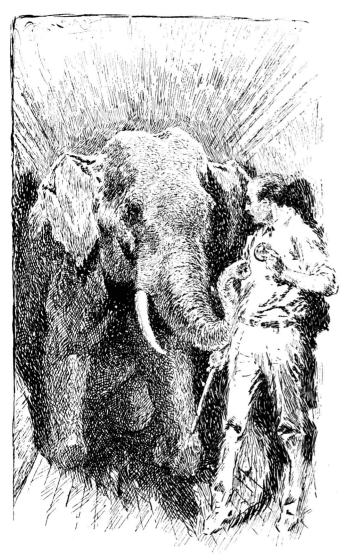
LONG CHANCES IN THE ANIMAL DEALER'S GAME

By CHARLES MAYER

Illustrations by Will Crawford



AT LAST WE GOT THE ELEPHANT INTO THE PASSAGE. IT WAS A TIGHT FIT

ELEPHANTS are easily trained and, when they once get the idea of what is expected of them, they will do it over and over with little variation. A trick or a certain kind of work immediately becomes a habit with them. In fact, they can form habits more rapidly than any other animals I have ever seen.

In Burma there are large lumber mills, and elephants are used for rolling the logs into position for the saws. Pushing with their heads, they run the logs up two inclined skids to the platform. Two elephants do the pushing and a third elephant acts as boss. The boss need not be an especially intelligent animal; he is simply taught that the log must go up the skids in a certain way and that the two pushers must be kept even. In his trunk he carries a few links of anchor chain, which he uses as a whip. If one elephant falls behind, the boss gives him a rap with the chain. When the log is on the platform, the pushers turn and plod back for another. The boss

elephant is quite unimpressed by his authority, and the others show no resentment when he swings the chain on them.

When the whistle blows, the elephants know that it is time to stop work and eat. It makes no difference if they have a log within a fraction of an inch of the platform: the boss drops his anchor chain and gets out of the way, and the pushers step to one side, letting the log crash down again. Then, without the least expression of interest. they turn for the stalls. Because they obey signals so mechanically, the engineer steps out, when feeding-time comes, and looks up and down the runway to see if an elephant crew has a log on the skids. If so, he waits until it reaches the platform before he pulls the whistle-cord.

The great weight and bulk of elephants sometimes make difficult the problem of handling and especially of shipping them. They are usually hoisted over the side of the ship in slings, but that method takes much time and labor, not to speak of very strong tackle. I did not evolve a new one, however, until the refusal of the captain of one of the British India Steam Navigation Company's boats to take a consignment of elephants for me put my ingenuity to the test.

I was under contract to send fifteen large elephants to Madras, and I had arranged with the company's agent at Singapore for three shipments of five each. The animals were the remainder of the Trengganu herd and I was anxious to see them shipped, for I was still sick with the fever. The doctors had told me that the best thing I could do was to leave the country and recuperate, and any delay in disposing of the animals meant a great sacrifice of either money or health.

The first five elephants, together with attendants and food were waiting back of the sheds at Tanjong-Pagar, the docks at Singapore, to be put on board. At the last moment the chief officer came with the message that the captain refused to take them.

I went to the captain's cabin and found a stout, redfaced and apparently good-natured Englishman. He was just out of his bath, wearing pajamas and idling about in his cabin until the ship was ready to get under way. I thought it a good time to approach him, and I took care to be quite calm and cool about it, although I was raging inside.

I showed him my receipt and the bill of lading given me by the agent. He replied that the agent was not captain of the ship; he didn't care what agreement the agent had made. So long as he was captain, he'd run his ship to suit himself, and all agents could go to the devil, for all he cared. And, moreover, he'd not carry elephants—not for any one. I explained my position and told him that it would mean a great financial loss to me if I failed on my contract to deliver the elephants.

"Look here, Mayer," he said, "I've handled elephants at Calcutta and I've always had a lot of trouble with them. If I load these elephants, it means that I have to rig up extra gear, and I won't do it."

"Captain," I replied, "I'll load those elephants without

using a foot of rope. I'll put them anywhere you say, and you won't have to rig up a bit of gear. And I'll unload them at Madras in the same way. Will you say the word?"

"I don't think you can do it," he answered, "but I'm enough of a sportsman to give you a chance."

That was all I wanted. I got out before he could ask me how I was going to work, for I couldn't have told him.

The elephants were to go in the bow and they had to be taken there through a seven-foot passage from amidships. The smallest of the elephants measured fully seven feet and the largest more than eight. I decided that we might as well try the largest first, and I asked that the electric bulbs be removed from the ceiling.

After some coaxing and prodding, we got the first elephant up the gangplank. The others followed obediently. Then I asked the chief officer to clear the cabins

him and petting him. Finally we came to the end of the passage, and I drew the first deep breath in fifteen minutes. I took the venture simply as a matter of course, and I didn't say anything that gave the captain an idea of what my emotions had been in that passage; but Ali looked at me and I looked at Ali, and there was no need of words.

I washed and went to the captain's cabin for breakfast, while the men secured the elephants in their quarters.

The captain said, "Mayer, that was the quickest and slickest thing I've ever seen, but what am I going to do with those animals at Madras?"

I knew that there were no docks at Madras and that all freight was unloaded into lighters, but I answered, "My men will attend to them."



THE CAGE BROKE AND OUT WENT MR. LEOPARD LIKE A FLASH OF LIGHTNING. . . . THE CHINESE SAW HIM COMING AND A PANIC STARTED

along the passage, for I was afraid that some one might open a door and frighten the elephant. A frightened, stampeded, eight-foot elephant in a seven-foot passage would give Singapore enough excitement to last for a year. The chief officer sent the people from the cabins and locked the doors.

The elephant balked at sight of the passage. I was at his head, talking to him and coaxing him, and two attendants were behind, prodding. We made him kneel and then urged him forward. At last we got him into the passage. It was a tight fit. His sides scraped the walls. I gasped at the thought of what would happen if he suddenly became afraid. He would try to stand up, of course, and then, wedged in, he would begin to kick and lunge his way out; and the other four, who were close behind him, would do the same. "And then, good-bye, steamship," I said to myself. Slowly we made our way forward, with the five elephants hobbling along on their knees. I stayed close to the head of the first, talking to

When the ship reached Madras, the attendants opened the doors and simply backed the elephants overboard. They hit the water with a great splash and a roar and came up blowing like whales. They were swimming, of course, for elephants swim better than any other land animals I have ever seen. The attendants approached them in rowboats, and, jumping on their backs, rode them to shore. By the time they reached land, they had completely recovered from the excitement of falling overboard.

The captain returned to Singapore, enthusiastic over this new way of handling elephants, and I had the pleasure of shipping my last consignment to Madras on his ship. He advised me never to take an agent's word for what the captain of a ship will or will not do, and, after that experience, I always saw the captain first and the agent second.

By the time I had disposed of the last of my elephants, I was so sick with the fever that I could not leave my bed.

I was dangerously ill and I began to realize that I should be lucky if I escaped with my life.

Mr. Lambert, who had been my friend ever since I landed at Singapore to enter the animal business, engaged passage for me on a steamer bound for Europe and took charge of the affairs of my animal house in Orchard Road. When it was time to go to the steamer, my Chinese coolie boy carried me. He is the only Chinese I have ever seen cry; the tears rolled down his cheeks as he carried me up the gangplank and to my cabin, for he thought that he should never see me again. I rather thought so myself, but I figured that if they didn't drop me into the Red Sea, which is the last resting-place of so many people who have stayed too long in the tropics, I should recover and live to return.

Ali and the coolie waited faithfully for me during the next year, while I traveled in Europe and America, recuperating and gathering new commissions for animals. And, when I came back, they were on the dock to welcome me.

Though my health was much improved by the voyage, I did not feel able to resume the active business of collecting, and so I concentrated my efforts upon my animal house and made it the largest place of its kind. I had a monopoly of the business. Mahommed Ariff, who had a large number of native collectors working for him, did much of his dealing through me, and I had no difficulty in disposing of all the animals brought in from the jungles by our various agents. My largest market was Australia, where I could sell the animals f. o. b. Singapore without any of the risk of transportation. Also, I made shipments to Hagenbeck, of Germany, and Cross, of Liverpool. Because of the high import duty, I sent comparatively few of my animals to the United States.

John Anderson, who was European adviser to the King of Siam and who had been created a Siamese nobleman, sent for me and offered me a commission that kept me busy for the next five years. The King of Siam was in the habit of making presents of wild animals to foreign rulers, and it became my work to select the animals and supervise all details of shipment. I was sent to interview the Minister of the Interior, H. H. Prince Damerong, who gave me a permit to travel wherever I pleased in Siam and to force labor. In Siam, I directed many hunts, especially for tuskers to be used in the teak forests. The driving was done entirely during the daytime, and on elephants, instead of on foot, as in Trengganu. The fever had left me in bad condition, and so I did not take an active part in the work.

On my trips between Bangkok and Singapore, I stopped off many times at Trengganu to renew my acquaintance with the Sultan and to talk with the native hunters, who were sending a steady stream of animals to me at Singapore. I was known to the natives throughout the Peninsula as $T\hat{u}an$ $G\hat{a}jah$ —Sir Elephant and I was amused to find that the story of the big elephant hunt had grown to incredible proportions. The herd of sixty elephants became larger each time the story was told.

After one exciting incident in the work of shipping animals for the King of Siam, I was allowed full authority. We were sending a pair of beautifully matched leopards to the Emperor of Austria, and they had reached Singapore in two large, poorly constructed cages. Mr. Anderson was there, and we disagreed on the advisability of recaging them. I thought that the cages looked weak and I

wished to have my Chinese carpenter build two that would be smaller and stronger. Mr. Anderson, however, was impatient to start the leopards on their voyage, and, since he was boss, we loaded the cages on bullock-carts and headed for the docks. In unloading one of the bullock-carts, the natives allowed the case to slide to the ground too heavily; the cage broke, and out went Mr. Leopard like a flash of lightning, heading straight for the Chinese quarter. The Chinese saw him coming, and a panic started. They tumbled over one another in getting out of the way, and two of them were scratched. The leopard was quite as frightened as any of the Chinese. The natives in charge of the bullock-cart came running for me, and I went to the Chinese quarter to find the leopard. He had taken refuge in a house, and I finally discovered him hiding under the stairs, his eyes shining in the darkness. Since it was impossible to get rid of the mob of Chinese and recaging under the circumstances would have been too dangerous, we had to shoot the animal. We took the other leopard back to Orchard Road and built a new cage.

In 1902, just before the rainy season, I was resting in Singapore after six months of hard work. Just as I had almost decided to go to Europe, I happened to see in an old copy of the New York Clipper an advertisement of a steam merry-go-round. That gave me an idea; there had never been a merry-go-round in the Malay Peninsula, and I was confident enough of my judgment of Malay nature to gamble that it would be a success. Mr. Lambert didn't agree with me. "Forget about it," he advised. "Take the steamer and have a good vacation." But I went to the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank and cabled \$2,000 in gold to the factory at North Tonawanda, New York, with instructions to ship me the merry-go-round on the first boat, via London. It arrived nine weeks later, and it cost me £110 in freight. The rain was beating down steadily in Singapore, and so I transshipped it to

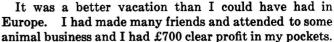
A few days later, I was in Penang, driving around in a rickshaw, looking for a good location, while the merrygo-round, still in crates, was coming ashore in sampans. Opposite the Hotel de la Paix I found a good open space, and I routed out of bed the Chinese merchant who owned it. I told him that I should like to rent the lot for a show and that, if he would come to terms with me, I would let him and his family ride free of charge. Now a Chinese likes a show better than anything else on earth, and so we were not long in closing a bargain. I was to pay him a rental of \$1 Mexican a day and to have an option of two months on the lot. I had no paper on which to write out the agreement, and so, since I didn't want him to change his mind, I paid him \$30 for one month, writing the receipt in my pith helmet. He signed in my hat; then we pasted a stamp in it and canceled the stamp by writing the date across it.

While Ali and my coolie boy were getting the merry-goround unloaded, I collected a gang of laborers and an engineer. All that day we worked at uncrating the merry-go-round and putting it together. The natives stood around, watching us and speculating as to what this strange new thing could possibly be. The merry-go-round ran on wheels on a track and the horses were connected with eccentrics, which worked them up and down; a good loud organ was connected by a belt with one of the wheels. The merry-go-round carried fifty-six people.

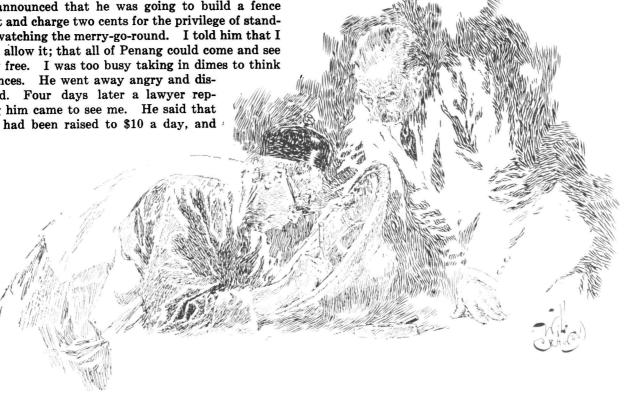
I began business on the Chinese New Year's Day. The merry-go-round was the sensation of Penang. The crowds flocked to see it, and the natives lined up for several hundred yards, each with his dime in his hand, waiting for his turn. We were so busy that I could not even go to the hotel for a meal; the brassy organ of the merry-go-round shrieked from early in the morning until late at night. In two days, I took in \$1,500 Mexican.

On the third day the merchant from whom I had rented the lot announced that he was going to build a fence around it and charge two cents for the privilege of standing and watching the merry-go-round. I told him that I wouldn't allow it; that all of Penang could come and see my show free. I was too busy taking in dimes to think

about fences. He went away angry and disappointed. Four days later a lawyer representing him came to see me. He said that the rent had been raised to \$10 a day, and



At my animal house I found a letter from Mr. La Seuf, the director of the Perth Zoölogical Gardens, saying that he was anxious to get a rhinoceros and asking what I could do for him. I did not want to go into the jungle again immediately, for I was afraid of a return of the fever, but



SINCE I DIDN'T WANT HIM TO CHANGE HIS MIND, I PAID HIM FOR ONE MONTH, AND HE SIGNED A RECEIPT, WHICH I WROTE IN MY PITH HELMET

that a dispossess order would be executed unless I paid it. I told the lawyer to wait and I went back to the hotel, to get my pith helmet.

The merchant had forgotten about the receipt. When the lawyer saw it, he told me that the merchant was unpopular with all the Malays and Chinese in Penang because he cheated them, and that they would be delighted if I sued for breach of contract. The result was that, for \$1 a day, I got the use of the lot as long as I wanted it.

Within six weeks I had made up the entire cost of the merry-go-round and I was on velvet. The dimes were still rolling in as fast as I could collect them. Finally, when the novelty of my show had worn off and business began to slacken, I shipped to Rangoon, Burma, to collect dimes there. After the merry-go-round had been running two weeks, I was approached by a man who wished to buy me out. I had had all the fun I wanted, and so I sold it to him for 10,000 rupees—\$4,500 in gold. He was a government official and consequently did not wish to appear in the transaction. The bill of sale was made out in his wife's name, and a man was hired to run the merry-go-round for him. I stayed for a week to get the enterprise started; then I went up to the lumber mills to see if the lumbermen needed elephants. When I returned to Singapore, I had a commission for six large elephants.

I replied that I would see what could be done and I sent out word to all my native agents. Both Mr. La Seuf and his father, who was director of the gardens at Melbourne, were great friends of mine, and their gardens had been my best market for animals. Quite naturally, I wanted to do everything I could to help them, and so, when word came from an agent in Trengganu that some rhinoceroses had been located there, I packed up my kit and started out.

At Trengganu, the Sultan welcomed me, and I spent several days with him, telling him what was happening in the world and discussing his problems. The problems were largely financial. He owed some money, and, knowing that he had something in the treasury, I asked why he did not pay his debts.

He thought for a time and then replied: "Well, I'll tell you. If I pay those people, they will forget about the Sultan of Trengganu. If I don't pay them, they'll never forget me."

The conversation turned to the subject of prisoners. On my way to the palace I had passed the cages where the prisoners were kept. Many of them were starving to death, for, unless their friends or family cared for them, they got no food.

"Why don't you feed them?" I asked.

"Why should I?" he replied. "If I feed them, my whole country will want to go to jail."



WE BEGAN TO PROD THE RHINOCEROS. . . . HE PUT HIS HEAD AGAINST THE WALL AND ROOTED; THE WALL TOPPLED OVER AND HE LURCHED OUT OF THE PIT AND INTO THE CAGE

Finally, after he had satisfied his craving for sociability, he gave me my official permit to go into the interior and to force labor. I started out for the upper end of his state, bordering on Lower Siam. At the mouth of the River Stew, I found my agent; we gathered a crew of ten men and went up the river as far as we could. When the weeds became so thick that we could not force the boats through, we took to the jungle and began cutting our way to the mud-puddle where the rhinoceroses came to wallow.

We took great precautions in approaching the puddle, for once a rhinoceros gets the scent of a hunter, he is off through the jungle as fast as he can go. The hunter, who spots his animal and shoots, has an easy time of it; but the collector, who must capture, has a more difficult job. He must work and build his trap at the very spot frequented by the animal and he must do so without exciting suspicion. A rhinoceros seldom charges when he sees a man, and his charge is not dangerous, for he is short-sighted and cannot gauge his direction accurately. Most often, he runs, and it is almost impossible, even when the collector can find him again, to chase or lure him back to the trap.

No animals were at the puddle when we arrived, and I had a good opportunity to examine the location. Then we withdrew and I told the men how we should go about making the capture. We made camp, building platforms between the trees for living-quarters, and I detailed some of the men to the work on a rattan net, which measured twenty by fifteen feet, with meshes ten inches square. I felt that we had a good chance of getting a rhinoceros in a net-trap and should save ourselves much time and labor if we could do so. When the net was ready, we put it in position at a likely-looking approach—half on the ground, where the animal would step into it, and half suspended, so that he would catch it with his head and bring it down about him.

Then we turned our attention to making pits. As I have explained before, a heavy animal was sure to injure himself in falling into a square pit such as the natives generally dug, and, of course, an injured animal would have been of no use to me. Hence the four pits that we dug around the puddle were made wedge-shaped, instead of square. They were six feet wide at the top and tapered to three feet at the bottom; they were eight feet deep and ten feet long, with the approach tapering down so there would be the least possible chance that the beast would injure himself when he fell.

Over the tops of the pits we built platforms of bamboo poles, and covered them with mud and leaves, taking care to leave no traces of our work. To the building of each pit we gave a whole day of hard labor and we were constantly on the alert for fear one of the rhinoceroses might surprise us. Lookouts were already stationed to catch the sounds of the beasts as they broke through the jungle, coming to their bath.

One morning a native came running with the news that a rhinoceros was trapped. We gathered our tools and hurried off to the puddle. There, grunting and fighting, lay a two-ton rhinoceros, firmly wedged in and helpless. When he saw us, he became furious, squirming in the slime of the pit, pounding with his feet and grunting.

I divided my crew, putting half at building a cage of heavy timbers and the others at digging away the ground in front of the beast. By the time the cage was put together and bound securely with rattan, we had an incline

running down to the pit, with two feet of earth walling the rhinoceros in. Then we placed skids on the incline and let the cage slide down. A native, who had been sent back to the nearest kampong, or native village, to recruit men and water-buffaloes, had soon returned with a score of other natives, driving six water-buffaloes before them. Then I went through the usual business of holding a meeting and explaining carefully, in the greatest detail, exactly what we were about to do and how we were to do it; what each man was to do and when and how. When they understood perfectly, we set about digging away the wall that separated the rhinoceros from the open end of the cage. With a little more than one foot of earth remaining, we began to prod him. The immense beast pounded his feet on the bottom of the pit, grunting and moving forward as rapidly as he could get foothold. He put his head against the wall and rooted; the wall toppled over and he lurched out of the pit and into the cage. The natives slipped the end-bar into place.

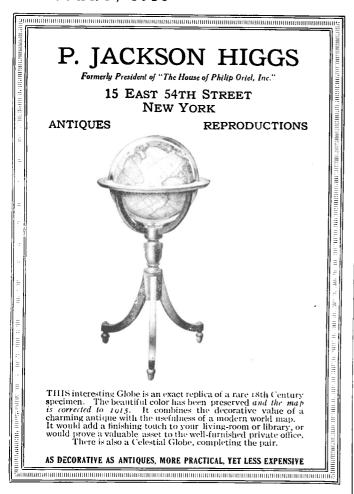
The capture was finished—but not the work. A rhinoceros cannot be broken and driven through the jungle like an elephant; he must be hauled every foot of the way. With the six water-buffaloes straining and every native giving a hand, we pulled the cage up the incline and mounted it on the runners. It took a week of steady cutting to clear the way, so that we could drag the cage to the Trengganu River. There we built a heavy raft and floated the cage down to port. Another two weeks passed before we could ship the beast to Singapore, for transshipment to Perth.

I received for the animal £200, which was about one quarter of its value. But it was as much as the Perth Zoölogical Gardens could afford to pay, and I was glad to be able to put so fine a specimen into the hands of Mr. La Seuf.

One day when I was busy in my animal house, Ali came to me with the message that three natives from Pontianak, Borneo, were outside. They had something important to tell me, Ali said. When they came in, I found that I knew one of them; he was an animal trader from whom I had bought some birds and monkeys. The other two were headmen from the interior of Borneo.

The headmen had gone to the trader with the story of two large orang-outangs that were terrorizing their villages, and the trader was bringing them to me for advice. We sat down in the shade and discussed the situation. The orang-outangs had run off with a young girl and had recently killed one of the men. The natives had tried repeatedly to kill them, but without success, and now they were afraid to adventure into the jungle.

For several years I had had a standing order from the Antwerp Zoölogical Gardens for a good specimen of orang-outang, and I had planned to go, just as soon as my health permitted, into Borneo, to see what I could find. Orang-outangs command unlimited prices because they are so hard to capture and, once captured, so difficult to deliver. On account of homesickness and sensitiveness to climatic changes, they die quickly in captivity. A caged orang-outang loses his spirit immediately; he sits brooding over his capture and often refuses all food. On one occasion I shipped eighteen small and medium-sized orang-outangs to San Francisco, hoping to land two or three alive, but they all died before reaching port. If I had been able to deliver a good specimen in the United States, I could have sold it for \$5,000. (Continued on page 168)





(Continued from page 159)

But here were two full-grown beasts, already located, and waiting for me to try my hand at capturing them. I was greatly interested in the story the two headmen had to tell, and I spent the entire afternoon in listening to them and asking them all manner of questions. They described the country where the orang-outangs made their home, and promised as many men as I needed.

I impressed them with the fact that I was not anxious to make the trip, and I made them promise, as a first consideration, that they would use all their power to prevent the natives from killing the animals if I captured them. I feared that the resentment of the natives against the orang-outangs might lead them to kill the animals for revenge, even after I had them safely caged. They agreed to do as I requested and once again begged me to return with them. I told them to come back the next day and talk with me again. I had already made up my mind, but it is always well to let a native think that one has not quite decided.

When I went to see the Dutch Consul-General and explained the situation, he issued passports for me, and, accompanied by the two headmen, the trader, Ali and my coolie boy, I took the next steamer to Pontianak. At Pontianak, I presented my credentials to the Dutch Resident. He was pleased to hear that I was going after the orang-outangs and he offered to let me have as many native officials as I wished to take along. I thanked him and declined his offer, explaining that I really did not know as yet just what I should need, or how long I should be up-country. As a matter of fact, I did not want his native officials because I knew that the jungle people have no love for them, and I wanted to have my expedition entirely clear of everything that looked official.

We stayed there for several days, getting supplies together. The trader remained with the party at my request, because he was known by both the coast and the jungle people. From a Chinese he rented a houseboat that I could keep as long as I had need of it. The Borneo houseboats are twenty to twenty-five feet long and five feet wide; they have a bamboo shed, which makes a fairly comfortable room, and are rowed or paddled by six men. With a mattress spread on the floor and mosquito-netting hung about, I could take the trip up the river easily. Omar, one of the headmen, stayed with me in my boat, while Mahommed Munshee, the other headman, went ahead with some of the stores.

On the way up the river we came to the station of Dr. Van Erman, the Dutch medical officer who was in charge of the outlying districts. He insisted that I stay with him for two days at least, and I was glad to do so, for he was the last white man I should see before we tackled the orang-outangs. I was anxious to have the benefit of his knowledge of the natives and the country, and also I found it reassuring, under the circumstances, to have the friendship of a medical man. Later, I became his enforced guest and I have always been thankful for his care.

We arrived at Nanaoh-Pinoh, which was Mahommed Munshee's village, two days late. I stayed at Munshee's house while the men prepared boats for the trip up the Melarir River to the spot where the orang-outangs were.

The fourth story of the series by Charles Mayer appeared in the preceding issue of ASIA. In the March number he will describe the long-continued and exciling preparations for the capture of the orang-outangs that were terrorizing the Dyaks of Borneo.







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