THE FIELD-BOOK
OF A JUNGLE-WALLAH

BEING A DESCRIPTION OF SHORE,
RIVER & FOREST LIFE IN SARAWAK

BY

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CHAPTER I

ALL ON THE BORNEAN SHORE

A Bornean Breakfast—Turtles and Turtles’ Eggs—The King Crab—A Local Turkish Bath—The Ship-worm—Strange kinds of Food—Fish attracted by Light—A Compleat Angler—Pink and Blue Prawns—Bornean Pirates—Bee-eaters—Swifts and edible Nests—A Spirit-plant—The Scaly Ant-eater—A Malay Legend—Adventure with a Bear—A Sacred Animal.

I awoke with the dawn and, for a moment, wondered where I was; for the early morning in the tropics has a romantic element, bringing recognition and arousing mystery. Here was I, in my own familiar corner of the world—anchored in a small sailing vessel at the mouth of a minor river on the Bornean coast; I knew very well what was going to happen, yet I was prepared for small surprises. So true is it that Nature, which is ever the same, makes all things new.

Looking through my mosquito-curtains and waiting for the coffee which my servant, with Chinese precision, was preparing, I watched the
CHAPTER V

A SHORT-LEAVE HOLIDAY


In the north of the Kayan country, and between the Apoh river (a daughter stream of the Tuta which, in its turn, is a tributary of the Baram), and the main river itself, rises a conical hill known as Batu Song, to the height of some five thousand feet. On account of its shape, which somewhat resembles an inverted mortar, it is a well-known landmark; and by its character (for it is a sandstone hill) it gave promise of interesting flora and fauna. To this mountain I determined, taking advantage of a period of administrative and magisterial quiet, to make an expedition in order to collect specimens.
CHAPTER VI

A MOUNTAIN TREASURE HOUSE


DURING the course of this day's journey we were agreeably surprised to find a sort of ready-made path cleared, as far as one could guess, for our special benefit; on either side of the track the bushes were sprinkled with mud. On making enquiries I was told that a rhinoceros or some other large creature had passed that way. The Bornean rhinoceros is a smallish species and quite the most grotesque of his kind; he has two horns and his hair is tough and bristly, almost like fine wire. He fre-
had done any good or not, or whether the gall of
the snake itself was the real neutraliser of the
poison, or perhaps both were helpful.

There are many theories regarding the proper
treatment of snake bites, but it has long been recog-
nised that the most important thing to do is to apply
a tourniquet and make a free incision immediately
over the wound, thereby promoting a primary
haemorrhage, which of course will tend to wash
away the injected venom. In this case, however,
the cure may have been due to the well-known fact
that the body-fluids of a poisonous snake develop
antibodies to counteract the poison, thereby causing
a natural immunity. Consequently if these fluids
were injected into the blood-stream of the victim,
there is no doubt that an artificial immunity would
develop. This condition, however, takes some time,
and there are many factors, such as haemolysis,
sterilisation, etc., to be considered before such a pro-
cedure should be attempted, and it is quite possible
that the free bleeding combined with the curative
power of the gall, which is usually sterile, was the
principal factor in the man’s complete recovery.

He was apparently quite well on the second day
after it had happened, and the wound quickly healed up.

It should be said, in justice to the pagan peoples of Borneo, that, unlike the Malays of certain countries, they are not naturally given to poisoning or sorcery; in fact a poisoner is considered as something unclean and loathsome, and some years ago there were serious disturbances in the north-east corner of Sarawak owing to a suspicion attached to certain Murut tribes. On the other hand, magic, both black and white, is extensively practised; and, as regards drugs, the Dayong or Medicine-man is held in special esteem. Punans and Kalabits have a deserved reputation for their skill as practical, if empiric, physicians; for it is a commonplace that in Borneo as elsewhere among primitive peoples, valuable specifics, unknown to Western medicine, have been in almost daily use for centuries. After all, the medicine-man acts according to his lights and his experience, even if he does not realise the value of careful diagnosis; and as for faith-healing, mesmerism, homeopathy, and (if one wishes) psycho-analysis, the West has a good deal still to learn from the East.
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