UP A TREE IN THE JUNGLE

By CHARLES MAYER

Illustrations by Will Crawford

FOR several years after the orang-outang hunt, I did not venture into the jungle for more than a day or two at a time. My fever and dysentery had become chronic. I realized that I had too often disregarded the warning of the doctors and that, if I had another bad attack of illness, far away from medical attention, I should have to leave the country or might possibly die before I got away. My animal business in Singapore had grown so large that it gave me plenty to do, and I left to my agents the work of collecting. Through my house in Orchard Road passed a steady stream of animals, destined for zoölogical gardens all over the world.

Most of the animals went to the various Australian gardens for which I acted as agent. They allowed me to make my shipments f. o. b. Singapore, relieving me of the risks of transportation. In return, I gave them first call on all of my best specimens. When their needs had been supplied, I had my choice between shipping to Hagenbeck's agent at Calcutta, shipping to Europe and selling to the crews of boats that called at Singapore. The officers and men bought many animals, sharing the cost and eventually sharing the profits if the animals lived to reach Europe. Ariff, by crooked dealing and passing off sickly animals, had almost ruined this business, but it revived rapidly when the word spread that I could be depended upon. Ariff and I had many stormy sessions before I convinced him that my way was the better, and he finally came to handle a large part of the boat trade for me, doing the work of soliciting orders and making deliveries on commission.

I made very few sales directly to America. The trouble and risk of the long voyage were too great, and also there was a twenty-five per cent duty to be paid when the animals were landed. The gamble was large, and, even when the deliveries were safely made, there was little profit. Some of my animals reached America through Hagenbeck, who kept them until they were acclimated and then shipped them across the Atlantic. The acclimatization and breeding of animals in captivity is a business in itself.

Hagenbeck approached me several times with the proposition to become his exclusive agent in the Far East, but I preferred to have my own business and sell independently. Both he and Cross of Liverpool kept me busy with orders; and, with the orders from Australia, I found that I had a greater demand than I could meet. Almost every boat that came to Singapore from the districts where animals were captured brought specimens, and I was continually pressing my agents to send more. I traveled constantly throughout the Archipelago, urging the natives to work faster and keeping in touch with the source of my supply. As I have said before, I made few excursions into the jungle, and then only when it was impossible for my agents, who were generally headmen, to leave their *kampongs* and come to the coast.

Trengganu, with its jungles full of animals, was my favorite territory. I had the valuable privilege of being practically the only white man who could enter that country. In it I passed so much of my time that I finally had a house built there for me. My presence speeded the work of capturing, though I took no part in it except to talk with the headmen when they came to the coast. The Sultan gave me unlimited power in handling the natives, and no native who worked for me ever had cause to complain.

Nor had the Sultan himself; for I often found ways of helping him when the treasury was at low ebb. He looked to me to bring him news of the outside world and to interpret the news for him in terms that were understandable.

I DOUBT IF A SINGLE BUCKET REACHED THE FIRE WITH MORE THAN A CUPFUL OF WATER IN IT

Several hours of each day I spent at the palace, in discussing the affairs of the country with the Sultan and his Prime Minister, Mahommed Yusuf. Yusuf was a *tunku běsar* (big prince) and was formerly the Sultan of Lingga. He was driven from his country by the Dutch and had sought refuge with his brother, the Sultan of Trengganu. There he lived as an object lesson in what might happen if Europeans were allowed to come into the country.

It was inevitable that Trengganu should eventually be taken over by the British, but the Sultan fought the idea at every turn. He could see in such a possibility nothing but ruin for himself, and he was determined to hold out as long as he lived. In our long talks we discussed every phase of his situation, and I pointed out to him that other sultans had prospered under the British. He was interested in that fact and asked for more information.

Finally, it was arranged that Sir Frank Swettenham, who was governor-general of the Straits Settlements, should make a visit to Trengganu. That was the entering wedge. A few years later, an agreement was reached by which the country became a British protectorate and the Sultan, a prosperous, though nominal, ruler; and the development of this virgin territory began.

As a reward for the advice and assistance I gave him, the Sultan, before Trengganu passed out of his control, made me a present of five different concessions of land, with all mineral and surface rights. Though the concessions, which totaled nine hundred square miles, were rich in tin, the Sultan advised me to let the tin stay where it was and plant rubber. I could see that I had reached the beginning of the end of my career as an animal dealer!

On my return to Singapore after one of my visits to Trengganu, I found a letter from Mr. LaSeuf, of Melbourne, asking me if I would make a special effort to get a rhinoceros for his zoölogical gardens. He had made the same request the year before, and I had had a standing order with my agents in Trengganu, but nothing had come of it. There was constant good-natured rivalry between Mr. LaSeuf and his son, who was director of the gardens at Perth, and, as I had provided the son with a rhinoceros, I wanted to do as much for the father. I wrote to him, saying that I should communicate with my agents and that, if they had nothing to report, I would go out myself and see what I could find for him. Accordingly, I sent Ali to Trengganu with the message, telling him to wait there until I arrived.

There seemed to be so little chance that the natives would capture a good specimen that, after attending to the business at the animal house, I gathered my kit and started northward. At Trengganu I found Ali and some of the headmen waiting for me. Just as I had expected, they had nothing to report. One of them said that he thought I could find a rhinoceros near Rawang.

"Why do you think so?"

"*Tûan*," he replied, "there are traces."

"But why haven't your men been digging pits and capturing it?"

He made some reply to the effect that his men were busy planting rice, and I let the matter drop, for I saw that he was unwilling to talk. After the headmen had left the house, I questioned Ali. While waiting for me, Ali had drawn the headman out on the subject. It seemed that the natives of the headman's kampong were reluctant to go out hunting the rhinoceros because they had seen the tracks, not only of the beast they were after, but also of beasts they wanted to avoid—a pair of seladangs.

I could understand, then, why they were not anxious to go out rhinoceros hunting, armed with nothing but their knives and muzzle-loading guns; for the seladang is, to my mind, the most dangerous animal on earth. It is the largest and fiercest of all wild cattle; its sense of smell and its vision are keen, and it charges with terrific speed. Except for one baby seladang that died before it reached a menagerie, not one has ever been captured alive. A number have been killed and mounted and are to be found in museums.

In meeting seladangs a hunter needs all his skill and courage. They charge without an instant's warning, breaking through the jungle at incredible speed. Unlike most animals, they do not try to protect themselves by defensive methods, holding the charge until they are cornered; they are instantly on the offensive. The hunter becomes just as much hunted as his quarry; each tries to attack by surprise. It is vitally important in running down seladangs for the hunter to keep his feet clear of vines and creepers, so that he can be free to jump; and also to keep his eye on a tree, which will provide refuge in case he needs it. The only possible way for a hunter to escape the direct charge of a seladang is to fall flat and let it run over him; its neck is so short that, when he is prostrate, it cannot reach him with its horns. Then, if the hoofs have not knocked him unconscious or broken his bones, he can jump up, before the seladang can check itself, and run for a tree. For the man once caught on the beast's horns, there is no escape; it tosses a victim time after time and then tramples him.

I had never met a seladang—and I must admit that I was not especially anxious to meet one—but I had no doubt of my ability to handle it if the emergency arose, and so I determined to go to Rawang for the rhinoceros. I had confidence in my express rifle and I knew that the natives would not refuse to accompany me. It would be useless to force them, of course, for they would be constantly on the verge of panic. I sent Ali to talk with the headman and bring him to my house.

That afternoon a large part of the village across the river from my house burned to the ground. While I was sitting on my veranda, waiting for Ali to return with the headman, I saw smoke arising from one of the houses in the Chinese section. A moment later, flames appeared, the alarm was given and the village was in an uproar. The flames leaped from house to house, running down the principal street, where all the godowns were located. I went across the river to watch the excitement and see what I could do to help. The natives were wild: rushing about, falling over one another and going crazy. I stood at one side, quite out of the way, for a native in such a condition is a dangerous person; the least word may send him *âmok* and start him slashing with his *kris*. Not one native thought about the safety of his women and children. On the contrary, he pushed women and children out of the way and walked on them, in the excitement of rescuing the one possession that a Malay values—his kris. Men dashed into burning houses and emerged triumphantly, scorched but waving their krises over their heads.

One of the tunkus managed to organize in the midst of the turmoil, what passed as a water-chain. The natives grabbed buckets and ran to the river, returning at full speed, waving their buckets and getting in one another's way. I doubt if a single bucket reached the fire with more than a cupful of water in it. It was so funny that I had to hide where no one could see me laughing. I heard later that the old Sultan laughed until he was weak.

He feared only that the wind might change and bring the fire on his palace; and he sent Mahommed Yusuf to find me and ask my advice. Yusuf and I decided that, if the wind showed any signs of changing, it would be best to tear down some of the village, to make a protecting strip. I went back across the river to my house for dynamite to aid in the work of demolition. However, the wind did not change, and, in exactly a hundred minutes after I saw the first smoke, the fire had run its course.

In that time, a hundred and twenty-five houses had burned to the ground, but no lives had been lost. And so it was not a serious calamity, since house-building in that

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section of the country is a simple matter. The Malays thought it a great joke that the stores that were destroyed belonged to the Chinese; for the Chinese were always cheating them. By the time evening came, it was as if the fire had been arranged to give the population an exciting and amusing holiday.

That night, Ali, after indulging in some eloquence on the subject of my express rifle, brought the headman to me. Until late, we three sat on the veranda of my house, talking about the rhinoceros hunt and the chances of encountering a seladang. At last the headman said that he would think about the matter and give me his answer the next day.

I spent the morning with the Sultan, who was still laughing about the water-chain at the fire, and I returned to my house early in the afternoon. The headman and Ali were waiting for me. It was decided without further delay that we should go to Rawang to capture the rhinoceros.

The natives at the headman's kampong were not over-anxious to take part in the hunt, and we spent several days there, waiting for them to make up their minds. It was useless to urge them, and to force them, as I had the power to do, would have been out of the question. It was a matter of waiting and working up their enthusiasm. Ali talked with them, cleaning my rifle and telling them about the "magic" I had performed. Then, after they showed signs of being properly impressed, I took my gun and began shooting explosive bullets into the trunks of trees. They stood about, wide-eyed, watching the bullets tear great holes in the trees. One evening, two days after our arrival at the kampong, the headman came with the word that his men had decided that they would like to go rhinoceros-hunting with me. "But I can take only ten," I replied. "I want you to come and I will let you select nine others your best men." Now that the desire to go rhinoceros-hunting was alive in the village, I knew that the selection of nine men would make rivalry keen, and that those who were selected would be proud to go.

Shortly after dawn the next morning we left the kampong and struck out toward the spot where the rhinoceros had been located. We kept up a good pace during the day, following the trails through the jungle and cutting our path. Three days later we came upon signs of the rhinoceros and began tracking the spoor.

At sundown, as we were approaching an opening where we intended to make camp, we heard a crash in the jungle. "Seladangs!" screamed the Malays.

The men dropped everything and jumped for the trees just as two seladangs came charging down upon us. Ali, who was carrying my rifle and who had become separated from me when the men rushed for the trees, started toward me. Gauging the distance, I saw that he could not make it and I yelled to him to save himself. I jumped backward and made for a tree; then, as I pulled myself up, I saw the bull seladang catch Ali on his horns and toss him. I dropped to the ground again, horrified; I wanted to get my rifle and I forgot about the other animal.

The cow seladang charged, and I barely had time to get behind the tree. Unconsciously I had drawn my *parang*, and, as the great chocolate-colored beast plunged past me, I slashed. The blade hamstrung her, and she plunged, bellowing, into the jungle. Then the bull, instead of catching Ali's body on his horns, allowed it to fall to the ground and turned toward me. I swung up into the branches of the tree, just out of his reach, and slashed downward as he charged. I failed to hit him and I narrowly escaped falling.

We could hear the cow bellowing furiously and dragging herself away through the jungle. She did not return. The bull charged back again and stood beneath me, pawing the ground and bellowing. Then he turned and attacked Ali's body, trampling upon it, time after time, until every bone was broken.

Each time the bull returned to the tree, I fired down-

ward at him with my revolver, but I might just as well have used a pop-gun—the little bullets had no effect. One dynamite cartridge would have ended him, but my rifle lay on the ground five yards away. Night came on, but the seladang did not leave. I remained poised throughout the night, waiting for a chance to jump down and run for the rifle. Our thirst became terrible, and there was little consolation in the thought that the seladang was probably quite as thirsty as we were. But there was some chance that he would leave us for a few moments to find water, and I needed only a moment to get the rifle and climb back into my tree.

Ants and mosquitoes swarmed over us. Trying to find some protection against them, we wrapped our hands and faces in *sârongs*. But we were as helpless against insects as against seladangs.

Morning came and wore away to noon, and still the beast stayed by his post. Then the fever began to hit me and my head throbbed. I propped myself up against the trunk of the tree, saving all my strength until the moment when I should need it most.

Ali's body was unrecognizable; he had been gored repeatedly in the tossing and now he was simply a mass of torn, trampled flesh. The beast returned to it again and again to sniff and paw, and the sight made me weak and ill.

I JUMPED BACKWARD AND MADE FOR A TREE; THEN, AS I PULLED MYSELF UP, I SAW THE BULL SELADANG CATCH ALI ON HIS HORNS AND TOSS HIM

The ten natives were scattered through the trees near me and we talked back and forth. They, of course, depended upon me and my "magic" to save them, and I, with the fever burning more fiercely every minute, realized that something must be done immediately. My thirst was becoming unendurable and my strength was leaving me rapidly. I called to the men to join me in my tree, and they swung from limb to limb until we were together. The seladang took up his position beneath us, bellowing and pawing.

I counted the arms in the party; we had, besides our parangs, four spears and three krises. With the parangs we cut stout branches; then we tore our sârongs into strips and bound the krises to the poles. As was usual in the Archipelago, especially in the inland districts, the spears and krises were poisoned, and our only hope of victory lay in that fact. I knew that the poison would kill a man in a few minutes and I had seen smaller animals die of it, but I did not know what effect it would have on so large and powerful a brute as a seladang.

Next we gathered leaves and stuffed a sack, made from a sârong, full of them, and tied it with a string, so that we could dangle it in front of the beast. Then three of us armed with the krises took positions so that we should be above the seladang when he charged, and we lowered the sack. He snorted and drew back; then he put his strength into his legs and lunged forward. I drove downward with my kris, tearing a wound in his back near the hump; he whirled and charged again, and this time one of the natives blinded him in one eye.

He withdrew a few yards, snorting, bellowing and pawing. He turned again on the body of poor Ali, as if to vent his anger on it. Presently we lured him back with the bundle of leaves, and he charged again. I scored another cut near his hump.

This charging and jabbing went on for fully an hour, and we seemed no nearer success than when we started. It was impossible to get in a death-stroke, and the poison apparently was having no effect upon him. In any event, I thought, we were winding him, and, if we could last out another night, he would have to seek water. But there was another danger—one of the natives, crazed by thirst and excitement, might run âmok there in the tree. I planned, if we were forced to remain in the tree through the night, to take charge, diplomatically, of the krises and spears. I regretted having spent all the ammunition for my revolver on that useless fusillade the day before.

The game resolved itself into an attempt to pierce the seladang's sound eye; we lured him back, time after time, but could not drive a kris to the mark. Evening was approaching, and I thought the battle was over for the day. The seladang stood near by, ignoring, for the moment, the sack we were dangling. Blood was flowing from a dozen wounds. When he took a step forward, we cried out in surprise. He was weakening! He almost tottered away, as if he had forgotten about us.

THEN THREE OF US ARMED WITH THE KRISES TOOK POSITIONS SO THAT WE SHOULD BE ABOVE THE SELADANG WHEN HE CHARGED, AND WE LOWERED THE SACK. HE SNORTED AND DREW BACK

Even though he had routed us completely, treed us and kept us treed and killed my good friend and assistant, Ali, I felt sorry for the beast, as I sat there watching him. He had put up a magnificent fight, and, half dead, he would muster his remaining strength and charge us again if we dared set foot on the ground. It was his victory until the moment he died.

His head drooped lower; then he went down on his fore knees, bellowing weakly. Presently his hind quarters slumped down, and blood began to flow from his mouth.

I dropped from the tree and walked forward cautiously to the spot where my rifle had fallen; then, armed, I stood watching him in the throes of death. None of the Malays had followed me, and, when I told them to come down, they refused. Finally, to convince them that there was no danger, I put a 50-110 explosive bullet behind the beast's shoulder.

We dug a grave for Ali and buried him; then we gathered our material and started back for the kampong. My fever was so bad that the medicine in my kit did me little good; for hours at a time, I was unconscious and had to be carried. At the kampong, I rested for several days, gathering strength to make the trip to the coast.

When I went to see the Sultan at Trengganu, before taking the boat to Singapore, he regarded me severely and said: "Tûan, why have I given you big concessions in land? Is it because I want you to go out and kill yourself in capturing animals?" He seemed satisfied when I told him that my days as an animal capturer were over, and that, after a trip home, I should return to Trengganu, to make my fortune in more peaceful ways.

At Singapore, I saw my doctor, who looked me over and told me that any more escapades in the jungle would be the last of me. He ordered me to leave the country at once and I took passage on a steamer sailing the next week.

Then I hurried off to Palembang, where I had spent my first months among the Malays. It was Ali's home, and I was in duty bound to take his kris back for him. The old *hadji* received me affectionately and heard the story of his nephew's death.

"He died bravely, tûan?" he asked.

"Yes, and in the faith."

The hadji nodded; that was what he wanted to know—whether or not Ali died a good Mahommedan.

"On what day did he die, tûan?"

I could not remember what day it was, but I knew what the old man hoped and I answered, "Friday."

That meant that Ali was certain of Paradise.

I said good-by to the hadji and went back to Singapore to catch my boat. The fever was still racking my body, but, when I saw the Red Sea behind us once more, I knew that luck had been with me.

THE FISHERMAN

FROM THE CHINESE OF SHI-TSEN TSU OF THE SUNG DYNASTY

By SOPHIA H. CHEN *and* FRANCIS DE LACY HYDE

*I shake my head and I am free from the Red Dust; **
I can be drunk or sober as I please.
My life is my peaked hat and my cape of straw;
The frost has been my garment, and the snow has often been my saddle.

At evening, when the wind dies down, and my fishing-pole lies idle,
There is the new moon above and below.
The water and the sky are of the same color for myriads of miles,
And I sit and watch a solitary swan floating on the surface, appearing and disappearing.

Throughout my life the fishing-pole has been my only acquaintance.
I turn my boat and my oar sends it where I will;
And like the birds of the air,
I leave no trace.

The marsh flowers of autumn come and go,
But the best thing for me to do is to get drunken:
Last night the wind and the rain filled the boat,
But I heard them not.

I turn my sampan,
And make the river and sea my mansion;
I turn towards Tung-Ting Lake for wine,
And I play my flute on the distant Chien-Tang River.

The cold wind brings color to my face.
The tide recedes from the black rock;
I passed the Rapids of Tse-Ling,
And I get a message from the plum-blossoms.

My oars are motionless,
The blue mist at twilight envelops everything.
Here the sea-gulls and the swans from the frontier divide their path,
And they share the beauty of autumn in the sky over the river.

The shining scales fill the baskets,
And I get enough wine in exchange for my fish.
The wind being favorable, with a single sail I return;
And who is there to stop me?

I lost the shadow of my own hills,
And I am now a stranger in the vast space.
The seaweed and the Lu-fish invite me
To live by the side of Yuon-Yan Lake.

Sometimes I refill my gourd with wine,
Passing my morning and evening slightly drunken.
I play the flute under the Tower of Moon-waves:
Who knows who I am?

* *Red Dust is a term generally used by the Chinese to denote worldliness, or things that are worldly.*