



MALAY DANCING GIRL

Frontispiece.

THE
GARDENS OF THE SUN:

OR

A NATURALIST'S JOURNAL

ON THE MOUNTAINS AND IN THE FORESTS AND SWAMPS OF

BORNEO

AND THE

SULU ARCHIPELAGO.

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THE ROYAL GARDENS, KEW.

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nated by the flickering glare of 'dammar' gum torches the effect is melodramatic in the extreme. It was rather difficult to make any use of these Muruts as collectors—they showed no powers of discrimination whatever, while the Kadyans, on the other hand—who are also aboriginals, but have mixed much with the dominant Malays, by whom they were years ago converted to the faith of Islam—showed great aptitude, and were of real service; and I shall long retain pleasant memories of some of the Kadyan villagers, especially 'Moumein,' of Meringit, who received me into the little village he had founded with every demonstration of friendship, and rendered me much intelligent assistance for many weeks. Of Malays generally one may say that they live by lying and thieving in one form or another, but the aboriginal races of Borneo, like the Papuans whom Goldie met inland in New Guinea, are gentle and hospitable to peaceably disposed strangers, and it will be a great pity to see them exterminated in the way their prototypes, the Incas of Peru, and the Red Men of the West, have been."

CHAPTER VII.

BEAUTIFUL BORNEO.

Borneo—Wild animals—the Malays—Poetry—Romances—Dewa Indra—Native government—Pile dwellings—Intermarriage—Language—Clothing—Courtship—Marriage—Inland tribes—Land culture—Native villages—Food products—Textile fabrics—Bark cloth—Native women—Climate—Native produce—Kayan weapon—Rivers—Gambling—Opium smoking.

BORNEO, the beautiful—the "garden of the sun"—is the third largest island in the world, and boasts a much larger area than that occupied by the British Isles. The equator divides it, and the climate is, perhaps, that most suitable for vegetation of any other, being uniformly hot and humid all the year round. There are no volcanoes, the tiger is unknown, and it is the only habitat of the wild elephant in the Malay Archipelago. It is also remarkable as being the home of the wild man of the forests, or the "orang utan" of the Malays. Alligators abound in the rivers, and are the most dangerous of the wild animals. Snakes exist plentifully, and in great variety, but death from snake-bites is very rare. The two-horned rhinoceros, wild cattle, pigs in abundance, and several species of deer are known.

The human inhabitants may be roughly divided into two races, the Malays and the Borneans, or aboriginals. The origin of both types is obscure. The Malays, however, are immigrants who inhabit the coasts of all the large Malay islands where, as here in Borneo, they have

to cross a grassy plain, the mud and water being up to our waist-belts in places, and the tall coarse grasses arched over our heads so that for a mile or more one has to flounder up this grassy sewer, the effluvia from the festering mud and the heat being alike almost unbearable. We at last reached the low sandstone hills and padi fields near the Badjow village, and were glad to know that we were within a mile or two of our destination. Then came another case of floundering through a wet rice field in a drenching shower, up to the knees in unctuous black mud, remarkably warm, too, it felt to the legs and feet. After all our struggles, however, we reached the Residency about four o'clock, dirty, wet, and tired. Here we found M. Peltzer in charge, although looking very pale and ill. We found out that he was suffering from low fever and dysentery, although fortunately not in anything like its worst phases. A bath and clean dry clothes was the first thing, after which we were glad to sit and rest ourselves ere dinner time. We discovered that our friend, M. Peltzer, had formerly studied in the Horto-Agricultural College, founded by the late M. Van Houtte, at Ghent, and that he had come here to make experiments in the culture of tapioca, tobacco, and other kinds of tropical produce. He related to us an account of a journey made into the interior as far as Sineroup, in the course of which he had lost three buffaloes in the streams. Altogether we passed a very pleasant evening, glad to be so near the termination of a long, and at this time of the year, a very critical journey. The accommodation here was luxurious to what we had been accustomed to, and in spite of mosquitoes we slept the sleep of the thoroughly weary.

August 24th.—We arose soon after 5 a.m., and calling our followers, bade them prepare our boat for the home-

ward voyage. We ourselves looked after the welfare of our plants, and packed up our roots and seeds carefully. A party of men were sent to the sandstone hills to procure roots of the white gardenia before alluded to. At 7.50 we obtained a beautiful view of the mountain, the top crags, ridges, and water-falls being very distinct in the clear morning sunlight. I could not resist sitting down on the verandah and sketching the scene. Although my sketch was true as regards outline, nothing but colour could represent anything of the beauty of this scene—it is a subject worthy of Walton's skill and labour. The tints of light are ever changing in the morning's sun, and the cloud strata lie like downy pillows on the bosom of a giant. No wonder the simple Dusun, gazing on this mountain in all the radiance of its early morning glory, has idealised it as the heaven of his race!

A small herd of water-buffaloes have come down to the opposite side of the river to drink, and I was surprised to see that most of them had short stumpy tails. On inquiry I am told that the Badjows cut the tails of their riding buffaloes, otherwise they draggle in the mud and dirty water so common here, and then besprinkle the clothing of their masters. The poor beasts must feel their loss sadly in a hot country where mosquitoes and other blood-sucking flies are abundant, but as we cut our sheep's tails short without so good a reason, we must not be the first in this case to throw a stone.

We gave all our men a rest this afternoon, which they sadly needed, for several of them were nearly exhausted. About four o'clock we were surprised at the return of Mr. Dobree and Mr. Pretzman, who had proceeded no further than the hill just above Sineroup. The Chinese cook of course received orders to augment his food supply, and we spent a very agreeable evening. Mr. Dobree

showed us the skin of a young rhinoceros which he had shot in the mud pool near the Sagaliad river, about twenty miles from Sandakan. The lower horn was three inches in length, the upper one only just growing. Mr. Pretyman had also a small but very interesting collection of large coleoptera caught in the immediate neighbourhood.

August 25th.—We finished rigging up our boat this morning, and stowed all our plants and stores on board before breakfast. Four of my men, including "Suong," who had been very useful to me, agreed to stay at this place as policemen under Mr. Pretyman. To oblige him I allowed them to do this. About 1 p.m. we started down the river, a much easier thing than pulling the other way. We reached the mouth in about an hour, but could not get over the bar, as there was not a foot of water on the bar; indeed we saw two native fishermen carry their little canoes over. We had to wait until 10 o'clock at night, when we got over and out to sea with a favourable breeze, but we did not reach Labuan until August 30th, since we had contrary winds, and altogether a very rough passage.

Thus ended our journey for the second time to "Kina Balu," which occupied in all thirty-one days from Labuan, of which thirteen were occupied in the sea voyage from Labuan to the Tampassuk and back; from Tampassuk to Kiau and back thirteen; and from Kiau to the mountain and back five days. Our last journey, viz., the Tawaran from Gaya and Menkabong, occupied in all twenty-three days, but as we happened to start just at the commencement of the dry season, we avoided the dangers and difficulties of fording rapid streams. In the dry season the Tampassuk route could be accomplished in five days, and the ground is much more level than that along the Tawaran route, which is both hilly and fatiguing, the

track being almost impassable for buffaloes. The difference in the time occupied by the two routes is in part accounted for in this way. Thus when I and Mr. Veitch went by the Tawaran we saved four or five days in going by chartering a passage for ourselves by a trading steamer which landed us at Gaya Bay the next morning after leaving Labuan. On our reaching Labuan, poor Smith, who had been ill in the boat for two or three days, had to go to the hospital with a very bad attack of fever, doubtless contracted during our walk from Ghinambaur to the Tampassuk. He fortunately recovered in a week's time, but evidently had felt the effects of a difficult mountain journey. All our friends in Labuan were glad to see us back again, and the mails from home which had arrived during my absence were of the most cheering kind. Notwithstanding our rough passage I found my plants and seeds in good condition, and I am glad to know that the practical results of this journey were more encouraging than I had expected, and many of the plants and seeds obtained ultimately reached Chelsea alive. Having at this time been over a year in Borneo, I had learned a good deal of the language, and had also found much to admire in the Malays and aboriginals, so that I felt in a way loath to leave a land which had been fraught with so many novelties and adventures to me.