

THE HEAD-HUNTERS

OF

BORNEO:

A NARRATIVE OF TRAVEL UP THE MAHAKKAM
AND DOWN THE BARITO;

ALSO,

JOURNEYINGS IN SUMATRA.

BY

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WITH THIRTY COLOURED PLATES, MAP, AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS.

SECOND EDITION.

London:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.

1882.

17457
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hunted by the Dyaks on account of the bezoar stones (*galiga*) found in them.

I have frequently seen in captivity, in the houses of Malays, the pretty gibbon, or malaat as it is called by the natives (*Hylobates concolor*). It is easily tamed, and may be seen running free about the houses and plantations, never attempting to go back to the forest, even when captured close by the spot where it is kept. The same is the case with the *H. leuciscus* or Wa-wa. The natives say they are afraid of being killed by their associates if they return to their native home. I never, however, saw the gibbon in its native forest, though I have often heard in the forests the unmistakable "wa-wa" of *H. leuciscus*—the well-known noise from which it takes its familiar name; but the only place at which I actually saw these animals wild was at Mindai.

The Kukang (*Loris tardigradus*) is common everywhere. The Malay boys often keep it in captivity—for amusement, they say, though it is a nocturnal animal, and sleeps all day! The kukang is the most difficult animal to kill that I have ever seen. To get life really extinct in a kukang is a very painful sight to witness. I thought it horribly cruel; and after I had secured a couple of skins in Sumatra I resolved not to buy any more, for that reason. One day I wounded one, and knowing its tenacity of life I strangled the little animal, then cut it open and pierced its heart. An hour elapsed before I wanted to skin it, and when I took down its body I found it still alive, its lovely eyes wide open. When, hoping to finally despatch it, I pierced its brains with a needle it began to shriek, and still some minutes elapsed before it was actually gone. Inside the skin is a thick layer of fat, of an intolerable odour.

The rhinoceros is found in south-east Borneo, but very rarely captured. The Sultan of Koetei has a fine horn in his possession, from one killed not far from Tangaroeng. Wild cattle are very common in all the mountainous parts of Koetei, and in the Doesoen district. The horns are kept by the Dyaks in Doesoen and used for drinking purposes, only on state occasions. The jungles everywhere swarm with wild pigs; and deer are plentiful especially the *Cervus russa*, the flesh of which is highly esteemed both by

cats are numerous here, and are eagerly hunted by the Malays on account of the havoc they work among the poultry. Among other quadrupeds I had two large siamangs (*hylobates syndactylus*) in one day, and the work of skinning the larger animals was not easy. In consequence of the great heat the animals began to decompose within twelve hours after being shot; and the smell in the neighbourhood, in spite of large quantities of carbolic acid, was somewhat unpleasant. The Malays, notwithstanding the equanimity with which they suffer the smell of their decaying fish, and the still greater gusto with which they eat the putrescent food, professed to have a great abhorrence of the bad smell occasioned by my animals, and complained to the Contrôleur about it, and I had to pay the penalty in increased gratuities to those who brought me specimens.

Bagindo, though not directly in my service, went out nearly every day to shoot birds, in order to earn a few coppers; he was generally accompanied by a friend; and one day at noon he came hurrying back, telling me he had shot two honey-bears, a male and a female, close by in a cocoa-nut plantation, while the animals were up in a palm-tree feeding. Having summoned some friends to his assistance, he went off to fetch the big game; and presently a crowd came, carrying the animals on four poles, and laid them down in front of my house. So great was the excitement that the boys literally spoiled the skins by cutting holes all over, merely for fun. I could do nothing to prevent them, and the men were so delighted at the death of the two bears that they took no heed of the possible value of the skins. Bagindo sold the hearts and gall-bladders of the beasts to a Chinaman trader for ten guilders. They were to be used in medicine—for what complaint he would not tell.

Among other large animals seen in the neighbourhood of Sidjoendjoeng was an occasional rhinoceros, which the natives killed for the sake of the horns. A Malay offered me a fine specimen, for which he wanted eighty florins. This fancy price was occasioned by the demand which existed for rhinoceros horns among the Chinese, who use them as medicine, or, rather, ointment for healing wounds, and especially snake bites.