

TRAILING THE TIGER

BY Mary Hastings Bradley



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MR. AND MRS. BRADLEY IN CAMP



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CHAPTER X

ON OUR WAY

THERE are other beasts than tigers in the forests of Sumatra; there are elephant, smaller and smaller-tusked than the African ones; rhinoceros and tapir, but we had only friendly feelings for them. There are wild pig, the rare and noisy white, and the common and silent black, but we did not yearn for what an official's English called "mad pork." There are crocodiles sixteen feet long if you care for crocodiles. There are little black bears, but though the Malay bear is a rare trophy we were not pursuing bears. We had already unwittingly achieved a *bin-turong*.

There are apes, great *orang outangs*, thought to be of the same species as those of Borneo but of a different family. The natives' stories about them are more amazing than any actual encounters can prove. The natives call them *orang pandak*, the short man, and *orang gadang*, the big man, and insist that the big man speaks Malay.

One native told how an ape came up to him in the rice fields and asked for tobacco; he gave it and the ape chewed. Another Malay said that he and a man

ON OUR WAY

were out in the wood when an *orang pandak* came up and pulled at them as if trying to carry them off; the Malay lighted a cigarette and the match so frightened the ape that it ran away.

Several white men have seen these apes, which they reported larger than the known *orang outang*, and last year the Royal Geographical Society of the Netherlands moved to send out an expedition, but the Netherlands Government said that if this were to be done the government would do it. It was understood that the Assistant Resident at Palembang got an order, but so far any researches have been postponed.

We were diverted by the stories of the ape but not by the ape itself. What we wanted was a tiger and we seemed no nearer to that than before. We had tried all the ways there were of not getting a tiger and we began to feel sure that something was wrong with our system. It would take a tremendous amount of time and patience, we saw, to succeed in Sumatra. We had finished the other things we had come for and now the tiger was holding up the expedition.

We decided to try for tiger elsewhere. Our Chicago friends, the Charles Barney Goodspeeds, had told us that tigers were to be found on the way to Angkor Vat, in Indo-China, where we were going, and we concluded to wait and try our luck there.

It was not easy to decide to leave Fort de Kock,

CHAPTER XIII

IN THE FOREST

OUR camp on the Lang Bian plateau was a most lovely spot. We were on a highland among tall pine trees that were spaced as if planted in a park, so that one could see for long distances, except when bushes intervened. It was, of course, a perfectly natural growth but so different from the density of our pine forests at home that it was a constant marvel.

These trees were about sixty years old, and some distance to the north another forest began, rather sharply differentiated, with trees a hundred years old, and farther north were other forests yet older—as if the armies of great pines, marching south from China, were flinging out battalions of young trees ahead of them.

The highlands were cut sharply by steeply sloped ravines, jungle-choked at the bottom, where rivers and streams wandered through the thickets. Here in the jungles the tigers lurked, except in the rainy season, when they roamed everywhere in the tall grass.

The plateaus were full of other game: sambur deer and hog deer and tiny barking deer, wild pig

and buffalo, the famous gaur or seladang, a form of wild ox, much like the buffalo but a warier beast to hunt and a smaller wild ox, the banteng. Farther on were elephants and farther yet the rhino.

We had no designs upon the deer or buffalo except for tiger bait and for food for our porters, but the gaur is considered a very fine and difficult trophy and Millet had taken out a license for us that included gaur and came out himself for a few days of hunting them with us.

It was a camp de luxe. We had plenty of supplies brought in from Dalat; we had trained trackers and porters and no trouble getting food for them. We had nothing to do but hunt.

Our cook and the tent boys were Annamites, the porters and trackers Mois. The cook was very swanky when in attendance, clad in white duck trousers and a coat with glittering buttons, but the moment he resumed operations at the cookhouse he reduced this supply of clothing by half, retaining only the trousers.

This Lang Bian plateau was certainly the land of the free. The natives here paid no taxes; the cook smoked opium—which he had bought legally back at the grocery at Dalat—and bottles of red and white wine stood unmolested by any Volstead agent upon our camp tables.

The wine was a gesture of hospitality to our French



A PAUSE IN GAME HUNTING—MONSIEUR MILLET AND
HERBERT BRADLEY



Cliché Guillet

MONSIEUR MILLET AND TWO TIGERS HE SHOT

THE TIGER COMES

Nothing to do but stand and wait and watch, . . . a dragging business if you are not keyed up by hope. . . . I kept telling myself that somewhere out in that green into which I was straining my eyes was the great striped beast we had hunted so long, sleeping, or perhaps padding about on stealthy feet, staring through the jungle at us.

Six o'clock. Seven o'clock. Eight o'clock. Nine o'clock. . . . The Kings had got their tiger at a quarter to nine so I had set nine, mentally, as a lucky hour, but nine passed uneventfully. Then I remembered a story I had heard about a tiger that had been seen at eleven o'clock and I set eleven as the time at which things would happen.

The business of standing motionless on your feet for hour after hour had a way, I noticed, of losing its first charm of novelty. By eleven o'clock I felt I had exhausted all the possibilities for joy in the situation. I never wanted to stand still again so long as I lived.

I knew Herbert was sharing my emotion. Our only diversion was to glance warningly at each other if we rattled a leaf. There is no strain on the family tie, or on any tie of friendship, comparable to hunting! A little matter of clearing the throat or munching chocolate or scuffling the feet separateth very friends. You always know that if the other had not made just the noise he did, at the moment he did,