

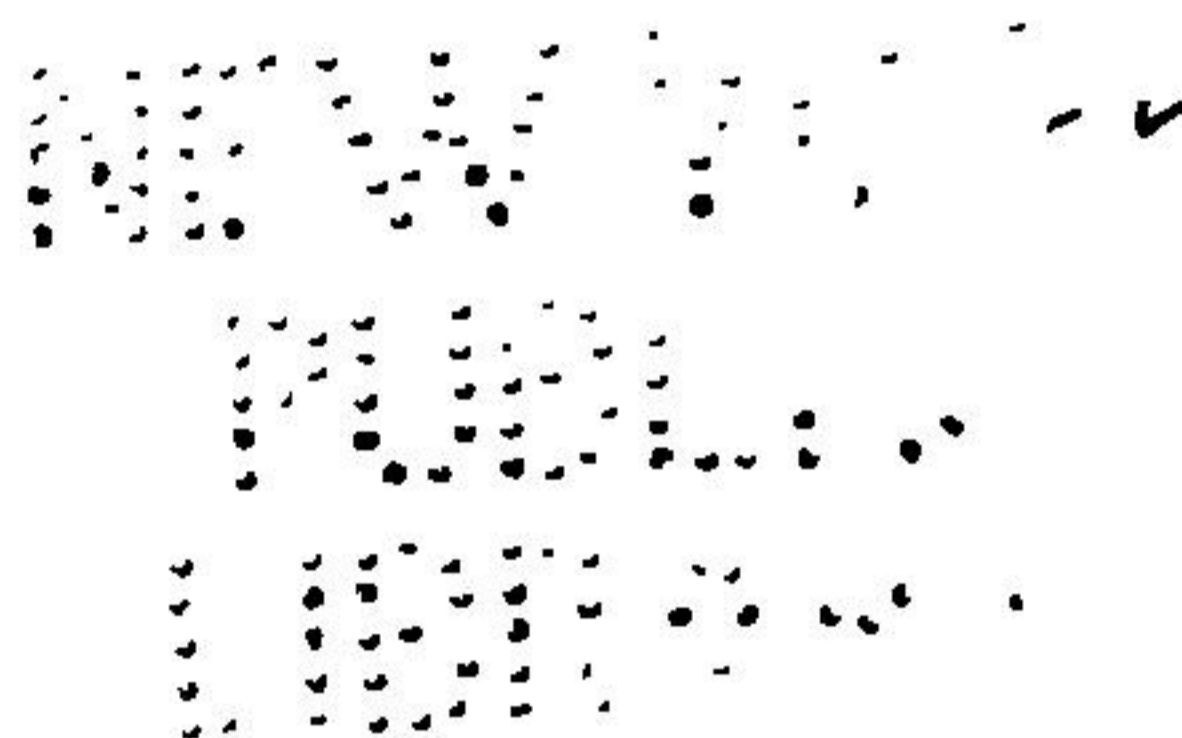
WANDERINGS IN THE GREAT FORESTS OF BORNEO

TRAVELS AND RESEARCHES OF A NATURALIST
IN SARAWAK

By

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which coveted morsel he consented to be my guide to the Lobang Angin.

The Dyak led me to another entrance of the cave, on the land side, also wide, but not so easy of access as that on the river, for we had to climb a steep rock, very rough and beset with sharp points, in order to reach it. On this side, as on the other, the cave presented a spacious hall which extended deep into the mountain in a winding manner, branching off into lateral corridors leading to various outlets. Nearly in the centre of the large hall-like portion, in a deep fissure of the vault, is the breeding place of the true edible-nest swift (*Collocalia nidifica*), its gelatinous nests being attached to the nearly vertical rock. There were none now, for the Dyak who was with me as guide had been there on the very day previous for the purpose of taking them. From him I learnt that a small mouse-like animal inhabits the cave, in holes in the ground. I saw a goodly number of these holes, but nothing of the animal itself. I searched in vain, too, for blind Coleoptera, and any other special cave creatures. A good deal of loose earthy soil, undoubtedly carried in by water, is to be found in this part of the cave, as in the other, which would be further evidence of a general elevation of the hill at a period not very remote.

Whilst descending the river on my way back I found a specimen of the lovely *Dendrobium superbum*, with large lilac-rose flowers, growing on the trunk of a tree. It is, I think, one of the most beautiful orchids in Borneo, and is found also in the Philippines. At Bau I stayed awhile to have a look at the gold washings, which are worked by a considerable number of Chinamen. At this place, and not in the above described cave, as has been asserted, fossil teeth of rhinoceros have been found.

I passed the night at Busso, and the next day went on to Blida, where, crossing the river, I shot a small crocodile, the only one amongst the many I fired at which I was able to secure. In the Sarawak river the common species of crocodile (*Crocodylus biporcatus*) is abundant, even in the vicinity of Kuching; and there have been instances of persons carried off by these voracious reptiles, even from the bazaar quay. A premium of one rupee was given per foot (in length) for every crocodile caught.

That evening I remained at Blida, where I was able to secure several species of birds which abounded on that portion of the banks of the Sarawak river. A beautiful pink and green bee-eater (*Nyctiornis amicta*) was particularly abundant. I also got some plovers, which made an agreeable addition to my ordinary meals of curry and rice. On March 6th I again ascended the Pininjau, partly for the sake of its splendid view, and partly to get specimens of the small swift which is so abundant there, and which Doria had asked me to collect for him, for at that time our knowledge of the

in my hunt after orang-utans, but it was loaded with big shot. Not to lose time I dropped a bullet into one barrel without removing the shot, and jumped ashore, followed by two of my smartest Kayans. But the place where I alighted was soft mud, and without the help of my two companions I should have stuck there. We scrambled up, however, and to approach the animals without being seen by them made a long detour, and I managed to get within twenty-five yards of the herd. A fine large bull, entirely black with white feet, showed its side, and as I fired the creature fell, but rose again at once and started at a rush for the jungle, followed by four others, evidently cows or calves, that were feeding with it. We then showed ourselves, but one of the herd, which had been grazing at a distance from the others, on perceiving me at once lowered its head and charged. At ten yards off I fired my second barrel, which, unfortunately, was only loaded with shot. The creature came down on its knees and rolled over. I thought I had got him, but he was up again in an instant, and made for the jungle like the others. My Kayans, thinking that it must be blinded or at least badly wounded, having received the contents of my barrel full in the front part of the head, followed its spoor for a while, but were unable to come up with it, and we reluctantly had to abandon the chase.

The wild cattle of Borneo, or "banteng," as the natives call it (*Bos sondaicus*), is, after the rhinoceros, which is only found in the interior, the largest of the indigenous Bornean mammals, the elephant having been beyond doubt introduced by man on the island. I once heard that the carcass of a rhinoceros had been seen in the Sarawak, carried down by the current, but I have never seen any portion of one got in Borneo. Elephants are found in the north-east portion of the island, but Mr. St. John (*Op. cit.* i. p. 95) writes that it is believed that they are the descendants of some which were presented by the Hon. East India Company to the Sultan of Sulu about 150 years ago, and which at his request were landed at Tanjong Unsang. They are now said to be numerous in that district, doing much damage to the plantations.

The banteng is also called by the natives tambadao, or tam-madao, and appears to be more frequent in North Borneo than elsewhere, especially on the Limbang and the Barram. Mr. St. John (*Op. cit.* i. p. 283) writes that in Kimanis Bay, in British North Borneo, herds of banteng are met with which are of smaller size than the wild cattle found on the banks of the two rivers just mentioned. I was told that the banteng has a special predilection for young bamboo shoots, and thus prefers keeping in the jungle or secondary forest, where that plant abounds, whilst it is rarely met with in the primeval forest. The country we were then crossing appeared to