

# In Malay Forests

BY

GEORGE MAXWELL  
—

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
MCMVII

*All Rights reserved*

## THE PINJIH RHINO.

AN old rhinoceros, that made its abode in the Pinjih valley in the Kinta district, was for many years the most famous animal in the native State of Perak.

In the first place, it was *kramat*: that is to say, the Malays credited it with supernatural powers, and imagined it to be protected against all danger by a guardian spirit. It often happens that an animal which attaches itself to one locality and establishes a reputation for daring or cunning, and which is fortunate enough to escape a few ill-directed bullets, comes in a few years to be considered *kramat*, and is in many cases imagined to be a reincarnation of a deceased celebrity. It is generally recognised that animals under the protection of another world will treat the human inhabitants of the district honoured by their presence with a benign consideration bordering on condescension; thus a *kramat* elephant will walk by the rice-fields leaving the crops untouched, and a child might drive away a *kramat* tiger that strayed too near the cattle-folds.

But this rhinoceros was extraordinarily savage; and it was this combination of *kramat* power and

savagery that constituted its second claim to distinction. It was known to have killed three men on three separate occasions, and in each case the attack was said to have been entirely unprovoked. At an inquest held on the terribly mangled body of a Malay named Japariugonen, the evidence proved that two men had been walking quietly along a forest path when, without any warning, the great brute had rushed upon them. In many other cases men had been attacked, but had escaped with their lives. It would turn aside for no one, so it was said; on the contrary, if met in the forest, it would either stand its ground and then slowly and deliberately advance in the direction from which it had been disturbed, or it would charge without warning.

It had been a terror in the Pinjih valley long before the British occupation of Perak (1874), and twenty-five years later, at the time of this narrative, it was only in large and armed parties that the woodcutters and rattan-collectors ventured into the less frequented parts of the forest.

On more than one occasion the headman of the district had organised expeditions to kill the animal, and once a party of five picked Malays had met the rhinoceros and had fired fifty shots at it. I heard the headman tell the story once. "It was no child's play," the old man said, turning fiercely on one of an audience who had criticised the shooting. "If a bullet felled the brute, it picked itself up at once; and if a shot missed, it charged forthwith. A hundred men might have fired more shots, but they could not have done more to kill it. And," he added with a

scowl, "the end of the matter is, that you cannot kill an animal that will not die."

The animal's third claim to distinction lay in its horn, which was said to be of exceptional length and girth, and also to be blue. Malays divide rhinoceroses into four classes, according to their horns. There is the one known as *sumbu lilin*, the "wax-coloured horn"; *sumbu api*, "the flame-coloured horn"; *sumbu nila*, "the blue horn"; and lastly, *sumbu hitam*, the ordinary everyday "black horn."

Rhinoceros' horns are considered to have the most marvellous efficacy as remedies for almost every kind of disease, and even shavings of a horn are carefully prized. In a case where the most appalling wounds were inflicted by this particular rhinoceros upon a man named Kanda Daud, the whole credit of the man's recovery was ascribed to the alleged fact that some of the blue of the animal's horn had come off on the man's hands as he sought to defend himself, and that this blue had been used by the native doctors as the antidote to the wounds.

The fact that made this rhinoceros so well known among the Europeans of Kinta was not so much the colour of its horn, or that it was *kramat*, or was savage, as that it was of the large one-horned variety known as *Rhinoceros Sondaicus*, which is somewhat rare, and that it seldom left an area of some forty square miles, circumscribed by bridle-paths, and within close reach of the headquarters of the district. By comparison with the boundless extent of the forest on all sides, and with the roving propensities of most big-game animals, this made it easily accessible; and

many efforts were made to bring it to account. But (partly, I imagine, to the native trackers being afraid to bring their men up to the brute) something always went wrong. Once the District Magistrate managed to get on terms with it, but was charged so often and so determinedly in very thick scrub that he had to beat a retreat and leave the rhinoceros master of the field. In the dull record of failures there was, however, one light spot. The attendant spirit of *kramat* animals has power to deceive the hunter by altering the appearance of the hunted animal or by giving its shape to one of the hunters or their attendants, and on one occasion a gallant officer in the N—— Regiment fell its victim. Leaving his pad elephant in the forest with a Malay in charge, he proceeded one day to set off on foot to look for fresh tracks. He walked for hours, until suddenly his tracker stopped him and silently pointed out the outline of a huge animal in front of them. M. took a steady aim and fired: a scream from a sorely-stricken elephant and a yell from a terrified Malay were his answer. He had walked in a circle and had fired at his own elephant. As the smoke cleared he caught a glimpse of the elephant rushing madly through the forest and had a full view of the Malay bellowing on the ground. The wretched man had been quietly smoking his cigarette on the elephant's neck, and now, lying where he fell, was only in doubt whether a bullet-wound or a broken neck was the cause of his death. Both elephant and man recovered, the Malay the quicker of the two, for the elephant, though the wound healed, was never fit for work again; but both had a lucky escape, for the

bullet, which hit the elephant high on the shoulder, had gone perilously near the man's leg. It will be some time before M. hears the last of the shot; but the chaff of the clubs does not carry the bite of the smiles of the Malays, who give the credit of the whole occurrence to "old *kramat*" and his guardian spirit.

Such, briefly, was the history of the animal, and Malias was by no means keen on tackling him. Malias was a local Malay who drew a regular salary from me, and who wandered round the country seeking for, and as far as possible verifying, news of game. He was not particularly bright, and, like all Malays, was inclined to be lazy; on fresh tracks, however, he was as keen as possible, and he would follow up a wounded tiger without his pulse giving a stroke above its normal beat. Chance brought us an ally: this was an old man named Pa' Senik, a foreigner from one of the northern unprotected States. He was of another type to Malias, who was a mere villager; for Pa' Senik's youth had been spent at the court of a petty raja, and had been such as might be expected from his surroundings, full of conspiracy and intrigue, love and lust, fair fight and cold-blooded murder. At last he had fallen upon bad days, for another raja ruled in the place of the man he had served, and he had had to fly for his life. He came to Perak, where he was shrewdly suspected of complicity in a carefully planned and well-executed dacoity, and then settled down quietly in the Pinjih valley, where until his eyesight failed him he had

made a living by shooting deer. He was now old and poor, but despite his age was keen to go after the rhinoceros, and, knowing its haunts and wallows, assured us that he could bring me up with it. But this was no ordinary quest, he said; if without preliminary preparations we went in search of tracks, we were foredoomed to the failure that had attended all previous efforts. We must first "ask" for the rhinoceros from the *Jin Tanah*, or Earth Spirits, who have power over the forest and all its inhabitants, and to whom the attendant spirits of *kramat* animals are vassals. Pa' Senik, who was a *parwang*,<sup>1</sup> proposed to make a feast and invoke the spirits, and to ask them to give us the rhinoceros and to accept compensation. We should not have to pay much, he said, for the spirit, if it accepted the offer, would probably ask for something to eat, a fowl perhaps, or some eggs, and a lime or two. Of course, if the spirits proved obdurate, nothing could be done, and we must not think of any act of defiance; but, if made with skill and address, our application would, he thought, be favourably considered. The exchange value of a rhinoceros in the spirit world seemed to be extremely moderate, and I gave the old man a dollar (all he asked for) with which to prepare the feast preliminary to the invocation, and arranged to go to his house to witness the ceremony.

The following Saturday was the day agreed upon,

<sup>1</sup> A *parwang* is a man who, by ceremony, incantation, or charm, propitiates or invokes the assistance of the spirits. He figures in every enterprise and festival of the Malay community. For a fuller account see the Appendix.

and a few miles by railway to the next station, and a walk of a couple of miles took me to his village, where a house has been set aside for me. After dinner I was invited into the adjoining house, where Pa' Senik had made his preparations. Like all Malay houses it was divided into three parts: the front room or verandah, absolutely public; the middle room, where the men eat and sleep, reserved for intimates; and the kitchen, where the unmarried women sleep, absolutely private. The ceremony was to take place in the centre room, and here I was introduced to Che Mat, a brother pawang, whom Pa' Senik had called in to assist him. After a few minutes' conversation the proceedings began, and while they sat down and faced one another over a brass bowl containing burning charcoal, I made myself as comfortable as I could upon the floor within a few feet of them, and round us such men and women and children as had obtained admission ranged themselves in a semicircle. Various bowls of water, in which floated leaves and flowers, were set about the floor, and twigs and sprays of leaves and blossoms were fixed to the posts and walls. Each bowl and leaf and flower had its definite significance, and to each were spells and charms attached. Pa' Senik then took up an *arbab*, a three-stringed instrument, in shape somewhat like a banjo, but played with a bow. After a tentative essay or two he struck up a monotonous chant to a tune a degree more monotonous. Much of his music was improvised to meet the special conditions of the present instance; but the greater portion of it was part of



his traditional craft. It was lengthy and full of repetitions: but the gist of it was that here was a white man, who came to ask the assistance of the spirits; and here were Malias, Che Mat, and Pa' Senik, the servants and followers of the white man, and they too craved the assistance of the spirits; and in the forest was the rhinoceros whom they desired to take, and whom they now besought the spirits to give them. What answer would the spirits give us, and by what means could we ensure their assistance in the enterprise? Such, in a few words, was the meaning of an invocation that lasted twenty minutes. The chant ended, Pa' Senik laid aside his bow, and asked one of the company to recite from the Koran. A man at once began to intone some verses, while the whole audience joined in the usual responses and replies, and the protection of the Islam religion was thus called in upon proceedings utterly at variance with the teaching of Muhammad. When this was over, a tray containing rice and various kinds of curry was brought up to Che Mat, who had hitherto remained silent and motionless, in pose of entire abstraction. He now roused himself, and throwing some gum benjamin into the censer over which he faced Pa' Senik, moved the tray in and out of the thick smoke until it was thoroughly fumigated. Then he took a saucer of rice from an attendant, and passed it in a similar manner through the smoke, and after placing a lighted candle on the edge of the saucer, put it on a tray suspended from the roof between the two men. Finally, a plate of parched rice was

purified from all mortal taint by smoke, and then, also with a lighted candle on its rim, carried out of the house by Che Mat, and hung on a tree. This marked the conclusion of the opening stage of the proceedings. The rice on the tray between the two men was of a peculiar kind, considered a delicacy, which is used in sweetmeats, and was intended to attract the attention of the spirits we desired to invoke. The parched rice outside the house was for any of the thousand and one wandering demons who might appear, and who, unless thus provided for, might mar the proceedings. The curry and rice was for the audience, most of whom at once followed it to a corner of the room, and devoted an undivided attention to it.

After an interval both men stripped to the waist, and Pa' Senik took up his instrument, and to the same drear chant reiterated the purpose for which we met. Che Mat in the meantime undoing the handkerchief that Malays bind round their heads, let a mass of long hair fall down upon his shoulders, and carefully combed it out and anointed it with cocoanut-oil. He then bound his handkerchief round the long glistening hair, and rolled it scarf-wise round his head. When this was done he brought forward more saucers of rice, and held them in the smoke of the censer, and passed his hands, his head, his breast, his knees, and his back through the pungent incense, ending by moving the censer three times round himself. He bowed to the four cardinal points, took some of the rice in his hand, and, muttering a spell over it, blew upon it in the pro-

fessional manner known as *jampi*. Another candle was lit, and Pa' Senik again began to play his instrument. Suddenly Che Mat broke in upon the monotonous music of the *arbab*, clapped his hands wildly above his head, shook his hair free from the handkerchief that bound it round his forehead, and, with a quick twist of his neck, swung his long locks in a sweeping circle round his head. The suddenness of the interruption was startling. Round whirled the black glistening mane, followed by the gaze of every eye in the room, and as it completed the circle, another short jerk of the muscles of the neck sent it again madly flying round his head. Again and again, and more quickly each succeeding time, was the stream made to revolve round him, until at last all that was to be seen of the man seated on the floor was his short bare body, with an occasional glimpse of white compressed features, surmounted by a black, rushing, whirling halo that filled and fanned the room. For some minutes this extraordinary muscular effort continued, until suddenly Che Mat fell forward in a state of collapse. There was perfect silence for a few moments, while all the spectators held their breath, and then Pa' Senik, picking up some rice, threw it over the supine figure, and asked him who he was. There was no answer, and Pa' Senik was forced to have recourse to his *arbab*. After a considerable interval Che Mat announced that he was Pran Ali, meaning thereby that he was possessed by a spirit of that name. In answer to questions put by Pa' Senik, the spirit Pran Ali expressed himself as friendly to us, and a

natural enemy of the earth spirits and the guardian spirits, but declared that he was unable to help us in the quest of the rhinoceros; deer were the animals over which he had power, not rhinoceroses. If it had been a deer now——

Pran Ali could help us no further, and thereupon left, and Che Mat was no longer possessed of him. There was another interval of singing and playing by Pa' Senik, who called on various spirits to come to our assistance, and repeated innumerable charms to prevent the rhinoceros from hearing or scenting us as we approached it, to prevent it from charging, or from recovering from any wound that might be inflicted upon it. "If all the dead return to life and walk this world again, then, and not till then, may this animal turn upon us; if the bottommost of the three layers of stone that support the earth reappear upon the surface, then, and not till then, may this animal attack us." But to repeat one-tenth of the incantations and invocations would fill many pages, and would interest but very few. Che Mat stopped the long tale by again evincing signs of another demoniacal possession. Again his attitude of abstraction fell from him, and his weird hair-swinging held the room. After the pause that followed his collapse he inquired what we wanted of him, and when Pa' Senik offered him a bowl of parched rice, he at once seized it and swallowed a handful of the contents; when a plantain was produced, he gulped it, skin and all, and then announced that he was Sang Kala Raja Megang Rimba, one of the guardian spirits. Pa' Senik thereupon humbly inquired whether

we might be allowed to follow the rhinoceros (which, by the way, was throughout the evening spoken of as a buffalo), and the spirit's immediate reply was a downright refusal, saying that on no account would he lose the animal. This caused a sensation amongst the audience, and there was much shaking of heads, but Pa' Senik was not to be beaten. He began with cajolery, and when that had no effect tried what is vulgarly known as bounce. Who was this spirit that he should take this defiant attitude? To this the spirit answered that he was a thousand years old: Pa' Senik declared that he was a thousand years older. "Ten thousand years old," replied the spirit. "Ten thousand years older," retorted Pa' Senik, who thereupon challenged his adversary to a contest as to which was the stronger. When the challenge was accepted, Pa' Senik seized a handful of parched rice and threw it full in the face of his adversary, and then leant forward, glaring at him over the smouldering censer. His opponent immediately seized a huge bowl of rice and raised it in the act to hurl; but when his arm reached the topmost point above his shoulder from which it would turn to throw, he suddenly stiffened, and the whole of his body became rigid. For a few seconds he sat there living and motionless as the statue of a discobolus: and then the bowl dropped from his nerveless fingers and fell crashing to the floor. Sang Kala Raja Megang Rimba was beaten in contest. He cast himself forth, and Che Mat was thrown into a third frenzy, becoming possessed of a spirit named Awang Mahat. Unfortunately Awang Mahat be-

longs to that unhappy class, whether in this world or the other, of creatures who mean well: his intentions are excellent, but he is powerless for good or evil, and the consideration he meets with is, therefore, such as might be expected. Little was asked of him, and he could tell us less: beyond saying that if our quarry were wounded near water it would come to life again (a pleasing prospect, as we had to seek it in swamp and marsh), he could not help us. He remained but a few minutes, and then craved leave to depart. When he left, Che Mat was nearly fainting, and to allow him to recover there was a long interval of playing and singing by Pa' Senik. Che Mat's wife, herself no unskilled disciple in witchcraft, in the meantime occupied herself in attending to her husband, breathing upon him, rubbing, kneading, and massaging him. When attention was called and the proceedings resumed, Che Mat fell into a fourth frenzy, more violent than any that had preceded it. He had undergone his previous attacks in silence, but this time he gave vent to scream after scream, short sharp yells of pain. When the succeeding exhaustion had somewhat passed, he declared that he was the Jin Kepala Gunong Api—the Jin of the Volcano's Summit—one of the *Jin Tanah*, the Earth Spirits, whom we had to fear in this enterprise. He was most violent at first, but soon became quiet, and then friendly, and finally asked what we would give him if he allowed us to "take" the rhinoceros. Various gifts were suggested, but rejected as valueless in the Spirit World, until finally the offer of an egg, some

parched rice, and the rice I have mentioned as a delicacy, was accepted.

This, Pa' Senik was careful to explain to me the next morning, was not in this case to be considered as representing the exchange value of the rhinoceros; it was tendered and accepted only in the sense of a propitiatory offering. All that was vouchsafed was that, as far as the Earth Spirits were concerned, we were at liberty to follow the rhinoceros; whether we succeeded or not was another thing, and to that the Jin would not commit himself. But we were given an omen, and told that if we met a tiger's tracks crossing those of the rhinoceros, we were to return at once, and not to make another attempt; when we made our offering at the entrance of the forest, certain signs in the flame of a candle would tell us the disposition of the guardian spirit; and, thirdly, we were to be guided by our dreams that night. The Jin then threw Che Mat into a final frenzy and left. This ended the night's work.

We were astir early the next morning, and Malias eagerly asked me what I had dreamt. Alas! no omens were to be gathered from my dreamless sleep; nor had any one else been favoured, except my little Tamil "boy," who had been very much frightened by what he had peeped in to see overnight, and who plaintively said, in tones that showed he wished it were true, that he had dreamt of being back at my house. Pa' Senik was ready with his offering, and after breakfast he, Malias, and I set off for a walk in the forest. We had no news of the whereabouts of the rhinoceros, for, as I have said, no one would go to look for this animal's tracks; but a day would be well spent in learning as

much as possible of the lie of the country. Pa' Senik had been directed by the Earth Spirit to make his offering at "the gateway of the forest," which is the Malay term for the place where the village foot-track leaves the open cultivated land and plunges into the virgin forest. At the "gateway," then, Pa' Senik made his offering. Splitting into four the end of a bamboo, and deftly weaving the stem of a creeper through the split ends, he improvised a censer, which a couple of green leaves and a handful of earth made fire-proof. Some dry leaves and a dead twig or two made a fire, upon which he sprinkled incense. The stipulated offering was passed through the smoke, and then carefully placed on an open spot. Now came the question — what was the augury? Pa' Senik lit a candle, and placed it on the edge of the censer, and, after due invocation, stepped back and keenly watched the flames. In doing this one has to stay beside the lighted candle, calling upon the spirits to attend until one feels one's skin move, then step back and watch the flame: if it flickers, it betokens the arrival of the spirits; if, after breaking and wavering, it burns true, straight, and upright—success; extinction is failure; if it blows to the right or toward you, hope; to the left or away from you, the chances are against you. In the wind-protected corner Pa' Senik had chosen the candle burnt true and bright, and as we started hope ran high. We had a long day's walk through the forest, but to find fresh tracks was too much to expect. Old tracks, however, and abandoned wallows gave proof of "old *kramat's*" existence; and the next morning I returned to my quarters well satis-



fied at having got through the opening stages of the campaign.

Though no result was seen that day, Pa' Senik's offering had not been without its effect, for not many days later a Malay came hot-foot in search of Malias, and told him that he had that morning seen the fresh tracks of the rhinoceros crossing a native path some twelve miles away. Pa' Senik was sent for, kit and provisions packed, coolies collected and despatched, and that night we all slept in our informant's house. It stood in a small clearing, in the depths of the forest. A few hundred yards away from the door a precipitous limestone hill rose sheer out of the level plain, and towered some seven hundred feet above our heads. At sunset numbers of jungle-fowl crowed and called on every side as they came down to drink at a little stream behind the house; and a party of black gibbons made the echoes ring with their ear-piercing whoops. The wild goat lived on this limestone hill, our host Hussein informed us; one could hear them bleat at night, and they often came down from the precipitous heights to feed round his clearing, but they were very rarely seen. We went to sleep early, and the next morning I woke my men at half-past four. A tiger had roared close to the house during the night, and this made Pa' Senik rather apprehensive of the omen regarding the tiger tracks crossing the rhinoceros tracks. We made a good breakfast, and while the first jungle-cock was shrilling his clear challenge and the gibbons went whooping through the tree-tops in search of food, we started to make a wide cast through the forest to find fresh tracks of the rhinoceros. With-

out doubt the heart of the Jin had been softened, for we had not gone more than two or three miles before we came on tracks made early the previous evening.

Pa' Senik had explained to me overnight that his "work" of the evening I have described would remain effectual for a month, and that an offering each time we entered the forest anew was all that was now required. He was provided with his censer and propitiatory gift, and in half an hour we were ready to proceed. Malias and I then went on alone, instructing Pa' Senik, Hussein, and another local Malay, to follow us slowly, and to keep, so far as they could judge, a quarter of a mile behind us. We followed a well-beaten track, and it seemed from the manner in which the animal had walked steadily on, without stopping to feed on the way, that he was making for another part of the country, and that many miles lay between him and us. We were therefore taken entirely by surprise when, before we had gone more than half a mile, a turn in the path brought us suddenly upon him. He was lying at full length in a wallow; but I was unable to make use of the disadvantage at which we held him, for as I threw up my 10-bore a hanging creeper caught the barrels, and I had to lower the rifle and disengage it before I could bring it fairly to my shoulder. By this time the rhinoceros had lurched out of the pool, and I only had time for a hasty shot at his shoulder, hitting him, as I subsequently discovered, too high up and too far forward. The thick smoke of the black powder prevented me from getting a second shot before the animal disappeared in the dense forest growth. An

examination of the tracks explained the suddenness of the encounter, for they showed that the rhinoceros had stayed the whole night long in the wallow, and the footprints proved that it really was "old *kramat*" that we had met. This Malias was at first inclined to doubt, for we had seen the animal plainly, and his horn was not the cubit's length of cerulean blue that every one said "old *kramat*" carried, but only a short, black, shapeless stump; nor had he in the least degree acted up to his reputation for pugnacity. The only fact in favour of the theory that it was he whom we had met was that there was not a sign of blood. This rather disconcerted the Malays; but I had before followed a wounded rhinoceros for three miles without finding a drop of blood (until the Malays had openly grumbled at my following an animal that had obviously been missed), and had found it when I did come up with it on the point of death—dying, I believe, from internal hemorrhage. We made but a short pause by the wallow to examine the tracks, and then pushed on. At once we were covered from head to foot, and our rifles from stock to muzzle, with the wet clay that clung to the bushes through which the rhinoceros had made its way. Slimy branches dripping with mire slapped our faces, and oozy drops of mud fell upon our heads and clotted in our hair. Then before we had worked more than a hundred yards of our way along the track a mass of white glittering clay caught my eye, and as I squatted on my heels Malias reached forward to make an excited tug at my coat. What we saw was on slightly higher ground than that on which we stood, and appeared to be at

least seven feet high; it was perfectly motionless. An "ant-hill," whispered Malias, for it was covered with the same substance as that with which we were smeared. An ant-hill, of course, I thought, and the rhinoceros had rubbed against it in passing. And so I nodded and prepared to move forward, but as I did so the mass moved and disappeared behind the brown pile of a real ant-hill. "Allah! that was he," groaned Malias. But before I could express my feelings the animal reappeared on the other side of the covering heap, and walked slowly away from us. Though his back was well exposed, a careful aim at the base of the spine produced no effect, and (the smoke hung terribly) I had no time for a second shot; nor perhaps would I have risked it, for I felt sure that this time at all events he would charge. However, the rhinoceros went straight away, nor did we see him again for many hours. For perhaps a mile we followed him through virgin forest, where, though rattans and creepers obstructed the path, the great trees afforded a shelter from the sun. But then the rhinoceros turned aside into a clearing where two seasons before the Malays or the aboriginal Sakeis had felled the timber to grow a crop of hill-rice. The scrub that had grown up since they had reaped their harvest and abandoned the place was some ten feet high, and here the difficulty of making one's way was increased a hundredfold, and moreover we were exposed to the full force of the tropical sun. Bowing and bending to avoid the interlacing creepers, twisting and turning to free our rifles from the branches that, despite our efforts, caught their projecting muzzles,

we had of course to move in perfect silence. The sun struck fair on our rounded backs, and we were surrounded by myriads of flies. They flew into our eyes, imprisoned themselves in our ears, or crawled clog-footed over our glistening faces. We pushed on extremely slowly, for we had no desire to come up with the rhinoceros in this horrible tangle, where we had but little chance of self-defence. There was no alternative, however, but to stick to the tracks. We could not say what line the animal intended to take, and to make a *détour* was therefore out of the question. The only thing to do was to give the rhinoceros time to move on, and to trust to meeting him in more favourable country. At first the track showed that he could not decide whether to go straight away or whether to refuse to leave the advantage the thick scrub gave, or, thirdly, whether to wait in the path and fight. This, of course, necessitated extreme caution, but at last after some two or three hours we emerged from the scrub and re-entered the forest. Soon afterwards we saw a few scanty drops of blood, and Malias was much reassured thereby. Then the rhinoceros took a definite line across country, and at about one o'clock we came to a small stream that it had crossed. Here we waited for Pa' Senik and the men. When they came up they informed us that we were close to the place where Japaringonen had been killed by this animal. After our meal and a cigarette we pushed on again. Before we had gone another mile a snort and rush showed that we had come up with "old *kramat*" again. His behaviour was most extraordinary: from a distance perhaps of some fifty yards away

he charged headlong towards us, passing within fifteen or twenty yards of our position. The sound of saplings crashing and breaking, and creepers rending and snapping, filled the place and testified to the enormous bulk and power of the animal. When he had gone fifty yards behind us, he stopped. Here he paused a few seconds, and then with a snort charged back again at an acute angle to the last direction he had taken. He again passed close enough for us to catch a glimpse of him and to see the bushes moving, but not close enough for one to aim with any certainty. Again he stopped, paused, and then with a snort came back on another line that passed us no nearer than the others. What his intention was I cannot say; whether it was that he could not discover our exact position, or whether his wounds had knocked the inclination for real fighting out of him, I do not know; but I am inclined to believe that he did not want to fight, and think that it was what tacticians term a demonstration. He made five such rushes, but no time did he come close enough for me to take more than a snap-shot, and this, thinking that I should require my cartridges for close quarters, I refused to risk.

At last, however, Malias pointed out a stationary black object some twenty-five or thirty yards away. I could see that it was the rhinoceros, but could not make out what part of him it was. Nevertheless, thinking that I might not get a better opportunity, I fired; in another wild charge he rushed headlong through the forest straight away from us, bursting or tearing a path through every obstacle. Again we

followed, and after another mile came up with him for the fourth time, when, after a series of similar demonstrations, he gave me a clear shot at twenty-five yards at the base of his spine. He again went straight away; but the blood showed that both this bullet and the one before had taken effect, and when we came on a place where the poor brute had lain down we made certain of him. Though we followed the tracks until four o'clock we failed, however, to come up with him again. It was now within two hours of sundown, and as we had only a rough idea of where we were, it was necessary to think of getting back. We therefore waited for the other men to come up to us, and then discussed the position: the house from which we had started that morning was many miles behind us, and it was out of the question to think of returning there. Where was the nearest house? On this question there was a divided opinion, and one of the debaters climbed a tree to prove his case, and, descending, admitted like a man that he was wrong. From the tree he could see a grove of durian-trees; and towards this spot we made our way, for we knew that from the grove a native track would lead to the nearest village. Before we left the tracks we marked a tree or two, so as to be able to start the next morning where we now left off, and then made our way toward the durian-trees. When we arrived there we found that we were within two or three miles of Pa' Senik's house, which we reached within another hour. The actual distance we had followed the rhinoceros from sunrise

to nearly sunset was not more than fifteen miles (from point to point it was perhaps seven); but these miles had been covered step by step—carrying the weight of a heavy rifle under a tropical sun, bent double to evade the thorns that clutched at everything, stepping delicately to avoid the dead leaves that crackled under foot; and, with every nerve on the alert, we did not estimate the distance by miles.

Early the next morning we went back at the spot where we had left the tracks the evening before. We found that the rhinoceros had lain down and slept the night not far from where we had left him: he had eaten but very little, and had not wallowed. He had now, of course, many hours' start of us, and we had to make such speed as we could in order to overtake him, and yet to exercise extreme caution that we might not stumble upon him and be charged unawares. We had to move in perfect silence or we should not come up with him, and at the same time we had to keep our eyes on the tracks step by step. The difficulty of following the tracks even of a rhinoceros is extraordinary. One would imagine that an animal weighing perhaps two tons, and whose footprints are nearly twelve inches across, would be easy to follow; but time after time we had to stop, retrace our steps, or make a cast through the forest. On hard dry ground covered with leaves only the barest impression was left: we had often to lift the leaves to look for the mark of a toe-nail dinting perhaps the undermost leaf to the ground. Often, too, the tracks appeared to go straight on, and it



might not be for some time that we found that we were on old tracks and must turn back. Traces of blood were extremely scanty, and it was only from time to time that one or the other of us would silently point to a single drop of clotted blood on a leaf or twig. The difficulty, too, and the physical exertion of moving in silence through the thick vegetation of the forest, must be undergone to be fully realised. While one hand is perhaps disengaging a thorny creeper from the shoulder, the other hand holding a heavy rifle, and one foot suspended in the air to avoid some crackling leaf, every muscle of the body is called upon to maintain the equilibrium. Moving thus in silence, we saw in the forest animals that would otherwise have been alarmed long before we came in sight. Mouse-deer repeatedly allowed us to approach within a few feet of them; twice we got among a sounder of sleeping pig before they awoke; and once an agitated tapir dashed across the track only a few yards away from me. A danger, however, there is of this silence. Malias and I had followed a wrong track for a few yards before we discovered our mistake; retracing our footsteps, we saw that beside the path lay a green puff-adder coiled and ready to strike, and that each of us had unwittingly set his foot down within six inches of its head. It was slowly thus that we made our way, and it was past one o'clock on an intensely hot day that we came up with the rhinoceros again. I then saw him some thirty yards away standing broadside on to us. His head was hidden by foliage, and it was impossible to say at which end of the

formless mass it was. I made the inevitable mistake, and a careful aim at the spot where I imagined the heart to be only hit him far back in the quarters. As on the preceding day, he rushed away on receiving the bullet, and the country in which the tracks took us was extremely dangerous. This was another clearing made for the cultivation of hill-rice such as that we had passed through the day before; but this was younger, and therefore worse. That of yesterday was some two years old, and through it one could see a few yards; this was only seven months old, and an object a foot away was invisible. Of course, I repeat, no sane man would seek an encounter with any dangerous animal in either place. But the younger growth is really wonderful: it is a mass of tangled vegetation—for here the giant *lalang* grass, that grows some six feet high, fights for its life with the horrible creepers that bind and choke it, and with the scrub-bushes that send their roots down into the earth to undermine it. Here, like wrestlers, they strain and pull, and the victory is to the one that can endure the longest. The loser dies, and giant grass, creepers, and scrub fight interlocked at death-grips.

Through this almost impenetrable thicket the rhinoceros made his way, and, to use a homely simile, his track looked like a double cutting on a railway line. It was necessary, therefore, to give him time to quit such desperate country, for in a patch of such wide extent a *détour* was out of the question. We therefore sat down for half an hour and then followed on; but soon we found that what

appeared to be a double cutting had developed into something more like a tunnel, through which it was necessary to make our way on hands and knees. It was impossible to see more than a foot in any direction, impossible to stand, and, except with one hand on the ground, impossible to fire. I therefore again gave the order to retreat, and for another half hour we waited on the edge of the thicket. Then we heard an uproar among some monkeys on the far side of the scrub. "They are chattering at the rhinoceros," I said.

"Let us see," said Malias. And on we went again. Happily the tracks led straight on through the scrub; and as there was none of the twisting and turning we had met the day before, we were emboldened by the calls we had heard from the monkeys, and pushed on in hopes that the rhinoceros was now in more open country. Suddenly a few heat drops, generated from a steaming ground and a blazing sky, fell pattering around and on us. Malias at once seized my coat and looked on every side with perturbation. "*Hujan panas*," he whispered, for "hot rain" is the sign of a bloody death.

"Perhaps," I suggested, "it is a sign that the rhinoceros will die to-day."

"That is not certain," he retorted. "It may be the rhinoceros that will die, and perhaps it may not." And then he added, very slowly and sententiously, "It is the Malay custom to be very careful when this happens."

His nerve seemed shaken for the moment, and more carefully than ever we crept along on hands

and knees. The heat in the open scrub was terrific. The tangled vegetation we were crawling through afforded our spines and necks no protection from the sun, and the air was bound a prisoner by the giant grass and bushes that throttled one another. Waves of heat were rising from the sweltering ground in quivering lines, and more than half we breathed there was steam: this filled the throat, but, though they hammered against our ribs, could not fill the lungs. The perspiration dripped from every pore of the body, but the mouth and tongue were clogged with drought, and salt with moisture from our lips; and worse than anything else was the drumming of the nearly bursting blood-vessels behind our ears and temples. Time after time I was deceived into thinking that I heard the rhinoceros move.

At last we reached the edge of the forest in safety, and threw ourselves down in utter exhaustion. We lay there gasping until the other men came up with us, and then found that the help we had expected from them had failed us. They produced sandwiches, cigarettes, my small flask of neat whisky, but for some extraordinary reason had forgotten the bottle of cold tea. I could not touch the whisky, and without something to drink it was impossible to eat or smoke. The only thing to do was to go on. On, on, and on therefore we pushed, without finding a drop of water to alleviate our thirst and to enable us to touch the mockery of refreshment we carried. There was not a sign of the big beast that led the way, except the three round dents that marked his toes, and occasionally in softer ground the impression

of his sole. At last, at four o'clock, as we were thinking of giving up for the day, we came on a path that Malias recognised as one leading to the village of Pinjih. We therefore waited for the other men, and after marking the place, made our way to the village. There we arrived at sunset, and a house was quickly put at our disposal. Then after a swim in the river, rice, grilled chicken, chillies, and salt fish—all that the village could offer—were ready for us.

Malias was openly despondent. Had not every one failed in this quest? And how was it that bullets that would kill an elephant dead on the spot failed even to knock this animal over? The Jin was playing with us: we were safe from his displeasure perhaps, but it did not seem that he had any intention of allowing us to kill the rhinoceros. Though Pa' Senik was more cheerful, his prognostications were even worse. The animal, he said, was making for a hill called Changkat Larang, and if it once reached that spot its wounds would immediately be healed. We had left the tracks within three miles of the hill, and our only chance was to come up with it the next day before it reached this hill of healing. Both were so down-hearted that I reminded them of the portent of the "hot rain," and suggested that the rhinoceros had returned to die by the stream and the village from which he had taken his name for so many years. But without avail. Both shook their heads in doubt, and I went to sleep, to hope for better luck the next day.

By sunrise the next morning we had finished our

meal of rice and chicken, and set off to pick up the tracks of the day before. We were soon on the ground, and then proceeded in the same order as on the two previous days. Soon we came on the spot where "old *kramat*" had spent the night. He had fed heavily on lush grass and young shrubs, and had wallowed for some hours. This was bad, very bad indeed, for the night before he had barely eaten a few mouthfuls, and had not wallowed at all; and now it seemed as though he were better and stronger after the second day than he had been after the first. Pa' Senik, who was close behind, came up, shook his old head, and intimated that he had told us overnight that if the rhinoceros reached Changkat Larang his wounds would heal: the hill was now not far off, and then—— I cut him short, and, picking up the tracks, pressed on. In a few minutes a rush some twenty yards ahead of us showed that our quarry was again afoot. This was worse than ever. Hitherto every time that we had come up with him we had managed to catch a glimpse of him; but now he would not let us come within sight of him, and I felt inclined to give up hope. To-day was my last chance, for I had to be back at my headquarters the next morning. The brute was stronger and better than he had been the day before, and now he refused to allow us to come to close quarters, and—climax of despair—he was heading straight for Changkat Larang.

One ray of hope remained. The rush we had heard seemed but a short one—seemed, I say; for even so huge a brute as an elephant, after its first startled

rush, can settle down to so silent a walk that a man may be pardoned for imagining it to be standing still, whereas it is really rapidly putting a lot of ground between it and its pursuer. Praying, therefore, that the rhinoceros might really have remained stationary after the rush we had heard, I moved as rapidly and as noiselessly as possible round to the right, in the hope of cutting him off, and after a détour of a few hundred yards, had the extraordinarily good luck of finding myself close behind him. The wind was in my favour, and I was able to get within some twenty-five yards. He was looking down the path he had come up, and I had made an exact semicircle in my détour, and was diametrically behind him. I had misjudged him when I had thought a few minutes before that he would not allow me to come to close quarters, for now his every attitude meant fighting. Hustled and harried for the last two days, poor brute, he could stand it no longer, and was now determined to run no farther. Malias, crouching close on my heels, urged me in whisper to shoot at the leg, and aim to break the bone. But I hoped for a better chance than that, and squatted down to await developments. Then a slant of our wind must have reached the rhinoceros, for he very slowly began to slew round. The huge hideous head lifted high in the air and swung slowly over the shoulder, the dumpy squat horn showed black, the short hairy ears pricked forward, and a little gleam showed in the small yellow eyes; the nostrils were wrinkled high, and the upper lip curled right back over the gums, as he sought to seek the source of the tainted air.

Pain and wrath were pictured in every ungainly action and hideous feature. High in the air he held his head as he turned round, high above us as we squatted close to the ground; and his neck was fairly exposed to a shot, but I waited to let him show yet more. Then—how slowly it was I cannot say, but very slowly it seemed—his shoulder swung round, and at last I was afforded a quartering shot at the heart and lungs. I fired, and knew that he was mine. A short rush of some thirty yards, and he fell in an open grassy glade, never to rise, and never again to see Changkat Larang.

Though he could not rise, the poor brute was not dead; and as he moved his head lizard-like from side to side in his efforts to raise his ponderous body, he seemed more like a prehistoric animal than one of our times. The head of a lizard it was exactly, and the body of an elephant was joined on to it. Another shot killed it. When the other men came up, the two local Malays were wildly excited. Malias was nearly off his head. He examined the feet whose tracks we had followed so long and so far, the skin, the head, the teeth that killed Japaringonen and the two other men who had died so long ago that their names had been forgotten, the horn that was said to carry the famous blue which cured Kanda Daud. He touched and handled every part of the animal, and returned to touch and handle it with fresh interest—in fact, he behaved exactly like a terrier puppy with its first rabbit. But old Pa' Senik, when he had uttered a short charm over the body to preserve us all from the consequences of its death, stood back a little space



and looked on with folded arms. It was not in the company of such mere mortals as Malias and myself that he had been hunting: for the last three days he had been in the mighty presence of the Earth Spirit, who step for step had been with us in the forest. In Pa' Senik's eyes the day's success was the result of the promise made when Che Mat had been possessed, and only a line at the corner of his mouth and a gleam in his old eyes showed the grim satisfaction with which he viewed the victim of the compact.

After a short rest I sent Pa' Senik and the two Malays to the house where we had slept three nights before to fetch my servants, my clothes, and my camera, and ordered Malias to follow me to Pinjih village to get some pack-elephants to carry the rhinoceros' head and feet.

It was with the greatest difficulty that I induced Malias to leave the body.

"Some one must stay and look after it," he said.

"But it's dead now," I objected.

"Yes," he said with firm conviction; "but it was dead after Kanda Daud shot it, and it came to life again and nearly killed him."

And he then asked to be allowed to stay behind, to shoot it again if it showed any symptoms of returning vitality.

It was with some trouble that he was finally persuaded to come away; but not even then would he move until he had hacked one of the hind-feet nearly off.

"If he does go, he will go lame," he said.

We found Pinjih village seething with excitement.

My shots had been heard, and the entire population was waiting for news of an event that meant more to the villagers than it is easy to realise.

By noon I had collected three elephants, and on the arrival of the men with my camera and impedimenta we returned to take some snap-shots (which were not a success), and to cut off the head and feet of the rhinoceros.

Between two upright posts at the shoulder and fore-feet I made out its height to be 5 feet 5½ inches. I am certain, however, that the measurement did not do it justice: it had fallen in a cramped position, and it was impossible to stretch it out. Measurement between uprights is the best way of taking records of dead game, but it is a poor way: one can imagine the difference between measuring a horse standing up and a horse lying down. When I caught my second glimpse of the animal, it appeared to be nearly seven feet high. I am sure that it was but little short of six feet high.

The horn was disappointingly small, the more so because it had been said to be so extraordinarily fine. It was a short shapeless lump, only some seven or eight inches high; but I think that it had once been much longer. The tip had been broken off, and the base was much worn and splintered.

Through the crowd that collected round us as we cut off the feet, a lame old man pushed his way up to the headman, who brought him up to me and explained that this was one of the rhinoceros' victims. He was Kanda Daud, to whom I have already referred, and the story of his adventure was briefly as follows:

Years before, "in the days when the white man had not yet come into the country," and when he was a young man, he had felled a patch of forest in the Pinjih valley to make a plantation of hill padi. The crop was nearing the harvest, and he was sitting at night with his gun to keep away the pigs and deer, when this rhinoceros came out of the forest and fed close up to his house. He fired, and heard the brute rush away and fall at the forest's edge. The next morning he went with a youngster to hack off its horn, when the animal threw off the semblance of death and charged him. He fell, and the rhinoceros did not gore him with his horn, as is the custom of the African animal, but bit him with its enormous razor-edged teeth. The boy ran away, and in a few minutes returned with some ten men, whose approach frightened the brute. Kanda Daud appeared to be dead when they picked him up and took him to his house. Though the wretched man had been bitten in almost every part of his body, he recovered, and as he limped beside me to see the dead body of his old enemy, he showed me the cicatrices of his wounds. The calf and the fleshy part of the thigh of the left leg had atrophied; they had been bitten away; and the ball of his toe reached the ground in a painful hobble. On his ribs and under one arm were great drawn lines of hideous white, such as one associates with the idea of a scald. The muscles of an arm had disappeared, and there only remained a bone. It was marvellous that he had recovered; but when I told him so he replied that when he was picked up and taken home, his hands and arms were found to

be stained with an indigo blue. This was the dye of the rhinoceros' horn, which he had seized with both hands in his efforts to free himself from the brute as it held him on the ground. His hands and arms had been carefully washed, and the stained water was the only medicine that he was given. Part he drank, and with part his wounds were washed. It was indeed a marvellous recovery. And the poor old man talked excitedly, as he limped along, of the result he expected from getting more of this remedy: perhaps with a further supply a skilled pawang might make the flesh grow on his withered limbs. Didn't we think so? A very little had served to heal his wounds, surely an unlimited supply would bring a perfect cure. For more than twenty—perhaps thirty—years the old man had been waiting for this event, and at last the day had come. Bitter was his disappointment, and pitiable to see, when he reached the carcass, for no amount of rubbing and washing would yield a sign of the desired blue from that black stumpy horn. The Malays stood back and whispered in little groups. All felt sorry for him, but it was difficult to know what to do. Finally I touched him on the shoulder.

"The rhinoceros is very old, Kanda Daud," I said, "and now in his old age the blue stain he carried has disappeared."

He stood up and looked at me in silence for a moment. "And I am very old too," he said; and then he added as he turned away, "and now I shall never recover."

ous as the "wily mouse-deer" stories, and the only example will suffice. As a rule, the stories rather remind one of the Arabian tales of the wise Viziers and Kathis.

In the third class of story the mouse-deer has attained to royal rank and power. By his skill and address he has subjected the other animals of the forest, and all of them—elephant and tiger, sladang and rhinoceros—acknowledge him as their king. His title is *Shah Alam di Rimba* (the King of the Forest Universe), and he is addressed in the honorific forms appropriate to a reigning sultan. He has his throne upon a white marble rock under the canopy of a flowering *bungor*-tree, whose flowers nearest approach the colours of royalty; and when he travels, rides either upon a white sladang or a white rhinoceros. He is the champion of all the animals against their external foes.

I should like to tell the story of how he made the peace between the Tigers and the Goats, and constituted himself as their king-paramount; and the story of how he slew the Giant of Lake Tenom, after the giant had defeated the bear and the rhinoceros. But the tales are too long to tell here, and I must reserve for myself the pleasure of telling them at some other time.

In this third class of story the mouse-deer has a heroic side to his character that is denied to Reynard, "B'rer Rabbit," or the Jackal. The little champion somehow invites comparison with the hero of the *Odyssey*. The comparison may appear ridiculous, but in justification I would point out the epithets