



BORNEO JUNGLE

*An Account of the Oxford Expedition
to Sarawak*

BY

JOHN FORD
C. H. HARTLEY
TOM HARRISSON
PATRICK M. SYNGE
EDWARD SHACKLETON

EDITED BY

TOM HARRISSON

3-62 Tom Harrisson, Remembered jungle.

229-230 A.W. Moore, A tribute: Ev: Katalang.



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X, 254

The Punans have a quality of stillness. They melt into the shadows and that is their life.



The verandah of a long house. They were often several hundred yards in length.

A birds' nest cave with the slender poles up which men climb to collect the nests.



be eight feet across, and startling on the dark forest floor in wine-coloured, fleshy and thick squashy leaves; they stench like all the decay in the district.

Rare it is, a lure for all botanists along with the orchids, rhododendrons and pitcher plants of numerous sorts and many as yet unknown, eagerly awaited by growers in England.

TARSIERS.

The tiny little tarsier is close to humanity, too, something after the style of one of those tragic little fluff-monkeys of dark chocolate whose fate is everlastingly, or so long as the spring lasts, to go up and down, down and up, up and down the pink stick of the toy-vendor hard by the entrance to the London Pavilion in Piccadilly Circus. Tarsiers have huge round eyes and tiny heads, long prehensile toes and tail, move like an aged negus or a foetus that has never been born. No one knows if the queer querulous squeakings heard at night are made by tarsiers: it is very difficult to find one at all. No one had so far succeeded in keeping one alive in captivity. They simply stare out and slowly die. This was a lure for the live animal-seeker. And in mammals, Borneo is the most interesting of all places, with the remarkable false-otter, the vile porty-looking proboscis monkey, tree-shrews, tiny tufted squirrels and magnificent fan-tailed squirrels, flying squirrels, blind Albino bats, pigmy rhinoceros, leopards, elephants, civets, the weird pangolin (scaly ant-eater) and, of course, orang-outangs. It's like that with everything, rich in life. But first there are riches of another sort—oil. Great finds of oil in Sarawak, and others very possible. More of this.

ORANG-OUTANG.

After the Rajah, the most interesting thing socially is orang-outang. The only place in the world you get these No. 1 Zoo attractions is Sarawak. Orangs really

of competition, co-operation and conflict, which will probably carry them through. While on the coast the Dyaks, the coastal people, who were involved in some of the Government's most bloody incidents, are, with the Government's agreement, extending their influence farther and farther inland, making long journeys into the interior to get sago, gum, rhinoceros, rubber, rattans, thus increasing the country's exports and favourable trade balance. The inland people are for the most part fully occupied with their own communal life, producing just sufficient surplus of goods to trade for Chinese ornaments or fine raiment. That is why they are amongst the most lively and pleasant of races, as we shall see; in our subsequent expeditions, to many lands, none of us has met with nicer people than the Kayans and Punans. As the Rajah's *Hints to Young Officers on Out-Station*s says, "the natives are not inferior, but different." It is worth seeing how this remarkable toleration and black-white friendliness, special to Sarawak, grew up. It is necessary to understand it, if one is to understand the accounts of the people we met and the things we did in the interior written by my fellow-members on the expedition.

Huxley saw a score or two of miniature Eiffel Towers as he rolled in the swell off Miri. But in a country which is said to be run for the natives, the question is, How did the oil fields come to be developed at all? In any other country this would be a silly question, and it just shows what Sarawak is like that you can ask this question there and no one thinks it silly at all. The official-unofficial answer is: "The Rajah decided to permit the exploitation of oil at Miri to cover the running expenses of the whole country." It is worth noting, however, that it was Official Hose who largely promoted the exploitation of the oil field, and that in recent years the oil companies have been allowed to carry out an extensive air survey of the jungle area inland from Miri, in conjunction with

careful ground prospecting as far as the *headwaters* of the great Baram River, at the mouth of which Miri is situated.

THE LAST 100 PER CENT. MONARCHY

The whole of Sarawak is around 50,000 square miles, and estimated at approximately half a million inhabitants. It is the only really functioning absolute monarchy left (Albania is nearly). The extraordinary history of this State began, from the white point of view, when a Mr. and Mrs. Brooke conceived (probably at Bath) a son, James, at the beginning of the nineteenth century. James entered the East India Company at age sixteen, and distinguished himself in the Company's extensive warrings. After six years he was invalided home, with a bullet through his lungs, but soon came back, this time to Malaya. (By accident he was stimulated to discontinue his service, for the vessel bringing him back from England was wrecked, causing him to overstay furlough.) Thence he drifted free-lance to Borneo, where in 1839 he found the Sultanate of Brunei in a chaos. The Dyaks had revolted against the Sultan, who sent his Uncle Hassim to beat them up. Brooke cashed in on Hassim. Hassim was tickled to death. The Dyaks were beaten. Hassim said to Brooke: "You'd make a swell Rajah." That's what Brooke thought. The Sultan of Brunei was not so sure, but fed up with that bit of territory. So Brooke got the job, and on 24th September 1841 he became the White Rajah of Sarawak, though of course at that time Sarawak only meant a small part of its present territory.

From then on, Brooke steadily expanded his influence. The Sultan of Brunei was a good deal of a damfool. He controlled Labuan Island, where there was trouble, so that Brooke took Sir Edward Belcher there in 1844, and in 1846 the Navy occupied it. In that year, or the end of the previous one, the Sultan of Brunei had Hassim and other pro-Brooke relatives murdered *en masse*. For