaw shut into pits instead of into marginal notches.

Very seldom will the alligator touch meat, and then only in direst necessity. But the crocodile is a meat-eater. He *will* eat fish, but he prefers meat—any kind of meat from man to monkey, and from cats to fowl. And he gets them all.

The women of the Borneo Dyaks still do their washing in the most primitive way. They go down to the banks of the nearest river, wade into the water to their knees, and beat the clothes on smooth, water-polished rocks.

These old-fashioned laundry methods give the crocodile his big opportunity. He will drift slowly down with the river current, almost submerged in the dark water, his back looking exactly like a bit of dead log floating in the sunlight. But all the time he will be edging slowly toward the laundry. Not head-on—that would give him away—but sideways, slowly, gently, with the least motion of his big tail, as a log might drift.

When he is within striking distance he wastes no time. He hits like a sudden, splashing bolt of lightning. His great tail rises slightly from the water and swings like a side-swiping battering-ram. There is no resisting it. The crocodile may be anywhere from twelve to twenty feet long, and his tail is as hard as iron. It strikes a terrible, stunning blow, often crushing bones and knocking its victim unconscious.

Then, while the rest of the laundry splashes to the bank with screams of terror, the crocodile seizes his victim in long, cruel jaws—jaws that make a shark's small by comparison. A good-sized crocodile will have four or five-foot rows of teeth.

He makes for deep water then, as fast as he can go. Once there he plunges under and hugs the bottom, holding firmly to his victim until the unfortunate laundress is drowned.

The crocodile does not bite his food into suitable portions—he *tears* it. He comes to the surface with his victim, pivots on his tail, and circles rapidly until he literally twists off his meal.

What he does not desire at the time he buries. Finding a soft spot on the bank, he carries the remainder of his meal there and covers it with mud and leaves. Many a native who has disappeared has been found by his friends or family half buried by a crocodile on some swampy river bank.

So it is easy to see why the crocodile is the Dyaks' deadliest enemy. He is strong, he is merciless, he strikes without warning, and once he strikes an inevitable and terrible death is in store for his victim. It is no wonder that the Dyaks are equally merciless when they happen to capture one of these great water reptiles alive. But there was one occasion when I wished they had been a little more gentle.

I have been going to Sandakan, on the northern coast of Borneo, for many years. It is one of the stops of the little steamers that ply the Sulu Sea and the South China Sea from Zamboanga in the Philippines to Singapore. I have brought many rare animals and birds back to America from Borneo, and on each of my trips to the East I usually get there at least once.

The very first time I landed at Sandakan I heard about Naga Besar, the " Big Dragon " of the bay. That was over twenty years ago. You can still hear about Naga Besar in Sandakan. Ask any Dyak about the Big Dragon. He'll tell you no creature ever lived as savage, as cruel, and as wise as the Naga of Sandakan Bay. And he'll be right—at least as far as crocodiles go. For I saw this Naga, and touched him, and finally nearly wept over him—and they weren't crocodile tears.

I was a bit surprised when I was approached by a deputation of Dyaks and asked to catch the Naga. My reputation as an animal-man was known, but usually natives manage to catch and kill their own crocodiles.

" Naga Besar is as old as the sea and more strong than its greatest wave. You catch him for us, Master."

" I'm not interested in crocodiles," I told them, and sent them away.

All around Sandakan I heard stories of the Naga. He was the biggest crocodile that ever lived. He was really no crocodile at all—he was a naga, a dragon. He breathed out fire and smoke from his nostrils, and he would eat nothing but human food. In the years he had been at Sandakan he eaten many, many natives. He had a " castle " far beneath the waters of the bay in the wreck of an old ship lying on a reef. From here he made excursions up the rivers and far out to sea, once even swimming clear around the point into the next bay. He regularly upset canoes and had been known even to attack a prau.

I dismissed all these stories as native exaggeration and superstition. And I left Sandakan without even trying to have a look at the Naga.

But each time I returned to Borneo I heard more stories

about Naga Besar. And each time his new list of victims was enumerated to me and new and terrible deeds of his violence related. I decided finally to have a look at him if I could. The natives were positive he lived in the hulk of a sunken ship in the harbour, so I permitted two Dyaks to take Ali, my Number-One boy, and myself out in a large dug-out canoe.

There was the hulk of an old ship there, sure enough. Through the clear blue water of the bay, about thirty feet down, I could see every rotted deck plank and broken spar. Bits of sea-weed and moss trailed from the rotted timbers in the slow current like sluggish snakes. There was a great hole in the ship's side where she had obviously crashed on the reef in a storm many years before.

" Watch," the Dyaks said softly. " Master watch hole in ship. Maybe see Naga Besar."

I watched and waited. The Dyaks kept the canoe motionless with deft, noiseless strokes of their paddles that barely stirred the water. The Borneo sun beat down mercilessly. That Borneo sun can be hotter than any other sun in the world, and we literally steamed in its reflection from the bay. I grew impatient.

" Take me back," I ordered. " There's no crocodile down there."

" Please, Master," they pleaded. " Just a little longer. Naga Besar very wise. Maybe he know you are here. Maybe after a time he come out to see what you look like."

" I'll wait ten minutes more," I said flatly. " Then we're going."

Those ten minutes passed slow as so many ages. I wiped the sweat from my forehead and looked longingly at the

cool, distant shore. Then I heard the breath hiss softly between Ali's teeth.

"*Tuan!*" he whispered. "Look! Look quickly!"

I glanced down over the side of the boat. It took me a moment to shake the sun out of my eyes. In the shimmering depths of the water I could still see the wreck, quiet, peaceful, motionless.

"The hole, *tuan!*" Ali whispered. "The hole!"

I saw a movement in the broken hull of the ship. It was vague at first, like a mere shadow on the water. It moved slowly outward and became green. I held my breath as I saw it was the snout of a crocodile—and the biggest snout I had ever gazed at. It moved on, foot after foot. Incredibly it moved until I could see the reptile's head and eyes. There must have been seven feet of long, cruel jaws that came through the wreckage before the beast saw the shadow of the canoe. He paused a moment, then with unbelievable quickness vanished back into the sunken ship.

"Naga Besar!" the Dyaks chanted. "Naga Besar! Master believe in the Dragon now?"

I believed I had seen one of the biggest crocodiles that ever lived, and I told them so. And dragon or not, I wanted him. A crocodile as big as this one was as rare as platinum and would be an immense curiosity back in America. The difficulty would be to capture him.

Crocodiles usually are caught in rivers or on river banks. Even the sea crocodiles go up the streams to feed and lay their eggs. Crocodile eggs vary in number from twenty to ninety. They are laid in a nest of vegetable matter which the crocodile scrapes together in a heap on the bank. These eggs are incubated by the heat caused by the fermenting of this vegetable matter and the warmth of the sun. The

young break through the shell of the egg by means of an "egg tooth" which grows on the tip of the snout and which, though sharp as a knife and hard as steel, breaks off and is lost immediately after hatching. The babies are two or three times as long as their eggs, and they are able to take care of themselves at birth. Their normal growth is about a foot a year.

The best bait for crocodiles when fishing for them along a river bank is a live monkey. The natives fasten two sharpened sticks crosswise and tie the little simian to the centre of the cross. The crocodile, in snapping at the monkey, gets one of the sharpened sticks between his jaws so that it is impossible to close them. He cannot go back into the river with his jaws propped open or he would drown. So he has to stay on the muddy bank where the natives find him by following his trail in the soft ooze.

I knew I would never get Naga Besar in this way. In the first place, if he did go up the river it would be impossible to trail him; and in the second, I had an idea he was far too old to fall for monkey bait on two sticks.

There is another way to catch crocodiles. You take a piece of rattan—which is almost as strong as a steel cable—about twenty yards long. To the end of this you fasten three yards of strong native-fibre rope. The strands of this rope are separated from one another, so when the crocodile takes the hook they slip into the interstices of his teeth and give him nothing on which to bite.

The hook itself is seven inches long and about four inches across from shank to point. But it is vastly different from an ordinary fish hook. The shank is sharpened at the end and the hook is not barbed. Half-way up the shank on the side toward the point is a loop. The rope is fastened

to this loop. Once the bait is swallowed a strain on the line pulls the hook across the crocodile's throat. The hook catches, and the sharp shank fastens in the opposite side. Once caught the hook cannot be dislodged, and the long rattan line floats on the water's surface.

I baited four of these hooks with half-plucked white chickens. A white fowl is better than a dark one, for the crocodile can see it farther in the water. Ali and I paddled out into the bay over the wreck and left our baits. Both the fowl and the rattan floated. Of course the light waves would slowly wash our lines away from the giant crocodile's hide-away and scatter them about the bay so it would be necessary to reset them daily. But there was no way to anchor the lines or Naga Besar would become instantly suspicious and refuse to be tempted. I suspected that he was too wise anyhow, and apparently he was. For four days straight Ali and I, with the help of our Dyaks and the dug-out canoe, carefully reset those lines, and waited.

"I guess it's no use, Ali," I said finally. "That old croc is too smart for us. I can't wait any longer. I've got to go on to Darvel Bay and see Bill Westley."

"*Tuan* want Naga Besar?" Ali asked.

"I certainly do. But I can't spend any more time on him."

"Leave me here, *tuan*, while you go visit *Tuan* Westley. Maybe I catch Naga."

He said it so seriously and with such confidence that I couldn't help smiling.

"All right, Ali," I told him. "I was going to leave you here anyway. Just keep the lines out there over the wreck. I won't expect anything."

So I left Ali at Sandakan and went over to Darvel Bay

around the extreme eastern point of Borneo from Sandakan. Bill Westley was an old friend of mine and the manager of a big rubber and tobacco plantation located there. He grinned when I told him I had tried to catch the Naga of Sandakan Bay.

"I wish you would catch him, Frank," he said. "I've listened to native lies about that fool crocodile until I'm thoroughly sick of them."

"They aren't lies," I told him. "I saw the Naga's jaws. He's the biggest croc in the world, Westley."

"He's a damned nuisance," said Westley. "The Naga is blamed for every native that disappears. Even over here half the Chinese and Tamil coolies that I import are afraid to go near the river bank because of the wild stories the Dyaks tell them about that old croc. They've begun to look on him as a god."

I stayed with Westley a week. Lounging on his broad porch was a welcome relaxation after six months of animal catching. There is a quiet placidity about a Borneo plantation that gets into a white man's blood. A month of it and you are ready to sit and let the rest of the world go by.

But I didn't have a month of it. On the eighth day Ali came tearing up to the bungalow, panting and dripping with perspiration. He had come all the way from Sandakan in a native prau with eight of the fastest Dyak oarsmen he could find. They had paddled in relays and had never stopped all the way round the north point of Borneo. They had made the two-day prau trip in less than twenty hours, and Ali had run as fast as his legs could carry him the three miles from the plantation landing to the bungalow.

"*Tuan! Tuan!*" he cried. "Naga Besar is captured!"

"Sit down, Ali. Get your breath," I said. "Now then, who caught him?"

"I did, *tuan*. The Dyaks and I caught him in the canoe."

"In the canoe! You're crazy!"

"No, *tuan*. Naga is tied on beach at Sandakan. *Tuan* come quickly. Dyaks hate Naga so I afraid they do him injury."

"All right, Ali," I said. "I'll come."

If it had been anybody but Ali I would have doubted the story. But he had been with me so many years I could trust him thoroughly. Westley immediately offered to send me to Sandakan in the company's power boat, so with a hasty good-bye Ali and I started out.

On the way I got Ali's story. Every day he had had four Dyak paddlers in their big dug-out visit the wreck and replace the drifting bait. Then one morning, early, he had found one of the lines missing. The other three were there, drifting on the surface, but one of the chickens was gone. Ali's Dyaks paddled slowly over the wreck and they finally spotted the end of the rattan. There was only about a yard of it on the surface. The other end went straight down and disappeared through the hole in the side of the wrecked ship.

Ali knew the Naga was on the hook end of that line. The Dyaks knew it, too. They wanted to paddle as fast as they could for shore, but Ali wouldn't let them. He and the strongest Dyak got hold of the end of the rattan and with all their combined strength gave it a jerk that set the hook fast in the Naga's throat.

After that there was no question of retreat. The Naga

A GIANT PYTHON AND BLACK PANTHER IN MORTAL COMBAT
Photographed in the heart of the Malayan Jungle.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

came out of his sunken home like a green-grey streak, and the big canoe moved with him.

"He look big as whale," Ali told me. "Bigger. All my life I never move so fast on water. Canoe go like twig in rapids."

But Ali and his Dyak helper hung on and gathered in the slack of the rattan when they could. At times the crocodile, lashing the water to a fury, dove, dragging both boys to their knees and nearly breaking their backs. But they clung to that rattan for dear life.

After the dug-out had been pulled around the bay for what seemed hours to Ali, and the big croc had evidently begun to tire, the boys managed to pull in the line until the Naga was only four or five yards from the boat. Ali had taken a long spear with him—almost a harpoon—with another rattan attached to the spearhead. He gave the first line to two of the Dyaks to hold.

The Naga turned over in the water, lashing with his great tail, fighting, his four feet clawing the sea to a foam. His jaws were open and Ali could see long rows of cruel teeth, biting and dripping. It was while the Naga was half out of the water, his yellow side showing, that Ali stabbed with the spear, being careful to drive it in where the flesh was thick so as not to hit a vital spot.

It went in clear to the hilt and Ali quickly wrenched the shaft loose, grabbing the rattan line as he did so.

All hell broke loose then in Sandakan Bay. The water was churned into a white whirlpool. The Naga went round and round, his tail lashing, his great jaws opening and clicking together like steel traps. Once the tail, with the weight of a falling tree, struck the canoe and knocked it half out of the water. If it had gone over it would

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have been the end of Ali and his madly paddling Dyaks.

What probably saved them in the end was the fact that the slack of the hook line caught about the crocodile's fore-feet and trussed and tangled them tightly. This hampered and crippled the Naga so they were able to draw him close to the canoe.

It was then that Ali accomplished his coup.

"I was thinking of you, *tuan*," he told me. "I know you want Naga Besar very bad."

He gave both lines to the Dyaks to hold and stood up in the canoe. He had brought a few short pieces of marlin twine with him, and he was now ready to use them. He put a running noose in the end of one of these twines and yelled to the Dyaks to hold steady to the spearhead line and pull hard on the one attached to the hook.

The Dyaks, thoroughly scared, managed to obey. This brought the Naga's head out of the water, and by leaning perilously over the edge of the canoe Ali managed to get the noose over the crocodile's upper jaw and draw it tight just behind the nostrils. With a quick turn of his arm he slipped the loose part of the twine around and under the lower jaw. Like lightning he took two quick turns and closed the animal's jaws.

With his hand he grabbed the left nostril then and held it tightly. Half blinded with salt spray the Naga had flung up about the canoe, Ali managed to take several more turns about the great jaws, and then put a hitch in the marlin twine.

The worst part of his work was now done. He got another piece of cord around the Naga's left front foot and drew the whole leg up over the beast's back. With a

quick movement he snared the other foot and tied the two legs together. He then went through the same business with the hind feet and Naga Besar, instead of being the Dragon of Sandakan Bay, was just a trussed-up and helpless monstrosity.

"Ali," I said, "I'm going to give you a hundred Straits dollars for getting that crocodile."

"Did not do it for dollars," Ali said. "It was great work—what you call 'big thrill'—and I knew, *tuan*, that you want Naga Besar."

It is now that the tears come in. We got back to Sandakan early the next morning and found the Naga trussed up safe and sound. He lay on the beach, enormous, his greenish-grey back covered with sea moss and barnacles. He looked dangerous even yet, lying there on the sand with a large group of Dyaks surrounding him.

I pushed the natives aside and went up to him. Without a doubt he was by far the biggest crocodile I had ever seen. Twenty-five feet if he was an inch! But on looking at him closer I began to swear. The Dyaks apparently hadn't trusted Ali's knots. After he had gone to get me they had proceeded to tie the hated Naga tighter. They had drawn his legs together over his back and relashed them so cruelly tight that all circulation had been cut off and they were blue in colour and swollen to twice their size. Already life was gone from those legs.

And this wasn't all. With the great Naga helpless before them they had proceeded to torture the murderer to the limit. They had run hot irons into his eyes and gouged them out. They had driven long nails into his back and sides. They had plugged his nostrils with live coals.

Anything to punish the beast that had terrorized them so long.

I performed an act of mercy which the Dyaks would never have done. I put three bullets into the great Naga Besar's head.

This is probably the only case on record where a man nearly shed tears over a crocodile.

VI

GILA

THERE is something about life under drooping, lazy, hot skies that makes for callousness—something intangible and difficult for people of the Occident to appreciate or understand. Morally, of course, there's many a slip. All drink too much, many plan too recklessly. Life is taken less seriously, perhaps because death is so close.

The danger of tropical diseases—cholera, smallpox, blackwater fever, malaria—constantly surrounds people who live in the East, along with a burning heat and a blazing sun that saps their characters as the diseases sap their health. Sometimes a man comes home from a shooting jaunt "clawed up" by a tiger, either finished or knowing he'll spend the rest of his days a cripple. A group of men leave the Club together and as they part bid a good night and cheerio. Next evening one of them is not there—they buried him in the afternoon. Decomposition sets in rapidly in the East. Life is like that there, quick—and death, too.

And the women? There are fifty men to every woman in the East—sturdy, upstanding men most of them, reckless, and with guts enough to take what they want. Affairs are over and done with out there before they would even have begun back home. This may give you an idea of what the women have to contend with. But probably it won't—unless you're a woman.

I first heard of the Randall case on a little Straits steamer coming up overnight from Singapore to Pulo Kangsar.

Appropriately enough, I heard about it from Garahan—Garahan of the C.I.D., Singapore's Scotland Yard.

"Frank," he said, as we sat comfortably by the rail, with the stars out across the steamer's bows, and the moon soft, "what would you say if I told you a man went home one evening, entered his house, went into the bathroom, shut the door and disappeared?"

I must have looked my disbelief, for Garahan said:

"Exactly what I think, Frank. And yet that is precisely what *did* happen to Dr. Randall."

"You mean the doc up at Pulo Kangsar?"

"Know him?"

"I've met him, He's got a bit of a reputation with the ladies."

"I've heard that. I'm on my way up to investigate his disappearance. He left his Club at seven in the evening, as he always did, got in his car and drove home. According to his wife he arrived before seven-thirty, stopped in his room long enough to get a drink, then walked into his bath, and disappeared."

Naturally I became interested in the Randall case. Even had I never met Randall the mystery of his disappearance would have been fascinating enough. But I had met him, casually once or twice, and had liked him. He was a good physician, too—better than the usual run we get in Malaya—and had made several valuable contributions to the London School of Tropical Medicine concerning beri-beri. The only questionable thing I heard about him was his supposed weakness for the ladies, and a recent too-great reliance on alcohol.

So the first night on the Club Terrace at Pulo Kangsar,

I sought out Garahan and dropped into a chair beside him.

"How's the mystery coming?" I asked, offering him a cigar.

He took it and bit the end with sharp, white teeth.

"It's still a mystery," he said. "Honestly, the thing's got me, Frank. It's absolutely impossible that that man could have disappeared—and yet he *did!*"

"Tell me about it."

"There's very little to tell. Inspector Kirby and I drove out to the Randall house this afternoon and looked the place over. It's an ordinary English house—like half the others up and down the Peninsula. Yet in that house, four days ago, Dr. Randall vanished into thin air."

"Four days ago?" I asked.

"Yes. Nothing was thought of the thing at first. You see, the doctor has been missing for an evening before—quite often from what I gather."

"I see," I nodded. "But when was the thing taken seriously?"

"Oh, Kirby himself started investigating. He was a great friend of the Randalls. When the doctor didn't come back the second day both he and Mrs. Randall got genuinely alarmed and sent for me."

"What did you find out?"

"Nothing. I had a long talk with Mrs. Randall—a pretty English girl, sweet, the kind you see on magazine covers."

"She couldn't tell you anything?"

"Nothing I didn't know before. The day the thing happened she played bridge at the Club, went home at the usual hour, bathed, dressed, and sat on a small verandah outside her bedroom waiting for the doctor. They had a

dinner engagement on the night of his disappearance—with the Stronaches, very fine people who live in the Settlement. They usually accepted engagements tentative on the doctor's being able to get away. If the party was close-by Mrs. Randall often went alone, and the doctor joined her later."

"What happened this night?"

"Randall came home just before seven-thirty. Mrs. Randall heard his command to the house-boy for a drink, then heard him in his room. After that the bathroom door slammed and she never heard or saw him again. It's perfectly possible the doctor could have tip-toed out of the house. He could have gone out the rear door without Mrs. Randall hearing him. In fact, that's what Inspector Kirby thinks he did."

"What makes Kirby think that?"

"Experience, I imagine. Kirby wasn't at all worried the first day. All night card games, with considerable drinking, are held pretty often in the Settlement. But when Kirby couldn't find any record of such a game, and the doctor didn't show up, and finally Mrs. Randall became alarmed, Kirby got busy and called me."

"How does Mrs. Randall take it?"

"She's a princess, that woman, Frank. At first she wasn't any more worried than Kirby. Went to the Stronaches' party and expected her husband would show up later, as he usually did. When she got home, and the doctor still wasn't there, she went to bed. I imagine she's done the same thing more than once in her life. From little things she let drop Randall must have been more of a swine that anyone dreamed."

"I wouldn't have judged him so."

"It takes a woman to really know a man, Frank. Anyhow, it wasn't until next morning and the doctor was still gone that she began to think something was wrong. So she called Kirby. She was frightened, but she was still thinking of the doctor's good name. 'I'd die,' she told Kirby, 'if we made any fuss and Ralph turned up later with some plausible excuse about where he's been.'"

"Sensible woman," I nodded. "What are you going to do about it?"

Garahan shook his greying head.

"I'm stumped, Frank. These stories that have got around about Randall's philandering open all sorts of nasty possibilities. I'm going to send a wire to Singapore and see if they can dig up anything about his past. Then I think I'll drift down into town and stroll through the bazaars. From some of that motley collection of evil-smelling Tamils, Sikhs, Chinese, Bengalis and Malays I might pick up something."

Both of these leads disappointed Garahan. I found it out at lunch next day when I met him at the Club. None of the motley aggregation of bazaar keepers had anything to say of the doctor but good, and the telegram he got from headquarters at Singapore extolled Randall's record in glowing terms.

By this time the whole white population of Pulo Kangsar was excited over the doctor's disappearance. I had heard two theories freely talked over and expressed, and I advanced them both to Garahan.

The first was that the doctor had strolled too far from the house into the jungle and had been attacked by a tiger. Recently a man-eater had been disposed of a few miles outside the Settlement, and it was perfectly possible there

was another in the district. In this case the remains of the unfortunate man's body might be found at any time in the bush.

The second theory—expressed by the more sophisticated with lifted eyebrows—was entirely different. Could Dr. Randall, after his many years' experience in the East, have so far forgotten his position as to play with the deadly fire of an affair with a native? The Malay, a loyal servant and an honest man beyond all other Eastern peoples, has a deep sense of sanctity regarding his home and his women. Pariahs there are among the Malay women, but to the violators of those who live within a family circle there usually comes a swift *kriss* thrust in the dark.

Garahan listened to both theories, then shrugged his shoulders.

"Frankly I don't know," he said. "The thing that puzzles me is this clean record of Randall's. I've heard plenty of bad things about him, but they've all been stories. No proof for any of them."

He stopped speaking and touched my arm, motioning across the Club terrace.

"There's Mrs. Randall now," he said. "The pretty girl in blue."

I looked across the stone terrace, with its sunlight and shadows, and saw one of the loveliest women I had ever looked at. She was sitting at a table alone, sipping iced tea, and her deep blue eyes were far away across the sea that lapped softly below the Club.

She looked up as Garahan spoke, recognized him, and made a little motion for him to come across.

"Come along, Frank," he said. "I'd like you to meet her."

I went with him reluctantly. The whole thing seemed none of my affair, and lovely as the woman was, I had no desire to intrude myself into her acquaintance at this time. But she acknowledged Garahan's introduction very graciously; in fact, she seemed glad of my presence.

"Oh, yes," she said. "I've heard my husband speak of you, Mr. Buck. He had a deep respect for you." She turned then to Garahan, and a frown stole down between her blue eyes. "If you aren't doing anything this evening, Inspector," she said, "I'd be glad if you'd come out to the house for a few moments. There are some things I should like to talk over with you."

I noticed that Mrs. Randall made no attempt to guard her speech from other listeners on the terrace. It was a natural request, naturally given. She seemed worried and troubled, but in thorough command of her emotions, and I admired her all the more that she had not stayed at home vainly waiting for a man who might never come.

"I'd be glad if you would come too," she said to me. "You're a man of the world, and I am sure your advice would be valuable."

I bowed, and a few minutes later Garahan and I left. He took my arm as we entered the Club.

"Frank," he said in a low voice, "I've an idea we're going to hear something to-night that will be pretty shocking."

"What do you mean?"

"We're going to hear the *real* reason why Dr. Randall disappeared. I'll meet you here at a quarter to eight."

Garahan and I drove out to the Randall house together. It was, as he had said, a typical British Colonial place—clean, neat, spacious, with furnishings rather better than

most. Mrs. Randall was waiting for us on the wide screened verandah. The setting sun, through the reed screen that had been lowered, cast lovely orange bars across her face.

"It was very nice of you to come," she said, and then smiled wanly at Garahan. "I knew you'd like to talk with me, Inspector, informally, regarding the doctor's disappearance."

Garahan nodded. "It's very thoughtful of you, Mrs. Randall."

"No. It's merely an explanation of my own conduct. My apparent lack of anxiety or grief must have caused you to wonder. I want to explain, Inspector, my reasons for a lack of concern regarding my husband's whereabouts."

She looked at Garahan a moment with her lovely blue eyes, then down at the white hands in her lap.

"I've suffered a great deal, Inspector Garahan. The doctor and I were married very young—five years ago, back home in England—and we came out to the East six months afterwards when Ralph secured an appointment in Borneo. Like all young people we were fascinated by the thought of the East, were in love with it before we even passed Suez, and we looked forward keenly to our life out here. We agreed that our life—our married life—should be different from some people's we had known at home. We swore to be honest, loyal, true to each other always."

She paused for a moment, twisting her fingers in her lap.

"It's a strange thing, Inspector, that those who hold honour lightly are always those who talk of it the most. The doctor was that way. He swore that if either of us ever found another whom we loved, we were to speak of it

frankly and we would come to some decision about it. Inspector, I have never been certain, but I have always believed that our marriage fidelity was broken even on the way East—on the boat six months after we were married."

She looked up suddenly as if only then aware that we had been talking for a long time. The sun had dropped over the horizon, changing the orange bars to red across her face. Tropical dusk lasting only a matter of minutes would soon set in, and then night. She clapped her slim hands sharply.

"You must have a drink," she said. "It's growing late." Raising her voice, she called: "Boy, *bawa dua stengah!*"

A house boy came out of the shadows with a tray, glasses and decanter.

"*Ayer blanda, tuan?*" he asked, and poured the water into the whiskey.

Garahan spoke softly.

"I think I understand, Mrs. Randall. You found your husband unfaithful from the first."

"From the very first," she said. "But you don't understand yet, Inspector. In Borneo we were happy for a time. Too happy, I imagine, for it lulled all my suspicions. During those first weeks there, you understand, I was. constantly tormented by what had happened on the boat. I thought my husband was genuinely in love with this woman he had met, and I waited every day for him to come and tell me so, as we had agreed. When he didn't I hoped—though I knew it was impossible—that I was mistaken about the whole affair."

She paused again, and I heard Garahan sipping his drink in the half-dark.

"About this time our house boy left us, and with him went his wife who had been working as our *ayah*. The new house boy's wife knew nothing of the duties of a lady's maid, and I had to find another. Our *kuki* sent word in from the kitchen that he had a relative, with a smattering of English, whom he would like to recommend. As I knew no Malay, I was delighted to get her.

"She was a jewel, knew her work, anticipated my whims, and did her duties beautifully. It's strange how servants out here in the East manage to make themselves indispensable. Every day I found myself listening to my *ayah's* chatter of household affairs, of commonplace happenings in the *kompong*—not knowing she had sensed my loneliness and babbled away just to lighten my hours.

"I got to know all about her family. I discovered her father was a Hadji. They had, not long before, come up the coast from Labuan, and before that they had lived at Kuching for a time. The holy Hadji had given his family a nomadic existence, taking them beyond Menado in the Aroes, and once even back of Maurauki. In all likelihood they would continue to roam the East.

"Gradually I began to slip back into a normal existence with my husband. I almost forgot about that affair on the boat—at least, I forgave it. He had begun some research work in a room in the house that he had fixed into a sort of laboratory. He was home several afternoons each week, and his very nearness was comforting.

She stopped speaking and looked at Garahan's glass.

"Another drink, Inspector?"

"No, thanks," Garahan said.

When she began again it was as if she had forgotten completely the line of her story.

"There were only four of us white women at the Post in Borneo—four white women and two hundred men. There were other women, of course. The Resident kept a Japanese—a dainty little thing to whom we four English-women had to be civil. I suspect the other men, the bachelors, got along well enough, too."

"You know our houses here in the East, Inspector. There's a lack of privacy in the way we live. It was more so in Borneo. Our house had no doors. Ayahs and boy servants went in and out of the rooms in utter disregard of the dressed or undressed state of the Master or Mem. I——"

She paused for a moment, hesitated, then went on reluctantly.

"I hardly know how to tell you this. It fills me with shame—it's loathsome. But my husband had an affair with my *ayah* in my own home."

Her voice went on, low now, monotonous, dull.

"It was around the Chinese *Taun Bahru.* You know how it is then—Malays and other natives celebrate the New Year of the Chinese as if it were their own. Even the whites enter in, glad of an excuse for a holiday.

"The men at our Club had planned a tennis tournament. I was to play in the mixed doubles. I was hurrying to the courts in a ricksha when I suddenly remembered I'd left my eye-shade at home. I went back for it and found my husband and my *ayah*.

"They didn't hear me. My tennis shoes made no sound on the matting. But I saw them through the doorway of the bedroom."

I saw that Garahan was sitting bolt upright in his chair. His voice was incredulous.

"A Hadji's daughter?"

"A Hadji's daughter."

"But that's——!"

"Yes—unheard of, I know. And quickly punishable by the *kriss* if the Hadji learns of it. But the Hadji had not learned of it—then."

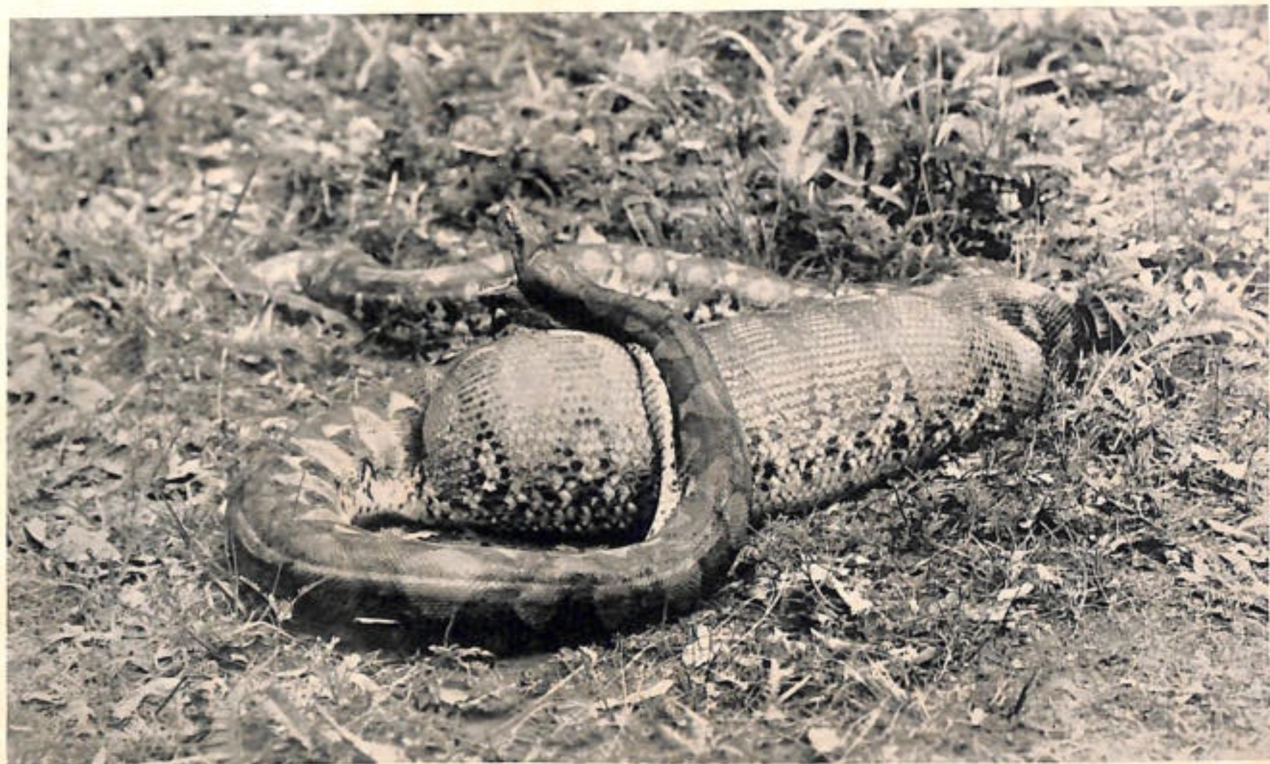
I heard Garahan's glass click against the table. The darkness outside the screens had become alive with a symphony of buzzings that made up the tropical night. Through it, faintly, came the restless wash of the tide on the nearby beach.

"Somehow or other," Mrs. Randall went on, "I stumbled back to the ricksha and went to the Club. It was only pride that allowed me to do it. Later, when my husband came, affable and cheery, I pretended to be as gay as he was. When we went home I was too ashamed—for him—to mention what I had seen. How I kept quiet to this day I don't know. But somehow I managed it.

"All the next day I sat on the verandah, mortified, nauseated. Then I began to be afraid. I knew enough of the Malay character to realize the seriousness of Ralph's position—the danger to his life even—if the Hadji, my *ayah's* father, came upon the truth.

"Only two weeks before one of the Malays in the *kompong* had run *amok*. There had been some frightful slashing before a Sikh constable arrived and shot him. This native had gone *amok*, they said, because of too much *baung* chewing; but the cases I had heard of similar affairs pertained mostly to women—and a great number of them had been Hadjis' daughters."

A light flared suddenly in the darkness and Garahan held



A THIRTY-FOOT PYTHON AFTER DEVOURING A WILD PIG

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

a match to a cigar. In its flame I saw Mrs. Randall in her cushioned chair, her lovely hands still in her lap, but now clasped tightly together.

" It's inconceivable to me," Garahan said slowly, " that of all the native women in Borneo, your husband should have selected a Hadji's daughter."

The match went out and I heard Mrs. Randall sigh.

" I probably haven't made it plain to you, Inspector, that my *ayah* was a beautiful girl, as natives go. And I'm sure you don't yet understand my husband's character. Where women were concerned he was terribly weak.

" Women are strange creatures," Mrs. Randall said softly. " This man had torn my heart out—yet I feared for his life. Perhaps I still loved him—I don't know. At any rate, I wanted to get him away from Borneo where I knew he would never be safe. So I feigned illness—so easy for women in the East, and so frequently resorted to. I threw away the medicine he prescribed for me, and begged him to take me to the Craig Sanatorium—you know, on the hill up behind Penang.

" He consented finally, gave up his billet, and we left Borneo. At Penang I rapidly recovered from my ' illness,' and Ralph got a position here at Pulo Kangsar. We hadn't been here three months before my husband had another affair—this time with a white woman."

" Why didn't you divorce him, Mrs. Randall ? "

One of the girl's hands moved like a white bird in the dimness.

" Divorce is such a frightful mess out here. You know how these small communities talk. And my people at home have never countenanced divorce. I—I'll be frank with you, Inspector Garahan. I may still have loved

Ralph in spite of everything. I don't know. There must have been some feeling left because——"

"Yes, Mrs. Randall?"

"Because last week, here in Pulo Kangsar, I saw Hadji Ali—my *ayah's* father."

"He was *here*, Mrs. Randall?"

"Yes. There was no mistake—it was he. That is why I say I must still have had some spark of love left for my husband. As quickly as I could I drove to his office at the hospital. He was out. I paced the floor for an hour waiting for his return. When he came I told him I had known all along of his affair in Borneo, and that I had just seen the Hadji. His face went as white as paper. He——"

The screen door of the bungalow slammed and the white coat of the house boy appeared in the dark.

"*Tuan*, telephone," he said to Garahan.

The Inspector reluctantly put down his cigar and rose.

"I'm sorry," he said. "You'll excuse me? I'll be back in a moment."

When he had gone into the house I sat for a time in embarrassed silence. I felt that I had looked through some forbidden window. The stillness between us grew longer and more oppressive. I felt that I must break it.

"Mrs. Randall," I said, "you have all of my sympathy. I——"

"Thank you," she said, "I am sure you understand."

Her hands had dropped from her lap to her sides and hung limply on the deep cushion of the chair. The screen door creaked and Garahan appeared, tall in the dark.

"That was Inspector Kirby," he said. "I'm sorry,

Mrs. Randall, but your husband's body was found on the beach about five miles from here late this afternoon. It has been identified."

"His body?"

"Dead, yes," Garahan said.

"Then the Hadji——"

"That's right," Garahan said, "we were speaking of the Hadji. But before you go on, Mrs. Randall, I must tell you that your husband came to his end as a result of violence. He was murdered. Shot."

"Shot?" she gasped.

"Yes. According to Kirby, through the heart. And I've yet to see a Hadji who would use a gun. Kirby says he was quite dead when placed in the water."

"Placed in the water?"

"There's no doubt it was foul play."

Garahan seated himself and knocked the ashes from his cigar into the tray. He spoke quietly, calmly, almost as if giving a lecture to a group of new policemen.

"As a matter of cold fact, there's seldom a doubt. You see, Mrs. Randall, a murder, except in very rare instances, is not the crime of a professional. It isn't like burglary, for instance, where the burglar commits a number of similar crimes and becomes proficient at it. Murder is unique in that it is committed but once usually by the same person, and this lack of experience almost always allows us to catch the murderer. Do you see what I mean?"

Mrs. Randall's voice seemed very far away.

"I don't know what you're talking about, Inspector."

"I'll try to be more clear. A clever person might build up a certain amount of evidence so as to have a crime synchronized with another person's presence. Take this

present case, for example. A Hadji, supposed to have a deep grievance against Dr. Randall, is in Pulo Kangsar—and Dr. Randall disappears. The inference is obvious.

"To go even further, a woman might—you yourself might—convey the impression that her husband was a philanderer by simply dropping a word here and there. It wouldn't require much repetition on the tongues of local gossip before that man had become in the minds of his acquaintances a veritable Don Juan."

Mrs. Randall said nothing. I saw her hands dimly at her sides, taut and tense. My own hands were tight on the arms of my chair as I leaned forward. Garahan went on, talking mildly, merely to hear himself apparently, for I am sure by this time we both knew where his words were leading.

"To carry the case a bit further, Mrs. Randall, suppose that instead of Dr. Randall *you* were the one who had the affair in Borneo. Suppose that circumstances made it necessary for you to leave Borneo or face exposure, and you forced the Doctor to come here. Suppose that once here you still found yourself incapable of constancy, and determined to rid yourself of your husband once and for all. And suppose that to do this you posed as the outraged wife, silently suffering——"

Garahan paused. I could see that he was looking steadily at Mrs. Randall. She had slumped slightly in her chair, but her eyes were bright in the starlight.

"I've given you your chance," he said slowly, as if waiting for something. "I'm afraid, Mrs. Randall, I must now arrest you for the murder of your husband, and warn you that anything you say——"

There was a swift movement of one of the white hands

in the cushioned chair. I sprang forward in my own, but Garahan caught my arm. A second later there was a shot, and the white figure of Mrs. Randall slid slowly down among the cushions as a revolver dropped dully on the matting.

For a moment I stood awed, scarcely breathing. Then I looked up at Garahan's cold, set face.

"Garahan!" I exclaimed. "Did you *know* she had that gun?"

"I rather suspected it," he said calmly. "Murder trials are a sordid business. That's why I gave her her chance to do this with that long-winded speech of mine."

This is the story I tell my friends who ask what "the heat and the climate and the life" of the tropics *really* does to people. Understand, it doesn't affect all people this way. Some come back as clean and honest as when they went out. It is only the weaklings that go *gila* or that the tropics make hard and callous. I firmly believe had Dr. and Mrs. Ralph Randall stayed in England they would have been living happily together to this day. And yet, Garahan was pretty hard and callous to let that woman shoot herself. And you couldn't call Garahan a weakling, could you?

VII

CLOUDED LEOPARD

SPEAKING of *gila*, you wouldn't think of animals going that way, would you? You think of animals as being conventional creatures that do what's expected of them in a conventional, natural way. And yet, every once in a while one does something utterly new and different. But let me make it clear that in their strange and unusual actions they're not *gila*; there's really a good and sufficient reason for everything a wild creature does, no matter how much he may surprise you in doing it.

After over twenty years in the jungles I know fairly well what to expect from the inhabitants. Animals of the same families or species have pretty much the same habits, and generally I can forecast very nearly what a tiger or an elephant or a water buffalo will do in a given set of circumstances. Yet after all the experience I have had in the business, some animal is always pulling a new trick on me, doing some unexpected stunt that if I didn't know a little about animal psychology—if there is such a thing—I'd think for sure he had gone *gila*.

On my last trip to the Far East I was gone for ten and a half months. While there I made a motion picture "Wild Cargo"—but my main determination was to capture and bring back to America a collection of particularly rare animals, snakes and birds. I concentrated all my energies on getting together an assortment rarer than ever before. As a matter of fact, I *had* to. I had definite orders for certain specimens from various circuses and zoos, and

from the time I decided to make the capturing of animals my life work I've done my level best to fill *all* orders, no matter now dangerous or difficult the job might be.

But this trip the assignment was especially tough. Even Ali, who has seen some rare captures in his day, and who was waiting for me as usual when my ship touched Singapore, turned as pale as it is possible for his walnut-coloured cheeks to turn when he saw the list of orders.

"*Api ini?*" he said. "*Gila!*" (That *gila* business again!) Which was his way of saying, "What is this? It's crazy!" I was inclined to agree with him, but I didn't let him see it. Otherwise he would have made twice as much work out of every task I gave him.

The thing did look pretty *gila.* You see, on my list was a male Indian rhinoceros, the rarest and biggest of the rhino family. In the whole world outside of India there are only three of these armour-plated rhinos in captivity, and all of them are females. My order called for a male, none of which to my knowledge had ever been captured. This meant an extra two-thousand-mile trip up into Nepal on the north-eastern border of India, a prayer, weeks of hard work—and all the luck I could get.

Another item on my list was a white water buffalo. That sounds fairly easy until you realize that white water buffalo are about as rare as white elephants. The only one I had ever seen was an albino calf in a herd in Negri Sembelin and that was *five years before!* So you can see why Ali said *gila* to the hope of again finding this particular buffalo in the wild haystack of the jungle.

Then I had an order for a Malayan tapir. These are the saddle-back tapirs. They seem to have ignored evolution, and are unchanged survivors of a prehistoric age. They

are, of course, very rare, and Ali didn't think much of our chances in this direction, either.

There were other little items such as a giant orang-utan which must have an arm-spread of at least eight feet, a big and ferocious specimen of a genuine man-eating tiger, as well as countless orders for rare birds and monkeys.

But the thing on the list over which Ali *gila*-ed the loudest was a clouded leopard. There are three kinds of leopards—black, spotted and clouded. And the clouded is by far the most rare and difficult to catch. For some reason or other they do not breed as freely as the other varieties. Even in their natural habitat they are extremely scarce and, unlike the black and spotted leopards, are seldom seen by the Sakai of the jungles or the Malays who live on the edge of the great forests.

"Cannot do, master," said Ali, a brown finger on the clouded leopard order. "*Gila.*"

"Got to do, Ali," I told him, but I almost shook my head as he shook his.

I always make Singapore my headquarters in the Far East, and start all expeditions from there. There I get my jungle equipment and boys together before starting off into the far country. An old native net-maker there makes an animal net for me which is stronger and more pliable than anything of the kind that I can get elsewhere. It is constructed of steel cables about the size of a lead pencil, yet bends as easily under pressure as a fish net. It was with one of these nets that I hoped to catch my clouded leopard, though I didn't quite know how. These leopards are usually too clever to be caught in a net set as a trap, yet it was all I could think of at the time.

With all my equipment together, I started with my boys

for northern Johore where I had decided to set up my jungle camp headquarters. There we spent several weeks building an *attap* shed. It had to be large, as it was to serve all purposes—living quarters, store-room, and a shelter for captured animals. It was constructed with a bamboo frame and thatched with nipa palm leaves. The natives make these leaves into a sort of shingle, about eight by sixteen inches, which is called *attap*, from which the shed gets its name.

From this jungle headquarters I go out in various directions and, when necessary, set up temporary camps. It was in Pahang, which is the best cat country in Malaya, that I hoped to get my clouded leopard.

Now it is fairly easy to get on the track of animals in the jungle. The jungle people know me pretty well and are always coming into camp to report the presence of various animals. There were plenty of black leopards in the vicinity, but no clouded ones. I let it be known that I would reward anyone who put me on the track of a clouded leopard, but for a while there were no takers.

I went on with other things, getting birds together and trading a bit with the natives for small animals. I picked up from one old fellow a fine pair of hornbills and a large monitor lizard which I was glad to get. And I snared a brace of argus pheasants myself.

Ali had found a " strutting ground "—the same sort of grounds I told you about earlier—very close to the temporary camp I had set up. The male argus was still busy at work clearing it of every weed and blade of grass. I knew that the pair would come back each day until the old man had put on his " big parade." So I set snares all around the edges of the square he was trying to clear.

These snares are made of hair, braided tightly together by the natives into a sort of tough twine. All that is necessary to make a successful snare for ground birds is to put a running slip-noose in the end, and fasten the other end of the twine to a stick driven into the ground. When the bird steps into the noose while walking, it tightens on his leg as he moves away, and he's held by the stick until he can be caged.

But what I wanted was a clouded leopard, and I began to suspect that Ali was right and that it was *gila* to hope for one.

And then one morning, early, I heard Ali jabbering with a *sakai*. Ali was as excited as the *sakai*. His eyeballs fairly shone as he ran to my cot and pulled aside the mosquito net.

" *Kuching balu marmar !* " he cried. " *Kuching balu marmar !* "

" How does he know it's a marble cat ? " I asked, using the name by which the natives know the clouded leopard. " All leopard tracks look alike."

" He see him ! " Ali told me. " With his own eyes he see him ! "

The *sakai* was making motions with his hands and pacing out steps on the ground to show me the size of the leopard he had seen. Even allowing for jungle exaggeration, I could see that it must have been an immense cat he had glimpsed.

" All right," I said. " Have him put us on the track, Ali. But tell him if it's not a clouded leopard I'll skin him alive ! "

Ali must have told him something much worse than that, for the *sakai* trembled and looked like a sick monkey. But

he still stuck to his story—it was a *kuching balu marmar*—so I knew I was in luck.

We started out immediately, the *sakai*, Ali, myself and four boys. Sure enough, a few miles from camp, there were leopard tracks. Whether it was a clouded leopard there was no way of telling. The only way was to follow the tracks to the animal's den.

The leopard, after a time, must have known we were following her. She doubled about through that jungle like a fox. Several times we lost the trail completely, but managed to pick it up again. It was a hot day, and the jungle was like a Turkish bath. I think maybe if it had turned out to be an ordinary black leopard I *would* have skinned that *sakai!* But it didn't.

It was just growing dusk when we lost the trail again. I thought this would be the last time. It was too dark to see clearly and I was ready to tell the boys we'd go back to camp when Ali let out a shout.

"*Loteng!*" he cried. "*Loteng!*"

"Up where?" I said.

Ali pointed—straight toward the sky.

We were standing beneath an immense jungle tree, and in its branches, very high up, I saw my leopard. There was just enough light left to see that it was a very large and beautiful clouded specimen. Instead of going to its den the animal had gone up a tree! Which also seemed *gila!*

That's what I meant when I said earlier that animals always give you new experiences. This was certainly a new one on me. I had captured lots of leopards, but never one from a tree. I was at a complete loss as to how to get it down. A hundred-and-fifty-pound cat, with teeth like sabres and claws like needles, is a bit different from a

monkey. You don't climb the tree with a sack. You don't climb the tree at all, in fact, if you want to stay healthy.

I wanted to stay healthy—but I also wanted that clouded leopard. Even in the dusk I could see that she was a beautiful specimen, enormously large and beautifully marked. But how to get her down? I knew she wasn't likely to come down out of that tree so long as we were around. And she'd be too suspicious of any kind of a trap we might set at the foot of the tree ever to venture near it. And besides, it was too dark now to do anything.

I decided to go back to camp and wait until daylight. But if we left the tree unguarded my leopard would come down in the night and get away. And even if we guarded it, there was a good chance she would leap over our heads in the dark and either mangle us up considerably or escape—quite probably both.

The only solution was torches—a constant blaze to frighten her and keep her in the tree all night. I sent Ali on a quick run to a native village a couple of miles away for some gunny sacks and a can of oil. By cutting the gunny into strips and winding them on poles, then keeping them well oil-soaked, they would burn throughout the night and keep my leopard where she was.

I left two boys in the jungle at the foot of the tree to keep the torches burning and gave them my rifle to protect themselves. The rest of us went back to camp—which wasn't exactly a pleasant trip in the pitch jungle darkness with my revolver our only weapon, and the jungle waking into dangerous activity.

I had a lot of thinking to do that night, and Ali's constant *gila* didn't help any. I was inclined to agree with him.

I didn't sleep much—probably no more than the leopard.

I had all sorts of visions of myself climbing that tree with the big cat waiting to pounce on me. But along toward morning I got an idea. It looked possible—in theory—but theory in the jungle has a way of going wrong, and when it does people get hurt. But I wanted that clouded leopard and, theory or not, I was going to try it.

Before dawn I woke Ali.

"Come on," I said. "And no more *gila!* We're going to get that leopard."

I must have looked more confident than I felt, for Ali moved without a word.

"I want six boys," I told him, "another rifle, some 180-grain soft-nosed bullets, and the big net."

Ali looked at me queerly. I think for a moment he lost some of his respect for me.

"Not good, *tuan*," he said. "Leopard never go into net."

I spoke sharply. "You do what you're told." I was irritated anyhow, because I was still thinking of the probability of error in all theory.

We started out through the dawn with the light just breaking through the jungle trees. The boys brought the net on carrying poles across their shoulders. Being made of steel it was quite heavy and took four of them to manage it. I wasn't even certain my leopard would still be treed. Almost anything might have happened to let her escape during the night.

I felt better as we approached the spot and I smelled burning oil in the air. At any rate, my boys had kept the torches burning. A moment later we came to the clearing where the big tree stood, and there were the two boys fast asleep at its foot! The torches were still smouldering, but

the flames had gone out. I glanced up quickly and for a second my heart sank. No leopard !

And then I saw her, high in the tree where she blended so completely with the lights and shadows among the thick leaves and branches that it was almost impossible to see her. The marbled markings of the clouded leopard make it one of nature's best examples of protective colouration.

Well, I still had the leopard—treed at least. Now all I had to do was to get her down—alive.

I had the boys spread the net at the foot of the tree. It was a large net—fifteen feet square—and, as I've said, it was made of pliable steel wire. The mesh was two and a half inches, close enough to keep any leopard paw or jaw inside.

I think Ali still thought I intended to set the net as a trap. But when I told him what I really intended to do his eyes brightened, although he still looked a little doubtful.

He handed me my rifle without a word. It's rather a light gun for jungle work—an American-made .300—but I find it just what I want. I use a heavy, soft-nosed bullet, which has tremendous tearing power. As I aimed up in the tree I think the boys thought I intended to kill the leopard, although they know I never kill any animal if I can possibly avoid it.

At any rate, they were amazed when I missed the leopard. The shot struck just below her. She let out a snarl and climbed higher in the tree. I fired again, and this time she darted out on a limb growing at right angles to the trunk.

This was right where I wanted her, and I lowered the rifle. The boys thought I was disgusted by my bad shooting until I showed them what I intended to do. Then they looked even less happy.

I had them pick up the net and spread it to its full width, a boy at each corner. Then, as nearly as I could judge the position, I had them carry the spread net to a place directly below the leopard. They looked like a group of scared Malay firemen holding a life net below a dangerous wall which might fall any minute.

I admit it wasn't a pleasant spot. If I had misjudged the place where I hoped the leopard would fall it would be just too bad when that biting, snarling, tearing cat landed—especially if it landed on one of the boys—or on me.

And there was plenty of room for misjudgment. That jungle tree was at least a hundred and fifty feet tall, and the leopard had crawled out on a limb well over a hundred feet from the ground. In fact, she was so high that she looked not much bigger than a house-cat silhouetted against the sky.

I then started my real work. It sounds crazy—and maybe it was. For I intended to use my rifle as a saw and *shoot that limb clean off the tree !*

The limb was about five inches in diameter. And just to make things more difficult, my leopard wouldn't co-operate. She was afraid the limb might break, and she stayed as close as possible to the end toward the trunk. She stayed so close, in fact, that it left me a leeway of only about three or four inches to avoid hitting her !

I fired the first shot and she drew back a bit, snarling. It clipped off a good sized piece of bark not two inches from her nose. I shot again, working down on the limb.

After the fifth shot I saw I'd have to work fast. The limb had begun to crack, and I was afraid at any minute the leopard would leap back to the main trunk of the tree.

So I gritted my teeth and fired four shots as rapidly as I

could pump the rifle. The last one of those soft-nosed bullets clipped the limb off as cleanly as though done with a saw. The leopard let out a scream as the limb fell. Then she dropped—twisting, turning, whirling her way down through a hundred feet of space !

Luckily the limb fell toward the tree. The leaves acted like a parachute, so that it fell much slower than the leopard.

The leopard—a hundred and fifty pounds of fighting animal dynamite—hit squarely in the centre of the net. The taut cables whined with the shock. The leopard bounced slightly upward, clawing the air with all four feet. When she hit again I yelled to Ali and the boys. Working for their lives they rolled the net end over end, folded it over tearing claws and snarling teeth ! And I had my *gila* clouded leopard !

I'll never forget the grin on Ali's brown face as he looked at me over that writhing net. He was a lot prouder than I was.

I really didn't believe it myself until with the net tied to carrying poles, we carried that fighting, snarling cat back to camp and got her in a cage.

And then I saw why she had given me a new experience by climbing a tree instead of running to her den. It's a safe bet that animals will never do anything without a reason. And my clouded leopard hadn't. She had just had cubs, and rather than go to her den and endanger her children, she had tried to throw us off her track by climbing a tree ! And now, in the cage she was a snarling knot of animal muscle—wanting those cubs !

Well, I wanted them too. Clouded cubs are even rarer than clouded leopards. So it was then my *real* search began.

For two days the boys and I prowled that jungle. We followed every leopard track we found, hoping some of the old ones would lead to the den. And at last, hollowed out under a tree—a most unlikely spot—we found it. And in it were two little clouded leopards, just getting their eyes open!

We got them into a gunny sack, took them back to camp, gave them canned milk through a bamboo tube and put them in a little cage alongside their mother. Almost immediately she stopped her furious snarling and fighting. She stood very quietly and looked out at her babies. Then, for the first time since we'd had her, she lay down and went to sleep. Her babies were safe.

So the circus owner who had ordered Ali's *gila* clouded leopard now has her. The St. Louis Zoo has the two cubs. And I have a new experience and thrill in animals: shooting a leopard alive out of a tree.

VIII

YEARS AND YEARS

THERE is always a suppressed excitement about the Far East. You never quite know what to expect there, and in looking for one thing you are very likely to find something entirely different. I never expected to shoot a clouded leopard out of a tree. nor did I ever hope to discover two valuable cubs in the most unlikely of places for a den. And I certainly never dreamed of the queer sight I should see with Bill Manley while crossing the Sulu Sea.

You sense this excitement of the unexpected wherever you go in the Far East. You get an undercurrent of it in the big cities—Calcutta, Bombay, Singapore, Hong Kong. You experience it to a greater extent in the interior jungles of Nepal, Burma and the Malay Peninsula. But for a genuine feeling of something impending, something always-about-to-happen, I recommend the jewel-like islands that dot the waters of the Sulu Sea, that beautiful sheet of ocean north of Borneo and west of Mindanao in the Philippines.

It is not that things *do* happen here—it is just that you feel they *should* happen in these strange waters. There is mystery in the depths of that blue sea, mystery in the dark jungle shadows of the island shores. As you sail along you remember that this part of the world used to be the stronghold of the old Malay pirates, those fierce fighting-men who with creeses in their teeth boarded commercial schooners and four-masters and took them for their own. You half expect to see a Malayan prau, square sail set, rounding the

nearest headland and bearing down on you with a brown giant on the prow and swords flashing in the blinding sea sunlight.

You don't, of course. All these things passed away when the Sultan of Sulu, under pressure of trade and various European navies, decided that his islands weren't good spots to allow the Malay and Borneo pirates to hide out. But in looking at those luxuriant, wild bits of land you can't help wondering what still goes on behind the unknown fringe of jungle that dips down to the floor of the sea.

A few years ago I was at Jolo, the capital of the Sulu Islands, on my way back to Singapore from Zamboanga with a collection of rare birds. I had left Ali on the north coast of Borneo with a further collection. I intended to pick him up at Sandakan, then go on to Singapore and my compound with the lot of them.

I was looking forward to this jaunt. It is one of the most beautiful sea voyages in the world, and as I knew the skippers of most of the little boats that plied across the Sulu Sea and along the Borneo coast to Singapore, I was confident it would be a pleasant trip.

I had no sooner stepped on board the little steamer—no bigger than a private yacht—when I heard the skipper's voice booming down at me from the bridge deck.

"Come up here and have a gin sling!"

I climbed up the ladder and shook the old boy's hand. His name was Bill Manley and we had made many voyages together. Despite his white hair and weather-marked face, he had a young twinkle in his eyes that showed a wisdom and a heart as big as the engine that drove his boat.

"Where are you headed for, Frank?"

I told him I was going to Sandakan to pick up Ali and my animals, then continue right on with his boat to Singapore.

"You'll have a good rest then," he said. "We stop at ten ports between Jolo and Singapore. We ought to be able to get in a lot of cribbage—and a few gin slings too."

We did. And I also got in some much-needed rest. You can't help but rest on those little boats, you see, unless it's cribbage and gin slings with the skipper—and even skippers sometimes tire of cribbage. You sleep in a big chair on the open deck, with southern stars above you, and the Sulu Seas lapping softly at the bows. And in the daytime you still sit in your chair under a canvas awning and watch deep green shores of islands slide silently past and wonder at the mysteries locked behind the jungle's fringe.

It's the most beautiful trip in the world, and it's a spot seldom if ever seen by tourists. The waters of that sea are clear as crystal. Looking down from the deck is like looking into some fantastic show-window. You can see the deepest bottoms of the blue bays, with the pinks and greens and blues of corals in every strange shape Nature fashions, with thousands of coloured fish swimming lazily by and casting their curved shadows across the weird sea floor.

Looking out and across the rail you see islands so beautiful they make you catch your breath. White beaches, flecked with lines of foam, and then dense, luxuriant jungle growth—bamboos, palms, coco-nuts—and the plane tree with its masses of crimson blossoms setting the shores on fire.

"Pretty nice, eh, Buck?" Captain Manley said one day, stopping at my chair.

"So nice," I said, "that I don't see why you and I don't quit running tubs and catching animals and settle down on one of those islands for the rest of our lives."

Manley grinned. "It's because we haven't got nerve enough," he said. "It takes a lot of courage to sit down here and let the rest of the world go by."

"I know. It never works."

"Very seldom, anyhow."

"I've seen enough cases. It's a bit different in the cities. But here there's a sort of dry rot sets in that burns out character. After a time a man gets so lonesome he either goes crazy—or native. I'm not sure which is worse."

"Going native's not so bad," Manley said. "I can think of lots worse things. Broadway on a Saturday night, for instance."

We both laughed.

"Joking aside, though," I said, "it just never works out. Kipling had it in that line of his about 'never the twain shall meet.'"

"Never's a pretty big word," said Manley.

The ship slid slowly along, stopping here and there at little un-mapped ports. Rickety docks—a handful of nipa-thatched houses—a larger handful of copper-coloured natives clamouring and laughing on the shore and watching the little boat with big, brown eyes.

We came finally to Kagayan Sulu, a small island off the coast of Borneo, and the southernmost of the several hundred islands that make up the Philippine group. It looked just like every other island—thick with green

palms, a smell of drying copra, and blinding sunlight falling on little thatched houses and on copper natives.

I stood for a time with my elbows on the rail looking down at the lazy bustle on the rotting dock. All at once I saw two people coming toward the gang plank. One was a tall, thin man with a lean face browned by years of tropical sun. He carried a straw suitcase in one hand and you could see at a glance that he was an American. With that suitcase he might have been a typical New England Yankee waiting on a railway platform at Manchester, Massachusetts, instead of boarding a coastwise ship at far-away, sun-baked Kagayan Sulu.

But it was the woman with him who attracted my attention. He held her elbow firmly but gently in one hand, and I could see that he was guiding her every step. She was a native woman, brown as a muddy swamp pool. She might have been forty—or sixty. It is difficult to tell a native woman's age. But there was no doubt that she was fat, and ugly, and gross, as disgusting-looking a hag as I'd ever seen. She looked strong enough, however, and I couldn't figure out why the man was so carefully guiding her steps. Then I saw her eyes. They were wide and blank and staring. The woman was blind.

I leaned forward s o I could watch them on the after deck. The man led her to a chair and held it while she sat in it. Then he unstrapped a wide palmleaf fan from the side of the suitcase and began gently to fan her. He clapped his hands for a boy and I heard him order a " drink of water for the lady."

Manley came silently up and leaned on the rail beside me.

" What are you thinking about, Buck ? "

I turned to him with what must have been a look of utter incredulity in my eyes.

"Look at that, Skipper! That man's an American—nice-looking, too. And he's with that blind old hag!"

Manley laughed softly.

"Sometimes, Buck, I wonder how much you really know about the East."

"As much as most men," I said.

"Remember the other day when I indicated 'never' was a pretty big word? Let me tell you a little story, Frank, about a man named George Baker, from Connecticut, U. S. A.

"Baker, as a young man, was with the United States Army in Mindanao all through the Spanish-American War and the Filipino affair. Apparently those Moros didn't like the idea of America taking them over any more than they liked staying with Spain. They fought like brown devils, raided leopard-like in the jungles, and made it mighty uncomfortable for Congress at home and General Pershing's entire command on the island. It was tough sledding, and a good many hundreds of our soldiers dropped in those fever-ridden Mindanao jungles.

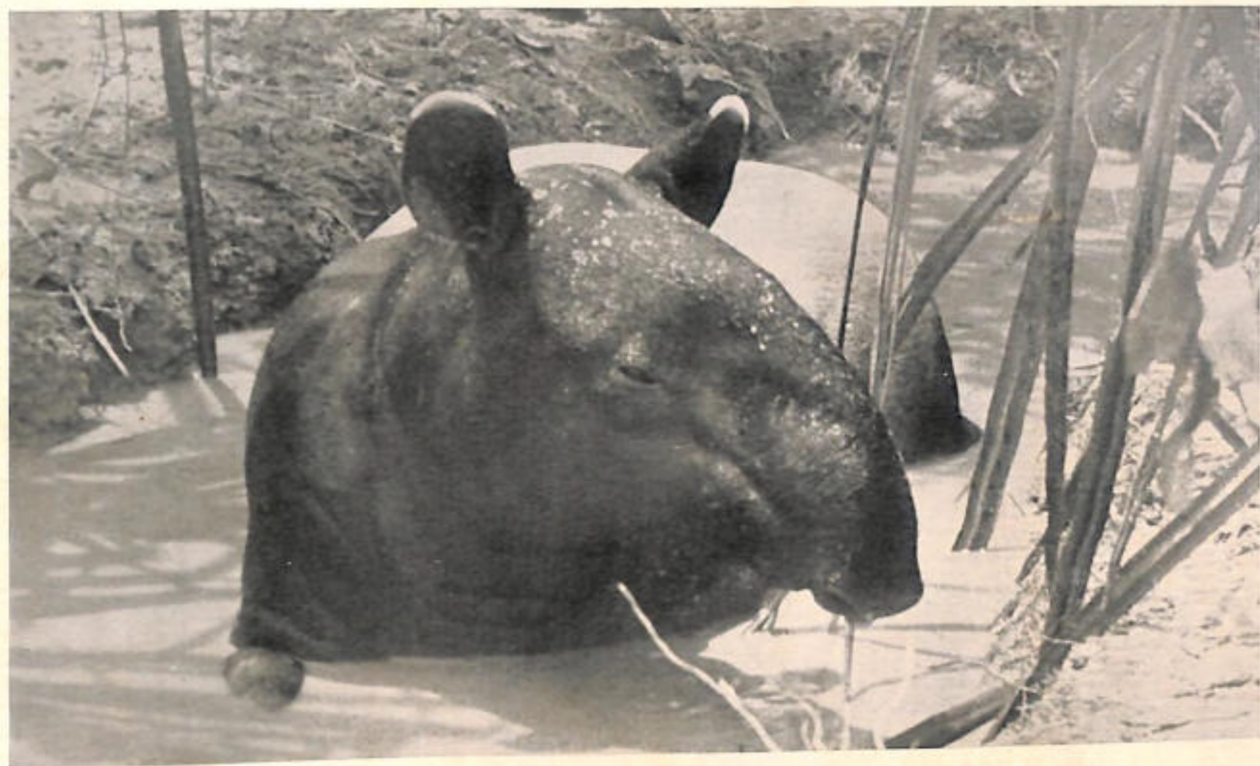
"But a lot of them, and George Baker among them, had had a taste of the tropics. There are some white men, a very few, who are born for this climate, who thrive on the lazy sunshine and the heat. And when one morning the flag climbed its bamboo pole over the military post, its red and white stripes blinding in the sun, Private Baker saluted that flag for the last time as a soldier. He became a private citizen, and he made the choice that was offered to all the men in our Army—he decided to stay in the Philippines.

"The Government, you see, needed white men on the islands. It was a pretty wild country, and the Spaniards hadn't done much with it. The Philippines were our first Colonial possessions and the cry went up back home for trade—sugar, copra, timber. It looked like a good thing and a lot of our soldiers took up the timber concessions and the coco-nut plantations that were offered.

"You can see those former soldiers to-day all the way from Manila to Zamboanga. They are old men now, but you'll find one in every coast town and in every inland settlement—all soldiers of fortune. Some of them are rich and respected, owners of immense plantations they built up from the soil. Others run stores in the towns or trading posts in the interior, selling the Moros everything from automobiles to chewing gum. Others are on the beaches—worthless, useless, beachcombers—sponging a living from both whites and natives and drinking up what they can get. The others—the majority of the little group that started out equally and together—are lying somewhere in jungle graves under flaming plane trees.

"As I said, George Baker decided to stay. He was tall, he was strong, he was young, and he had no ties back home in Connecticut. Even if he had I doubt if their call would have been as strong as the call of the tropics. Baker had a sense of beauty, and he loved these green waters and the little emerald islands and the clear blue skies.

"But he was a Yankee, too. He had a business head, and he saw an opportunity here which would never come to him back home. On a leave of absence he had formerly come down to Kagayan Sulu. He found the climate better than farther north, the sea breezes cooler, the soil more rich. So when he was mustered out of the service Baker knew what



A TAPIR IN NATIVE HABITAT IN NORTHERN MALAYA BEFORE BEING CAPTURED BY FRANK BUCK

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

he wanted—and got it. A coco-nut concession on this island.

"Had he been like a lot of those soldiers Baker would have folded after the first six months. Building up any land isn't easy, and this is probably the toughest land in the world. Eight months of sapping sun to work in, and four months of steaming rain. And a dense jungle to clear, a jungle that almost springs up under the bolo that cuts it down. Besides all this there's a constant fight against wild pigs. You drive them out once and they return with twice as many, eating everything within sight and smell. Not to mention snakes, and insects, and a shortage of food—and worst of all, a shortage of money.

"But George Baker was a Yankee. He had the blood of workers and pioneers in his veins, the same blood that sent wagon trains out from New England to the middle west, and from Indiana and Illinois on over the plains and the mountains clear to California. Good blood, good muscles, a good brain.

"He whipped this Far East jungle just as his ancestors whipped the Far West prairies, and it wasn't long before Baker was growing coco-nuts and shipping a bit of copra now and then.

"He lived in a little nipa-thatched bungalow. He built it himself, and he made bamboo furniture, and reed screens, and straw rugs for the floors. His coco-nut palms rose far behind the house, green as jade, with the copra drying field far enough off so that the breeze brought only sweet scents of blossoms to the screened porch.

"In front of the bungalow was a stretch of pink sand and then a little bay blue as azure. A coral reef stretched across

the mouth of the bay so that the water was always calm as a mirror and cool as glass.

" Every morning, early, before the sun had come above the palms, and while the mists were still rising from the jungle, Baker would trot down across his velvety sand and plunge into his blue bay. He would swim about, play in the water, and kick his Yankee heels before going back to a day's work on his growing plantation.

" And then one morning something happened. It didn't seem important at the time, and Baker laughed about it. He found someone else swimming in his bay.

" He didn't notice until he was actually in the water, and then he heard a splashing to one side of him. He saw a slim copper-coloured arm cutting the blue, and then a young face and brown eyes, glistening with wet, looking at him. It was a native girl from the village beyond the headland.

" She didn't wait when she saw him. She swam to shore, snatched up the bit of orange sarong she had left there, and darted into the jungle. Her body looked lithe and smooth as a copper-coloured leopard as she sprang away, and Baker laughed.

" But he didn't laugh that evening. Sitting alone on his bungalow porch, he stared down across the little starlit bay. He had never before quite realized how lonesome he was. The work on the new plantation had taken all his time, his strength, and his thoughts. He had no desire for a social life even if there had been one in Kagayan Sulu where he was the only white man. But for the first time he felt definitely lonely. And for the first time he saw something other than the moonlit blue bay and the dark fringe of jungle as he looked from his porch. He saw a vision of a

brown, lithe, girl's body leaping away into the shadows as he had seen it that morning.

" He got up earlier next day. He didn't quite believe, but he hoped he might see the girl again. He did. And this time he caught her before she could get away. He grasped her wrist and, both standing in water up to their knees, they looked at each other. There was no fear in the girl's brown eyes. They looked frankly into his, and they laughed.

" Baker laughed back. He could speak a little Moro by this time and he asked her name.

" ' Takahala,' she said.

" Her teeth, white as sea foam, flashed behind red lips as she said it. And the sun, coming up over the fringe of palms, lighted and glinted on the curves of her copper body.

" That was the beginning, of course. The girl was beautiful, beautiful as only a slim native girl of sixteen can be. And Baker was lonely, lonely as only a white man on a tropical island can be lonely. They met every morning in the blue bay. They swam together, laughed together, and talked together sitting on the smooth coral sand.

" Baker wanted that girl. He loved her—actually, definitely, completely. But Baker was a Yankee. He couldn't just *take* her as lots of white men in the East do. He didn't want to do that, anyhow. He really loved her. And with his New England background there was just one answer to that—marry her.

" You can see now where all Baker's Yankee blood rose up in rebellion. He had seen other white men who had gone native, and he didn't admire them. He loathed and abhorred the whole business. Yet here he was with this

beautiful girl, lovely as an April morning, slim, delightful, soft, with a laugh that rang like music across the pink beach.

"Baker sat a good many evenings alone on his bungalow porch, torn and miserable. I think I know the way he argued with himself. 'I am going to spend the rest of my life here—here, on this island. I have no one waiting for me at home—no people, no ties. If I marry this girl I shall never be able to go back to America. But probably I'll never go anyhow. The East is my place—my life. Why not? Why shouldn't I do it? It isn't as if I just wanted Takahala—*I love her!*'

"So he did it. There was a boat in the harbour at the time, and on it was a Padre, one of the Spanish priests that periodically visit every island in the archipelago. Baker went straight up to him, tall, lean, and said in his nasal Yankee voice, 'Padre, I've got a job for you.'

"He took the Padre over to his little nipa-thatched bungalow where Takahala was waiting. And still standing very straight, he looked the priest clearly in the eyes and said, 'Padre, we want your blessing.'

"The Padre hesitated a moment and the two white men looked at each other. 'I mean it,' said Baker. 'And when you go back to Zamboanga I want this marriage registered in the book.'

"So with the coco-nut palms behind, and the blue bay sparkling before them, the Padre gave Baker and Takahala his crucifix to hold—and the brown girl and the white man were married in sight of God."

Captain Manley stopped speaking a moment, and I heard the water lapping at the little Kagayan Sulu dock.

"That was twenty-six years ago," he said finally. Then he motioned quietly toward the deck below.

"And there they are."

I looked down on the after deck. The white-haired Yankee with the palm leaf was still fanning the brown old hag who was blind, fanning her as gently as if she were still the girl of sixteen who had swum glinting in the blue bay.

"Native women age quickly out here," said Manley. "It's been years and years now. And 'never' is a pretty big word."

IX

THE BEARER OF THE TOOTH

I HAVE seen many strange things happen between men and animals—almost enough to make me believe the old fable of Androcles and the lion. I am ready to believe almost any tale I hear providing it conforms to the known habits of the animal. The Good Book to the contrary, I'm afraid a lion and a lamb won't lie down together. But I have seen a black leopard and a tiger, two totally different and both extremely savage animals, together, and apparently enjoying the companionship. But they had been raised together from early cubhood. It's all a matter of what happens, and what doesn't.

That is why the strange story of the Tooth of Buddha, and the parts played by a little, wizened man with a grey beard—a man who weighed little more than a hundred pounds—and the greatest, strongest, fiercest elephant that ever lived, is not really strange when you understand it. Both the man and the animal, queer as their actions seemed, were merely conforming to their known habits.

There is a glamorous sound to the words "Tooth of Buddha." I remember I heard them first when I was a young man making my first trip into Ceylon and the land of the ancient Kandy Kings.

Ceylon is a large island off the southern coast of India in the Indian Ocean, just across the Straits from India. It's as hot a place as exists on the globe, which is perhaps why the famous Ceylon tea is so fine.

I had heard a lot about the weird, romantic beauty of the island, which together with the fantastic history of Ceylon, seemed almost too much for a young animal collector fresh

from the States. But I must admit I was strangely disappointed when I saw Colombo.

Colombo is Ceylon's capital, and viewed from the harbour it is as unromantic a place as you'd care to see. Dirty cargo boats lie at anchor inside a concrete breakwater, the wharves are piled high with copra sacks and tea chests, and behind it all rise ugly oil tanks. Beyond all this, however, as I later found, lies a beautiful tropical paradise of palms and flowers.

A quarter of a million people live in Colombo—people of every race and religion: Europeans, Tamils, Malays, Persians, Chinese, Arabs—people who believe in Christ, Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed. They make their living selling anything from typewriters to Persian shawls, from Scotch whiskey to Japanese kimonos, on streets paved with everything from asphalt to cow-dung. It's a crossroads of the world, hot, sweating, blistering. You jump from the path of a shiny American automobile into the way of a Singhalese-driven bullock cart.

So on that hot, breezeless plain on which Colombo is built, it's no wonder I lost some of that idea of glamour and romance I had been expecting. It wasn't until I met a friend of mine, George Davis, who was a Government District Officer at the time, that I began to get some of my early dreams back. It was Davis who told me about the Tooth.

"You're in luck, Frank," he said over our second whiskey-and-soda on the hotel terrace. "The moon's just right for the Festival."

"I haven't time for picnics. I'm here to get some leopards for the Al G. Barnes Show."

"You'll have to go to this one," Davis said. "It's the Festival of the Tooth."

I laughed. "Whose tooth?"

"Buddha's."

That cut the laugh from my lips. I had been in the East long enough to have a deep respect for Buddhists. I knew they were widely spread all through Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, China and Japan, and that the religion was, in fact, among the most powerful in the world.

"You mean, Davis," I asked, "that there is actually a tooth of Buddha's still in existence?"

He shrugged.

"The Buddhists say so."

"But Buddha's been dead for twenty-four hundred years."

"Just about," said Davis. "Here in Ceylon they set the date at 544 B.C. Other places they make it seventy-three years later."

"Where is this tooth?"

"Seventy miles from here—at Kandy."

"And the festival?"

"Is held each year. The tooth is paraded before the pilgrims. They come for hundreds of miles to see it—by steamship and sailboat, by railroad and motor, by bullock cart and on foot just to be at the parade."

"It's actually paraded?"

"In a howdah of glass and gold on the back of the biggest elephant you or anyone else ever saw."

"I guess," I said, "I'll have to go to that picnic after all."

Davis grinned.

"I thought you would. I'm going up myself—wouldn't miss it for the world. It's the greatest show on earth, really. It makes one of your American circuses look like children

playing in a back lot. We'll go along together—and Frank, wait'll you see that elephant. It's as big as a house."

I did want to see that elephant. I had seen some pretty big ones working in the teak-wood forests in Burma and on the military roads in India. I was young enough at that time to think I knew a lot about elephants, and I thought Davis was probably exaggerating the animal's size just to lead me on.

On my way to Kandy I learned from him something of the history of Buddha and the Festival of the Tooth. Gautama Buddha was born during the sixth century B.C. He was the son of a king of the Sakyas of the Gautama clan near the Himalayas. Raised in luxury, he left home when he was twenty-nine years old in search of perfect knowledge. He got his enlightenment at Gaya in Magadha under a bobo tree. It was there that he found his "three perfect truths" and the rest of the ritual; but what really made the thing stick was, I think, that Buddhism was a protest against the prevailing Hinduism and its theory of caste. Buddhism, invented under a bobo tree, taught an independent morality and denied any permanent station of caste in the world or among the gods.

"These bobo trees are interesting," Davis told me. "Eighty miles north of Kandy, at the ruined city of Anuradhapura, there's a tree which the Buddhists claim was grown from a branch of the parent tree sent to Ceylon from India by King Asoka in the third century B.C."

"Still living?"

"Still living."

"But that's impossible!"

Davis smiled.

"Nothing is impossible in the East," he said. "At least

to Easterners. And pilgrims still come to visit that tree at Anuradhapura. On the grave of every Kandy monk a bobo tree is planted. You'll find the East a queer place, Frank. You'll even believe me about the size of that elephant when you see it."

"Get on to the tooth," I said. "Let's have it all at once. Let's have the tooth, the whole tooth, and nothing but the tooth."

Davis laughed.

"I can see you're not going to swallow this tooth thing either. Well, neither do I—exactly. But the 'tooth relic,' as they call it, is one of the most powerful symbols in the world. It may be just a symbol—as a crucifix represents Christ on the Cross—or it may actually be the real thing. Where it came from no one knows. But it's been here for hundreds of years. It's been stolen—it's been held for ransom by the Portuguese—innumerable wars have been fought over it——"

"Wars?"

"Between the Tamils of Southern India and the Kandy Kings. The Kandyans were great rulers—cruel, despotic—but fabulously rich. When the Tamils finally carried off the tooth the Kandy Kings offered—now you can believe this or not—two billion rupees for its return!"

I whistled. "Actually?"

Davis shrugged.

"This was before the British came to India, so nobody knows."

"And did they get the tooth?"

Davis shrugged again.

"Nobody knows. They got *a* tooth. It's in its temple at Kandy now—waiting for the Pari Hari."

"What's this festival like?"

"Wait and see for yourself. There's a parade that would have made Barnum green with envy, hundreds of elephants from all over Ceylon, and—The Bearer."

"The Bearer?"

"Of the tooth. The biggest elephant that ever lived. Looking up at his side is like looking up at the side of a cliff. No Maharajah in India ever had a bigger beast in his court. He's absolute tops in the elephant world. Fifteen feet high if he's an inch. And seven tons if he's an ounce."

"There's no such animal."

"You'll see," said Davis.

I did. But first I saw Kandy, Kandy the beautiful, Kandy which until 1815 when the British came had been one of the last outposts of mystery and the home of fierce fighting men. The last Kandy King reconstructed the city around the margin of an artificial lake, and the houses and buildings and temples mirror themselves in its blue waters in the clear Ceylon moonlight. I saw the Temple of the Tooth, where the "relic" is housed, with its great stone blocks and carved marble balustrade, moss-covered and worn with age. But being an animal man I was much more interested in Davis' elephant than in native architecture.

"You'll see him in the parade," Davis said. "You'll just have to wait."

Davis was right when he said that parade would have made Barnum green with envy. It was gorgeous from first to last—jewels flashing in the sunlight, natives in rainbow costumes of vivid reds and greens and yellows, plumed feather fans stirring the hot air, weird Indian instruments blaring shrilly over the heady, steady beating of great drums. And through it all, from first to last, marched

painted elephants—big elephants, little elephants, elephants from all over Ceylon—their trappings dazzling, gold and blue and purple, their feet shaking the street in a regular rhythm over the drums. Buddhist priests marched, their prayer wheels whirling, devil dancers pivoted and gyrated, medicine men kept grotesque time to the beating feet of elephants.

And then I saw The Bearer, far off, but looming up above the mass like a grey mountain in a range of hills. An awe-struck murmur ran through the crowd. They were looking far off at the howdah on The Bearer's back, the glass and gold howdah that held the tooth of Gautama Buddha. I murmured in awe myself—but it was at the colossal size of that elephant. I had never dreamed an elephant could be so big. His feet squdged down on the pavement like soft pile drivers. His trunk—yards of it—swayed like a great tree in a wind as he walked. His tusks, gleaming white with bands of gold, curved out ahead like great crescent moons of ivory. And he cast a shadow that darkened the bazaars as he passed.

Davis touched my arm.

"Well?" he asked.

"I'd give ten years of my life," I said, "if I could take that beast back to America!"

"You'd give *all* your life, Frank. These natives would never part with that elephant. He's been The Bearer for fifty years. Did you notice his mahout?"

I hadn't, but I turned to look. Astride that giant elephant's head, stretching out so he could get one bare toe behind a great ear, was one of the smallest and oldest mahouts I had ever seen. He was thin and emaciated, with a scraggly grey beard that only half covered the deep

wrinkles in his scrawny neck. There was pride in every line of his body, but he looked so old and weak that I thought each jog of The Bearer would topple him fifteen feet down to the roadway.

"Nobody knows," Davis said, "whether Marku, the mahout, or The Bearer is the older. They've been together all their lives. That little bundle of bones is the only one who can do anything with that animal giant. It's a question of which loves the other the most."

The parade went on, a rainbow phantasm of gorgeous colour, but its climax was over for me. I had seen the greatest elephant in the world—there was nothing left.

Next day I went on into the jungle, recruited half a dozen of the best *shikarees* in Ceylon, and twelve days later came out with four fierce leopards to fill my order. Then I left Ceylon for Malaya. For the next few years I carried in my mind the picture of that great elephant who bore the tooth of Buddha. He was beyond anything I could hope to capture, of course; but he was a model for all the pachyderms I sent back to America—the perfect specimen—and I always had a sneaking dream that some day I might get one like him. I didn't, of course. There was only *one* like him in the world.

But I later got a story about him that was almost as good as the actual elephant. I heard it from Davis, which wouldn't particularly have made me believe it. In fact, if by this time I hadn't thoroughly known the habits of elephants, I would have scoffed at it.

It seems that The Bearer's mahout, Marku, that little old man with the grey beard, went on a trip to India. There was a migration of Tamils to Ceylon about ninety years ago, and Marku was an Indian and not a Singhalese. He

wanted, of course, to worship at the shrine of his ancestors. In the East natives keep close track of their relatives, and make periodic visits to them and to their graves.

This is humorously true even of husbands and wives. I have had servants in Calcutta say to me, "Must go to Burma next week, Sahib. Not been for year now. Must go see wife to make another child."

Marku was a little old for this sort of thing, but he did want to visit his family shrine. So he got a leave of absence and went. The mahout had no sooner taken a boat across the straits from northern Ceylon to southern India than The Bearer began to get restless. He would eat no food, he swayed constantly from side to side, refused to sleep, and the rattle of his chains could be heard from dusk to dawn.

"The Bearer is impatient," the natives said. "He misses Marku. He will be all right soon."

But he wasn't all right. He tugged steadily at his chains, he ate nothing, he made little moaning sounds in his throat as if he were trying to speak. Other mahouts came and attempted to care for him. He drove them off with his trunk, his eyes small and red and furious. The natives began to be frightened. Some evil jungle god had taken possession of The Bearer! The wickedness of the lowlands was upon him!

And then one moonless night, when the jungle was still and the streets of Kandy were deserted, there came a tremendous trumpeting from the elephant stables. There was a great clanking of chains, a crash of splintering wood, and a second later the sound of giant feet tramping through the streets of Kandy.

The Bearer was loose!

There was consternation in the city. Lights flashed, voices cried through the shadows, and trumpets summoned all the mahouts of the city. The Bearer must be recaptured ! He was sacred ! He had borne the tooth of Buddha for over fifty years !

Into the dawn, and into the heavy jungle, mahouts and elephant men sprang to follow the trail. There was no trouble in this. Branches of trees hung limp against their trunks, grass and bushes were beaten down, and in the swamps were great, barrel-like holes where The Bearer had tread.

They found him finally—forty miles from Kandy—in a dense jungle. He was backed against a rock wall, and when he saw them he trumpeted, lowered his head and struck out with trunk and tusks.

The word went out then for elephants—dozens of elephants, thirty, forty, fifty ! Elephants enough to surround The Bearer, chain him and bear him off by sheer weight of numbers !

They came from all the districts around Kandy—the biggest and the strongest of the tame, work elephants, and all the decoy elephants practised in the art of subduing wild elephants caught in the kraals. And with them came more mahouts, and more elephant experts, dozens and hundreds of them ready to do their duty in taking The Bearer back to Kandy.

On the first attempt they used eight of the most powerfu' beasts. They advanced together, tense mahouts on their backs, chains and nooses ready. The Bearer watched them a moment, his eyes red and hard. Then he lowered his head and charged.

He became a devil of lightning. His long tusks cut and

ripped like polished white swords. Elephants screamed as he gored them, turned, and ran with blood flowing from great holes in their sides. Clawing mahouts fell and were trampled into the jungle mud by pile-driving feet. One was caught up on a tusk and tossed high in the air, screaming as he fell.

They drew back and tried again. There was a religious fervour about the mahouts.

"This is The Bearer! He must go back to Kandy! He must again bear the tooth of Buddha! What matter if some of us are killed?—this is The Bearer!"

They attacked with a dozen elephants this time, a dozen of their strongest. Again The Bearer charged, ripping, snorting, trumpeting, fighting with feet and trunk and tusks. His furious weight bore them all back, gored them, tore ribbons of flesh from their bleeding sides, killed and trampled mahouts. When it was over eight men lay dead on the ground and The Bearer still stood with his back to the rock trumpeting defiance.

The news went out all over Ceylon and began to spread across India. The Bearer of the Tooth was loose! He had gone "must!" He had gone crazy! He was killing men and elephants like flies!

And back by the wall of rock where The Bearer defiantly stood, mahouts were trying night after night to creep on him in the dark, chains and ropes in their hands, to snare his feet. But he drove them away, he crushed them and tossed them in his trunk, he beat them into the mud with his great feet.

Finally the cry went up! "Where is Marku? No one can do anything with The Bearer but Marku!"

So word went out to Marku in India to come back.

Come by train and boat and elephant and bullock cart! Come fast on the wings of speed! Come into the jungle where The Bearer has gone mad! Only come—and come quickly!

Marku came. He came tottering, panting, weary from his long journey, his old shoulders stooped, and his stick picking out the solid places in the jungle floor. When he got to the spot where The Bearer was surrounded the place was a shambles. Wounded elephants groaned among the trees. Gored mahouts lay in a row, the breath dying from their mangled bodies. Two of the dead still lay too close to The Bearer to be removed, flattened into the mud, motionless.

Marku paused on the edge of the jungle clearing. Backed against the rock wall, his trunk still raised in angry defiance, his massive body swaying with fury, stood The Bearer. Foam dripped like hot icicles from his red mouth. His long tusks were clotted with the blood of elephants and dead men. And his fierce trumpeting rang like horns across the jungle.

Marku stood stock still for a moment. Then he drew his wrinkled little body up to its full five feet. His old grey beard bristled straight before him as he limped forward. He no longer used his stick as an aid in walking—he held it like a feeble cudgel in his weak, old hand.

He walked straight up to that bellowing, frothing, mad elephant. With all the strength in his little body he smote the beast across the trunk with his stick. His squeaky voice shrilled out above the elephant's trumpeting.

"*Sura ka bachi!*"

The Bearer's red eyes glared down upon the little, grey-bearded atom for an instant, then suddenly all the fury

and anger seemed to go out of those eyes, his great body ceased swaying and his head turned slightly aside as if he were either afraid or ashamed to look little Marku squarely in the eye. The stick rose again and came down with a weakly resounding whack on that great, cruel trunk.

"*Bite!* Down on your knees!" shrieked Marku.

There was a moment of absolute stillness. Then that giant beast slowly lowered his head. He dropped both knees to the bloody jungle mud and doubled his trunk flat under his great body.

Marku grasped an ear, used the bent knee for a step and flung himself up to The Bearer's head as quickly as his strength and his old bones would allow. Once astride the great neck he hooked a bare foot behind each of the huge, flapping ears and hit seven tons of elephant with his stick.

"*Geldi jau!*" he shrilled. "Get going! Get going—fast!"

The Bearer of the Tooth of Buddha, blood clotted on his great tusks, loped calmly and peacefully back to Kandy, with ninety pounds of Marku perched like a fly on his head.

So while stories of lions and lambs are a little difficult to believe, I find it easy to believe stories of men and animals; because the love of a man for an animal is only surpassed by the love of an animal for a man.

X

DRUMS !

I HEARD this one from an old friend of mine, Bill Dwyer, whose profession of railroad engineering has taken him into some queer spots and some tight places. I've known Dwyer for a good many years, and I'm always running into him somewhere or other whenever I go to Malaya. Consequently it was no surprise to meet him at the E. & O. Hotel last time I was in Penang.

After the greetings were over we had to have a *stingah* on the cool terrace that looks out over the blue bay. And we had to mull over the gossip of Malaya, and discuss the good and bad points of mutual acquaintances, as all men do in the East. The sun dropped low, the shadows lengthened, and the hum of millions of insects began their twilight symphony as we talked.

" Ever meet a chap named George Stanhope in your rambles ! " Dwyer asked suddenly.

" Stanhope ? No. What does he do ? "

" Queer chap. He's a rubber planter—or wants to be. Remember that old plantation that's north of the camp you used to have up on the border of Pahang and Johore ? "

It took me a second to recall it.

" There *was* a plantation there—the only one in the district. But that was ten years ago. When I saw it last it had gone to seed, become overgrown by the jungle, and its bungalow dilapidated and tumbling down."

" That's the place. Stanhope's taken it over."

" He'll have a job on his hands then. It will take a long time to put that place in shape."

"Quite. And at first it didn't look as if he were the man to do it."

"What was the matter with him?"

Dwyer touched his glass with a forefinger.

"This," he said. "Too much of it."

I nodded. "This" had been the trouble of a great many men in the Far East. The raciness of the life gets them, the pace, the Clubs, the heat—and they're always remembering that like their neighbour who died last week they may die to-morrow. It's a drink-sort-of-thing without the eat-and-be-merry. Many a man's life and career has been ruined by too many *pahits* and *stingahs*.

"Anyhow I did my best to get him over that," Dwyer went on, "though it was a job. And for a while it looked as if *I* might take the count." He looked off into the gathering dusk for a moment, then said, "Frank, did you ever hear of a were-tiger?"

I started. The hum of insects, the deepening shadows, the always-strange jungle just across the narrow channel on the mainland, made an alarming setting for a mention of were-tiger.

Of course I had heard of were-tigers. Everyone has who has travelled extensively in the Malay country. Tales drift into the towns from the wild *sakai* of the forest and the up-country Malays who live on the fringe of the jungle, weirdly unbelievable tales of people who supposedly can turn themselves into tigers, then back into people again. But they aren't unbelievable to the Malays and the *sakai*. To them they are real and true—true as the vampire bats of ancient Greece and the were-wolves of superstitious Northern Europe. Ever since the first Egyptian carved an animal with a man's head, and the first Babylonian laid

his strangely human bull in sun-dried bricks, the world has had a history of this animal-man combination.

It's not strange that in Malaya it should take the form of a were-tiger. The tiger is the most savage and dreaded creature that stalks the jungle. He is the great killer of the whole Peninsula, and the words *harimu bezar* carry a pregnant and fearful meaning. An "enormous tiger" that is known to be a man-eater can throw a whole plantation into chaos, and no work can be expected of the coolies until the tiger is either captured or killed.

A were-tiger is even more dreaded, for the killing of a were-tiger is made practically impossible by the fact that the natives believe that he can turn himself back into a human being at any time. The killer may be the *pawang*, or the *pawang's* sister, or the next-door neighbour's son, or even the plantation manager himself! He'll be a tiger by night, kill and eat his prey, and next morning calmly go out to tap rubber trees along with the rest of the coolies.

So I nodded to Dwyer's question.

"Of course I've heard of were-tigers," I said. "What about them?"

Dwyer struck a match for his pipe and his face looked grim in the light of it.

"Do you believe in 'em, Frank?"

"No. Of course not. The idea is merely the result of native superstition."

Dwyer rubbed his hands gently together.

"Sure," he said. "But the natives don't think so."

"Certainly not. The idea's been handed down to them from generation to generation. They've been taught to believe it from the time they were children."

"And yet—they have some basis for that belief."

"Basis? Nonsense!"

"No—fact. That is, if you consider circumstantial evidence fact. Juries have been known to."

"Just what are you driving at?"

"The strange case of George Stanhope."

"In connection with were-tigers?"

"Yes."

Dwyer was on his way back to Singapore from London. He had gone there to discuss plans for a new branch line which his railroad was contemplating putting in through Johore up into Pahang. He had told the London officials what he thought would be the best route through the jungle, and now he was on his way back to the tough job of surveying it.

The vacation had done him good. London had been gay and sparkling after the monotony of the endless Eastern railway camps where he had spent the last ten years of his life. He was feeling relaxed and rested, and consequently the Mediterranean moon looked doubly bright, the stars doubly blue, as his ship ploughed steadily eastward toward Suez and Singapore. Perhaps that is why the girl with the yellow hair, and the slim figure, and the young eyes, who walked each evening on the deck, looked doubly beautiful to Dwyer.

His friend, the ship's captain, effected an introduction—as only sea captains, who have had a great deal of experience, can.

"You're both going to Singapore," he said. "I think you should know each other. Miss Howard, this is Bill Dwyer."

And being a good skipper, he left them to get acquainted.

If you've ever been to sea you know how easy this is. A ship is a little, isolated village with a static population. Common tastes and common interests merge quickly and thoroughly. And between Dwyer and Dora Howard there was that magic word " Singapore."

" Have you been there ? " she asked.

Dwyer smiled.

" For the last ten years I have been in and out of Singapore as regularly as the boats of this line."

" This is my first trip."

" I knew that," said Dwyer.

" Tell me about it ? "

She asked the question like a child inquiring about geography from its teacher, her eyes eager, her lips parted slightly as if to drink in a glowingly desired description.

Dwyer judged she was very young—twenty-one at the most—and had spent all of her short life very close to some fine old English family, with arm-chairs before a fireplace and tea each afternoon at five.

" It's hard to tell about Singapore," he said. " It's the crossroads of the world—and I mean that literally. Every race, every religion, every type of man and woman meets there. In spots it's as civilized and cosmopolitan as London ; in others it's as rough and savage as the jungle behind it. It all depends, you see, on the people who live in those spots."

" It sounds terribly interesting," she said seriously. " I'd like to find out all I can about it. Because, you see, I'm going to live there."

" In Singapore ? "

" Not *in* Singapore. In a place north of there called Sungai. Near Sungai anyhow—on a rubber plantation."

Dwyer's brow furrowed. He knew the Sungai section well and there were no rubber plantations in it. It was as wild and desolate a stretch of jungle as there was in Malaya. In fact, he had recently been over it to get a tentative idea of the best route for his railroad's branch line. He stared at the girl.

"You're sure Sungai is the name?"

"That's where the plantation is."

All at once Dwyer remembered having seen an old and deserted rubber estate there. The jungle had encroached upon it, vines and creepers had throttled its trees, its bungalow had rotted and was tumbling down. All in all it was as worthless and wild a bit of jungle property as he had ever seen.

"You can't live *there*," he said.

"Oh, but I'm going to."

"You don't understand. It's no place for a man, let alone a girl like you. It's wild, savage—it's *jungle*. This plantation, the only one there, is run-down and deserted. There's not another white woman in the district."

"Yes—George wrote me that."

"Who is George?"

"George Stanhope. He went out from London and he's taken over the estate and he's going to do big things with it. His father bought it for him. He doesn't know much about rubber yet, of course, but he'll learn. And then——"

"You mean this man Stanhope, knowing nothing about rubber, has actually gone to that jungle plantation near Sungai?"

"Of course. It's his now. He's going to develop it.

FRANK BUCK HOLDING A RARE AND GORGEOUSLY PLUMED ARGUS PHEASANT

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

That's why I'm going out—to help him." Her eyes were proud. "We're going to be married."

She was standing against the ship's rail, her hair bright in the moon. Dwyer tried to picture her in that stretch of Sungai wilds he had so recently been through, where to *get* through he had hacked out a trail through the jungle, kept a sharp lookout for tigers, killed snakes, sunk in swamps, and slapped a million insects.

"See here," he said, "do you know what you're getting into?"

"Of course. I've known George for years."

"Do you know where you'll have to *live?*"

"Oh, yes. George wrote me all about it. It sounds terribly romantic!—with beautiful birds singing all around, and orchids growing in the trees, and——"

"And snakes crawling in the jungle grass, and millions of mosquitoes, and no bathroom, and a roof that leaks, and no white person within thirty miles——"

"I'll have George," the girl said loyally.

"Yes—you'll have George."

Dwyer wondered what sort of a person this George could be. A man who would deliberately take a girl into the hell this girl was going into must be as low as they come! If they had gone out together, unknowing, it would have been different. But Stanhope evidently had been on the ground for some time, and he knew what that ground was—savage, uncivilized, wild—scarcely a place for a man, much less a girl fresh from school and London.

As the ship steamed eastward, left the Mediterranean for the Red Sea, and then swung into the wide stretches of the Indian Ocean, Dwyer heard more of the girl's romance with

Stanhope—little snatches that came at dinner, in deck chairs, in sunshine on the plunging prow.

" George and I have always been in love. We grew up together, you see, in Surrey. . . . He was captain of his team at Oxford. It was his goal that defeated Cambridge. . . . . He's tall and strong, and he—he has the bluest eyes ! . . . His father gave him this opportunity to go East and he couldn't refuse. George has always been a little —wild. But I never cared. . . . He promised he'd send for me as soon as he was settled and a success—and he has ! We always knew that some day we'd be married. . . ."

As these things came to him with girlish confidence at Port Said, at Colombo, bound east for Singapore, Dwyer found himself more and more deeply troubled. He couldn't imagine this young girl going into that dense jungle around Sungai to live on a worthless plantation that was as isolated as the remotest of islands. He had developed a genuine liking for Dora Howard. Perhaps it was something more than just a liking, but Dwyer never admitted that even to himself. She was going alone to a strange country and Dwyer felt she needed protection. If it was in his power he'd see that she got it. And if he could manage it he'd do a little investigating of Stanhope.

When the ship docked at Singapore he said a cordial good-bye to the girl, briefly visited the main offices of his line, then struck northward to set up his surveying camp. He had decided while still on shipboard to establish his camp in the Sungai district. He could survey both ways from there as easily as working toward Sungai gradually, and it would give him a chance to look over Stanhope and his rubber plantation at the earliest opportunity, and before the girl could get there.

As soon as he had his boys together, and got them started on the necessary shelter construction, he called Salleh, his Number-One boy who had been with him on surveying jobs for many years, and started through the jungle toward where he had earlier found the plantation. That jungle was tough going, dense, dark and swampy. More than once Salleh had to cut down vines and creepers with his *parang* so they could get through. Dwyer wondered what Dora Howard would think of this dank mass when she got there with her pictured beauty of "birds singing all around and orchids growing in the trees."

All the time, while slapping mosquitoes and avoiding leeches, he was thinking of Stanhope. Of course it was possible the fellow's father, in shipping him out of England, had given him sufficient money to put the plantation in proper shape. And—just as important—to build a road with proper surface and grading to replace the present rough bullock-cart trail from the plantation out to the town of Sungai thirty miles away. But, even so, enough time hadn't elapsed since Dwyer had seen the place deserted six months ago to have done much with it. It was in such bad condition that two years would have been a short enough period, the least time Stanhope should have waited before sending for Dora. Nevertheless Dwyer hoped for miracles as he and Salleh fought their way three miles through dense jungle from the spot where he had set up his camp.

He found no miracle. As he came to the clearing where the plantation's bungalow stood it looked just as when he had first seen it—overgrown, weeds and grass a tangle, jungle underbrush creeping in from all sides. The house was the same too—its nipa-thatched roof half patched, its

steps rotting away, its window screens rusted and dirty. Dwyer swore.

A brown Malay boy dozed on the rotting steps and he stirred him to life with his foot.

"Where's your *tuan?*"

The boy motioned with his thumb toward the bungalow. Dwyer opened the screen door and stepped on to the porch. Even the porch was rotted in spots and he felt himself walking carefully. The interior was dark after the blinding sunlight of the clearing and it was a moment before he saw the man lying back in the reed chair by the table.

It was obvious that the man did not see him. His head was bent forward on his chest and he appeared to be sleeping. Beside him on the table was an empty whisky bottle.

Dwyer walked forward and shook the fellow's shoulder. There was a low groan, then the man raised his head. Dwyer saw behind a beard what was really a fine face. But it was lined now, puffy, dull with drink.

"Are you Stanhope?" he asked.

The man shook his head violently as if to clear it.

"Yes—I'm Stanhope," he managed. "What about it?"

Dwyer put his hands on his hips and stood a moment in silence. So this was what Dora Howard was coming to marry!—this drunken, useless, unshaven fool in dirty clothes who lay numbed and blinking in a chair!

"Get up!"

"Huh?"

"Get up out of that chair before I pull you out!"

Stanhope's hands clawed at the chair arms. He slipped back once, then managed to stand rocking on his heels.

"Say! Who do you think you are? Who do you think you're talking to?"

"I'm talking to you, Stanhope! And I'm giving you orders—not for your sake, but for——"

"You can't talk to me that way!"

Stanhope reeled slightly, then swung wildly with his right arm. Dwyer ducked easily. There seemed but one thing to do, one way to sober the fellow up, and he did it. Stepping in close he sent his fist crashing to Stanhope's jaw. The younger man went to the floor without a sound. He groaned once, then lay still.

Dwyer turned to his boy.

"Salleh, help me carry him in the next room and put him on the bed."

The bed was mussed and dirty. Evidently it had not been made or washed in days.

"Get his clothes off, Salleh, and throw some water on him."

Dwyer strode back into the first room and looked about the bungalow. It was filthy. Spider webs drifted from the ceiling, the floor was littered with ashes and cigarette ends, empty bottles stood everywhere. Even when clean it would be bare and dreary enough, but now it made even Dwyer shudder.

He calculated time rapidly. At the latest Dora would arrive in Sungai the next day. In that short period could he get Stanhope sufficiently sobered, and the bungalow sufficiently presentable, so that she would not be too disappointed? He felt if he saw tears in those young, blue eyes of hers he would be capable of killing Stanhope.

Stanhope's boy stood on the verandah staring in with wide eyes.

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"Come in here you!" Dwyer ordered. "What's your name?"

"Name Hussein."

"How long has your *tuan* been drunk like this?"

"Month—maybe more."

"Has he been like this ever since he came here?"

"No, *tuan*. First he work good. Make us all work. Clear out jungle from rubber trees. Then he get like this, more and more. Now he do no work—he just drink."

"Well, you're going to do some work right now, Hussein."

"Work, *tuan?*"

"That's what I said. Get half a dozen rubber coolies and bring them here. Then get mops and buckets of water and soap. We're going to clean this place out. Have some boys fix those rotted steps and the bad boards in the verandah. Sweep down all those spider webs. Then get a tub and wash all your *tuan's* clothes, and the towels, and the bed sheets. Hurry now! Move!"

The bungalow looked better when it was cleaned. But it was still dingy and bare. "Curtains!" Dwyer thought. "The windows need curtains!"

He solved this problem through Hussein and a dozen sarongs he bought from the coolies. A sarong is a long strip of gaily-coloured cloth which is a Malay's principal garment. When hung from a bamboo pole at the top of a window Dwyer found a two-yard sarong made as bright a curtain as it would be possible to find. The bungalow suddenly took on a dressed-up air, and Dwyer found himself smiling. He felt younger, almost as if he were fixing the place for a girl who was coming to *him*.

Some of his pleasure went, however, when he heard

Stanhope calling loudly for Hussein and whisky from the next room. Dwyer walked in and stood at the foot of the bed where the younger man sprawled.

" Listen, Stanhope—no more drink for you," he said sharply.

Stanhope lifted a grey, unshaven face.

" Who are you ? "

" My name's Dwyer, if you think you can remember it. But that doesn't matter. The important thing is that——"

" You hit me ! " Stanhope said suddenly. " You—"

" Yes—and I'll hit you again if you don't pull yourself together and listen to what I say ! Dora Howard is coming. She'll be here to-morrow."

" Dora——"

" She's coming to marry you. She loves you. Why—only God knows, but she does. And if I have to wash and shave you myself, I'll do it ! And if I have to break every bottle of whisky in the district, I'll do that too ! "

Stanhope put grimy hands over his eyes.

" Dora——"

" Why you sent for her to come to this hole is more than I know ! "

The man on the bed began to sob.

" It was the heat—and the loneliness, this damned loneliness ! I couldn't stand it. That's why I drank. I didn't want to, but I couldn't help it. I wanted *her*. We've been in love ever since we were kids. I had to have her, so I sent for her. I was getting on all right at the time I sent for her—but—I——"

" If you cry," Dwyer said, " I *will* hit you again. Get up off that bed and get clean. Hussein's washing your

clothes. If your hand's too shaky to shave yourself I'll do it for you."

Stanhope was fairly presentable next day when Dora arrived at the town of Sungai. They held each other close a moment and Dwyer could see young happiness in both their eyes.

"Let me look at you," Dora said finally, and held Stanhope away from her. "You're thin—and pale, you poor dear."

"He has been working too hard," Dwyer said quickly. "It's good that you've come to put a stop to that."

"You *do* need someone to look after you?" said Dora. "We'll never be separated again, will we?"

They were married by a missionary Dwyer dug up near Sungai, and he watched them off in the bullock cart before starting back on the long trail to his camp. Just before they left, however, he drew Stanhope aside.

"Listen," he said grimly. "If I hear of you hitting the bottle——"

"Don't you worry," Stanhope said soberly. "From now on I drink nothing but water. For Dora I'd do *anything*. Isn't she wonderful, Dwyer?"

Dwyer nodded.

"I've found a way to whip the jungle and the East at last," Stanhope went on eagerly. "All a man needs is a woman to help him!"

For a month Dwyer went on with his surveying job. Surveying a Malayan jungle for a railroad line is as hard a piece of work as exists in the world. The growth is so thick that the mere lugging of instruments through it is a task in itself. And the problem of laying out a straight line is complicated by thousands of trees and hanging vines

and creepers that make seeing even fifty feet in any one direction practically impossible. A half mile a day he considered excellent work in the thicker sections of the jungle.

He saw the Stanhopes occasionally. Four times he called at the plantation, and once they came to see him at his camp. They seemed terribly happy, though once at the bungalow he found Dora alone, and her eyes were red.

"See here," Dwyer said abruptly. "Have you been crying? Has *he*——"

"Crying?"

"Your eyes——"

The girl laughed.

"Why should I cry? I've never been happier!"

"But you look as if——"

"Just like a man!" she smiled. "You never notice anything. I've been *sewing*. Haven't you seen the new chair covers, and the sofa pillows, and the curtains I've made for the bedroom? I've been sewing until I can scarcely see—putting our home in order!"

"You're not sorry?" Dwyer asked.

"That I came?" Dora Stanhope looked at him with wide eyes. "I love it here. It's just as George said. There are orchids in the trees—birds sing—the ferns are green and damp and lovely. What do I care about conveniences, about bathrooms, about people? I have George, and he has me—and that's all that matters."

Dwyer's camp seemed lonely and mean after that. Because the camp *wasn't* a home. He had no home. Most of his life he had been living in camps like this—a shelter of nipa palms, a crudely-built table, a cot on which to sleep, and a handful of brown boys around him. The

Stanhopes at least had a house, land of their own, a plantation which was theirs—and they had love.

He thought of it often after his day's work, when the light was dying and he sat silent and alone while Salleh cooked his supper over hard-wood embers. He was sitting like that one evening when the shadows were lengthening and the birds were singing their last songs. All at once, from the blackening jungle, a woman suddenly appeared before him.

"Dora!" he cried.

She came to him, her hands outstretched, her face twisted with fear.

"Mr. Dwyer!" she panted. "I need you! I——"

"Sit down," Dwyer said sharply. "Get your breath."

"I'm all right. I—I've just been running."

"All the way from the plantation?"

"Yes. I——"

"Through the jungle? You shouldn't have done that! It's dangerous! It——"

"I had to! You're the only white man here. I——"

"What's happened?"

"George! He——"

"Has he been——?" Dwyer stopped. He had been about to say: "Has he been drinking again!" But something in the girl's face halted him.

"A tiger got him!"

Dwyer breathed deeply. A tiger! There were tigers in the district, of course, many of them. But he had been expecting something entirely different.

"Is he——?"

"He's hurt badly. His leg. The tiger ripped it—tore it wide open! Oh—it was awful!"

Dwyer felt the hand he put on her shoulder tremble. He had never touched her before.

"Easy," he said. "We'll go to him right away."

He called to Salleh for his rifle and revolver—the jungle is dangerous at night—and the three of them, Salleh hacking a way ahead, the electric torch in Dwyer's hand boring a yellow hole through the dark, started for the plantation. On the way Dora told him how the thing had happened. They had been troubled by a tiger killing the stock; goats had been carried off and bullocks slaughtered. It had been going on, in fact, ever since she had first come. The natives had built and set out several log traps, but had had no success. Evidently this tiger, or the pair of them—George felt sure there must be a pair in the vicinity—was extremely clever and cunning; he avoided traps, made his kill by night, and retired with it into the unknown parts of the jungle. It was almost as if after each kill he utterly vanished in the dark.

"But Stanhope?" Dwyer asked sharply. "How did he——?"

"It was this afternoon. He always comes to the bungalow for lunch. He works so hard that I insist he come for a while and relax during the heat of the day. He was going back to his work and I was on the porch watching him down the trail. The rifle he's always carried since the tiger scare glinted in the sun.

"All at once there was a flash in the bushes behind him. George must have heard it, for he turned half-way round. He fired, wounded the tiger, and then the beast struck him. He went down in a heap, the gun spinning from his hands. I hardly remember what happened then—it was all in a mist. I know I ran—as fast as I could—toward where

George lay, the tiger above him. I was ready to try to fight that great beast with my fingernails if I could help George! All at once I stepped on the rifle that had been knocked from his hands. I had never shot a gun in my life, but I picked it up, aimed it as best I could, and fired. The tiger staggered off a few paces, and dropped."

"You killed it?" Dwyer asked.

"I don't know. I ran to George. He was lying there on the ground, his leg all torn and bleeding. Some of the boys must have heard the shot. After what seemed ages they came running up and carried George back to the bungalow. I didn't know what to do. I'd never seen anyone hurt like that. There was no one to help. Then I thought of you and your camp, so I ran all the way."

Dwyer, with a confidence he did not feel, said, "We'll pull him through. Don't worry. You were mighty brave in killing that tiger."

"I don't know whether I killed it," Dora said.

"You must have. A wounded tiger would put up a terrific battle."

"No. You see, he wasn't there when the boys came up."

"Wasn't there?"

"He must have crawled away into the jungle. I was so busy with George that I didn't notice what was happening. When the boys came up I was bending over George, and the tiger was gone."

"Gone?"

"Yes. There was blood and fur on the ground, but there was no tiger there."

When they finally came to the clearing before the bungalow a group of Malays outside loomed brownly in the light

that fell through the windows. Dwyer found Stanhope's leg in bad shape. It had been severely clawed, the fleshy part torn to ribbons. But the bleeding had stopped, and if no infection set in there was every chance that Stanhope would be as well as ever in a few weeks. He washed and dressed it, bound it up in bandages torn from a clean sheet, and reassured Dora.

"He'll be all right," he said. "A little time, a little patience——"

"I don't care how long it is," she told him, "just so he gets well. I love him so! And thanks—so much!"

Dwyer went outside to send the group of chattering Malays on their way.

"Your *tuan's* not going to die," he said. "In a week or so he'll be as well as ever. Get back to the coolie lines."

They went, muttering deeply, and Dwyer wondered at it. It was Hussein, Stanhope's Number-One boy, who enlightened him as to the mutter.

"*Tuan*—I have great fear."

"Fear? What about?"

"Very great hurt come from tiger, *tuan.*"

"Yes—Stanhope got pretty badly clawed."

"But no tiger there, *tuan.* Blood and fur—but no tiger."

"What are you talking about, Hussein?"

"No tiger there. I come up with first of boys. Find *tuan* Stanhope on ground—and only white woman bend above him."

The night was dark. The yellow glow from the bungalow made the only light, and Dwyer felt the whole jungle grow cold as he realized the weird thing the Malay was driving at.

"Mrs. Stanhope shot the tiger," he said sharply.

"Then why not body of tiger there, *tuan?* Dead *harimu* no walk off in jungle."

Dwyer tried reasoning.

"There are Chinese coolies in the tin mines north of here, Hussein."

"Many, *tuani.*"

"And Chinese coolies go often up this trail."

"Yes, *tuan.*"

"Well, there's your answer to the disappearing dead tiger, Hussein. You know how the Chinese look on tiger whiskers and gall bladder as good *obat*—good medicine. Some Chinese coolies probably came along before you did. They saw the dead tiger there. Mrs. Stanhope was so excited she didn't know what was going on around her. So the coolies dragged the carcass off into the jungle to get the bladder and whiskers."

Hussein shook his small, round head.

"Sorry, *tuan.* Malays say man attacked by *were-tiger.*"

Dwyer had been expecting the word.

"Nonsense," he said. "There's no such thing as a were-tiger, Hussein."

Hussein spread his lithe, brown hands.

"Malays believe, *tuan.* Who can say?"

During the next two days Dwyer was more disturbed than he cared to admit. From the native standpoint the evidence was strong. Stanhope had been mangled by what was obviously a tiger; the wounds could have been made by no other beast, and there was tiger fur on the ground. And yet, when the boys had come up after the sound of the shot, there was no tiger there. They had seen only

Dora—the white woman—bending over the body of the fallen man just as a tiger would be bending over his victim. To their simple minds there was only one answer—*were-tiger!*

He found Stanhope improved each day. So far as he could tell there'd be no infection, and with luck the wounds would heal rapidly. Stanhope was intensely grateful for what he had done.

Dwyer touched his hand.

"Never mind," he said. "I like the way you are bucking up for that girl."

Before he left, he had another talk with the house-boy, Hussein.

"Men still talk of were-tiger, *tuan*," he said.

"I told you, Hussein, that was nonsense."

"Not to coolies, *tuan*—not to Malays—not to *sakai* of jungle. They talk of nothing else. 'Were-tiger!' they say all day long."

"Who do they think this were-tiger is?"

Hussein looked slyly toward the bungalow.

"Mem Stanhope?" Dwyer asked bluntly.

"Who else, *tuan?* She stand over clawed husband—and there no tiger there."

"I told you what became of that tiger."

"Yes, *tuan*."

"Well, tell it to the coolies and the *sakai*."

"Yes, *tuan*. But they no believe. They sure there were-tiger near—very near."

Dwyer felt uneasy back in his surveying camp. He did two more days' work half-heartedly. He was not surprised when he heard that his own boys knew the story of the queer happenings at the plantation. News travels quickly in the

jungle. It was Salleh who told him about it. And it was Salleh who told him another story that added to his uneasiness.

Salleh, it seemed, had a cousin who lived over in Negri Sembilan. The cousin met a beautiful girl; she was half-*sakai*, half-civilized. He fell in love with her and arranged a marriage with her father, as is the custom. Then he took her home to his hut for a native honeymoon. But that first night, after he had put out the light, and made ready to lie down beside her, he paused a moment. Cold, pale moonlight fell through the window on the sleeping mat, and stretched out in it beside his beautiful bride he saw a yellow and black tail! It waved slightly to and fro, impatiently in the half-dark. Salleh's cousin let out one yell and ran out of that hut as fast as his legs would carry him. He never saw her again. But three days later they caught a tiger in a log trap, and Salleh swore that tiger was his cousin's bride.

Dwyer knew that if such stories were being told the matter was serious. He decided to go to the plantation in the morning and stay there for a while until the thing blew over. Almost anything could happen to the Stanhopes there alone in the midst of the jungle. It was with a more comfortable feeling that he put out the lamp, drew the mosquito netting around him, and went to bed. For a time the hum of insects and the *crick* of tree-toads was the only sound.

He must have dozed for a while, because it was a long time before he became aware of the faint sound of drums.

He awoke with a start, conscious that he was hot, that the night was stifling, that his pillow was wet with perspiration. And then in the dark, far-off, but steady, like distant

THE COMMENCEMENT OF A "DRIVE"

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

thunder rumbling through a valley, he heard jungle drums.

For a few moments he lay listening to the thudding, monotonous beat, regular as half a hundred great clocks beating in unison.

He got up finally and lit a lamp. His wrist watch told him that it was almost midnight. It was impossible to tell from which direction the drum-sound came. It seemed to come from all directions at once, to fill the night with its savage, unbroken beating.

Dwyer sweating, poured himself a drink. He had heard many jungle drums beat in his years in the East, but never in a rhythm like this, never as savage, as heady, as potentially cruel. And always they had beat in the daytime for religious festivals and rites. As far back as he could remember he had never heard such a beating at night, a rhythm that woke the jungle in a primitive thunder of smouldering sound.

He called to Salleh who was also awake.

"Salleh, what do those drums mean? What are they beating like this for at night? What——"

There came a sudden cry from the dark, the loud scream of a man calling for help. Dwyer swung from Salleh and peered into the night. Into the patch of yellow light that fell from the lamp, light already filled with insects and moths, a man staggered. Under one arm he used an awkward crotched stick for a crutch. He limped horribly, one leg dragging like a dead weight.

"Stanhope!"

Dwyer reached his side, saw a face and hands torn by a limping struggle with undergrowth, saw a man on the verge of collapse.

"Thank God I found you!" Stanhope whispered, and fell on the wet, jungle earth.

Dwyer carried him to the shelter, laid him on the cot he had just left, and poured half of what remained in the whiskey bottle down his throat. Stanhope's choking gasps added to the confusion of the drums. Dwyer shook him roughly.

The younger man opened pain-wracked eyes and stared up dazedly. Then the eyes became pin-points of black in the light of the lamp as the jungle drums seemed to beat on the bare eyeballs.

"Dwyer! You've got to save her!" he mumbled.

"Save who?"

"Dora! They've got her!"

"Pull yourself together, Stanhope! What's the idea of dragging yourself here on that leg? You'll kill yourself!"

"I had to. It was the only way. They've got her, I tell you! The natives have got Dora!"

"Got her?"

"In a cage A *tiger cage!*"

Dwyer shook the man brutally.

"Are you drunk, Stanhope?"

"No! God no! I'm telling you—you've *got* to save her. I know you love her, Dwyer. I love her, too. That's why I'm here. She's in a cage—a trap! A tiger trap! And they're dancing around her with bare spears in the light of fires they've built! They think she's a *were-tiger!* They're going to kill her!"

Dwyer buckled on his revolver with one movement, then reached for his rifle.

"That's why those drums are beating!" Stanhope went on. "The *sakai* have come in for miles around, half-naked,

their spears gleaming in the dark ! Wait ! Where are you going ? "

" I'm going out to the plantation as fast as I can get there ! " snapped Dwyer.

" I'm going with you ! " Stanhope said.

" You can't ! Any more strain on that leg might kill you ! It hasn't healed ! It——"

" I walked *here !* I'll drag myself back if I have to ! "

For the first time Dwyer realized the stuff of which Stanhope was really made. A weakling at first, he was showing strength now of which few men would have been capable. Through the dark, through the drum-filled night, he had dragged himself and that useless, torn leg through a black jungle. And now, to get back to the girl he loved, he would do the impossible all over again !

" You can't stand it, Stanhope."

" I'm going. With you—or alone ! "

Dwyer swung about.

" Salleh ! Get four of the boys ! . . . This camp-chair, Stanhope—can you sit in it ? "

" I don't want to sit. I want——"

" Sit in it ! "

" What for ? "

" You can't walk—not on that leg. If you insist on going, I'll have you carried."

" Thanks, Dwyer."

It was a strange procession that started into the jungle—Salleh ahead, an electric torch and a *parang* gleaming in his hand, then Dwyer, his rifle shining, then four boys carrying Stanhope in a reed camp-chair. All around them the drums sounded steadily in the dark, drowning all other noise in a sea of sound.

In brief clearings, when he could move beside the chair, Dwyer heard snatches of what had happened.

"Dora went out to get water," Stanhope said. "I was in bed with this leg of mine, and——"

"*She* went out to get water?" Dwyer demanded. "Where was Hussein?"

"I don't know. He'd vanished somewhere. They've been talking were-tiger up there, and he——"

Dwyer swore. Salleh was having trouble with vines and he went to help. He was back at Stanhope's side the next instant.

"You know better than to let a woman go out here alone after dark!" he snapped.

"Yes—of course. But she wouldn't listen to me—just laughed. And what could I do with this leg?"

"What happened?"

"I don't know—for sure. She was gone a long time. And then a drum began to beat—one of those beastly jungle drums! Another joined it, and another. I dragged myself out of bed and on to the verandah. There were fires burning down the trail, and I saw natives around them—leaping and dancing—hordes of natives! More seemed to be pouring in from all directions, their bodies shining in the firelight, their spears gleaming!"

Dwyer's knuckles were white where he gripped his rifle.

"Go on."

"I turned back into the house to get my gun. It was gone, Dwyer."

"Gone!"

"Hussein must have stolen it. I got myself on to the ground and hobbled as best I could toward those fires. It

was agony, each move. But I didn't mind that. I was thinking of nothing but Dora. And all the time those hideous drums beat on and on and on—— !"

"Easy, Stanhope."

"They're going to kill her, Dwyer! They think she's a were-tiger!"

"Go on with what you were saying."

"Yes. . . . Those drums were throbbing—just as they are now. Every beat seemed to strike at the wound in my leg. But it didn't matter. Dora was in danger, and I had to go to her. All at once I saw her, Dwyer—saw her. You know we'd put out some log traps for tigers——"

"Yes?"

"Ahead of me, in the red light of those fires, I saw her. She was *in a tiger trap*, Dwyer!"

"In a tiger trap!"

"Yes—with her white hands clasping the bars and her face twisted with fear of those devilish *sakai* and their spears!"

"How did she *get* there?"

"I don't know. All I know is she was there! I hobbled forward as fast as I could, yelling at the top of my lungs and pushing those brown demons out of my way. But they drove me back. There were hundreds of them, Dwyer. What could I do? I had no gun or I'd have shot them all! The only thing I could think of was you—a white man to help—so I went."

"All the way—on that leg?"

"I found a crotched stick after a time that helped me."

Dwyer went forward again to help Selleh with the trail. They were getting close now. The night throbbed with

drums, drank drums in the dark, spewed drums out against tree trunks and creepers.

Ahead there showed a sudden light, a red light, flickering, leaping, making the swinging vines in the trees look like moving, crimson snakes. It was the light of a dozen blazing jungle fires. And the drums swelled to a steady thunder.

Dwyer paused.

"Stanhope, I'm going to have you carried to the bungalow."

"No—I'll go with you."

"You can't. I may have to run for it if I get Dora away from them safely. I want you there, with the door open, ready to slam it in case we get in."

"But it's my fight too! It——"

"This is no time to argue! Do what I tell you. Have the boys carry you to the bungalow——"

"Dwyer——"

"Listen, Stanhope. You said something back at my camp that's ridiculous. I don't love Dora. I want you to forget that. Now I'm going."

Dwyer plunged ahead alone toward the light of the fires.

Half-naked figures, leaping in frenzy, gleaming with mad perspiration, danced ahead of him. *Sakai* from the depths of the forest, their spears shining in the red cloud of the fires, sprang and wove like jungle devils in the clearing ahead. And in their midst Dwyer saw a log tiger trap, and from it heard the screams of a girl.

Unless he acted surely and quickly Dwyer knew that he stood a good chance of being torn apart by these insane savages who danced to the beating of their primitive drums.

Raising his rifle he fired a single shot in the air, then ran forward.

The drums stopped with the shot. It was as if a roaring volcano had suddenly ceased erupting and settled back into silent lassitude. *Sakai* shouts stopped, *sakai* spears dropped, and a thousand dark eyes turned to the single white man who stood outlined in red fire by the log door of the tiger trap. The sudden silence after a seemingly unending world of sound held the natives spellbound.

Dwyer took advantage of his moment. Turning to the men nearest him he ordered in his best *tuan* voice:

"Get that door open!"

A murmur swept through the mob. It was the first sound the natives had made since they had ceased pounding their drums.

"Get it open, I said! You all know me! You take my orders!"

Inside the heavy tiger trap he could hear Dora's low, panting sobs.

"*Open that door!*"

One of the natives' headmen stepped forward, an evil-looking spear in one strong hand. With his other arm he pointed toward the trap.

"Were-tiger!" he grunted. "We *kill!*"

Dwyer raised his rifle. With its *crack* the man fell. Dwyer swung toward the mob.

"No man can raise a spear at me!" he shouted. "I shot your headman in the shoulder. Next time I shoot through the heart! Now—*open that door!*"

The headman lay motionless on his face, a little black stream curling out on the earth beside him. Dwyer's rifle still gleamed in the light of the fires. The nearest natives

looked from the sprawling figure of their headman to the rifle, then dropped their spears and moved toward the door of the trap.

Dwyer reached for Dora Stanhope's hand. She came out of the trap trembling, sobbing, her face pale as a moon.

"Can you walk?" he asked.

"Yes——"

"All right. We'll have to go slowly. There are so many natives here that——"

There were more than ever Dwyer had figured. Since the headman had dropped, natives—coolies, Malays, *sakai*—had poured in around him. They had come from all sides, as if the jungle had opened a thousand black doors and spilled its people into this firelit clearing. They stood now in a complete menacing circle, ten-deep, their *parangs* unsheathed and their spears raised, their eyes gleaming in the light of the fires.

Dwyer paused. There were too many for him now. He knew it—the natives knew it. One step might be his last. There was only one thing to do—talk, temporize. But it would never do to show weakness. He raised his voice in a command.

"Listen, all of you!"

Their murmur ceased a moment and he took advantage of it.

"You nearly did an unjust thing—and from the years I've lived among you I know you are just. Men get punished for unjust things—soldiers come with guns. I've saved you from that. Now *mem* here——"

A great cry went up. "*Were-tiger! Were-tiger!*"

"*Mem's* not a were-tiger!" Dwyer cried. "I know

mem, and I say it. You know me and you know what I say is true."

"*Were-tiger! Were-tiger!*"

"Listen! I know your stock has been killed, that you've lost cattle and goats, that——"

"*Were-tiger! Mem were-tiger!*"

"No! It's a *real* tiger that's done these things! It——"

"*Were-tiger! Mem were-tiger! We kill were-tiger!*"

They were working themselves into a savage frenzy, Dwyer knew that at any moment the circle might break and Dora be overwhelmed and pierced by a hundred spears. He had to do something, and do it quickly.

"Listen!" he called again. "I'm going to do something for *you!* I'm going to prove to you that it's a *real* tiger that's been doing these things *by catching that tiger!* Then you'll all see that it's real and not a were-tiger!"

"*Were-tiger! Mem were-tiger!*"

"Wait! I want just twenty-four hours to do this thing! Just until the moon reaches the same place in the sky to-morrow night! Then if I haven't caught the real tiger——"

"We kill *mem!*"

The circle pushed back so that a small opening was made. Through it, his arm around her, Dwyer led Dora. Behind them a dozen natives, spears in their hands, followed silently. Dwyer understood. Dora was to be guarded! All through the night and day they would watch her until the twenty-four hours were gone!

"Thank God!" Stanhope called from the porch when he saw them.

While they held each other close, Dwyer watched the

guard quietly surround the bungalow. There'd be no escape for the girl through their ring of spears—now or later.

Inside he dressed Stanhope's leg, and while doing so heard how Dora came to be in the tiger trap.

"Hussein wasn't here," she said, "so I went out to get some water. I had reached the spring and had just started back when I heard the snarl of a tiger behind me. There on the trail *was* a tiger. I ran. I knew I couldn't get far; he'd overtake me in a few bounds. But just ahead at the side of the trail, I saw one of the log traps the natives had set. I knew that it would be strong enough to keep a tiger out if I could only reach it and get inside. So I ran to it as quickly as I could, crawled in, and let the log door drop behind me!"

Dwyer nodded. He began to understand what had happened.

"After a time the tiger went away. But I found I couldn't get the door open—it was too heavy to lift. I called to the first native who went by on the trail. He took one look at me in the trap, then ran screaming. I couldn't understand it. He came back in a little while with half a dozen natives. They all began shouting, '*Were-tiger! Were-tiger!*' The next thing I knew drums were beating, fires were blazing, and hundreds of insane *sakai* and Malays were milling around me with spears and *parangs!*"

"Take it easy," Dwyer said. "It's over now."

"Over—yes!" breathed Stanhope.

He turned from bandaging Stanhope's leg.

"That'll be all right for a while. And now there's something I've got to do." He looked at Dora. "Don't try to leave the house," he said, and walked out.

He found the guards outside—silent, menacing, waiting. Their spears gleamed sullenly in the light from the windows. Dwyer called Salleh.

"Salleh, I want you to get me a goat."

"Goat, *tuan?*"

"The biggest, noisiest, smelliest goat you can find. Get it from some of the coolie lines, only get it quick."

"Yes, *tuan.*"

Dwyer walked through the night toward the tiger trap. The place was deserted now, dark, still. Only the stars shone where before there had been fires. Only the tree-toads croaked where before there had been drums.

Dwyer knew a bit about trapping tigers. All men do who have lived in the jungle. At various railroad camps he had seen a number of live ones that natives of nearby *kompongs* had caught. He had even occasionally set a few traps himself for the sport of the thing. But never before had he so earnestly hoped to catch a tiger. He had, in a moment of necessity, made a bargain with the Malay and *sakai* natives, and he knew he would be held grimly to account. He had, by that bargain, won twenty-four hours of life for Dora; but he had also guaranteed to produce a tiger. In deadly seriousness now it was the lady or the tiger, and the lady's life hinged on how the tiger he knew was somewhere in the jungle acted.

He baited the trap with the goat Salleh brought. A goat, he knew, was among the choicest of tiger baits. A goat makes a noise, attracts the tiger, and its meat is delicious and savoury to the jungle beasts. So with the trap set, and the goat fastened to the trigger, Dwyer went reluctantly back to the bungalow.

He doubted if Dora understood what had happened.

She had been hysterical and probably hadn't heard half of what had been said. Stanhope, of course, knew nothing about it. He passed the guards, entered the house, and confronted them.

"We've got to talk," he said. "This thing isn't over yet."

"Not over?" Stanhope asked. "Why, Dora's out of the trap——"

"And I can never thank you enough——" the girl began.

"No, it's not over," said Dwyer. "Those natives were ready to kill Dora. In order to get her away I had to promise them I'd catch a real tiger."

"A real tiger?"

"Try to understand this. They think she's a were-tiger. To get her out of their hands I had to swear I'd catch the real tiger within twenty-four hours. Unless I do—they'll take Dora again."

Stanhope's eyes hardened.

"You promised *that?*"

"It was the only way to save her at all. Now she's got a bare chance. How good it is I don't know. Not very, I'm afraid. But the trap's set—all we can do is wait."

"Wait?" Stanhope tried to pull himself up in bed, then fell back weakly. "We can't wait! Wait for those savages to kill her?"

"What else can we do?"

"Get her away! Take her to your camp! Take her——"

"Stanhope, I've thought of these things. This bungalow's guarded—natives with spears, *parangs* and even blowguns with poisoned darts. Dora couldn't get ten

feet from it. I've thought of sending my boy Salleh for help. But I know they wouldn't let him leave here. And even if they did, where could he get help? The nearest plantation is nearly thirty miles away, and by the time he got there and back it would be too late. If you'd had time to have graded that bullock cart trail and had a car, we might be able to shoot our way through, and make a get-away. No, all we can do, Stanhope, is—wait . . ."

Wait. They could wait, but time wouldn't. The clock on the shelf steadily ticked away the seconds. Its ticks sounded strangely regular, like the beating of tiny drums. Outside the moon wouldn't wait; it slid slowly down the black western sky and vanished behind the dark fringe of jungle. Nor would the dawn wait. The tree-toads ceased their croaking and the sweet call of an argus pheasant sounded faintly through the stillness. Then the sun shot up above the horizon in a burst of gold and the night was gone.

With the light Dwyer went to have a look at the trap. It was just as he had left it, the goat cowering and bleating, the log door still up and ready to fall if the trigger were pulled. Near it, however, in the soft jungle mud was something that made Dwyer catch his breath with hope—the fresh spoor of a tiger! There was a tiger near—he had smelled the goat—but he had been too wary to venture close.

He went back to the bungalow, passed the sullen, watching guards, and pretended to be cheerful.

"We'll get him to-night," he said, "and then this thing will be over for ever."

Dora got breakfast and they ate it beside Stanhope's bed. Stanhope found it impossible to move. His torn muscles

had been stretched and strained so severely the night before that his leg was stiff as an iron rod. So they ate at a table beside him and talked of everything except what was uppermost in their minds—London, Dwyer's railroad, the Paris chestnuts in the Spring, the price of crude rubber, the best way to keep a woman's clothes from mildewing in the tropics—a thousand and one things for which to-day they cared nothing.

Once, when Dora was away making more tea, Stanhope said quietly, "Just what are the chances, Dwyer?"

Dwyer shook his head. Stanhope's lips became a thin line across his white face.

"Damn it—I was never any good back in London, and I've been worse here! There's just one thing I want, Dwyer, before the time comes."

"Yes?"

"Hussein stole my gun. I want yours. If they try to take Dora, I'm going to lie here and shoot 'em down one by one as they come through the door!"

"I think," said Dwyer, "we'll both do that."

"It's not your fight, Dwyer."

"It is now."

"You're white. Any chance?"

"We'll hold them off for a while. Then they'll probably fire the bungalow. Anyhow, we'll have the satisfaction of a little shooting while we wait for that."

They could wait, but nothing else in the jungle did. Even the heat of noon passed quicker than usual. And sooner than ever before the shadows of the jungle fell in long, dark blots across the clearing. Mosquitoes began their evening hum, perhaps the same argus pheasant that had called to

its mate at dawn called once more, and dusk fell. The tree-toads took up their interrupted song.

Throughout the day Dora had been the most cheerful of the three. But with the coming of darkness some of her courage went over the horizon with the sun. It was as if she were again hearing the weird, horrible beating of drums, and were again caught in that log tiger trap with a ring of menacing spears around her. The spears still menaced. Periodically they passed the windows, or glinted by the verandah, as the guards moved about on silent, bare, brown feet.

Dwyer went down the trail to look at the trap. It was just as he had left it—set, ready, waiting. The goat bleated more loudly with the dark, as if it sensed danger in the black depths of the jungle it could see through log bars. Dwyer's eyes hardened. That little goat's bleat, if it were sufficient to attract a tiger, might be the means of saving three human lives.

The worst moment of the whole day was when the moon rose. Dwyer had watched thousands of moons rise in the East, but never before had there been one that looked as full of horror as this one. Yet it was an ordinary moon—nearly full, and silver and lovely as some great pearl. But before that moon had completed its path below the stars, the moment it reached "the same place in the sky" where it had been when he had pointed it out to the natives last night, all hell would break loose in the jungle.

They sat in silence, a single lamp burning in the bungalow, the clock ticking on the shelf.

"I'm sorry," Dora said suddenly, looking at Dwyer.

"Sorry?"

"To have brought you into this."

"You didn't," he said calmly. "I came."

"But I've an idea, when we met on that boat, and I told you about coming to Sungai, that you thought the man I was coming to marry shouldn't have sent for me, that he was—well, perhaps not just what I thought. And Ive always suspected that you came here so quickly, and set your camp where you did, so you could look after me. Isn't that so?"

"Very nearly," Dwyer admitted.

She looked tenderly toward Stanhope.

"Well, I *did* need looking after, but you didn't need to worry about George. From the moment you first saw him you must have known——"

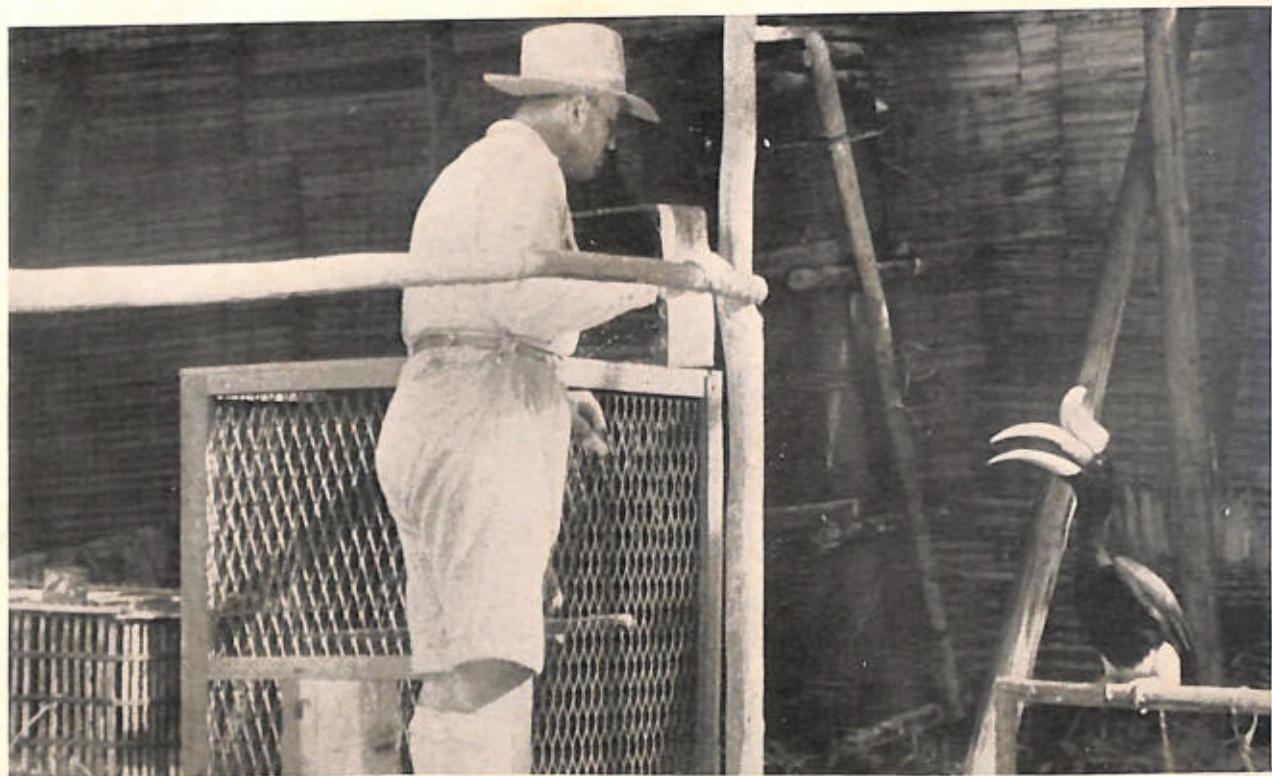
Stanhope broke in.

"Dora, I never told you. And Dwyer's too much of a man ever to tell you, but when he first saw me——"

"I knew," Dwyer said quickly, "I knew, Mrs. Stanhope, that you were coming to marry one of the finest men I've ever met."

She took Stanhope's hand gently, her eyes soft, and they listened to the ticking of the clock. The oil lamp cast a ring of yellow light around them, and its far rim, touched by the moonlight that fell through the open door, merged into silver. The moon was high now, sweeping on across a sky of stars, and below it the jungle stretched and dripped, swayed and hung silent like some uneven black pool.

Dwyer was constantly listening. His rifle lay on the table within easy reach, and his revolver was beneath Stanhope's pillow. He knew what the signal would be to put out the light and reach for the guns. Outside a hundred pairs of dark eyes silently watched the sweep of the moon. Deeper in the jungle, under durian trees, at the edge of



RHINOCEROS HORNBILL
A rare bird found in Malayan jungles.

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

swamps, on the banks of streams in *sakai* villages, more eyes watched and waited—waited for the moon to climb to the same place in the sky where it had been when a white man had pointed his finger at it last night.

Dwyer also waited, tense, breathing deeply, for the sound for which these hundreds of natives waited—the low, hollow beating of a drum! Other drums would join it, drum by drum, until the word to *come* swept beyond trees, beyond swamps, beyond villages to the whole waiting jungle. And the spawn of the jungle that would then throb and sob with drums would come pouring in—superstitious coolie, frenzied Malay, savage *sakai*—to hack down and kill the white woman they believed to be a were-tiger!

The clock ticked on. Its tiny sound seemed to be a drum—the first drum—the death drum——

There came a sudden native shout from the night. It rang through the stillness like a shrill bell. It came closer, louder, triumphant—and Dwyer reached for his rifle. Still—no drums beat.

The first man who appeared in the door was Salleh, Dwyer's boy. His face glistened like wet copper, and his eyes shone.

"*Tuan! Tuan!*" he called. "*Harimu bezar!* Tiger come—tiger caught!"

Dwyer lowered his rifle suddenly.

"Tiger caught, Salleh?"

"Oh, yes, *tuan!* Caught in trap by light of moon, just as you say! No were-tiger, *tuan*—it *real* tiger, fur and blood! Everyone happy—everyone glad. *Mem* go free now, for *sakai* know she not '*were-tiger.*'"

Dwyer looked at *mem*. She had buried her young face on Stanhope's shoulder, and she was crying.

And this is the story Bill Dwyer told me while lamps were lighted and insects hummed around the terrace of the E. & O. Hotel at Penang on the Straits of Malacca. You may not understand those natives, but they had been taught were-tiger all their lives, just as we have been taught our countries are the most glorious and our religions the only right ones. We're from the West, and they're from the East, and I doubt if we'll ever really know what the other's driving at. To really understand a thing—if the thing is a girl like Dora—it takes a couple of men like Stanhope and Dwyer.

XI

JUNGLE CAMP

THE moon fades fast in the jungle. One moment it hangs in a blue velvet sky, pale and silver and fragile as rice paper. From somewhere in the deep, damp shadows of great ferns a hyena tilts back his head and howls his ugly song to the silent, silver lantern. And then the lantern is gone, snuffed out like a faint candle by the golden glory of the rising sun. With the sun the sleeping jungle wakes . . . and with it jungle man wakes too.

He sees a patch of sky, framed by the glistening leaves of jungle trees, and grey through the haze of white mosquito netting that shrouds his cot. From far away he hears the lovely call of an argus pheasant whistling to its mate a half-mile deeper in the jungle, and he marvels that a sound can be so beautiful. He hears the last echo of the night-singing tree frogs, and the first cricking of the lizards that come to life on the branches of the trees above his head. From two miles away—plaintive, musical, lonely—a gibbon calls across the forest. The squirrels begin their barking, the grey sky turns a paler blue, and day has come.

It is this medley of miraculous sound and shadow and golden light that hails each new day I spend in the jungle. While I have often told stories of animals, their habits, their lives, and their thrilling captures, I have never told the story of myself, of a full day in my jungle camp in Northern Johore, of exactly what happens in that little spot of man-made clearing in a great wilderness between daybreak and dusk. This is that story.

Strangely enough, with that golden, musical dawn, I get up from my cot—in a cage! This seems natural enough for captured animals, but for a capturing man it probably seems queer. It is, however, absolutely essential. For my bedroom is literally a cage designed, not to keep me in, but to keep jungle animals out. The walls and ceiling are made of tough expanded metal, a wire mesh strong enough to withstand the attack of the fiercest leopard or tiger. It is only this sturdy, metal cage that allows me and my boys to sleep in safety through the long jungle night.

I get up, stretch, step out of the cage into the warming sunshine, and Ali brings me a bowl of water for a wash. It is tepid water from a nearby jungle stream. The sleep leaves my eyes—I shake the water from my hair, look up at the sun and the blue Malayan sky, glad to be alive and ready for a new day's work.

"Boy, *bowa buoa!*" I call, and clap my hands sharply.

It is my first command each morning, that "Boy, bring fruit!"—and Ali brings it, his brown face serious as always, his white teeth showing faintly in the sun.

It is glorious fruit spread out on a wide, green banana leaf, and carried tenderly in Ali's lithe hands. There is a large costard apple, a few ripe bananas—the size of a man's little finger—a mango, and a half-dozen mangosteens.

These mangosteens are the most delicious fruit in the world. They are the one delicacy Queen Victoria wanted from her Indian Empire—and never could have. They ripen so quickly and spoil so easily that they cannot be shipped, even in the fastest refrigerated boats. However, things have changed now. If England's beloved queen of a generation ago were alive to-day her wish could be gratified, for outside of the Far East there is but one place in the world

where they can now be bought—at a tremendous price. That is London. They are carried there, and there alone, by the fast Dutch mail planes that connect Eastern Asia with Western Europe.

It is impossible to describe the taste of a mangosteen. It has an indefinable subtle something about it that defies words. It has a deep purple shell that is so hard it must be cut with a knife. Once it is cut, however, there is inside the purest of white meat that has an aroma like the rarest perfume on earth.

Fruit—even such delicious fruit—is but part of a jungle breakfast. Ali has lighted a charcoal fire and is boiling water for coffee if we're lucky, tea if we're not. Every native village has its charcoal kiln, for charcoal is important in making a quick fire, and quick, hot fires are necessary in the damp jungle country. Every drop of water that is drunk, you see, must first be boiled. Usually it is boiled the evening before and left in stone jugs all night to cool.

On his fire Ali has a pot of rice cooking for the boys, who are squatting about on their haunches, waiting. If we are particularly lucky I have fresh fish, caught in a nearby jungle stream, or eggs imported from the nearest jungle village. And it all tastes marvellous there on my open-air table built on four posts driven into the ground in the centre of my camp shelter—more marvellous than all the fancy dishes of the chefs and cooks of civilization.

We are ready for work now, and we waste little time about it. With the dawn all the animals I have captured also wake. For half an hour I have heard the growls and whines of my tigers, the hoarse coughing grunt of the bintorungs, the savage snarls of my leopards. All are hungry with the rising sun—all want food.

My birds chirp and call. Fireback pheasants, red-crested green wood partridges—known to the Malays as *burong seuals* and the most beautiful of all partridges—give their faint, musical whistle, and the Malayan singing partridges, with a call like our mocking birds, sing their gorgeous, wild songs.

The feeding begins. From the nearest native village there are fresh-killed chickens and a quarter of buffalo meat for the tigers, leopards, and civet cat. The cat animals are fed six days a week. For the sake of their health, in captivity, they have a Sabbath and go one day without food.

For the monkeys, gibbons, and orang-utans there is a variety of jungle fruits and vegetables. From twenty miles away the boys have carried baskets of sweet potatoes and tapioca root. This root—which looks much like a sweet potato itself—is what is ground up commercially for our American tapioca puddings.

For the birds—the pea fowl and pheasants and partridges—there is patti rice, grain and wheat imported all the way from the coast towns. I have a grinding machine in camp, and all the food is thrown into the machine along with green vegetables, a native water cress—corresponding to our dandelion greens—and several dozen hard-boiled eggs ! It is mixed, ground fine, and those birds love it. I half believe many of them are glad to give up their freedom for the pleasure of strutting for that delicious, carefully prepared meal.

But the feeding is only one part of my care of captured animals. Each cage has to have its water, and each cage has to be cleaned daily. When you realize the tremendous number of animals and birds I have in camp at the end of

five or six months in the jungle, you will understand what a colossal task this cleaning is.

In the first place, I have three hundred chattering, mischievous rhesus monkeys. The small varieties are piled in crates three feet by three feet by eighteen inches—twenty monkeys to a crate—the bigger ones in cages proportionate to their size. And if they're in the mood they make a lot of trouble for the boy assigned to cleaning those lively, wriggling cages.

I have half a dozen fine big tigers, three black leopards, a clouded leopard, four Indian spotted leopards, four bintorungs, six civet cats, ten big Asiatic porcupines, four bush-tailed porcupines, forty rafflii squirrels—gorgeous red and black and white fellows—along with two dozen pure white squirrels from the Siamese border. These animals alone, the big cats and the rodents, require almost as many cages as the menagerie of a small circus. But this is only the start of the zoo at my jungle camp at the end of several months.

You understand that in a big collection like this I do not capture all of the birds and animals myself. For one man to catch as many specimens as I have in my jungle camp at the end of five or six months would require nearly as many years. Many of them are brought in to me by the *sakai*, the jungle people, and the Malays from the neighbouring kompongs. Almost every day natives come straggling into my camp carrying baskets, bags or cages of some sort or another with animals, birds or snakes they have trapped to sell me. The ones I want I buy, after much haggling and bargaining.

Together with the animals I have named I also have four Malayan tapirs. (It takes all the time of two boys finding food for these animals alone. They have to dig rare

roots from the river banks and the jungle swamps.) There are eight barking deer (mutjacs)—little fellows two feet high, and six Sambar deer, larger than American deer but not quite so big as elk.

But no matter how big an animal collector's ambition may be, he also has to supply zoos with small animals. A little snake, six inches long, has its value in a zoological garden the same as the biggest man-eating tiger. So I have in my camp a collection of small snakes, three tiny, baby orang-utans which cling to me and the boys and scream when we put them on the ground, five pangolins or scaly ant-eaters, and a baby elephant captured in Sumatra and brought all the way to my camp in Johore.

There are hundreds of birds, too. Himalayan song-birds, Shama thrushes, Himalayan pheasants—the most gorgeously plumed of all the pheasant family—racket-tailed dorangos that can imitate any sound they hear, and the lovely bulbul thrushes of Omar Khayyàm that make a chorus of beautiful sound more gorgeous than any symphony orchestra.

Dwarfing these small specimens and birds is a giant orang-utan, eight and a half feet from fingertip to fingertip. He lazes indolently in his cage, but when I venture near he comes to lightning life, thrusts his great hand through the bars, and rips the sleeve from my shirt as easily as if it were tissue paper ! A half-dozen sleeves have gone into that orang's cage, and I am careful to conserve the rest of my limited supply.

Beside the great orang's cage is a smaller one holding spectacled langur monkeys. These watch him curiously and a bit timidly with their great, white Eddie Cantor eyes. Next is a cage of crested langurs, which when wild move so

fast they are seldom seen even by the jungle people, and must be caught in nets on the ground. Three big Indian hannuman langurs come next—the kind that carried Kim through the tree-tops in Kipling's immortal story of a jungle boy.

Quite a menagerie to care for in a jungle camp! But there's still more. Three hyenas that howl all through the night, a pair of black-buck antelope from India, a nilghai or blue-buck from the forests of Western India, and half a dozen tiny gazelles from the edge of the Indian desert.

Then there are the snakes—eight pythons all over twenty feet long that can crush a man to death in a few seconds! I can't bother with pythons smaller than this, as the zoos want big ones. Dozens of krites and tree snakes, and six big cobras, seven to twelve feet long, each with enough venom in its fangs to kill twenty men.

This gives you an idea of the number and variety of cages that have to be cleaned, scraped, and washed with a bucket of warm water each morning in my jungle camp. By the time it's done the sun is getting high—and hot—and the jungle is steaming. But there's no rest yet. There's plenty more work to be done, and it has to be done before that climbing tropical sun makes all work impossible.

Behind the camp I hear jungle logs being chopped and planed. Ahmed, my Number-Two boy, with a couple of helpers, is busy there with his axe and his rattan, building more cages. Cages are an ever-growing need. Each new capture requires a cage, and it has to be ready when the animal is brought into camp. Fortunately all the material is ready at hand, and a strong, sturdy cage can be built of logs and rattan—a natural jungle vine—with little more than an axe and a pair of hands to do the work.

Ali is getting out my rifle, a rope, and a gunny sack or two. For all through the surrounding jungle I have set out traps and snares, and they have to be visited each day and the animals brought in.

While I wait for him I watch the pet honey bears I have caught playing at the end of their staked fastenings. Above them are a few golden gibbons, running furiously along horizontal poles, their chin chains rattling as they go. There is a battle royal fought, strenuously, but playfully, by these potential Londoses and Lewises before the gibbon leaps once more to his pole and howls down madly. It is the comedy relief of a hard, busy morning.

Ali and I visit the traps and snares that have been set out. This is no easy task, as they cover an area of several miles, and each one has to be inspected or its catch might die. By this time the jungle is a hundred in the shade—and getting hotter! If it has rained the night before, we must take the precaution to rub liquid soap, of which we keep a supply on hand at all times, on our clothes and skin. When the bushes are wet from showers or even from an excessively heavy dew, they are full of leeches. Almost every leaf has one of these pesky worms hanging on to the under surface, waiting to pounce on any passer-by. But leeches do not like the odour or taste of the soap and will not crawl in underneath the clothing if plenty of it has been applied before starting out.

Once leeches take hold they bury their heads, and the only way to get them out of your hide is with the lighted end of a cigarette. But that's all part of my business, and I never kick. The same Mother Nature that put those leeches there also put the animals by which I make my living.

In my traps and snares we find half a dozen monkeys,

an eight-foot monitor lizard, a couple of argus pheasants, a porcupine, the big prize of the day, and a black leopard. All of these have to be bagged or boxed, carried several miles back to camp, and caged. Which is a day's work in itself.

It's lunch time then, and after a hard morning's work no lunch at the Ritz ever tasted better than the one I get on my rough, planked table in the midst of the jungle with my tigers snarling and my birds singing in their cages all around me. Fresh chicken, eggs, a sweet potato, all the fruits of the Orient, and maybe delicious wild honey made by bees that feed on orchids. And for a floor show there's always Jim Londos and Strangler Lewis putting on their tireless wrestling act which no matter how many times I see it is always good for a laugh. The surroundings for that lunch are crude, savage, primitive—but surroundings like these have been my home for the greater part of twenty years, and I love them.

While I am eating there are screams from behind the camp. Ahmed comes running into sight, holding his face and howling as loudly as the hyenas. He has been in the high grass and stepped into a wasps' nest, finally getting rid of them by jumping in a stream.

These nests are low on the ground, impossible to detect in the grass, and the wasps are brown, about the size of our yellow-jackets, but with the sting of a whiplash. The boy's head is twice its normal size and one eye is entirely closed.

"Hurt pretty bad?" I ask.

"*Yah, tuan—susah luka.*"

"I'll fix you up, Ahmed. Sit down here."

For ten minutes I daub each sting—and there are nearly

half a hundred of them—with soda and water, iodine, and vaseline. He takes it stoically now, his first fright over. It's all a part of jungle camp life.

While I am still at the table I hear voices down the jungle trail. My own boys set up a chatter.

" *Tongku mahkota !—Tongku mahkota !* "

It is the son of my friend, the Sultan of Johore. He is Prince now, but will some day be Sultan. He has been in the neighbourhood shooting wild pigs with six of his men, and has dropped in to chat a while. As a good Mohammedan he can't so much as touch the pigs, but it's grand sport and the Prince, like his famous father, is first and last a sportsman.

We sit for a while and talk over a Scotch-and-plain-water highball. There's no ice, of course, and the water, boiled the night before, is still tepid in its stone jug. But it's a pleasant social occasion in the wilderness, and one I look forward to.

It is late when the Prince is gone, and I again set about the long business of feeding my wild captures. Tigers, leopards, and other cats are fed but once a day, but monkeys, birds, antelope, deer, bears, bintorungs, tapirs, elephants, orangs, squirrels—all have to eat again before I get my own dinner.

While I am busy with the cages there comes a sudden louder chattering from the monkeys. The gibbons run howling on their poles. The honey bears on the ground shrink in terror. Looking across the camp I see a snake box with its lid unfastened. I realize it is the box of a giant python we brought in the night before. Twenty feet of glistening snake has already slithered from the box !

" Ali ! " I call sharply. " Ali ! "

I run across the clearing toward the great snake, glad of Ali's feet pattering behind me !

" Ahmed ! " Ali yells, and Ahmed, forgetting his wasp stings and his swollen face, comes tearing after us. Four other boys drop what they are doing and run, their brown bodies glistening in the sun, across the clearing.

Coil after coil of the big snake slides out over the box top. I manœuvre, waiting for an opening. There is only one place to grab a python, and that is by the neck, just back of the head. One slip—or a miss—and he'll have your arm in his teeth !

I thrust out a hand suddenly and clutched him.

" Careful, *tuan !* " Ali yells.

" I've got him ! Help me get him back in the box ! Lift him—up ! "

A twenty-eight foot python weighs about three hundred pounds. And he's three hundred pounds of twisting, squirming, slippery, fighting muscle ! Slowly we push him back, monkeys screaming all around us. Coil after coil goes fighting into the box. At last, with one final push, I thrust in his head, with its big mouth and needle-sharp teeth.

" Shut that lid ! " I call to Ali, and he slams it closed.

I sigh with relief and wipe the sweat from my forehead.

This is one of those little extra jobs that come up every so often to break the " monotony " of my jungle camp.

It is getting late now. The sun has dropped down behind the jungle trees, dropped fast, like a heavy red ball falling over the horizon. The East is called " the land of short shadows." One moment they are there, clear and dark on the ground. The next they have vanished into the briefest of twilights, and the blackest of nights.

Lanterns are lit about the camp—lanterns that attract thousands of insects and great jungle moths. Inside the sleeping quarters the mosquito nets are spread, white and filmy. The jungle has hushed now. My animals and birds in their cages are quiet. Like man they, too, sleep when the land grows dark.

The lanterns are put out. From somewhere, off in the dark, a hyena howls mournfully. My three in their cages take up the weird cry. I know they will continue all night, the only sound except for the night-singing tree frogs.

From my cot I see a few stars, clear and blue through the jungle leaves in a sky of velvet. An hour later the forests will be bathed in white Malayan moonlight—gorgeous, eerie, silver. But I shan't see it. I shall be sleeping the sleep of a tired animal collector in my jungle camp.

XII

STORY OF LAL

IN my various jungle camps I have naturally had many "boys" and servants. It takes a lot of help to handle as many animals and birds as I usually get together at one time, and I suppose it's not unnatural that human animals should differ from each other as radically as a tiger, for instance, differs from a sad-eyed tapir.

There have been all types among these number-one boys, these servants and general workers, these house-boys who have served me. It's really unfair to compare any of them with a tiger, as I did above, because a brown man in the East doesn't get a chance to show his claws to a *tuan* or *sahib*. But I've no doubt that in their own homes, and among their own people, there are tigers and leopards—and even cobras among them. The British know that among the fiercest fighting-men that followed their flag in the World War were the thousands of Ghurka volunteers that came to them from the highlands of Nepal. These men, with no strings attached except a deep-founded loyalty to the British, swept irresistibly across the fields of France uttering the deep-throated battle cries they had learned in the icy shadows of the Himalayas.

In Lal I had the perfect servant. While I am talking of men and animals, I can truthfully say that Lal had the strength and follow-up qualities of the elephant, the quick-witted and cat-like action of the leopard in emergencies, and the deep-set and devoted loyalty of a Saint Bernard in everything he did for his *Sahib*. And I am proud to say that I was *Sahib* for a "boy" like Lal.

The first time I ever saw Lal Bahuda he was squatting

in front of a series of bird cages in Atol Acooli's bird bazaar. He looked like any other Hindu at first glance, and it wasn't until I saw his bright, round eyes that I realized there was a difference. Those eyes looked straight into mine, frankly, bravely, as if he had nothing in his whole Hindu world to conceal from anyone—even Vishnu himself. They were dark and round and bright, those eyes of Lal's, and as alert as the eyes of the chattering parakeet that strutted in the cage behind him.

You've got to understand that I first saw those eyes across at least twenty feet of Calcutta sidewalk and roadway, and through brilliant, blinding sunlight; for Lal was squatting in the shade of Atol Acooli's bazaar, and I was riding up Parsee Church Street in a garry. I say he *was* squatting. For our eyes had no more than met when Lal, on his quick bare, brown feet, had covered the distance to my garry, and his hand was on the door.

He looked straight at me, smiling slightly and opened the door. There was no salaaming or holding out his hand for *baksheesh*, as would any other Hindu boy who had done a Sahib the slightest service. Lal merely stood there, very straight, until I stepped down from the garry. Then he closed the door and went back to his bird cages.

My business was with Atol Acooli. Parsee Church Street used to be the chief bird bazaar in Calcutta, and probably the noisiest and most colourful street. Only two blocks long, the street was literally lined on both sides by bazaars containing thousands of Indian birds of all varieties, particularly fine thrushes and the ornamental birds of the Himalayas.

Atol Acooli was the most extensive trader of the lot—a lean man, with long arms and lithe hands, and a gift of

conveying information with those hands that made a puppet seem a motionless figure. I had carried on business with Acooli for many years, and had received through him many of the fine bird specimens that are now in zoological gardens and in aviaries all over America.

This was nearly twenty years ago, when I was first starting in the animal business. I have since established connections in the interiors and on the frontiers of the various jungle countries of Asia, so that Sahib Buck is now a well-known person with the bird trappers and *safaris* from the Himalayan slopes to Taloimannar at the southern point of the Indian peninsula. I have brought back to America as many as ten thousand birds in a single consignment, and have obtained them from the jungle people themselves. But in those younger days, when I was feeling my way in the animal world, Acooli was an essential person.

In my dealings with Acooli I had a chance to get better acquainted with Lal. You don't just walk into a bazaar and say, "I want to buy a thousand birds." There is a great deal of diplomacy necessary in a deal as big as this, and even more haggling. Usually it takes three to five days before such a deal can be consummated, and then, if you are to believe the trader, he is being royally cheated and selling at a loss.

Every morning when my garry pulled up before Acooli's bazaar Lal was waiting for me. He literally sprang to get the door open. Then he stood very straight, those wonderful brown eyes of his looking frankly into mine, with just a faint touch of a smile in the corners.

I watched him while I talked with Acooli. Other boys, doing the same work, lazed about, chewed their betel nuts,

and shirked more than they worked. Not Lal. He kept constantly and efficiently busy—extra attention to a bird here and a bird there, fresh water and food, a particularly good cleaning for a cage.

"Acooli," I said on the third day, "who is that boy?"

Acooli made an expressive gesture with his lithe hands. "His name is Lal Bahuda," he said. "He come with small collection of birds from Bikna Thori. He is good boy—so I keep him."

"Bikna Thori," I said. "That's in northern India near the Nepal border. Is he a Nepalese?"

"Mother Nepalese—father Bengal."

That explained a good deal. I could see in Lal the Ghurka qualities he had inherited from that Nepalese mother of his—the qualities which made the Ghurka regiments among the best fighters the British had in the World War: an absolute lack of fear, and the admirable modesty usually found in fierce fighting-men.

I said nothing more about Lal at the time, but I was thinking. I had no boy with me except the usual body servant that a Sahib must have in India. (No white man can travel in India without a bearer.) I knew I was going to need help. I had left Old Ali—the uncle of my present Number-One Boy—with my animals in Singapore. And I had bought a sizeable collection of birds from old Tasadug Husain, whose bazaar in Moore Market, the famous market place of Calcutta, had been the source of supply for European bird merchants for over fifty years. I knew that by the time I had concluded my bargain with Atol Acooli and added his birds to my collection I was going to need plenty to help to handle them all.

I spoke to Lal when I had concluded my deal with Acooli.

"Lal," I started——

He stood straight as any Ghurka soldier, looked at me and said:

"Yes, Sahib?"

"Lal," I said, "how would you like to go away with me? But I must tell you, it's a long way to America, Lal."

The slightest shadow of a cloud flitted across those big, round eyes. I could see that he was worried, but he spoke quickly and firmly.

"I go, Sahib," he said, "if you promise to send me back."

"Of course, Lal," I told him. "I guarantee to send you back to India."

He looked happier than I have ever seen any Hindu look.

"Very good, Sahib," he said. "We go *now?*"

And we went.

That was the beginning of Lal—the beginning of fifteen years of close association between myself and that little brown boy with the Bengal father and the Nepalese mother. Our position was, of course, and *had* to be, that of master and servant. But I am sure that I never had a truer friend than Lal Bahuda.

I remember we were sitting one night by the ship's rail on that first trip to America, watching the Malayan moon over the waters of the Straits, when I recalled the cloud that had passed Lal's eyes when I had suggested that America was a long distance away. We knew each other pretty well by this time, and I asked him about it. For a

moment he sat, clasping his knees and rocking slowly back and forth.

"I thought, Sahib," he said, "of my wife and babies back in Bikna Thori."

I stared at him in the half-dark.

"You mean, Lal, that you have a wife and babies waiting for you at home?"

"Yes, Sahib. I leave them when I take my birds to Atol Acooli."

"And they don't know you've gone to America?"

"No, Sahib."

"But, Lal——"

"I go back," he said. "Sahib promise send me back to India. I see them then."

The moon was bright, and I could see those big eyes of his fairly glowing.

"Ah, they good babies, Sahib," he said. "Best babies you ever see!"

You've got to understand that Hindus—Easterners in general—do this sort of thing. To them it's not unusual to walk out their front door without a word and come back as silently six months later. It's the same as a commuter in New York catching a train each morning at Stamford and returning the same evening. After a time his wife doesn't even get out of bed to say good-bye. He gets his own breakfast where he can, and returns for dinner if she happens to have it ready.

In Negri Sembilan just this last year the Pawang of Kuala Pileh and I went out after water buffalo. I hadn't seen the *pawang* in five years, and the first thing he did was tell me about the five fine children that had been born while I was away. He went through their names as lovingly

as an actor goes through a good line—Pa Wee, Ali, Ahmed Said, Pi Noi, and Si Himid. Yet he walked away from his Kuala Pileh doorway and into the jungle without seeing any of them.

This story goes even one step farther. While we were still in the jungle a runner came into camp with news that a new child—Wee Ngah—had come to grace the head-man's home. The *pawang* was delighted, but he showed no inclination to go home and see this new desire of his heart. "When we finish work, *tuan*, I go," he said. "That be time enough." Yet I knew the *pawang* loved this unseen child as deeply as he loved anything in life. Just as I knew Lal Bahuda loved that family of his that dwelt way up in India near the Nepal border.

I kept Lal two weeks in America that first time, then put him on a ship and sent him back to India. He didn't quite know whether to smile or cry when he boarded that ship alone. He was going back to Bikna Thori to see his wife and babies, but he was also leaving his Sahib.

"I see you again, Sahib?" he quavered.

I grinned. "You bet you will, Lal. When I come I'll cable you at Bikna Thori and you go down to Calcutta and meet me at Octram Ghat when the ship arrives."

"Very good, Sahib. I be there."

When I crossed the next time, and my ship pulled into Octram Ghat, there was Lal, straight as ever, waiting to meet me. We greeted each other like long-time friends rather than master and servant.

"Well, Lal," I asked, "how are those babies of yours?"

His brown eyes softened like those of a Himalayan deer.

"Best babies in whole world, Sahib!" he said. "So big now—and so."

"Was your wife mad when you finally came?" I asked.

"Wife very happy I came. I also glad to see wife. We work now, Sahib."

We did. There was always work to do in those days. I was in India for another collection of animals and birds, and had to get them. For fifteen years there was work to do, and for fifteen years Lal did it—always torn by those two great loyalties of his, to his babies and to his Sahib.

I had many examples of Lal's bravery and loyalty, and I am glad that I can say when the time came I was loyal to Lal.

I remember once I got my hand too close to the front of a black leopard's cage. Quick as a flash the savage cat reached out and sank his claws into my hand. He pulled me closer to the bars and stabbed furiously, trying to reach me with his other paw!

Out of nowhere came Lal. Without a moment's hesitation he lunged at that flailing, tearing paw! Had he missed he would have had his whole side torn out by one fierce swipe. But he didn't miss. He held that paw in the vice of his quick hands until I could get myself free. Then he looked at me as if I had been the only one in danger, and his eyes went suddenly moist.

I looked at him and said, "Thanks, Lal."

He seemed a bit surprised. In the East masters don't thank servants. Lal was even a little shocked—but he was very proud. All he said, however, calmly and pleadingly, was:

"Sahib be more careful, please. Lal not want to lose his Sahib."

I didn't want to lose Lal, either. So for years we travelled together, master and servant outwardly, but inwardly

joined by a friendship that started in the brilliant sunlight before Atol Acooli's bird bazaar, and couldn't end even when the long hand of Vishnu himself reached down from the Himalayan clouds.

In 1927 I had among many other specimens two fine, female elephants for Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. Herbert Fleishhacker had ordered them a year before to be presented to the park for the children of San Francisco to ride. This meant, of course, getting particularly tame and docile animals that could be broken to carrying a howdah.

Lal and I brought them in and landed them. But it was found that none of the men associated with the park had any knowledge of elephants, and Mr. Fleishhacker asked me if I would lend him one of my boys to stay with the animals until one of their men could be broken to the work.

I suggested it to Lal.

"Sahib want me to stay?" he asked.

Always before, when my consignment was safely ashore, I had packed Lal back to India, where he would always be waiting for me at Octram Ghat when my ship pulled in. I could see that tearing look in his round eyes—*his babies* and *his sahib.*

"Lal," I said, "it's up to you. You would be a big help if you stayed for a couple of months, but I want you to do exactly what you wish."

He pulled a moment at his *chutia*, then said calmly:

"Very well. I stay with elephants—and Sahib."

So Lal was put on San Francisco's city pay roll, and slept in the park dormitory, and trained two of the park men in the handling of elephants. In the meantime I went on to Chicago and New York with consignments of animals I had for those cities. It was while I was in Chicago that I re-

ceived a telegram which alarmed me more than I admitted to anyone. It said that Lal Bahuda was very ill. I felt as though my dearest friend had been stricken. I wired back to put him in the San Francisco hospital and give him the best of care.

It was two weeks before I could finish my business, and another four days before I got to San Francisco. As quickly as I could I went to the hospital. There was Lal, thin, his bony, brown hands clutching the white sheets, and his wonderful, round eyes looking as though they had sunken into his head. But they brightened as if lamps had been lighted behind them when they saw me, and big tears streamed down his cheeks.

" Oh, Sahib—Sahib—please tell *mem sahib* not cut my hair ! "

I sat on the edge of the bed.

" No one's going to cut your hair, Lal," I said.

" Oh, yes, Sahib. They try—I fight. I fight for days to save my *chutia !* "

" Well, it's all right now, Lal. I'm here. Don't worry."

" Yes, Sahib."

He looked at me gently, and with the faith of a dog went to sleep—the first sound sleep, they told me later, he'd had in weeks.

I found out then about the hair. All Hindus have a small tuft of long hair on the top of their heads, even though they may have the rest of their heads shaved. It's about the thickness of a lead pencil, and three or four inches long. It's called the *chutia*, and is one of the most important things in their lives. For when a Hindu dies, Vishnu, the Hindu god, can reach down and use the *chutia* as a handle to lift his soul to heaven.

FRANK BUCK AND A TRAINED ELEPHANT PREPARING A TRAP FOR A WILD ELEPHANT "DRIVE"

(For sequel see illustration facing page 216.)

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

Lal had put up a noble fight to save his *chutia*. With all his weakness he had battled nurses and internes, who thought he had had a haircut and someone had played a trick on him by leaving the long tuft on top. They had tried again and again to cut it off, but Lal's jungle ferocity had won. He still had his *chutia*, and he had it always.

I talked with the doctors about Lal. They were intensely interested in the case. Lal had some kind of rare jungle disease which was new to them, and in the weeks that followed they experimented to the limit. But when they suggested an operation I put my foot down.

"Have you any idea what you are operating for?" I asked them.

They hadn't.

"Then there's nothing doing," I said. "This boy is too loyal and valuable to me to be used as a test for tropical diseases."

But I went in and talked it over with Lal.

"Lal," I said, "you're a very sick boy. Maybe you're going to die. These American doctors think maybe they better cut you open. Maybe they can find something inside and take it away. What do you think we better do?"

He looked at me and slowly shook his head.

"No, Sahib—cutting open no good. Maybe I die. All right—no matter. But I don't want die in America. Sahib, can't you take me back to Calcutta where I die in my own country? Who knows—maybe I even see my babies first?"

His eyes burned at the mention of those babies again. They were almost grown-up boys now, but they were still babies to Lal, even though he rarely saw them.

"Besides," he added, "you know I think Vishnu could

never find me here. I have been eating cow meat since I leave home—very bad. I sure go to hell if I die now. More better I go to India and get my caste mark. Maybe I see my babies. . . ."

Lal got steadily worse, but he miraculously summoned a little strength to help himself when several weeks later we carried him on board the *President Wilson*. He was going home, you see—home where Vishnu could find him, home where he might see those babies of his before Vishnu arrived.

When we reached Manila Lal was in a pretty bad way. By this time I was ready for operations, or even miracles, if they could only save Lal. Dr. Hart, the United States Government Medical Officer of the Port, and an old friend of mine, performed the operation. It was a difficult business, and he had to remove two of Lal's ribs before he could get in to operate. Dr. Hart, familiar with tropic diseases, knew exactly what was wrong—abscesses of the liver. Three days later he told me Lal would live.

A few days later I went on to Singapore, having made arrangements for Lal to join me there when he was able to travel.

The story got around, of course. Any kind of news or gossip travels quickly in the East. And everyone looked at this as a sort of joke on me. Wherever I went, hotels, clubs, I was greeted with : " Buck, what do you want to spend all that time and money on a brown boy for ? There's a hundred million more just like him in India. Let the begger die and get a new one ! " I couldn't tell them what Lal meant to me. They wouldn't have understood. But you can't go into the jungle for fifteen years with even the

brownest of boys, experience all sorts of dangers together, sit before campfires and on the decks of ships under tropic stars, without having something touch your heart. Even if it cost me another couple of thousand I was prepared to spend it willingly to keep Lal alive. He was a friend, you see, not a servant—but I couldn't tell that to the chaps in Manila and Hong Kong and Singapore.

Six weeks later Lal joined me in Singapore, the old Lal, still thin and weak, but with his big eyes round and bright again. He was as delighted to see me as I was to see him. But he was still too weak to do the kind of work that was necessary.

"Lal," I said, "I'm going to send you on to Calcutta. You can go up to Bikna Thori and see that wife and those babies of yours. Stay with them until you get strong. Then go down to Calcutta and hang around and help Atol Acooli until I come."

"You sure come, Sahib?"

"You bet, Lal! Meet me at Octram Ghat, as usual."

He went. Three months later, when I had finished my work in the jungles, I sent the usual cable to Lal and took ship to Calcutta. I was looking forward to seeing Lal again. Three months of India's sunshine would surely have put him back on his feet. But on the dock there was no Lal. For the first time in fifteen years he had failed me! —and after all I had done for him!

I took a garry and went to Atol Acooli's. The old bazaar was still there, a riot of jungle plumage in the brilliant sunshine. But there was no Lal squatting before the bird cages—no Lal to run out and open the door of his Sahib's garry.

I greeted Acooli, fifteen years older now, white and wrinkled.

"Where is Lal Bahuda?" I asked. "He was coming to help you, Acooli, until I came."

Acooli spread his lithe hands wide, and his old shoulders moved slightly upward.

"Vishnu took Lal Bahuda away," he said simply.

"So the disease got him," I said slowly.

"Disease?" Acooli looked at me queerly with his old, wise eyes. "No disease got Lal. I have the story straight from Bikna Thori. Lal went home. He was strong again. Very happy he was to see fine wife and babies of his—very happy. Then one night all dark. Lal woke up. He smell smoke. Flames springing up like tigers everywhere in his house. Lal ran, fast as he can go, into open. He stop then and look back. His house in flames—flames everywhere. Then Lal remembered his babies inside——"

Acooli stopped, his hands still wide.

"Yes?" I said.

"Lal stood still, they say, one little minute. Then he calmly fold his arms and walk back into his house. Lal, his wife and his fine babies — all go up to Vishnu together."

Slowly I sat down in front of the very bird cage where I had first seen Lal. Fifteen years of friendship passed before me—fifteen years of Lal torn between his babies and his Sahib. And in that moment I was inexpressibly glad that when Vishnu had finally reached his long arm for Lal's *chutia* he had found him among his babies and not with his Sahib.

I haven't a doubt but if I go to the place where Lal has

gone, I shall see Lal, still standing very straight, with his round eyes smiling at me. And he'll probably say: "So sorry, Sahib, not meet you at Octram Ghat, like you say. But Lal here now. Is there work to do, Sahib?"

XIII

ANIMAL FIGHTS

IN all the years I have spent in the Far East and the Far Eastern jungles, and of all the thousands of wild animals and birds I have caught there, until very recently I have never taken pictures of any of those captures. My business has been to supply zoological gardens, menageries, circuses, and other buyers with living specimens, and I have simply done a job as the job had to be done—trapping tigers, elephants, leopards, and snakes, and of course trading with native trappers as well, without thought of cameras, or angles, or lighting. All of which brings up the subject of animal fights, and particularly recalls to mind what I consider the finest animal fight ever filmed, and the first one ever attempted in Malaya—twenty-three years ago.

During those twenty-three years since that first attempted animal fight in pictures, a lot of water has flowed through the Straits of Malacca. Hollywood has been born and flourished; a great deal has been learned about the taking of animal pictures. And Rule-Number-One—with me, at any rate—is, and has been: "Make your pictures authentic."

You'll understand what I mean when you hear the strange story of the *first* movie animal fight, which, curiously enough, is coupled with my *last* one.

A year ago I was in Northern Johore in the Malay Peninsula taking shots for *Wild Cargo*. Animal picture making sounds simple to most people. There is no plot, no story, no actors, no settings; the general impression is that you just go out into the jungle and grind away with

cameras. Only you *don't*. Not if you want to get pictures, you don't.

In the first place, the animals themselves are your actors —bad actors, some of them, dangerous, and as temperamental as any Hollywood beauty. They make their own plot and story as they go along, and they're likely to change any scenario you've hoped for, suddenly and without warning.

Besides this, the "stage" those animals work on—the jungle—is your setting. The jungle is *always* dark, even on the brightest, sunniest day. Great trees grow toward the sky, their branches interlace, and as if this weren't enough to discourage camera work, those branches are tied and bound together by countless thick vines and creepers. It's a damp, dark place, and the only possible way to get effective pictures is to find a clearing where the sun can penetrate, or at least where a good bright light comes through, set up your cameras, keep quiet, and hope and pray an animal comes along to be photographed—or that, by the use of beaters, baits or other devices, the animal can be *induced* to come along to have his photograph taken.

All of which is one of my problems in making animal moving pictures. When I move into a district and set up camp, first I send out all of my boys and let it be known to the *sakai* that I will reward anyone who brings me news of any particular spot an animal is known to frequent in a jungle clearing—a clearing light enough so that shots of the animal can be taken.

I was delighted on my last trip when a native came running into my temporary camp in Northern Johore with the news that a great python was coiled beside a jungle trail four miles away.

"Is it a big snake?" I asked.

"*Ular besar!*" he answered.

"Is it in the open? So I can get pictures of it?"

"*Ada, Tuan!*" he cried. "Python coil beside clearing on jungle trail!"

This was enough for me. All animals in the jungle more or less use trails through the forest. Some of these trails, the ones that lead to jungle streams and water holes, are almost as well-worn as a man-made footpath. Animals are like humans in this respect; they'll take the easiest way toward where they are going. Why beat down the jungle, and circle ferns and underbrush, when there's a well-defined path leading directly where they want to go? Consequently these trails are much more open, and lighter, than the surrounding jungle.

I knew that if there actually were a python waiting beside a jungle trail—and in the open—I had a grand chance of getting a rare picture. That python could only be coiled there for one thing: he was hungry and wanted food. And he wouldn't move until he *got* it, no matter what disturbed him, or how long he had to wait. When these big constrictors devour a fair-sized animal, no more food is required for a period of six or eight weeks, so the matter of waiting alongside a game trail for a number of days in no way affects their patience. Almost any animal that finally came down that jungle trail would be grist for that python's mill. It might eventually be an antelope, a mouse deer, a monkey, or a wild boar. Any of them would make an interesting picture.

But I had bigger ideas. Four miles from where the *sakai* described the python as waiting, there was a native village. The village had long been troubled by a black leopard—a

leopard that had killed sheep and goats, and once had even attacked a native child.

Now a black leopard is the villain of the jungle. He's just about as tough an animal as walks on four feet. He'll whip his weight in anything that moves. He'll even go out of his way to pick a quarrel—and usually win it. So I knew if there was any possible way of getting this killer near where the python was lying, there'd be a battle—and a battle royal!

But before making any definite plans, I first went the four miles by bullock cart and had a look at the *sakai's* python. Sure enough, he was coiled up near the trail, in a light, open spot, just waiting for anything that came down it. I hastily called up my movie cameras and as silently as possible placed them behind screens of ferns and creepers. I was ready for anything now—a battle, or just a square meal for the python!

But I hoped for more than this. I knew that if I could possibly get that black leopard that had been terrorizing the villagers within range of my cameras, I might get a rare and unique animal fight—something absolutely new to the screen, something that few men—even those who have lived all their lives in the jungle—have ever seen.

I contacted the villagers on the idea. They were more than pleased at the prospect of getting rid of this black leopard—this *kuching*—that had been making their lives miserable. They agreed to beat the jungle—to form in a long line—and try to drive the black leopard the four miles through the forest toward my cameras and the spot where the great python lay.

With all arrangements made with the *sakai* villagers, I went back to my cameras and the lean-to we had built in the

shelter of the jungle. We had built the lean-to on general principles; there's no law that you can't be comfortable while waiting for an animal fight. I have had cameras masked and screened for days at a time. There is no telling when your animal actors will perform, or *how* they'll perform, and you have to be ready at any minute when they start in their starring rôles. A few seconds of delay in grinding a camera can mean the loss of a long-hoped-for picture.

There's another thing of which you never can be sure. Should your big scene, your animal fight, happen after dark—as it very likely may—you're just out of luck. Your cameras won't record in darkness any more than they will in unlit places in the jungle in day-time. And the result is you've lost precious days of preparation for nothing.

All I could hope for in getting my black leopard and hungry python together, was that they *would* get together, and that it would happen while the tropic sun was still shining over the jungle. Otherwise I couldn't get a picture.

While I was sitting in the lean-to—my camera men alert and ready in case the leopard, or any other animal should show up on the jungle trail—Ali came hustling up.

"*Tuan*," he said. "Friend of yours come from camp in bullock cart."

"Who is it?" I asked.

"*Tuan* Barnes."

"Oh," I said. "Bring him here at once, Ali."

I had known Gerald Barnes for a number of years. I had met him first in Kuala Lumpur, the capital of the Federated Malay States. We had liked each other, and had kept track of one another ever since. We had met in London, New York, Penang, and more or less all around the world. I had

last seen him two weeks before in Singapore, before starting out into the jungle, and had asked him to visit me in my camp in Johore. Evidently he had come while I was out on location, and Ahmed, my Number-Two boy, had sent him on in the bullock cart.

I was delighted to see him. We went into the lean-to and had a drink, and then sat comfortably in the camp chairs I had brought along. He asked me what I was doing there, and I told him.

" You really expect to get a fight picture between a black leopard and a python ? " he asked.

" I don't expect it," I said. " I only hope for it. The beaters are starting just about now to drive that leopard this way. All I can do is wait. There's no telling what two animals will do when they get together—*if* they do."

Barnes chuckled. " Don't I know it ! " he laughed.

I was a little surprised that Barnes should know anything about animals. While he had lived in the East for a great many years, he had never spent any time in the jungle. His job was as representative of London and American drug firms, and he was agent for various drug and medicinal products all through the Malay Peninsula. He sold them to all the dispensaries from Singapore to Bangkok.

" How do you know anything about animals ? " I asked. Barnes laughed again.

" You'd be surprised ! It's funny me coming up here just as you're trying to get a picture of an animal fight. You see, I was a witness—in fact, one of the instigators—of the first animal fight ever attempted in the films."

" How long ago was this ? "

" Oh—way back—1911, I think. Yes, that far anyway.

It was when Pathé Frères were making those first travelogue pictures. Remember them?"

Of course I remembered those pictures. It was in the earliest days of the travelogues when a camera was mounted on the platform of a railway car, and the audience, in seeing railroad tracks and telegraph poles and now and then a bit of scenery, thought they were getting a view of the untracked world for five cents! As I remember, the films were called "Hale's Tours."

"Gaston Verlaine came over here about that time," Barnes went on.

"Who was Gaston Verlaine?" I asked.

"A representative of Pathé Frères and their travelogues," Barnes said. "I met him in Kuala Lumpur, and in those days a white man in the East was a friend no matter who he was. You know the Spotted Dog Club?"

"Of course!"

Everybody who has been in the East knows the Spotted Dog. It's really the Kuala Lumpur Club, but everyone in Malaya speaks of its oldest and most famous club as the Spotted Dog.

"Well, it all happened there," Barnes said. "Verlaine and I and Reg Mason were there having a *pahit* when all at once the Sultan of Trengganu came in——"

"Wait a minute!" I interrupted. "This is getting a little complicated. You, and Verlaine, and Reg Mason—and now the Sultan of Trengganu!"

"I suppose it is. Old Man Guy comes into it, too."

"That name's familiar, anyhow," I said. "Didn't Old Man Guy run the Federal Dispensary at Kuala Lumpur?"

"That's right—that's where I met him. And a wonderful old trader he was! Keen blue eyes, a beard like a goat,

and a knack of making money where there wasn't any. He started in the drug business when there were practically no drugs except opium sold in the East. Yet the Federal Dispensary still hangs its sign out in the capital."

"I've heard a lot of stories about Guy," I said.

"Probably not any that paint a true picture of him. He was simple, yet complex—a little boy, yet a wise old man. He came out here to the East to sell real drugs—authentic drugs—British drugs of known medicinal value. And he got clean off the track."

"How?" I asked.

"Well, how are you going to sell authentic medicine to Straits-born Chinese who only want to buy *obat?* How can you dispose of real drugs to natives who would rather have tiger whiskers or powdered rhinoceros horn than all the real medicine in the world?"

"I don't know," I shrugged, smiling. "It's a little difficult, knowing these Straits-born Chinese superstitions."

"Guy didn't know, either," Barnes said. "He'd no sooner opened his dispensary before some Chinese coolies came in with various animals to sell to him. Animals with whiskers and gall-bladders that were in great demand all through the East—the only kind of medicine Guy's trade wanted to buy. What was the poor old boy to do?"

I didn't try to answer that question. There was nothing for Guy to do, of course, except cater to his trade. If his customers preferred whiskers, animal gall-bladders, or powdered horn to real medicine, what could a shop-keeper do but sell it to them?

It's a peculiar fact all through the Far East that wherever the Chinese go they improve the race. They have done wonders for the Malay strain. Hundreds of years ago

Chinese from the Island of Hainan came to Malaya. They are now the brown colour of the Malays, but they still have retained their ambition, their slant eyes, and their native superstitions. All through the Straits there are thousands of Chinese coolies, and they are the best workers obtainable in any tropical country. If you want to clear out a thousand acres of jungle to plant rubber, a dozen Chinese wood-choppers would do the job in half the time that a whole Malay village might accomplish it. All the tin mining operations are carried on by these same Chinese coolies, and out of the great mass of this transplanted population, many have risen to high positions. They are the leading native citizens, the merchants and the business men, yet despite their prosperity and rise in the Malay world, they have never shaken off their old ties. They still believe tiger whiskers and gall-bladder and rhino horn are good medicine —good *obat!*

Which, I gathered from Barnes, was why Guy's Federal Dispensary flourished.

"They brought Guy in all sorts of animals," he said. "Civet cats, porcupines, antelopes—everything! And Guy, after a time, took them all. He had to, you see, to keep his business going. He had quite a private zoo in the rear of his dispensary. Almost anything could be called for and obtained at Old Man Guy's, from snake fangs to tree-toads' hearts! Once they even brought him in a jungle-built cage the most savage-looking black leopard you or anyone else ever saw! Which is where I come in."

"You?" I asked. "How do *you* come into this, Barnes?"

"Oh, the story goes back now to the Spotted Dog," Barnes smiled. "Verlaine—the Pathé man—and I, and

Reg Mason, were all having a *pahit* and talking about Verlaine's business—which was taking moving pictures of strange lands. We got talking about the animals of Malaya, and fights between them—when suddenly the Sultan of Trengganu walked into the club."

"Wait a minute," I said. "I met the Sultan some years ago. He trained wild water buffalo to fight, didn't he?"

I was thinking of something that until very recently has been a practice in Malaya—the fighting of wild water buffalo. The various rulers and Sultans of native states captured these animals young and trained them as fighters. It was a pastime all through the Peninsula, as popular with the Malays as bull fighting in Spain and Mexico—except animal was pitted against animal rather than man. A great deal of money was bet on these fights, and the élite of Malaya gathered wherever one was to occur. British residents in the various states have now discouraged water buffalo fights. The last one I saw was in 1919 in Keddah, when two big, powerful bulls battled it out to a finish. In Keddah still, I understand, water buffalo fights are occasionally held secretly.

"That's right," Barnes said. "The Sultan of Trengganu had some water buffalo in those days that were supposed to be unbeatable—the best in all Malaya and the Federated States. Well, you see now where all this is leading, Frank. Verlaine wanted pictures for Pathé of animals. My idea was: why not a picture of an *animal fight?*"

"What kind of animals?" I asked.

"The Sultan's water buffalo, of course!"

"And——?"

"And the *black leopard* Old Man Guy had just taken in trade in his Dispensary 'Zoo'!"

"Phew!" I whistled. "That's a queer combination!" Barnes grinned.

"You don't know the half of it! I suggested the idea, and everyone was delighted. The Sultan, because he knew his prize water buffalo and its fighting qualities; Old Man Guy because he had seen the fangs and claws of that leopard he didn't want, and was confident it could kill any buffalo; and Verlaine, because he hoped to get a startling and unique picture. So we all had another *pahit*, made some bets, and went off happy."

"But the fight?" I asked. "Was it held?"

"Sure it was—the *first* animal fight ever filmed! We went up to the Sultan's place and built a big enclosure of logs. Nobody knew much about camera work in those days, so we put up a platform at one side of the stockade, where Verlaine could stand out of harm's way and crank his box. Old Man Guy, his goat's beard flying, wanted a ring-side seat, so he went up there too. The Sultan and I climbed to the top of the fence on one side, and Reg Mason sat on the other."

"What was Mason for?"

"Oh, Reg rather fancied himself with a rifle. He'd done a bit of game hunting, and he thought it a good idea to have a gun ready in case anything went wrong."

"He was right," I said.

"Oh, yes. Only Reg didn't know as much about a gun as he thought. Well, anyway, the Sultan's men turned his prize wild water buffalo into the enclosure. He was a beautiful animal, strong and powerful as an ox, almost as graceful as an antelope, with tremendous horns as powerful and sharp as spears!

"And then more of the natives raised the door of the

ELEPHANT TRAP NEARLY FINISHED

(See illustration facing page 200.)

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

leopard cage with a rope, and the big cat came out, black and shiny as coal in the sunlight, and—as I imagine Guy had starved him for a week—hungry and mad as sin !

" We all held on tight to our perches, and Verlaine's camera on the platform began to click——"

Barnes stopped speaking and I looked at him impatiently.

" Well ? " I asked. " What happened ? "

He grinned.

" Nothing."

" Nothing ! "

" The fighting water buffalo took one look at the nice green grass inside the enclosure, bowed his head, and began to eat it ! And the savage leopard blinked in the sunlight at the stockade, and began to nose around its base looking for a way out back to the jungle ! That buffalo, trained to fight other water buffalo, had never seen a leopard before—it was no worry to him. And the leopard, having lived its life in the jungle, had never seen a water buffalo. They completely ignored each other ! The thing was a fake from beginning to end ! "

I laughed at the ludicrous picture Barnes drew—a fight that wouldn't come off, while all the time a camera on a platform clicked at nothing !

" Wait a minute," he said. " It's not over yet."

" They did fight then ? " I asked.

" No."

" What happened ? "

" What happened was pretty funny—and tragic, too. Old Man Guy got impatient. He had bet with the Sultan on his leopard, and his leopard wouldn't fight. All it did was nose around the fence. So Guy ripped a couple of

boards off the platform, and when the big cat came close he tossed them down at it.

"The leopard looked up—and saw Guy. It didn't know what a water buffalo was, but it *did* know a man—and it was loose! Gathering itself together, that big cat gave one spring and was on top of the platform! The next second it was on top of Guy—with bared fangs and claws!

"Verlaine took one look at the fury of that leopard, and jumped to the ground—camera and all! The film out of his box went trailing along the grass as it smashed. And just as Verlaine hit the ground, the wild water buffalo looked up. It might not know a leopard, but it was a fighting buffalo, and it also knew a man! The water buffalo charged Verlaine!

"Verlaine saved himself by dodging under the platform. The whole thing shook as the buffalo hit it. The Frenchman had quite a time under there—dodging from side to side every time the buffalo charged——!"

"But what happened to Guy?" I asked impatiently. "The leopard was on top of him——"

"Yes, the leopard was on top of Guy—on the platform. And this is where Reg Mason comes in—Reg with his emergency rifle on the fence. No doubt the leopard was killing poor Guy, so Reg raised his rifle and fired!"

"Good!" I said.

"Good?" said Barnes. "Well, it might have been. Only instead of hitting the leopard—*Reg hit Guy!* The leopard, alarmed by the shot, took one jump from the platform to the top of the fence, and one more from there to the ground on the outside. When last seen that leopard was heading due north toward the jungle where it came from in the first place!"

Barnes drew a deep breath.

"And that," he finished, "is the *true* story of the first animal fight ever attempted by the movies—back in 1911! The Sultan's men rounded up the buffalo, and we got Verlaine, shaking and pale as a pint of milk, out from under the platform. But poor Guy—clawed and thoroughly shot—was dead."

We sat a moment in silence.

"I suppose," I said at last, "you being a drug representative, the moral is that a dispensary in the East shouldn't sell tiger whiskers and rhino horn."

Barnes shook his head.

"No," he said seriously, "I think the moral is that you *can't fake animal pictures*. You've got to be authentic or there's no 'take.'"

It was about this time that Ali, panting for breath, came running up to the lean-to where Barnes and I sat with our drinks.

"*Tuan!*" he cried. "Beaters come through jungle! Can hear them in distance!"

I sprang to my feet and took up a rifle.

"Come along, Barnes," I said, "if you want to get a look at this."

Barnes hesitated a moment, and then followed. Perhaps he was thinking of that other movie attempt on which poor Guy had been killed.

We reached the screens behind which my cameras were ready. The light had begun to fail, but there was still enough of it if the leopard came soon. The python still lay coiled there by the trail, apparently slumbering. But I knew he was alert and ready for instant action.

Off in the jungle to the north I could hear the sound of

the beaters from the village the leopard had been annoying. Those beaters were doing a good job. They didn't want to lose any more of their sheep—or *any* of their children—to this black demon that had terrorized them! They were raising mild hell in that jungle, and I knew that unless the leopard had gone into a den he must be ahead of them.

All at once I saw him!—a black face with shiny green eyes at the far side of the clearing!

He looked around boldly, missed us behind the screens, and loped into the clear. In his excitement at the unusual noise behind him, he entirely overlooked the coiled python.

There was a lightning-like movement in the grass. Like an anchor chain in the sun running down the side of a ship, that python struck! He caught the leopard by the neck with his great mouth, and a coil of silver muscle literally shot up and around the black body!

The leopard let out a savage scream that shook the jungle. He tore with his great claws at the gigantic snake. He squirmed and fought and flung his body into the air with all his strength. But another coil of the python slipped over him like a silver wave over a bit of black beach.

The leopard tore at the snake with claws and fangs—just as he had torn at village sheep, and would have torn at native children! But he was tearing at solid snake muscle now—muscle strong as steel, muscle that bound him in, coil after coil, link after link, like a powerful and unbreakable chain!

When it was over, and the great cat lay crushed and still, there was nothing of him visible except a black head and tail. His whole body was surrounded by coil after coil of python.

I turned excitedly to the camera men.

"Did you get it all?" I demanded.

They nodded, their faces white and a bit awed. The whole thing had been finished so quickly, you see. Two minutes had seen the death of the black demon that had terrorized a whole village! A black leopard, that for its size and weight is the most vicious and ferocious of all fighting animals!

Barnes touched my shoulder. I had forgotten he was there.

"Frank!" he exclaimed. "You've got the greatest animal fight ever filmed! It was all there, all in the open—no close-ups, no tricks!—right in the jungle where it actually took place! You got it just as it really happened! I told you the moral of Old Man Guy and that story of mine was authenticity!"

Maybe Barnes is right—I don't know. But now, when I see an animal fight on the screen, or a real one in the jungle, I can't help thinking of Old Man Guy and that ill-fated attempt of his, back in 1911, to film the movies' first animal fight.

XIV

GIANT ORANG

UNTIL very recently I have never kept animals long in captivity. My job has been their capture in the jungle, and then the problem of their immediate health until I have been able to get them back to America and distributed to the various zoos and menageries which have ordered them.

Don't think, however, that there isn't a serious problem here. A great many newly-captured animals don't take easily to cage life; if they are young they miss their mothers, if they are old they miss their mates. And there is always the matter of food. On my last expedition to Nepal I captured a young Indian male rhinoceros—one of the rarest animals in the whole world. He was just a baby weighing only a little more than a ton. But the food problem of my baby was colossal. I knew that I might very easily lose that valuable young rhino by a change of diet on the long trip down across India to Calcutta. I solved it finally by packing a half-ton of jack fruit leaves—of which the baby was very fond—on the backs of each of three pack elephants, and carrying a ton and a half of rhino food with me.

This is just a sample of my difficulties. Sometimes I bring back several hundred birds and animals in the same shipment, and I have them to nurse and feed for thirty or forty days on shipboard. Not only do I have to nurse and feed them—I have to keep them warm and dry. Animals, you see, often have to ride on the open deck, where, if we run into bad weather—or a typhoon, as I have many times—

my wild cargo gets whipped by wind and drenched by mountainous waves that smash over the rails.

Naturally the mortality rate is fairly high. It's one of the things that makes animals so expensive; remember that if you're thinking of starting a private zoo, and don't be amazed if you should be asked twelve or fifteen thousand dollars for a rhino in case you should want one for a pet.

But the story I started to tell is about a giant orang-utan—the biggest orang-utan ever captured—and they come plenty big. This is *his* story—how he was caught, how he lived, the problem of keeping him in captivity for many months, and of all the heart-aches and thrills he gave me.

If you've never seen an orang, you should. They're majestic and savage animals of the anthropoid ape family, They have all of man's dignity, and judging by some men I've known, a bit more sense. I compare them with man because that's the way the natives of Borneo and Sumatra think of them. "Orang," you see, means "man"—and "utan" means "jungle"; so an orang-utan to the Batiks and tribesmen of the Far East is a "man of the jungle." In some cases they add "bezar," which means "big" or "enormous"—and they're right about that, too.

An orang is built like a man, except that he has shorter legs and longer arms. He has a wide, flat face—so flat that it looks like a taut piece of black leather. In it are two calm-looking eyes, eyes that are curious, hard, yet as calculating as any eyes you have ever seen. Below the chin there hangs a large bag which can be inflated or deflated at will. When the orang becomes excited he puffs it out enormously. swelling up like nothing so much as a big leather bellows, Around his face, around the whole body in fact, is a tremendous growth of sandy, reddish hair. From the arms

it hangs down a full foot, like Spanish moss dripping from a southern oak. It is thick across the back and shoulders, and when an orang is curled up for a snooze he looks for all the world like the nice, brown lap-robe that used to be in grand-pa's sleigh. That is, he does until he moves—and then *you* move too !

When the Century of Progress in Chicago was preparing for its 1934 season, the officials set aside an island for a midway. This island was reached by bridges from the mainland. It was new to the Exposition—which had been running all the previous year—and the officials realized that to get people across the bridges they must have new and distinctive attractions on the other side.

At this time I had just returned from a ten-and-half-month trip in Asia. I had made my second motion picture—*Wild Cargo*—and I had with me as rare a collection of birds and animals as was ever seen in America. It occurred to the World's Fair officials that here was an attraction that would draw people in vast numbers across the new bridges to Northerly Island—a " Frank Buck Jungle Camp."

I consented to build such a camp on a plot of almost two acres. The materials for the buildings and animal sheds were brought all the way from Malaya. There was genuine attap for roofing and siding—hardwood logs from the jungles of Johore—bamboo and rattan from Negri Sembilan—all transported eleven thousand miles to Chicago.

I reproduced at the World's Fair a complete camp, exactly the same as I build in the Malayan jungles, with an actual sleeping quarters of expanded metal. And my Number-One and Number-Two boys, Ali and Ahmed, were there—sleeping, cooking their meals, and taking their baths each day as all good Mohammedans must do. Around

them—around the table on which they ate their food—honey bears and gibbons played and wrestled and fought. Sometimes just looking at that camp made me homesick. It was so genuine, so real. And then the music of the merry-go-round next door would come drifting in, and I'd realize I was on the shore of Lake Michigan and not the Straits of Malacca.

For the first time in my career I showed a complete animal exhibit myself. In the centre was a rock "mountain" seventy-five feet high surrounded by a moat of water. On it I turned loose four hundred rhesus monkeys. And how they fought and played and scampered up and down those rocks after the thousands of peanuts and bags of popcorn people threw them! I had no food problem with those monkeys. They were so attractive and cute to their spectators that the only problem was to keep them from eating too much free food and getting fat.

I had leopards and tigers, bears and bintorungs, and even a baby elephant just under four feet high. I had rare Oriental birds from New Guinea, Malaya, India. I had a king cobra fourteen feet long—the biggest in the world. Among hundreds of other specimens were giant monitor lizards, which I had captured in Malaya. These lizards are seldom seen in this country—seldom seen anywhere, in fact. Each of them weighed nearly a hundred pounds and was eight to nine feet long—a lizard! They are closely related to the famous dragon lizards of the Komodo Islands, and are almost prehistoric in type.

In the snake line I had two of the biggest reptiles ever exhibited anywhere in America. They were the immense pythons which I had captured in *Wild Cargo*. One, you may remember, swallowed alive a hundred and fifty pound

pig. And the other, in battle, killed a vicious black leopard—one of the most savage animals that walks—in less than two minutes. Both of these pythons were nearly thirty feet long, and weighed almost three hundred pounds each.

But the rarest specimen in the entire collection, and the one that caused the most excitement among the spectators, was a giant orang-utan. When I say *giant*, I mean it. He was the biggest orang-utan ever captured. He had an arm-spread of eight and a half feet. His great, flat, black face was thirteen inches wide. No one in America—or the world, for that matter—had ever seen such a beast. In *one day* eighty-five thousand people crowded around his cage and stared at him with wide, amazed eyes.

That cage itself was a problem. It had to be big enough to allow the orang plenty of exercise—with a strong bar across the top on which he could swing—yet it had to be strong enough to make escape impossible. If that orang once got his hands on a man, the man would last just long enough to be drawn close by those tremendous arms and have canine teeth bigger than a tiger's sunk in his throat.

I made the cage strong enough by using three-inch hard-wood timbers dove-tailed together. The dove-tailing was necessary. If there had been any cracks large enough for the orang's fingers, he could have ripped the joints apart. Across the front of it I placed solid iron bars which would have discouraged even the most determined jail-breaker.

But my cage problems weren't over with solidity. Orangs, despite their great size, are delicate animals. They live their lives in the heavy, tropical heat of the equatorial jungles. Chicago has chilly nights even in July, and down-right cold ones in November. I knew that if I hoped to

keep my valuable orang alive—I had refused five thousand dollars for him—I would have to keep him warm.

I solved half the problem by devising a glass front for his cage. It was heavy glass in three sections, which could be fitted on or off the front of the cage a section at a time. Thus, if it were cold, my orang's fans could see him through the glass without his feeling the stiff Lake Michigan breezes.

But this was only half the problem. That cage had to be heated, and its heat maintained at an even seventy-six degrees of temperature. How to do this stumped me for a while, until I hit on the idea of installing electric heaters at each end behind heavy screens where the orang couldn't get at them. These worked beautifully, and a guard (in constant attendance to keep the fans from feeding the star of the show), took a thermometer reading every half hour and turned the electric heaters on or off as was necessary. So my orang was kept as cosily warm as he would have been at home in his native Sumatran jungle.

I mentioned a food problem in connection with my Indian rhino. Mr. Orang presented that same problem in an intensified form. Not only did my guards have to prevent people from tossing all sorts of indigestible tit-bits through the bars of his cage, but I had to hit upon some diet that would please his sensitive taste and at the same time keep him alive and thriving.

Oranges and bananas—all sorts of fruit, in fact—were acceptable to him. He would eat a dozen or so bananas with éclat and gusto. But it wasn't until I hit on something else that I became confident of keeping my orang well and happy. This *pièce de resistance* was a molasses sandwich. Thick slices of bread, with generous fillings of molasses,

was a Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner all rolled into one for my star boarder.

As I say, that giant orang was my prize attraction. From morning to midnight people gathered around his cage with a look on their faces that said: "There ain't no such animal!" Every time I came near I was cornered and besieged by eager interrogators. The questionnaire which was submitted to me at least a thousand times was invariably the same.

Q. Where did you capture him, Mr. Buck?

A.: In the jungles of Sumatra.

Q.: How big is he?

A.: Well, he has an arm-spread of about eight and a half feet. Of course I haven't held out his arms to measure him.

Q.: How much does he weigh?

A.: I've never put him on the scales, but I'd safely say two hundred pounds.

Q.: What does he eat?

A.: Molasses sandwiches.

Q.: (*Incredulously*) No!

A.: (*Firmly*) Yes.

Q.: How old is he?

A.: That's hard to say. An orang-utan gets his full growth when he's about eighteen. I'd say this one was approximately twenty-five.

Q.: But can't you tell by looking at his teeth—like a horse?

A.: Not *me!*

Q.: *How* did you capture him?

And this is where the questionnaire always stopped, because I've never had time to answer that question fully. Any short answer given before that glass-fronted cage

would have been thoroughly inadequate. The capture of that giant orang was one of the most difficult and thrilling of all my experiences; it took infinite patience and time, and it wasn't until it was actually accomplished that I really believed it possible.

In the first place, Borneo and Sumatra are the only lands in the world inhabited by orang-utans. Gibbon apes roam pretty much all through the jungles of Southern Asia, but these big brothers of theirs live only on those two islands south and west of the Malay peninsula.

It is always difficult to get a full-grown orang. Young ones are easy to obtain. All you have to do is go to a Batik village in Sumatra and buy them. I have purchased as many as eighteen at one time. The natives, you see, realizing their value, and knowing that sooner or later some trader will come along and pay real money for them, catch young orangs whenever they can. And they will go to any lengths to keep them alive until sold. It is a fairly common sight to see a Batik mother nursing her child at one breast and a baby orang at the other!

These young orangs become practically a member of the family. They eat, sleep and play with the children; they take on childish habits and become almost like human babies. They are very affectionate and loving, are delighted if picked up by a human, and scream like any spoiled child when put down on the ground again.

But a full-grown orang is a different proposition. Young ones may be tame and affectionate, but there is no more savage beast in the jungle than an angry or wounded grown male.

A male orang was what I wanted when I set out on my last expedition—a male, and the largest orang ever caught.

It was a tall order, and I knew it when I started to fill it.

There was difficulty even at the beginning. The Dutch own Sumatra, and the Dutch Government is very strict where orang-utans are concerned. Never very plentiful, a great many orangs have been shot for museum purposes and collected for zoos and menageries and other buyers so that had the Government not stepped in the orang might very easily in a few more years have become extinct. The Dutch also protect rare birds of their East Indian territories, the Victoria crown pigeon and the famously beautiful birds of Paradise are likely to survive there.

I didn't expect much trouble on this score when I left my compound at Singapore on a K.P.M. boat bound up the Straits of Malacca for Sumatra. All I wanted was permission to capture two orangs, and as I have always played fair with the Government—and the Dutch know it—I knew I could get the necessary permit.

Because of the strict laws regarding orangs, there is occasional smuggling in this field. Chinese in coastwise boats for a small sum will smuggle young orangs out of Sumatra whenever they can secure them at the little native ports where they call in for jungle produce. Never having gone in for this sort of thing, I was able after landing at Belawau Deli, which is the port for the city of Madan, to get permission to capture and take out of the country the two orangs I wanted. I might add that the permission was given me through the kindness and generosity of Dr. Dammermann, head of the Museum of Natural History of Bitzenzorg, which is just outside of Batavia, the capital of all the Dutch East Indies.

With permission obtained, I hired a motor at Madan,

and Ali and I drove from the famous DeBour Hotel two hundred and fifty kilometres north into Atchin. This route took us through one of the richest tobacco and rubber growing sections in the world. With typical Dutch thrift these plantations are as neat and well-ordered as the clean streets and clear canals of homeland Holland itself.

But the farther north we went the wilder grew the country until we reached our final stopping place with the car—a rest-house in Atchin on the border of the jungle. The Governments of all Eastern provinces maintain these rest-houses for the convenience of white travellers in out-of-the-way places. They are the only fit roofs for a white man to take shelter under.

From the rest-house it was a matter of walking through jungle trails to a Batik village I knew and which I had visited before for orangs. We walked because Sumatran jungles are in places too dense to permit even a bullock cart to pass. Many of the trails were originally made by animals—thousands of animals over hundreds of years—taking the line of least resistance to the streams and water holes. And jungle man, like the animals, also takes the ready-made and easiest way to where he wants to go.

The jungles of Sumatra are as thick and dark and beautiful as any in the world. The trees are enormous—tremendous. Giant durians rise a full two hundred feet into the air, with lesser tropical redwoods, and jack fruit trees, and marantis—the trunks of which the Batiks use to make their hollowed-out *praus* and canoes. They make a complete green roof over your head, matted with vines and creepers, and in places entirely blot out the sun, the sky, and the breeze. In their damp crotches great orchids and ferns

grow, and I have seen the ground literally a mass of colour from the petals of fallen flowers.

We finally reached the village I was headed for, and I got in touch with the *pangkulu*, the headman—who is about the same as a *pawang* in Malaya. He remembered me from former trips, and after giving me a delicious, cool drink of coco-nut milk, was ready to talk business. I told him I was in search of orang-utans; that I wanted a full-grown male, and the biggest orang he had ever seen in his life. He immediately waxed eloquent.

"*Mias bezar* (great, enormous orang) in this forest," he told me. "*Mias* so big trees shake when he climb! *Mias* so big he darken sky when he swing through tree tops!"

Knowing typical native exaggerations I discounted sixty per cent of what the *pangkulu* said. I knew he was anxious to get work for fifty or so of his villagers, and was laying the *bezar* business on a bit thick. Yet he had worked for me before, and in general he was as truthful as any native could be. I had no doubt but what there was a genuinely big orang in the district, and I determined to have a look at it.

"All right, *pangkulu*," I said. "I'll make a camp here. Send out your scouts to find this *mias bezar*, and I'll see what he looks like."

This "scouting" of a Sumatran jungle sounds a great deal easier than it actually is. As I've said, it's as dense as any jungle anywhere, and to effectively cover thirty or forty square miles of it on a search for an orang-utan in the tree tops is a business that wears out both native feet and white-man patience. An orang seldom makes a noise, and then merely a sucking-in of the lips that can be heard for only a short distance. So his presence cannot be easily

A SPOTTED LEOPARD SNARLING ITS DEFIANCE FROM THE TOPMOST BRANCHES OF A HIGH JUNGLE TREE

Frank Buck captured it by cutting the limb of the tree with soft-nosed bullets, causing the Leopard to fall into a net of steel held by native boys on the ground below.

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spotted. And an orang seldom comes to the ground except for water, so his spoor cannot be followed like that of an elephant or tiger, as it is lost immediately he takes to the trees again. It is practically necessary to see an orang in the trees, and then follow him as he swings from tree to tree, if you ever hope to capture him.

Consequently I was delighted one day when one of the *pangkulu's* scouts came running into the camp I had built with news that the *mias bezar* had been found. He was eight miles away in the jungle, and boys were on his trail and following every move he made.

Ali, the *pangkulu* and I covered those eight miles as quickly as the dense growth of vines and creepers would permit. We came finally to the spot where the orang had been sighted, and found that he had moved—moved generously. Boys, posted along the route, pointed continually south, and a mile farther into the jungle we caught up with him.

He was in a tree-top ahead, high up, peering down at us from a hundred and fifty feet above, and he really looked small up there against the sky. As we watched him he launched his great, brown body into the next tree, and with a tremendous rustling of branches swung away from us.

"Sorry," the *pangkulu* apologized. "*Mias bezar* not *quite* so big as I say."

"*Pangkulu*," I said, "that's the biggest orang-utan I ever saw in my life! You've done a *grand* job!"

"Glad you pleased," he told me, with a beaming brown face.

I was more than pleased. I knew that up in those Sumatran jungle trees ahead of me was an orang bigger than

any that had ever been seen in captivity anywhere in the world. All that I had to do was capture him.

I presume that most of you have never captured a wild orang-utan. Well, we're even on that score; I've never repaired a watch, or built an automobile engine, or added a column of bank figures—all of which, I imagine, can be extremely interesting. But until you've seen a live orang-utan swinging through the tree-tops, intent only on escaping from that queer animal called man on the ground below him, you've never realized how difficult a job it can be.

I wanted that orang. We followed him for hours through that dark, Sumatran jungle. At times he would hang high in a tree, looking down at us with his fierce, beady eyes. At others he would swing swiftly from tree to tree, casting his weight from branch to branch so rapidly that it was difficult for us to keep up with him in the soft, dense going below.

But eventually I saw what I was looking for ahead. An immense durian tree loomed through the jungle. It rose high above the surrounding trees like an oak in a patch of scrub pine. And the orang was headed directly toward it.

"*Pangkulu!*" I called. "Get some men ahead of that durian tree, and on each side of it! When the *mias bezar* swings into it I want to keep him there! Have your boys pound on tree trunks and yell! I want to drive the *mias* to the top of that durian so he can't go any farther from tree to tree!"

The *pangkulu* carried out his orders. As soon as the orang swung into the durian his boys set up such an uproar that the astonished ape climbed high in the branches of the great tree and peered down in amazement mixed with animal anger.

"*Pangkulu!*" I called. "Your boys have got axes there! Start them chopping down all the trees around the durian! I want a whole circle cleared around that single tree so the *mias bezar* can't escape by swinging to another limb!"

The *pangkulu* was quick in getting the idea. We had chased that orang for a long way through the jungle, and he was as tired of the job as I was. The headman saw the plan of segregating the great ape in a single tree, and he went to work on it. In a little while trees were crashing to the ground all around that circle of jungle, and the *mias bezar* was looking down at us from his high perch with still astonished and outraged eyes.

It wasn't until late that night when the last tree hit the soft earth that I heaved a sigh of relief. I had my giant orang a prisoner high in the air; now all I had to do was get him to earth.

I thought of half a dozen ways of doing it. But by far the quickest and easiest seemed to be the method I had used in getting that rare clouded leopard up in Johore. So I sent some boys back to camp for a rope net I had brought along. It seemed to me at the time that an orang-utan up a tree could be captured in the same way as a leopard. I found out differently later.

When the boys came back with the net I had a dozen of them hold it directly under the limb on which the orang was perched. The idea was simply to shoot the limb out from under the ape, and by the law of gravity he would naturally fall into the net where he could be neatly entangled and, for all his great strength, rendered helpless in rope meshes.

The only trouble was that my orang ignored the law of gravity. He refused to be bothered by such natural con-

ventions. I am not an expert shot, but I can hit a four or five-inch limb a hundred and fifty feet in the air nine times out of ten and hit it just about where I want the bullets to land. I hit this one exactly eight times with a high-powered rifle bullet, and the limb cracked and fell. The only trouble was—the orang didn't fall with it. When he felt the limb snap under him he simply launched his bulk in the air, caught another limb with his strong hands, and swung on to it. And he sat on that limb and stared down at me disdainfully.

There was nothing to do but try it again. I tried it three more times. And each time as the limb was shot from under him my orang flew through the air with the greatest of ease, and swung safely on to a new branch of that durian tree.

I gave it up finally. Obviously this greatest of all orangs was too smart to be captured in this way. He defied the law of gravity; but there was one law of nature he could not long defy—*hunger*. I had him up a tree, a tree from which there was no escape. Sooner or later he *must* come down to feed and drink.

If you've never lived in a jungle lean-to for five days you won't know what I went through. No chairs, no mosquito netting, no cot. A lean-to roof of palm leaves to keep off any rain that might come—and that is all. Earth for a bed, leaves for a roof, and the open jungle for walls. But I was willing to put up with it all if only I could capture this *mias bezar* that still clung to the top branches of that durian tree. Sooner or later I knew he *must* come to earth for food and water. And when he came, with the aid of the *pangkulu*'s boys and the net, I knew I would get him.

Yet when he finally came I did nothing of the sort.

It was on the fifth day that he ventured down his tree. He was pretty well starved by this time, and mighty thirsty. I could tell by the way he lowered himself from limb to limb in that big durian tree that he was coming down to fight his way out. Every gesture, every movement of his big hairy arms said: "I'm going to get some food or know the reason why! And you're not going to stop me!"

I had the *pangkulu's* boys well prepared for this moment. For five days I had drilled into them what they were to do. The net was ready; the moment the orang touched the ground they were to pile on top of him with that net, toss it over his head, roll him over, get him so tangled in its meshes that he would be helpless.

The plan worked beautifully—except for the orang. The boys ran forward in the prescribed manner. They tossed the net over him as expertly as fishermen casting into a run of shad. But the *mias bezar* ignored the net. He pushed it aside with one sweep of his powerful arms. With the same sweep he knocked one boy ten feet away in a sprawling heap. And in the same motion he was back up his durian tree again, climbing limb after limb as an old-time sailor used to go up the rigging of the main mast.

So my orang-utan was up a tree again. And so were we.

I decided then to use different methods—strategy. By this time I actually felt that this was a personal war between the great orang-utan and myself. It was a question of wits, of brain, and I knew that sooner or later the mind of man must conquer the natural instincts and strength of the animal.

So I ordered the *pangkulu's* boys to build a trap. It was to be a heavy trap of solid, hard-wood logs; a trap and a cage both—strong enough to catch the orang, and strong

enough to carry him back to Singapore. At least, this was the idea.

The trap was the usual kind of animal trap, a sliding door that would drop when bait and trigger were touched. The only thing was, I couldn't use it in the usual way. I knew that if I set that trap on the ground my orang, instead of going in it, would be off in the jungle as fast as his legs could carry him. At all costs I had to keep him in that segregated durian, and it looked as if we would succeed in keeping him there as long as we remained in force on the ground below. The only way to do it was to set the trap *in the tree.*

I got four ropes over a high branch, tied them one to each corner of the trap, and the boys hoisted it up. It was a tough pull, and took the concentrated efforts of every native we had on the job. Ali, a monkey where trees are concerned, climbed along with it, guided it, and finally fastened it solidly on two parallel limbs. He then put in the bait, adjusted the trigger, and slid down the tree.

All the while the orang, high above, watched the proceedings with mingled anger and curiosity. Occasionally he would break off a limb and throw it at us furiously. Then he would merely sit and stare thoughtfully at this strange log box that had invaded his tree.

All the monkeys and apes are curious by nature. Never having heard the story of what curiosity did to the cat, they investigate anything new that comes their way. However, I doubt if that orang would have ventured near that trap if he hadn't been so hungry. He was a wise old ape, and unlike most over-sized animals he seemed to have a brain in proportion to his bulk. But he'd been without food for six

days now, and the luscious fruit inside that log box was calling.

It was plain that he suspected the box. When he finally ventured down the tree to the limbs it was on, he sat for a long time and studied it. Then, very cautiously, he attempted to reach the bait with one of his long arms. I had foreseen this manœuvre and placed it in the rear of the trap. The only way he could possibly get those tempting morsels was to go all the way in.

Sitting there looking at that food he went through all the temptations of Satan. His starved animal stomach said, "Go get it!" His cautious animal instinct said. "Careful!"

Stomach won. Into the trap he went—reached for the bait—and down slid the door with a roaring of logs. He dropped the fruit he had snatched and flung his weight against the door. He tore at the bars with all his great strength. I had a few bad moments as I watched that trap tremble and rock. But those hardwood jungle logs were solid and strong. And the rattan that bound them together was tough and tied by expert Batik hands. It wasn't, however, until my giant orang stopped his struggles and began to fill his stomach that had betrayed him with the bait that had caught him, that I breathed easily and ordered the boys to lower the cage to the ground.

So now you see why I couldn't answer off-hand the query of that questionnaire submitted to me so many thousands of times in front of the orang's cage at the World's Fair in Chicago: "How did you capture him?" It would have taken an hour each time to explain, and hours are precious when you have two thousand temperamental show stars on your hands, all demanding attention and

balanced diets—even if they are only animals, birds, and reptiles.

So about all I could answer in Chicago—and I'm afraid no one really understood—was : " They say the way to a man's heart is through his stomach. Well, the way to the capture of the biggest orang-utan in the world was also through his stomach."

The thousands who questioned me at the Century of Progress will understand now as they read this story.

XV

RUBBER

THIS is a story that came to me from Inspector Garahan of the Singapore C.I.D. You can believe anything Garahan tells you. He's a slow-moving, slow-thinking chap with a thatch of what was once flaming red hair. The hair is well-streaked with grey now, and most of its colour has died. But none of the steady flame that goes to make up Garahan's spirit and character will ever die.

He is one of my oldest friends in Malaya. I knew him more then twenty years ago, and our friendship has grown each time I have been out to the Far East. Garahan likes nothing better than to sit in the Raffles Hotel with me and chat. He hasn't been back home since he first went out, and he likes to hear all the first-hand news from England and America that I bring him. And I like to talk with Garahan. He probably knows more about the inside of life in Singapore and the surrounding country than any other man. It's been his business to find out why the various complicated wheels of Eastern life go round, and Garahan knows his business.

There aren't many what the police of America would call " big cases " in the East, so Garahan has had very little except petty thievery and the ordinary run of misdemeanours on which to keep his detective teeth sharp. A white man in the East, who gets himself into the ordinary sort of trouble that white men do the world over, is usually shipped out of the country on a one-way ticket. White men must outwardly at least be shining examples of all

the virtues. In a land so overwhelmingly populated by natives, every *tuan* or *sahib* must be looked up to as a sort of god who can do no wrong.

But once in a while a case comes along which cannot be glossed over or hushed up. Murder, even in the East, is the greatest of crimes, and someone usually has to answer for it. And a few times during his long career in Malaya, Garahan has had the problem of this answering on his hands.

I remember as clearly as if it were to-day when Garahan brought up the Denison affair. I had just come out to the East for a new collection of animals and birds, and before starting north into the jungles of Johore I was looking up old friends and acquaintances. Garahan, of course, was one of them, and we were sitting in the Raffles over a whiskey-and-soda. I had encountered him at the hotel entrance waiting for his Malay chauffeur to drive up to the doorway, and in spite of the fact that he seemed to be in a great hurry he insisted on coming into the lounge with me for a drink. We started talking over things that had happened since we had seen each other last when he suddenly said:

"Here's some news. Denison was killed last night."

"Not Williard Denison?" I asked.

"That's right. The big rubber man."

This *was* news—not only to Singapore, but to the whole world. Denison was an international power in the rubber business. Head of one of the biggest syndicates in the East, he supplied a large fraction of Malayan rubber to world markets.

"Automobile accident?" I asked.

"No," said Garahan. "It wasn't an accident."

"Not—an accident? But you said he'd been killed."

"I wouldn't call a *kriss* in the back an accident," said Garahan. "Would you?"

I must have appeared stupid, for I repeated his words: "A *kriss*—in the back?"

"That's right. A tough sort of death for a man like Denison. He *faced* everything all his life, and he finally died from a thrust from behind."

"Denison didn't have an enemy in Singapore. He's got a reputation for being the squarest, most honest man on the island!—in the whole of Malaya, for that matter!"

Garahan nodded and passed me a cigar.

"That's the puzzling thing. I can think of a dozen men who live here who wouldn't surprise me a bit if they turned up dead some morning. But Denison—well, as you say, it seems impossible. But he's *very* dead, Frank."

"When did it happen?" I asked, holding a match for Garahan's cigar.

"Last night. In the living-room of his house up Tanglin-way. You know that house?"

"I've seen it. It's one of the biggest in Singapore."

"And probably the most luxurious. Honestly, inside you'd think it was something straight from Paris—silk hangings, gilt furniture—of course, I've never been to Paris. Just a policeman's imagination. But it's pretty grand, and Denison could well afford it. You know, Frank—and I've looked up the figures, as a matter of duty—he was one of the richest white men in the East."

"I believe it. Everyone here talks of Denison when rubber's mentioned."

"Funny, isn't it? One of the richest men in Malaya dies just like a thieving Chinese coolie on the docks, with a knife thrust in his back."

"Forget the philosophy," I said. "This is going to echo from here to London. Who did it?"

"If I knew," said Garahan, "I wouldn't be here drinking whiskey-and-soda with you. I'd be out making the arrest."

"You must have some idea."

"An idea—yes. Nothing more."

"It sounds like a native job."

"The *kriss?* It does."

"Any servant trouble? Any 'boys' Denison had discharged or had words with?"

"Nary a boy. As a matter of fact, his servants sing his praises. The most generous *tuan* they ever had. No one was ever so kind or patient with them as *tuan* Denison. I've had inquiries made at his various plantation holdings—and he holds plenty—but all I can find is that everyone thinks he was perfect. His managers speak highly of him, and as you know, to work for the Denison interests—whether you tap rubber-trees or are general manager—is to get more pay than from any of the other big syndicates. I'm afraid there's nothing there, Frank."

"But that *kriss* didn't drop from nowhere!"

"No."

"He's the biggest man in Singapore. He belongs to both the Clubs. I've seen him in his box at the races. He's the society leader, the leading citizen, the——"

"*Was*, Frank. He's dead now. We've all accepted Denison as the big-shot, the leader, because he had the money, the power. But until now, I, at any rate, have never asked myself *where* and *how* did he get that money and power?"

"Rubber," I said.

"Rubber—yes. A good many fortunes have been built on rubber. But until I know how Denison got *his*, I don't expect to know why he died. This is just a hunch, but I feel it's a good one. I'm making inquiries now—probing back through the past. This is no ordinary servant-murder, no small, petty thing. The reason for it lies way back in things that are forgotten, things that happened perhaps twenty years ago, when Denison first came out here. I'm a patient man, Frank; policemen have to be."

This was the first I heard of the Denison affair, the day after it happened, from Garahan himself. I heard a lot about it in the days that followed. The murder was naturally the talk of Singapore, and it was discussed from morning to night, not only in Singapore, but in every hotel and Club in Malaya. The death of a man like Denison shocked the whole district. He was the leading citizen; whenever money was needed for local charitable projects, Denison donated it; he was the head of nearly every municipal committee, and his influence was felt northward all through the Peninsula and wherever his vast rubber holdings stretched. Now that he was dead he became even a greater figure—as most dead men do—a sort of saint who had never done and never could have done a wrong.

Naturally, pressure was put on Garahan and the police. At all costs the killer must be captured. Action was what

counted, and action was demanded. Yet Garahan refused to act because he had nothing on which to act. He went on patiently digging up old facts in the maze of ancient history, and he was still digging when I left Singapore for my jungle camp.

It was two months before I got back to the city again. Two months is a long time. A lot of ships pass in and out of the Singapore harbour in two months, and a lot of topics which once were hot, cool off and are no longer discussed. Denison's death, while not forgotten, had been dropped as an issue, and Garahan was allowed to work in peace.

But strangely enough, he seemed to be doing no work. He was going about his ordinary round of duties as if the Denison business were the furthest thing from his mind. I invited him to my room at the Raffles for a drink and asked him about it.

"Oh, that," he said.

"Have you made any progress, Garahan?"

"Lots. In fact, I imagine I know everything there is to know about the case."

"Even—who used that *kriss?*"

"Who used that *kriss*—and a lot of other things. I told you soil long fallow would be productive."

"But see here, Garahan. If you know who's guilty, why don't you arrest him?"

Garahan sipped a moment at his drink.

"You think I'm a pretty hard man, don't you, Frank?"

"You've got that reputation."

"Yes—the bulldog of the law—the relentless tiger who never relaxes a grip. Got some time on your hands?"

"All afternoon."

Garahan settled himself more comfortably in his chair.

"Then I'll tell you something, Frank, that I never expect to tell again. And after I've told you, I'm going to ask you a question."

"What question?"

"Simply, if you had been in my shoes, what would *you* have done?"

And this, substantially, is what Inspector Garahan of the Singapore C.I.D. told me that afternoon a few years ago in my room in the Raffles Hotel.

The reliable banks in the Far East are mostly branch banks of the well-established houses of the European capitals. In Singapore this is especially true, and the service and courtesy extended by the young men who spend their days behind the shiny counters is comparable with the best British tradition of London.

The boys who come out to Malaya and the East to enter the banking business have first gone through a thorough and efficient training school at home. They are the pick of the crop of young London bank apprentices, the most ambitious, the most willing workers. And they are rewarded for faithful service by gradual promotion and eventually by early retirement. The system works practically like the British Army System, and a young man who enters it, and works hard, knows that his entire future will be taken care of by the Company he has served. When a young man goes to Malaya in the banking business, he knows that that business is his life. His early years with the bank will mean hard work and long hours with small pay, but he will gradually rise from office to office as regularly

as an Army man, and in the end, at a comparatively young age, he will be retired on a well-deserved pension.

The thing really works. When a man has but one career, he knows when he starts that he definitely can reach the heights, he is pretty apt to throw all his brains and energies into his job, and the result is an even efficiency that continues from man to man and from generation to generation. Consequently the Charter Bank of Australia, India, China, the Hong Kong-Shanghai Bank, Ltd., and other big London banking institutions with branches in Singapore have a personnel that is excelled by few banks anywhere in the world.

It was into this Far Eastern banking service that young Jerry Scott decided to go. Scott was twenty-three at the time, fresh from Cambridge, with an alert mind, a healthy body, and the background of a fine old English family behind him. The East had a lure, as it always has for young men, and Scott felt it. He also sensed the opportunities that lay there. If he stayed in London he realized he would probably remain just one of the thousands who rode to work each morning on buses, and each evening rode home again. But if he went to the East he could satisfy his ambition in comparatively few years, and perhaps rise to the top of the Eastern branch offices. So he offered himself to the service, was tested, and accepted.

There was only one hitch in the programme. Ethel Washburn and Jerry Scott had grown up together. On sunny Sunday mornings they had gone to church together terrifically Episcopalian—and they rode on Mondays in the Washburn dog-cart, and played on Tuesdays beneath the pollard oak that in young imagination became Nelson's

FRANK BUCK CORNERED BY AN ESCAPED DEADLY COBRA SNAKE

(For sequel see illustration facing page 272.)

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flagship. Their more or less definite understanding grew during Scott's Cambridge days, and when he went into the bank it was all settled. They were to be married.

He went to her with the Far East proposal. They strolled along the Embankment on a spring night.

"I'd take it in a minute, Ethel," he said, "only it's going to delay things."

She turned her face towards the far-off English moon.

"You want to go, don't you, Jerry?"

"Yes—of course. Think what it will mean! We'll be able to have things—nice things—that much sooner. Here we'd be married and live in grubby rooms somewhere, and struggle along from year to year with nothing definite ahead of us. If I go East, promotion is certain. In no time at all I'll have a responsible position, we can be married, and start in where most people leave off."

She looked at his earnest face in the moonlight.

"You're terribly ambitious, aren't you, Jerry?"

"For you," he said. "I'd do anything for you. Honestly, Ethel, I can't see you living in a miserable London flat. Think of what the East would be like—a moon like that up there, only soft and warm, with blue tropical stars in the sky, and music drifting in across lazy water. And in a few years we'd *be* somebody there—have a responsible, well-paid position—without the struggle and the heart-break and the uncertainty we'd have here."

"You're sure of all this, Jerry?"

"Of course."

"And you're sure you'll want me?"

"Terribly. Ethel, as soon as I'm in a position to do it—I'll send for you. I'll never be able to live without you. You know that. Promise me one thing?"

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"Anything, Jerry."

"That you'll come when I send for you?"

She held his hand a moment.

"Jerry, until your letter comes I won't be living. I'll just be existing from day to day for the time when I can come to you."

Scott found Singapore banking rather different from what he had expected. Music didn't seem to drift in across lazy Eastern waters—at least, not for junior bank clerks. Nothing drifted except native Malays and imported Hindus and evil-looking Sikhs from India who ran bazaars in the native quarter. For junior bank clerks fresh from London there was work, more work, and very little pay.

The bank furnished a mess which gradually became Scott's pet abhorrence. Six young clerks were quartered there in a house barely large enough for three. Time and again Scott planned to leave it, and time and again realized the inadequacy of his pay to maintain a separate establishment. The bank also realised this, which was the reason it provided the mess.

There was no privacy there. Young Milgram knew everything Blake, the senior of the crowd did, just as Blake, who tried to keep a watchful eye on the whole five, knew every intimate detail of Scott's life. The Chinese houseboy knew what all of them did—gossiped over their private affairs, their little scraps and arguments, with other servants of his own nationality and with the Chinese Bank messengers who frequently came to the mess with papers to be worked over late at night by the bank's juniors. Then there were the necessary and unpleasant household routines to be attended to—commissary, laundry, super-

vising the house and cleaning. These responsibilities were apportioned each month among the members of the mess, and if they were not well done the wrath of the other five descended. Scott grew to hate the place and the young men with whom he was forced to live. He gave all his energies to his minor job at the bank in the hope of more quickly rising to a responsible position and the increased pay that would go with it.

He was terribly lonely. He was living in a strange world among strange people, without money enough even to half-way enjoy the pleasures it held. There were no Clubs with cool terraces and warm companionship for bank juniors, no *pahits* at the Raffles—at least one couldn't afford such luxuries very often—no invitations to any of the diplomatic affairs. Only a full day's work at the bank, and then a lonely evening in that damnable mess.

Scott refused the diversions Milgrim, Blake and the others found for themselves. Native women were cheap enough, even for Singapore bank clerks, but they were too cheap for Scott. He thought and dreamed more and more of Ethel.

He spent most of his spare time writing her letters. They were boyish letters, brave letters, all telling that he was working hard and surely it wouldn't be long before his ability was recognized. Anyhow, he'd at least be able to see Ethel in another two years because then he'd have his six months off and could go home for a visit. Six months out of every four years Eastern banks give home leave with full pay.

Suddenly Scott got his first promotion. A Far Eastern bank usually has a Chinese *compradore* who handles the

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Scott found Singapore banking rather different from what he had expected. Music didn't seem to drift in across lazy Eastern waters—at least, not for junior bank clerks. Nothing drifted except native Malays and imported Hindus and evil-looking Sikhs from India who ran bazaars in the native quarter. For junior bank clerks fresh from London there was work, more work, and very little pay.

The bank furnished a mess which gradually became Scott's pet abhorrence. Six young clerks were quartered there in a house barely large enough for three. Time and again Scott planned to leave it, and time and again realized the inadequacy of his pay to maintain a separate establishment. The bank also realised this, which was the reason it provided the mess.

There was no privacy there. Young Milgram knew everything Blake, the senior of the crowd did, just as Blake, who tried to keep a watchful eye on the whole five, knew every intimate detail of Scott's life. The Chinese houseboy knew what all of them did—gossiped over their private affairs, their little scraps and arguments, with other servants of his own nationality and with the Chinese Bank messengers who frequently came to the mess with papers to be worked over late at night by the bank's juniors. Then there were the necessary and unpleasant household routines to be attended to—commissary, laundry, super-

vising the house and cleaning. These responsibilities were apportioned each month among the members of the mess, and if they were not well done the wrath of the other five descended. Scott grew to hate the place and the young men with whom he was forced to live. He gave all his energies to his minor job at the bank in the hope of more quickly rising to a responsible position and the increased pay that would go with it.

He was terribly lonely. He was living in a strange world among strange people, without money enough even to half-way enjoy the pleasures it held. There were no Clubs with cool terraces and warm companionship for bank juniors, no *pahits* at the Raffles—at least one couldn't afford such luxuries very often—no invitations to any of the diplomatic affairs. Only a full day's work at the bank, and then a lonely evening in that damnable mess.

Scott refused the diversions Milgrim, Blake and the others found for themselves. Native women were cheap enough, even for Singapore bank clerks, but they were too cheap for Scott. He thought and dreamed more and more of Ethel.

He spent most of his spare time writing her letters. They were boyish letters, brave letters, all telling that he was working hard and surely it wouldn't be long before his ability was recognized. Anyhow, he'd at least be able to see Ethel in another two years because then he'd have his six months off and could go home for a visit. Six months out of every four years Eastern banks give home leave with full pay.

Suddenly Scott got his first promotion. A Far Eastern bank usually has a Chinese *compradore* who handles the

cash. The *compradore* reports and accounts to one of the white men of the bank, and Jerry Scott became that man. Each night he checked in with the bank's number-one Chinaman, and under his supervision the money was placed in the immense iron safe and locked up, and each morning he opened the safe and took out the cash that the *compradore* would require for the day's business.

Scott was encouraged. His pay was raised, and already he could see himself as Mr. Hough, the bank's manager. Mr. Hough had a house up Tanglin-way, a lovely wife, and three splendid children. Mr. Hough rode to and fro from the bank each day in his own carriage. Mr. Hough wore fine clothes and carried himself with that confident air that salary and position give a man. Scott could picture himself soon stepping into Mr. Hough's shoes, with a home of his own and Ethel at his side. He once talked with Mr. Hough about his ambitions. The manager smiled tolerantly and patted his shoulder.

"It took me twenty-three years, Scott, to get where I am. Keep up your good work and no doubt in the same time you'll get the job."

Twenty-three years! It wasn't a long period in which to rise to the head of a great branch bank. But to Scott it seemed an infinity. And the mess where he was forced to live made each year look like a century. Discouraged, he did some careful figuring and decided that it would be possible for Ethel and himself to live on what he was now making. It would mean the monotonous hoarding of pennies for the two years before he could expect another promotion, but having Ethel with him would be the only way in which he could stick the thing out. Instead of

going home on his leave he would have Ethel come to him, they would be married, and in some way scrape along together. So he sent the letter telling her to come, and felt happier than he had felt since his first week in Singapore.

But almost immediately he was sorry. In looking at houses he realized the dingy place his meagre salary would rent. Somehow he couldn't picture Ethel living in such conditions, or wearing the cheap clothes he could afford to buy her, or not having any of the pleasures—the dances, the Clubs, the races—the more wealthy women enjoyed.

To make it worse, other people were making money, and lots of it. The rubber boom was on. The automobile was developing enormously all over the world, and American manufacturers were crying for rubber for tyres. British syndicates were buying up vast tracts of Malayan land where rubber could be grown, and were paying fancy prices to the holders of that land. Land which had once been worthless jungle, over night became worth thousands of pounds to these avid syndicates from London.

Scott saw all this happening at the bank. Men who had been poor became rich with tremendous cash deposits to their credit. Money rolled into Singapore which seemed destined to become the world's greatest trading centre for the new industry, and land which was actually producing rubber sky-rocketed in value. The supply was not great enough to satisfy the demand, and prices rose still higher. There seemed no end to the money rubber could make.

The bank which had employed Scott, as well as the other two similar institutions in Singapore, acted as agents or representatives for a great many of the newly organized London rubber syndicates, and Scott naturally overheard

much of the talk and plans regarding this new important industry.

Through an acquaintance, George Ellis, who was employed in one of the competitive banks, Jerry learned of a new syndicate—Witherspoon & Chase, Ltd.—that had recently been formed. Mr Chase, the active head of the organization, was on his way out from London to purchase plantations. Through bank correspondence, Scott's friend learned that there was one native estate in particular which Chase was extremely anxious to buy. It was in Malacca, was owned by a Chinese-Malay *conche*, and its rubber production, according to its records, was extremely high. Chase had written Ellis' bank, so Scott learned, that his firm was prepared to pay up to fifty thousand pounds for the estate and asked the bank to arrange for a member of the *conche* to meet him at Singapore on his arrival.

This job, among other duties, came to Ellis. He found that the Malacca plantation in question was actually owned by a *conche*—the Malay name for any business venture controlled by a group of men or a partnership.

In talking the matter over with the Chinaman who was the leader of the *conche*, Ellis discovered that the estate could be bought for a hundred and fifty thousand Straits dollars, which figured at current exchange would make the sale price fifteen thousand pounds. Scott, recalling that Chase was willing to pay fifty thousand pounds, was astonished when Ellis told him these details. In other words, a profit of thirty-five thousand pounds could be made on a turnover of that rubber land by anyone who knew the facts !

Scott found himself in possession of this terribly tempting piece of knowledge. Thirty-five thousand pounds !—two hundred and ninety-odd thousand Singapore dollars, or a hundred and seventy-five thousand U.S. dollars !—lay within someone's quick and certain grasp provided that someone had the necessary cash to buy the estate of the *conche* and hold it for a few days until Chase arrived !

Scott shivered that afternoon as he put the bank money in the big iron safe and locked the great door. So much money was lying there idle ! He knew that Ellis was living far beyond his means, and was heavily in debt. With a fair amount of ready cash he could undoubtedly be bribed to turn over further details and on Chase's arrival, to inform the would-be purchaser that someone else had beaten him to this ripe plum, and that he, Chase, would have to deal with the new owner. Scott thought again of all that money in the Bank's vault. If he had fifteen thousand pounds for three days he could make himself a rich man ! But he hadn't. He had barely three hundred pounds that he had saved, and with that he was going to buy furniture to make his and Ethel's home a bit more livable.

That evening he went and looked at the house he had rented—and shivered again. It was difficult to picture Ethel in it ; Ethel who was so dainty and lovely would seem out of place in these sordid and mean surroundings.

He had long since had a cable in answer to his letter. "*Leaving at once. Darling, I love you.*" A hundred times he had counted the days necessary for her trip from London. He suddenly realized that she must be on the same ship that carried Chase, of Witherspoon & Chase.

If he had that fifteen thousand pounds he could be a rich man on the very day she landed in Singapore!

Scott suffered that next day at the bank. Everywhere he looked there seemed to be money. He himself had taken it from the safe that morning, and to-night he would look it up again. There was always a reserve fund held there for emergencies. Ordinarily this reserve cash was checked over but once a month by himself and the *compradore* to balance the bank's books. The first of the month had just passed. For twenty-eight days that money would be idle and Scott needed some of it for less than a week.

He stayed late that evening at the bank, pretending to work. Mr. Hough had gone early—to the Keppel Harbour Club, most likely, for a round of golf. Scott had always envied Mr. Hough Keppel Harbour, with its broad view of the bay and its wide, cool lawns.

Blake and Milgrim had gone out together, Blake touching his shoulder and grinning: "Keep at it, Scott. If you work late every night, in a couple of centuries you'll get to be manager."

Left alone, Jerry Scott made his decision. It weren't as if he were stealing the money; he would merely be borrowing it for three or four days. It weren't as if he were gambling or doing anything wrong with it; he was buying a rubber plantation worth infinitely more than the price asked, and even if something happened to himself, the value of the property was there, and the bank couldn't possibly lose. In a few days he could put the money back as soon as Witherspoon & Chase took the estate over—and be a rich man without anyone knowing what he had done.

That night, when he locked the safe, Jerry Scott took home with him fifteen thousand pounds of the bank's money.

Next day, before noon, two hundred pounds of Scott's savings went to pay young Ellis' more pressing debts, and a telegram was despatched to the Chinese leader of the *conche* at Malacca, requesting him to come down to Singapore that evening.

Scott and the Chinese planter from Malacca dined at the Canton Restaurant in Cross Street, in the heart of Singapore's Chinatown, and by nine o'clock the deal was closed.

Next morning, as soon as the transfer could be registered, Scott paid over the money, received the papers, and owned outright one of the most promising and valuable rubber plantations in Malaya.

With the thing accomplished, Scott began to have fears. Suppose Chase changed his mind—or his price—and decided not to buy? Suppose the loss at the bank were discovered? Suppose he should be sent to jail?

For three days he moved in agony. But the thing was done, the money spent, and it would be impossible to replace it until the estate was sold to Witherspoon & Chase. He *had* to go through with it. Ellis reported to his chief at the rival bank that the estate was held by a Mr. Scott who had come down from Malacca at his request to meet Mr. Chase, and could be found at the Raffles Hotel. The manager of the bank that employed Ellis, did not, of course, know of Scott, a junior at a competitive bank, and even if he had ever heard of him, would not have connected his name with the present transaction. Scott, at

the Raffles, had taken two rooms in different sections of the hotel—one in his own name, and the other for Ethel Washburn.

With success so close at hand he had decided not to take Ethel to the poor little house he had rented. Another day and he'd be able to afford the best for her—a place in the Tanglin district, a garden, servants. They'd marry immediately and he'd be able to give her the sort of home he wanted her in always.

He awoke early the morning of the day the boat arrived, went to the bank, and hastened through his duties. There was one thing of extreme importance. Until the deal for the estate had gone through the syndicate, and the money replaced in the safe, Mr. Chase must not suspect him of any connection with the bank. Afterwards, when there was no evidence of his theft, it would not matter.

He was about the leave the bank to meet the boat and Ethel—it was docking at ten o'clock—when Mr Hough sent for him to come to his office. Scott felt his knees go weak. He turned to young Milgrim.

"Do me a favour, will you? Meet the P. & O. boat at ten and take my girl to the Raffles. I've taken a room for her there. I've got to go in and see old Hough. Explain it to her, and say I'll be over as soon as I can."

Milgrim agreed, and Scott, the perspiration hot on his forehead, opened Mr. Hough's door.

The moment he saw the manager he knew there was nothing wrong. Hough looked the same as always, a little fussy, very neat, with his black tie precise. There were several papers on his desk and all he wanted was to discuss them.

Scott was intensely relieved. But as time passed and the manager continued with the routine bank business, he began to be nervous again. By this time the boat was in. Mr. Chase may have gone to the hotel, made some inquiries, and he might possibly have found out that the Mr Scott he was going to meet was actually connected with the bank and come there directly instead of waiting at the Raffles. A meeting in the bank would be absolutely fatal, for everyone knew he had no money with which to have bought the plantation in the first place. He found it difficult to keep his mind on what Hough was saying; his eyes wandered again and again to the frosted glass of the office door, fearing to see a shadow against it, fearing see it opened.

And suddenly what he dreaded happened. A shadow loomed against the glass, the door opened, and an office boy, inserting a black head, said: "There's a *tuan* who just landed from the boat to see you, Mr. Hough."

Hough said: "Have him come in."

Jerry Scott felt himself sliding down in his chair. He clasped sweaty hands on the arms and held himself erect. It was all over now; Chase would come in to inquire from Hough about Mr. Scott, he'd have to meet him, and the whole deal for the Malacca estate would fall through.

The man who came through Hough's door was tall and rather handsome. He wore a slim, blond moustache, and his face was fine and sensitive. Mr. Hough held out a welcoming hand.

"Hello, Williard! Terribly glad to see you."

The slim man took Hough's hand rather patronizingly.

Scott was puzzled. Was this Chase? Could Hough have known Chase?

"How are you, Hough? The directors thought I better come out and look things over. It's about time, you know."

"Yes, yes—of course. Oh—that'll be all, Scott. You may go."

Jerry Scott got to his feet. With his handkerchief he wiped the perspiration from his forehead. He turned on his heel to go, then Hough stopped him.

"Oh, by the way, Scott—I don't think you've met Mr. Denison."

Denison? Scott's heart missed several beats. It was Denison—and not Chase?

"No. I——"

The blond young man was holding out an ample hand.

"How are you, Scott?"

"I—I'm pleased to meet you—Mr. Denison."

Hough spoke again.

"Williard here is the son of one of our London directors. He's been out frequently."

Jerry Scott breathed deeply. He felt his tense face breaking into a smile. He was still safe!

"Anything I can do for you while you're here, Mr. Denison——"

But Hough interrupted.

"You can hand over your keys for the inner vault, Scott. Mr. Denison is the bank's examiner. That's why you're here, isn't it, Williard?"

Denison smiled.

"Business before pleasure," he said. "In a day or so

I'll have you checked to the last penny, Hough. Then I can go out and enjoy myself."

As if he were in a deep and dense dream, young Scott handed over his vault key. Here was something that had entirely escaped his plan. A bank examiner! The books would be gone over, the cash balanced, and a deficit of fifteen thousand pounds would be found!

Scott got himself out of Hough's office. He had been through enough hell in the last hour for a lifetime. Yet there was still a chance, and he clutched at it eagerly. If he could put the deal through with Chase for the Malacca estate, and replace the money he had stolen from the bank's safe before Denison discovered it was missing, all would yet be well.

As quickly as he could, Scott went to the Raffles Hotel. There he claimed the room he had taken, sent a *tamby* to page Mr. Chase, and then sat down to wait. Only he couldn't sit down. The papers showing him to be the sole owner of one of the finest rubber plantations in Malaya spread on the table, he ceaselessly paced the floor, smoking cigarette after cigarette.

Somewhere under the same roof was Ethel. She was probably wondering about him. Why hadn't he met her at the boat? Why didn't he come to see her? She had crossed half the world to marry him, and now she sat in a lonely room—wondering and waiting.

Scott did not dare to go to her. Minutes were precious. The *tamby* had returned, informing him that Mr. Chase was not to be found in the Hotel. But if Scott left the room and the buyer should come, the whole structure he had built would come toppling down round his head. It was

so near collapse now that every minute made the thing that much more dangerous. On the table lay papers definitely worth fifty thousand pounds that had cost him only fifteen thousand of bank money. Nearly three hundred thousand Singapore dollars of cool profit were his if only he could get it quickly enough.

He finished his last cigarette and sent for more. It was midday now. Singapore, a bare sixty miles north of the equator, was hot as a baker's oven. Activity had ceased in the streets. A dull sort of silence fell that was more ominous to Scott than all the bustle and sound of before.

If only Chase would come! He *had* to replace that money before Denison found it missing. Even now the loss might have been discovered! They would comb the bank for him, Milgrim would tell about meeting Ethel and taking her to the Raffles, and then they would search the hotel for him! If only——

There came a sudden sharp knock at the door. Scott's first impulse was to lock it. But what good would it do to lock a door? There was no escape from the room. And even if there were, they'd get him sooner or later. So Scott flung the door open—and found a hotel *tamby* there.

"Man to see you, *tuan*."

Scott breathed deeply. The police wouldn't send a *tamby* to warn him.

"What's his name?"

"*Tuan* Chase, his name."

Scot restrained himself from throwing his arms about the boy. He wanted to hug him.

"Bring *tuan* Chase here at once!"

Mr. Chase proved to be a typical Londoner, very neat,

very precise, very business-like. He understood from his bank that Mr. Scott owned a certain rubber estate in Malacca. He, Mr. Chase, was in the market for rubber, which was why the bank had arranged this conference. The bank had investigated the estate and found it satisfactory. Now, did Mr. Scott care to sell his holdings?

Scott, more impatient and nervous with each minute that passed, pounced on the words.

"Yes, I'll sell, Mr. Chase."

"Ah. And have you considered a price?"

"Fifty thousand pounds."

Mr. Chase appeared to be shocked. Such a lot of money for a stretch of jungle! Yes, he understood there was rubber growing on it, but even so, it was a tremendous sum, far more than he had considered paying.

Scott knew Chase was bargaining. Ellis had shown him the syndicate's letter to the rival bank in which it was definitely stated Witherspoon & Chase would pay as high as fifty thousand pounds for the property. Every minute Chase bargained made Scott's position that much more dangerous. For a moment he was tempted to lower the price; but he had risked so much that he wanted to collect every pound that he could, so he held firm knowing that Chase would eventually meet what he had asked.

His heart touched bottom when Chase rose.

"I'll have to think this over, Mr. Scott. Suppose I get in touch with you to-morrow?"

"Wait a minute." A day's delay would be absolutely fatal. "How did you intend to pay, Mr. Chase?"

"Why, in cash if you like."

"I would. I'd like to get back to Malacca as quickly

as I can. If you want my estate, and will take it this afternoon for forty-five thousand pounds—you can have it."

Chase wasted no time. He had saved his syndicate five thousand pounds.

"Done!" he said, and held out his hand.

Scott took it, the room reeling around him. He had put it through! He was a rich man! The bank had never been subject to loss, because value was behind the money he had taken. Now—this evening—he would put back the fifteen thousand pounds and be richer by thirty thousand!

"I shall get a certified cheque at the bank," Chase said "and bring a notary with me. You'll be here, Mr. Scott?"

"I'll be here," said Scott.

But he wasn't. At that instant the door opened and Mr. Hough stood in the hallway. Beside him were two policemen.

"That's Scott," Hough said, pointing. "I want him arrested for stealing fifteen thousand pounds from the bank!"

Garahan stopped speaking and I filled his glass. For a second the gurgle of the bottle was the only sound.

"The boy got caught then?" I asked.

"Yes—he got caught. But he nearly put it over, and as smart a deal as I ever saw. If it hadn't been for that bank inspector unexpectedly turning up, Scott would have gotten clean away with it and no one would ever have known."

"But what's all this got to do with——"

"With murder? All this is merely the old, fertile soil

I had to dig up, Frank. It happened twenty years ago. And a lot more happened, too. From this point on the story's no longer Scott's—it now belongs to Denison."

Denison sat in Mr. Hough's office at the bank and heard the whole story from Chase.

"I was ready to pay the boy forty-five thousand pounds!" Chase said. "It's one of the finest rubber plantations in Malaya, and——"

"He really had possession?" Denison asked.

"Oh, yes—clearly. I went over all the papers. There's no doubt but what he really owned that estate. I understand there's only fifteen thousand missing from the bank?"

"That's right."

"Then the boy would have had a clear profit of thirty thousand pounds! It's incredible!"

"It would have been," said Denison, "if I hadn't found that money missing."

"I suppose it will go hard on the boy?"

"Pretty hard. We can't have things like this happening in our banks, you know."

"Of course not. But—what will become of the property? I'm anxious to get it, and——"

"The bank will naturally have to take it over. There'll be litigation, of course. We'll have to prove it's our property. You're still interested in it, Mr. Chase?"

"Naturally. That boy made a smart deal. It's one of the richest estates in the country. I——"

"Perhaps," said Denison, "it can be arranged."

For a time Denison sat alone, thinking deeply. He was a young man, in his early thirties, with a conservative

English background behind him. His father was one of the directors in the bank, a member of the London board, and a comparatively wealthy man. Denison had always resented the fact that very little of that wealth would ever come to him. There was an elder brother to whom it would surely go; his father would never break family tradition by dividing the fortune. Already the trend was showing; Fred held a high office in the main London bank, while he was sent out on the unimportant task of checking over the reports of the various branches. When his father died, Denison's income must necessarily come from Fred. If he ever hoped to be rich he must make his fortune himself.

Denison definitely hoped to be wealthy. He knew his own desires and tastes, and they were high and costly. He wanted things, luxuries and comforts. And he thought, sitting there in Hough's Singapore office, what a grand joke it would be on his father, on Fred, on the whole family, if by some means he could obtain those luxuries and comforts for himself. If, in fact, he could become even richer than Fred by his own efforts instead of having an inheritance handed him on a legal platter.

Here, before him, was his chance. If a mere bank clerk could make thirty thousand pounds from a single illegal transaction, why couldn't he, Denison, make even more by a legal one? Perhaps not strictly legal, but certainly not criminal. At least, there was no court penalty for what he had in mind. It might not be to the best interests of the bank, but it could not harm the bank.

So when Mr. Hough came in, damp and perspiring, Denison was ready for him.

"A most distressing affair," Hough said. "Most distressing. I've just come from jail where I signed a complaint."

"They've got Scott there?"

"Yes. You know, I trusted that boy. He was one of my hardest workers. That's why I put him in charge of the safe. That's why——"

"You know this is going to look bad," Denison said, "when I make my report to the London office."

"Yes, yes—I know. Most distressing."

"Bad for you, I mean, Hough."

"For me?" Mr. Hough mopped his forehead.

"Of course. I know what my father and the other directors will say: 'Hough's incompetent or this would never have happened. We'll have to replace him with another manager.'"

Mr. Hough's handkerchief again moved across his brow.

"But really, that's not so! I——"

"What else are they to think when I report fifteen thousand pounds stolen?"

"But, Williard! You know I'm as good as any manager——"

"*I* know it. But *they* won't. They'll think——"

"Isn't there anything you can do? Just a word?——Just a——"

Denison leaned forward.

"Hough, I like you. Always have. I'll tell you what I'll do."

Mr. Hough twisted his handkerchief in fingers.

"I'll take this whole affair off your hands. There'll be no need of my making any report to London if the

bank's funds balance. Very well; I'll make them balance. I'll give the bank my personal note for the fifteen thousand, and take the ownership of this rubber estate in return. The note will be paid, the bank is even, and you keep your position."

Mr. Hough saw his salvation and grasped it.

"I can never thank you enough, Williard!"

"That's all right. Now I'd like to get possession of that rubber estate as quickly as possible."

Mr. Hough saw difficulties. The estate, even though it was bought with stolen bank money, was registered in the name of Jerome Scott. Until a court order went through authorizing a transfer, the property must necessarily be held pending trial of the defendant.

Denison, his brain working like lightning, had an answer.

"We can get Scott to sign it over, Hough—to-day."

"Sign it over?"

"Certainly. To all intents and purposes he owns it."

"Yes. But he'll never sign."

"I think he will. All we have to do is *promise him immunity*. Promise him he won't be tried—that he'll be freed—and he'll sign."

"But—do you intend to do this?"

"Certainly not. After he signs I intend to see that he gets the fifteen or twenty years on the rock pile that he deserves!"

Hough protested to Denison; this would be unfair to the boy, the promising of a direct lie. Denison took the matter out of Hough's hands entirely. He had no such finer scruples.

And so for a note purporting to be worth fifteen thousand pounds, Denison came into possession of a Malacca rubber estate for which Witherspoon & Chase would willingly have paid forty-five thousand. But Denison had other ideas. If the estate were worth that much to a London syndicate, why wasn't it worth that much—or more—to him? Rubber was booming. Prices were going higher and higher. The supply couldn't fill the demand. He was on the spot. Why not stay, develop the plantation, perhaps buy more, and build a great fortune on rubber? It was a colossal idea, and Denison decided it was his destiny. He would become one of the richest men in the East!

My room in the Raffles was growing dim. The sun, which here sets at practically the same time the whole year round, was going down over Singapore. In a short time, with the speed at which night falls in the tropics, it would be dark. Garahan's glass was empty again and I filled it.

"So that's how Denison got his wealth!" I said.

"That's how he started it, Frank. . . . Not strictly legal, but as he had figured it out, not criminal either. And, by the way, that estate proved to be one of the richest in Malay. Denison built a manager's bungalow and modern coolie lines and installed an expert planter as manager. For years the estate paid a net profit of over fifty thousand pounds a year."

"How about young Scott?"

"Oh, he got his twenty years on the rock pile. Denison saw to that. He rather had to, you see, for his own protection."

"It was a damnable thing to do!"

"Quite. And the money wasn't all that Scott had to think about while he broke rock. There was another reason why Denison wanted him out of the way."

"Another reason?"

"Yes. You've probably forgotten. Ethel Washburn came out to Singapore to marry Jerry Scott."

"The girl! I *had* forgotten her."

"Denison hadn't. He'd come on the same boat with her, you see. All the way around Spain, Gibraltar, the Mediterranean, Suez, the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, Ceylon, and then the long jaunt to Singapore. I probably haven't given you a clear picture of the girl. She was terribly attractive. Beautiful in a young, fresh sort of way, vital, all feminine, a girl any chap with blood in his veins couldn't help loving. You've seen how Scott felt about her. Denison had fallen for her too—on the way out. Which was another good reason for getting Scott out of the way—on the rock pile. And from now on the story I dug up in that old soil is Ethel Washburn's."

As the P. & O. boat docked at Singapore Ethel looked eagerly for Jerry Scott's face. Almost three years had passed since she had last seen him, but three years wouldn't have changed him. Years would never change Jerry. He'd always be the boy with whom she had gone to church on sunny Sunday mornings, and ridden with on Mondays in the dog-cart, and played Nelson with on Tuesdays beneath the pollard oak. He'd always be her pal and her lover, and years would never matter.

But he was not on the dock, and a strange young man

who introduced himself as Mr. Milgrim said Jerry had sent him to escort her to the Raffles Hotel. Jerry was detained by his work at the bank, and would come later.

She waited interminably in her room at the hotel. Jerry didn't come. No one came. She grew uneasy and alarmed. Mr. Milgrim had said Jerry would come as soon as he was free. What could be keeping him so long? She thought of going to the bank to find him and dismissed the idea; it might embarrass him. At dusk, hungry, she sent downstairs for some food. A Chinese hotel boy who spoke only broken English brought it. The bank must have closed long ago. It was dark out. Suddenly there came a knock at the door. Eagerly she sprang to open it. A *tamby* stood there with Williard Denison behind him.

"Good evening," Denison said, and stepped in, closing the door.

Denison was a sudden raft in a storm. On the way out he had told her of his connection with the bank. They had strolled the deck many evenings, danced together, had occasional cocktails together in the lounge. And she had, of course, told him of her romance with Jerry and her reason for going to Singapore.

Denison nodded when she asked him the inevitable question.

"Yes, I've seen him," he said. "You've got to prepare yourself for a shock."

"A shock? He's not——!"

"No. But something just as bad."

"I don't understand. I——"

"He's in jail."

"Jerry?"

"Yes. That's why he didn't meet you. He was caught stealing money from the bank."

Ethel felt the world collapsing around her. Jerry Scott! Jerry so the dog-cart, of the pollard oak!

"It's not true!" she cried.

"Sorry. He's confessed. It's a shame, Ethel, you had to land here during this mess. It's pretty bad. Scott's in deep. If there were anything I could do, you know I'd do it. But there's no fixing courts here in Singapore. He'll probably go to prison for twenty years."

Twenty years! The world *did* collapse. Denison's arm saved it.

"Here—sit down. Take it easy."

"I've got to go to him!"

"Easy. You must think about this. Singapore's a small place, really. Gossip gets around. If you visited a man in jail everyone would know of it. If he didn't think enough of you not to commit this crime, why should you think of him now?"

During the hours of the night that followed Ethel lay wet-eyed and thought of those words. "*If he didn't think enough of you——*" Jerry Scott—in prison! Stealing money from his bank! A thief! For no reason at all except that he *was* a thief! Why should he steal? There was no reason. He had a position—she had come to marry him—and he had done this to her!

Next day, despite Denison's advice, she went to see Jerry.

She found him behind bars, unshaven, dirty, tears in his reddened eyes.

"Ethel!"

FRANK BUCK PINNING A DEADLY COBRA SNAKE TO THE GROUND BENEATH HIS COAT

(See illustration facing page 248.)

ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN
CALCUTTA

She said nothing. She couldn't. She merely took his hand and let hers go limp as he pulled it between the bars and kissed it.

"Jerry—tell me this thing's not true."

He looked at her with the eyes of a dog.

"I can't, Ethel."

"You stole?"

"Yes."

"Why, Jerry? Why?"

He dropped his eyes to her hand and kept them there. She couldn't know what he was thinking. All she heard was his mumble.

"I don't know. I just did."

"But, Jerry——"

"I did. God, how sorry I am! But I did. And now I've got to pay. You must get yourself out of this, Ethel. I should never have brought you over. Forget that you ever knew me. I'm finished—I'm through. I'll probably go to prison for years and years. Even if I don't—and I've been promised a chance—I'll never be worth anything. You've got to look after yourself. You——"

"Jerry——"

"I mean it. Go away, Ethel. *Stay away*. I mean that, too."

Ethel felt herself growing hard in the days that followed. She had come all these thousands of miles to Jerry—loving him, to marry him. What would her friends—her family—think when she had to go back to them? There had been parties, going-away presents, even wedding gifts. How could she face all these people when she went home?

Quite suddenly, in an early Singapore dawn, she decided she wouldn't go home. She would never face all those curious eyes and answer all the thousand-and-one questions that would be asked her. Rather she would stay here in the East, somehow make her way, somehow get a job, somehow make a living in this strange land in which she had hoped to make her home. Ethel didn't know it, but she merely made the decision that has been made by thousands of other girls who have left their homes for what was obviously a mistake.

The way was made easier by Denison in the next few weeks. There were no jobs to be found—but there was always Denison. She had not formed any particular liking for the man on the boat, but now he was good to her, kind, friendly, sympathetic. He took her for drives around the island on roads that bordered the sea. He took her to lunch at clubs and hotels, and to dinner on board, cool terraces. And finally, beneath great tropical stars that made the plane trees look like blue-silver, he said what she had known all along he would say.

"Ethel, from the first moment I saw you on that boat I loved you. You told me you were engaged. But what difference did that make? When a man needs something, and wants something, he fights for it. Well, I've fought for what I wanted. I was under a handicap from the first. I knew you loved Scott. That's impossible now. He's been tried and gone to prison for what amounts to the rest of his life. I tried to be fair; I did everything I could for him. But that's over now—it's got to be. What I'm trying to say is that I love you, and want you to marry me."

She had known this moment was coming and she had

tried to be prepared for it. Yet when it came she found herself silent, helpless, staring off into the dark. She liked Denison for his many kindnesses and attentions, but she didn't love him. She loved a man whom she considered had cared so little for her that he would steal. She couldn't go back to London, couldn't go home. She didn't love Denison, but she could make him a good wife.

Denison's rise was phenomenal. He had come to Singapore as a mere bank inspector. He remained to be a power throughout the East. And rubber was the answer. He was the owner of a rich estate in Malacca. The estate grew, produced enormous dividends, and these dividends purchased other estates. Gradually plantation was added to plantation, estate to estate, and the Denison interests swept and moved wherever rubber was grown.

Ethel found herself the mistress of a house in Tanglin, the best district in Singapore. She found herself gradually becoming the leader of Singapore society. She found her husband at the head of every civic movement, the prime mover of every charity, the angel of every local enterprise. She found herself envied, talked about, held in esteem.

And she found her husband unfaithful, untrue, and unworthy.

The thing dawned on her slowly and with the years. For a time Denison had been lover-like, devoted, passionate. Then, like a mist rising from the nearby jungle, he had been drawn away from her. For a time she had blamed herself. She had never really loved him, although she had made every sacrifice, satisfied his every whim and desire. It was Mrs. Wells who had shown where the straws were blowing.

Mrs. Wells was the young widow of an Army captain.

Quite suddenly, in an early Singapore dawn, she decided she wouldn't go home. She would never face all those curious eyes and answer all the thousand-and-one questions that would be asked her. Rather she would stay here in the East, somehow make her way, somehow get a job, somehow make a living in this strange land in which she had hoped to make her home. Ethel didn't know it, but she merely made the decision that has been made by thousands of other girls who have left their homes for what was obviously a mistake.

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Mrs. Wells was the young widow of an Army captain.

Denison had first brought her to call in her young widowhood, and Ethel had received her with sympathy and cordiality. But the fourth time showed Ethel the reason for the call, and a few months later Mrs. Wells had gladly departed for England a thousand pounds richer than when the Captain had died.

The episode came as a shock to Ethel. She had never realized, quite, that men could behave in such a manner. Yet many episodes followed, similar, the same, a blonde for a brunette or a brunette for a blonde. It seemed that she, and she alone of all the people of Singapore, understood Denison as he really was.

She was in her late thirties now, and the thirties are not easily subject to change. She had cast her lot and it definitely lay here in the East. There was no other place for her. In any so-called civilization the woman suffers her husband, and particularly in the East it's a man's world, principally because there's no escape for the woman.

So Ethel went on—watching women come and go—blonde and brunette—year after year—while Denison, wealthy and prosperous, was respected and honoured the length and breadth of the Malay Peninsula.

Most women would have said: "I've had enough of this—I'm moving out!" And they'd have done it if they had been living in New York or London, anywhere probably except the East, half a world away from all they've known. She had made a mistake years before in coming here to marry Jerry Scott; now she had made a second mistake in marrying Williard Denison. She was the wife of one of the richest men in the Straits, yet she had less real happiness than the wife of the poorest trader.

In a way Denison was proud of her. She made a splendid hostess for his home; she was beautiful, talented, and could carry off one of his Singapore dinner parties with grace and finesse. But when the guests were gone his pride went with them; he became mean and petty, and where other women were concerned, cruel beyond measure.

One evening, just at dusk, she received the shock of her life. Denison had not yet come home — she had long ceased being concerned with his comings and goings— and she was sitting on her Tanglin terrace alone. Suddenly a voice spoke from the half-darkness outside the screen.

"Ethel."

She started and peered at the man who stood there. He was tall and terribly thin. His face was brown as a native's from years of exposure to merciless tropical suns.

She got to her feet, rather frightened.

"I don't believe I——"

"Yes you do. It's Jerry Scott."

"Jerry!"

The terrace rocked like the deck of a ship. He looked thin and old and burnt-out, as if the sun had sapped the last of his vitality.

"I'd like to sit down a minute. I've come a long way to-day."

She took his hand and held it tightly. It was hard and rough. He withdrew it.

"Breaking rocks does that to your hands," he said.

He seemed blurred through her wet eyes.

"Poor Jerry!"

"Save it. I'm all right. I've served my time. I'm free. I've paid."

"Jerry, why did you do it? I've never understood. I——"

"I've never understood either," he said tightly. "You certainly weren't worth it, were you?"

"I don't——"

"Stop pretending. You know what I mean well enough. You married Denison."

"Yes, I——"

"You got it from him—the same as you would have from me."

"Got what?"

"What's the good of making believe you don't know. Got comfort, got *things*, got bank money—that's what! From the rubber I tried to steal—and the rubber he *did* steal!"

"I don't know what you're talking about, Jerry."

"It wasn't enough that Denison did exactly what I tried to do, made himself a rich man in exactly the same way. He had to see then that I went to prison for twenty years! After promising that I'd go free! I got that straight from Milgrim who overheard him insisting to Hough in the bank. And as if that weren't enough, he got *you* as well! The only thing I ever really loved in my life!"

"Jerry—do you know what you're saying?"

"Know? I've thought of nothing else for twenty years! Thought of it while the sun beat down on my head, and while my hands and arms and back ached over rocks! Rocks to make roads for Denison to drive his car—rocks to make a cool terrace for Denison to sit on—rocks to——"

"I didn't know, Jerry. I never knew."

He looked at her with sullen, burnt-out eyes.

"I didn't," she went on. "I swear it. Oh, I've known for a long time that Williard is unscrupulous, dishonest, cruel. But——"

"Cruel?" Scott said. "To you?"

"Jerry, you aren't the only one who has suffered. All the time you've been in that prison I've paid just as you have. Don't think I haven't. I've suffered a thousand mental tortures just as you suffered physical ones. I——"

She stopped speaking. Scott's young-old face was buried in his hard hands and he was sobbing.

"Jerry—*don't!*"

"It's been my fault! If only I hadn't——"

"No—it's as much my fault as yours. And from what you've told me to-day it's more Williard's fault than either of ours. It——"

A voice spoke from the darkness of the house.

"Is someone talking about me?"

Denison stood in the doorway.

There was an instant of silence. Only the great hum of insects outside the screen broke it. Then Scott, his face wet, stepped grimly forward.

"*I* was talking about you, Denison! And I was saying of all the low, despicable people, of all the ——"

"Just a minute! I don't know you."

Scott laughed.

"I suppose you've conveniently forgotten me now you've made a fortune in rubber. I haven't forgotten you, or that you began that fortune on my bent back! In case you *could* have forgotten, my name is Scott—and I've just come from spending twenty years in the place you sent me!"

"Scott!"

"That's right—Jerry Scott. Somehow or other, you know, years *do* get themselves passed."

Denison looked very pale in the dusk.

"We'd better go inside and talk this over," he said.

Denison lit the lights himself. They glinted about the room, struck gleams in polished furniture and in the steel blades of shiny Malay *parangs* and *krisses* hanging on the walls. Denison leaned against a table and looked first at Scott, then at his wife.

"Now then, what's all this about?"

It was Ethel who spoke.

"Williard, I can hardly believe—yet I do——"

"Oh, Scott's been telling you things, has he?"

"Yes—I've told her and now I'm telling *you!* You're pretty white here in Singapore, pretty clean. I couldn't talk before because I was in prison. Well, I'm out of prison now, I'm a free man, and there's nothing on earth can *stop* me from talking. I've paid for what I did—but you haven't. And if it's the last thing I do on earth I'm going to see that you *do* pay! I'm going to let the people here know just what kind of a man you are! I'm going——"

"That sounds like a threat, Scott."

"It is a threat! It——"

"Suppose you listen to me a minute, I'm the biggest man in this colony. Anything I say is believed. And if I say the word, you'll go back to the prison you just came from! Who do you think will believe *you?* A thief! A jail-bird! Why, the threat you just made against me and the

fact that you are trespassing in my home is enough to send you back to the rock-pile ! "

Ethel spoke sharply. She was amazed at the calmness of her voice.

" People will believe *me*, Williard."

" You ? "

" I can tell them what you are. I've lived with you for twenty years. I *know*—and they know that I know. I swear to you that I'll tell them——"

" Ethel ! "

" I mean it ! I've stood a lot. But this is the end. I knew you were bad, but I never dreamed you'd done a thing like this to Jerry."

Denison's face was white as ice.

" So *you'd* turn against me ! All right—I'm through with you ! If you think you've suffered with me, I've suffered too. You never loved me. I soon found that out. But I've made up for it with other women—and I've had plenty. I haven't snivelled around—haven't put on that holier-than-thou face of yours, haven't——"

" Be careful, Denison ! "

Turning his attention from Ethel to the man, Denison fairly shrieked.

" You keep out of this, Scott ! You're going back to prison right now ! "

He stepped toward a bell cord hanging from the wall. But his wife quickly placed herself in front of him. . . .

Inspector Garahan stopped talking. His face was grimly white in the darkness. I turned on the room lights

and looked at him steadily. The light ruined the illusion of reality of what he had been telling. Garahan became just a grey-haired police officer, and the people he had been talking about so vividly became so many puppets that moved on strings that his voice had been pulling.

"Well—what about it?" I asked.

"About it?"

"Who killed Denison? Who took one of those *krisses* from the wall? Who stabbed him with it?"

Garahan smiled.

"Who do you think, Frank?"

"Either Scott or Ethel. They both had reason enough, God knows!"

"Yes, they had reason enough. But so did half a dozen women in Singapore. And so did at least three husbands that I've discovered. Any one of them might have done it. As a matter of fact, only one of these husbands and two of the wives can show an alibi for the time Denison was killed."

"Perhaps," I said. "But the evidence all points to either Scott or Denison's wife."

Garahan smiled.

"When you've been dealing with the law as long as I have, Frank, you'll find out how weak evidence can be. There was even a native servant girl—a member of his household—with whom Denison had had an affair. It might have been her, or her lover, or her father, who used that *kriss*. Malays have rather drastic ideas about such things, you know."

"See here, Garahan," I said. "You know who did it.

You told me so when you started this story. I admit Denison deserved what he got——"

"Oh, you admit that, Frank?"

"Of course. Any sane man would."

"I'm glad of that. I feel the same way."

"But what's the real answer, Garahan? Did she do it?—or did Scott?"

Garahan smiled again.

"Frank, I went up there to Denison's house on the night he was killed. He was lying dead. His wife and Scott were there. They told me their stories, told them straight, just as I've told them to you. When I dug back through old soil it was merely to check up on them, to see that they *were* straight. They said that after Denison's flare-up, after he had denounced them both, they went out on the terrace to talk the thing over. Then they said this: while they were out there they heard a cry inside, rushed in the house, and found Denison with a *kriss* in his back."

"But, Garahan——" I protested.

"Oh, I didn't say it was true, Frank. This is merely what they told me. Their faces were white, ghastly white, when they said it."

I stared at him seriously in the light.

"Garahan, you *know* who did this."

"Yes," he admitted, "I know. But all I can say to you, Frank, is what I said to those two people after I dug through that old soil."

"Yes. Garahan—what did you say to them?"

"Well, they had both suffered—terribly. I guessed they'd sort of steeled themselves for my decision. They were standing very close together, so still and so tense that

they hardly seemed to be breathing. I've a reputation for being rather hard-boiled, but I think my voice trembled a bit when I said to them: 'This case will be known as one of the unsolved mysteries of the East.'

"Then I left them looking straight into each other's eyes, their hands clasped tightly together.

"And that, Frank, is exactly what it's going to be—an unsolved mystery of the East."

FRANK HOWARD BUCK

FRANK BUCK was born in Gainesville, Texas, on March 17, 1882. While he was still a boy his family moved to Dallas. Here the Buck home was not far from a densely wooded area through which ran Turtle Creek. This was where he made his first acquaintance with animals and established a friendship that became lifelong. From Texas he went to Chicago and later to South America in search of rare birds. After his second South American trip, he sold his collection of birds and found the deal so profitable that he resolved to go in for wholesale bird and animal collecting. Although he has been all over the world, he has specialized in the fauna of Asia and has for years maintained headquarters at Singapore. He has crossed the Pacific some forty odd times, circumnavigated the world five times, knocked out an Orang-utan in a fair fight, walked practically the entire width of the island of Borneo, contracted to deliver (and delivered) to the city of Dallas one complete Zoo; and assembled in his Singapore compound the biggest assortment of live animals ever collected in one place (with the possible exceptions of the big Zoos in New York, Philadelphia, London and Hamburg). He is internationally famous for having brought back an amazingly large number of "firsts" and unique specimens. These include the only authentic man-eating tiger even seen in America; the biggest king cobra ever captured alive; two rare Indian rhinos which he transported from the jungle of Nepal, where few white men have penetrated, sixteen thousand miles to the New York and Philadelphia Zoos. In addition to his two first books, *Bring 'Em Back Alive* and *Wild Cargo*, he has made two phenomenally successful jungle moving pictures by the same names, and is at the moment in India, working on a third.

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