

ASIA

PEEPS AT MANY LANDS
THE MALAY STATES

PHILIP C. COOTE



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THE
MALAY STATES

BY
PHILIP C. COOTE

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SKETCH-MAP OF THE MALAY STATES

THE MALAY STATES

CHAPTER I

ON MALAYA

Men are much in disposition and feelings according to the nature of the country which they inhabit.—POLYBIUS.

The largest soul of any country is altogether its own.—RUSKIN.

Most travellers who have made a journey to the Far East are on bowing terms with Singapore, the "city of the lion," and possibly with Penang. A few may possibly have called at Port Swettenham and visited the Federal capital, Kuala Lumpur. But the majority know nothing of the mainland of Malaya from Prai, the landing place opposite the island of Penang, to Johore Bharu, where the traveller is ferried to the island of Singapore.

Like ancient Gaul in the days of Cæsar, British Malaya is divided into three parts—the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States, and the Unfederated Malay States, three very distinct and separate divisions. Singapore, Penang, Province

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Wellesley, Malacca, and The Dindings form the Straits Settlements, and are British possessions. Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang are federated States, each with its own Sultan,* but administered by British law, while Johore, Kedah, Trengganu, Kelantan, and Perlis are unfederated, though the Sultans have British advisers. The federated and unfederated States, therefore, are Malay territory under British rule. The Governor of the Straits Settlements is also the High Commissioner of the Federated States, to whom the Chief Secretary of the F.M.S. is directly responsible.

As seen from the Straits of Malacca the Malay peninsula presents a forbidding and uninviting appearance. The low-lying mangrove swamps which fringe its shores, with dark, foreboding mountains in the background, are anything but attractive. The sight is almost repellent. Once in the interior the aspect is changed. The dreary, frowning mountains appear in a more friendly light, clad with the bright and ever-changing verdure of their virgin forests, while the odorous mangrove jungle of the seaboard is forgotten. Rubber trees planted with irritating precision and symmetry are the salient feature whether one travels by road or rail through the peninsula, for the *Hevea brasiliensis* is one of the commercial

* The Malay ruler of Negri Sembilan is called the Yam Tuan Besar.

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mainstays of the country. Occasionally there is jungle with a wonderful array of strange tropical trees, while in places the natural beauty of the scenery is sadly marred by the intrusion of dredges used in the mining of tin. Curious isolated hills of limestone formation appear in some parts of the peninsula. These are often hollow with natural chambers in them and are used by Hindus and Chinese as temples, and by the latter as a meeting-place for their "Triads" or secret societies. "Triads" are as old as the hills themselves, and there is the suspicion that in these disturbed days the Russian Bolshevists are encouraging these Chinese secret societies. There is a limestone hill, covered with forest, at Padang Rengas, in Perak ; in this *bukit*, which is the haunt of the *kambing grun*, a rare animal of the goat-antelope type, are some caves which appear to have been tenanted at some very remote age. These the Malays firmly believe to be *hantu* (haunted) since lights are seen on the hill at night. Since the natives cannot account for these lights they firmly believe the hill to be inhabited by evil spirits ; but it is far more likely that some secret society holds its meetings in caves where it is most unlikely that it will be molested.

Things have changed in Malaya during the past fifty years. Where the pioneers of early days laboriously wended their ways through forest tracks

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there are now well-metalled roads of which the country may well be proud. A railway runs from Johore Bharu to Prai, and even beyond as far as Bangkok, while the journey from Singapore to Penang takes twenty-three hours. Where hovels of the dirtiest description existed there are now prosperous towns built on modern lines with up-to-date drainage and excellent water supplies. Wonderful progress has been made since Great Britain undertook the administration of the country.

Malaya owes its prosperity to the initiative and enterprise of the *orang puteh** and to the climate, which, however troublesome to the individual, is eminently suited for the growth of tropical produce of an agricultural nature. The humid heat is uncomfortable for the European unaccustomed to an average shade temperature of 91°. There is usually a heavy downpour of rain every day and the average rainfall is 95 inches in the year as compared with about 22 inches in England. The daily rain, which is frequently accompanied by thunder and lightning, is preceded by a short gusty gale of great intensity which has been known to root up young trees with its vehemence. Apart from this there is no wind and the sun beats down with terrible power untempered by any cooling breeze. Malaya is very

* *Orang* = man ; *puteh* = white. The term is applied only to people of British nationality.

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little north of the equator, and the difference between the longest and the shortest day is very slight. Malaria is common, but the medical authorities have done much to eradicate the *anopheles* mosquito, which is the cause of the trouble.

If the climate is unpleasant for human beings who are accustomed to the cooler atmosphere of Europe, it is responsible for the prosperity of the crops. Rubber is the principal agricultural product of the Straits, and, although there is a native rubber tree, that which is cultivated, *Hevea brasiliensis*, was imported, *via* Kew and Ceylon, from South America by Sir Hugh Low over thirty years ago. Since its introduction it has practically ousted the coffee industry, and many thousands of acres which were previously devoted to coconuts are now under rubber. In 1921, a year of unprecedented depression in the rubber industry, Malaya exported 241,291 tons of rubber. The coolie work on rubber estates is done by Tamils, Chinese, and Malays.*

Tin mining, which is mainly carried on in the Kinta and Larut districts in Perak, is the other chief industry of Malaya, and its presence in the peninsula is very largely responsible for the hordes of Chinese which have made the country their home. The Chinese can be trusted to discover a place where there is hidden wealth, and they were in Malaya long before the *orang*

* See "The Rubber Tapper," p. 60.

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puteh began to exploit it. The town of Taiping, which in Chinese means "Everlasting Peace," in spite of its name, has been a much-disputed battlefield among Chinese factions owing to the rich tin deposits of the district. Chinese contractors arrange for the coolie work on tin mines. Exports of tin amounted to 46,231 tons in 1921, when the market was in anything but a cheerful state.

It has been realised during the past three years that too much reliance has been placed on the rubber and tin industries. The recent disordered state of these two commodities has caused widespread suffering throughout the country, and it has been realised that there should be other industries upon which to fall back in case of necessity. Consequently the cultivation of arghan fibre has been started, but all attempts, in the easternmost State of Pahang and elsewhere, have up to now proved failures. Roselle fibre is also being grown in various parts, while at Gopeng (Perak) the china-clay (kaolin) works have prospered since their opening in 1921. Other industries include coconuts, rice, tapioca, gambir, wolfram and scheelite.

European life in Malaya may be divided into two sections—the country-working section (*i.e.*, planters, tin-miners, etc.) and the town-working section (*i.e.*, officials, traders, etc.). In contrast to life at home the town-worker is healthier on the whole than the dweller up-country, the reason being that the sanitary

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authorities are better able to supervise anti-malarial and other health-producing schemes. Left alone in a possibly unhealthy and certainly mosquito-infested spot, the planter frequently has little chance of combating the naturally adverse conditions, though it must be said that on the majority of estates, mines, etc., every assistance is given to employees for guarding against malaria and making life as pleasant as is possible under the circumstances.

The planter's life commences daily before dawn, when he attends the muster-roll of his coolies. From then onwards his day is full, attending to his various duties on his section and keeping his books posted to date. It is an existence of unutterable monotony, broken only by an occasional visit to the nearest town to draw the monthly *gagi* for the estate coolies. Many of the estates have clubs where the assistants can play cards or billiards after their day's work is done.

Neither is the tin-miner's a life of roses. They work in shifts on the dredges which operate continuously day and night, and the heat on one of these dredges during the middle of the day must be felt to be appreciated.

In town early rising is usually the order of the day, though work may not commence until nine or even ten if one happens to be lucky enough to be in a Government office. In commercial offices the hours are usually from nine to four, and in some cases five.

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Work over, tennis, football, cricket, or golf is played, weather permitting, and the club is generally the centre of attraction between six and eight, after which dinner at the house and bed. Even in towns life is apt to become monotonous, though travelling theatrical companies periodically appear to enliven things, while local talent occasionally combines to give an amateur entertainment. Dame Gossip reigns supreme in the towns, where everybody knows all about everybody else's business. This, however, is by no means only found in Malaya.

Malaya is a new and interesting country with a prosperous future before it. It contains a strange assortment of singular people whose customs and habits are peculiar and interesting. In the following pages are a few observations on the people and their ways, which to the European often seem passing peculiar.



D. H. Aldworth.

STREET CORNER IN KUALA LUMPUR.
The Blind Basket-Seller and the Itinerant Restaurant.

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE OF MALAYA

Le peuple est le cœur du pays.—LAMARTINE.

When we take people merely as they are, we make them worse ; when we treat them as if they were what they should be, we improve them as far as they can be improved.—GOETHE.

IN Malaya is found as motley a crowd of Orientals as can be discovered in any country in the East. The mixture of races which is gathered together in the peninsula forms an interesting subject for the student of human nature and psychology. The Malay, who gives his name to the country, is by no means in the majority, and the first impression gained on visiting a town will be the very great number of Chinese of all classes. The rickshas are pulled by Chinese ; most of the shops bear signs in Chinese letters over them ; a goodly proportion of the domestic servants hail from the island of Hainan ; the clerks in offices are Straits-born Chinese ; and, in fact, these enterprising Celestials are found in every walk of life, from the millionaire *towkay*, with large tin interests and owning half a

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dozen palatial houses in different towns, to the humble coolie who performs the most menial tasks.

Of the Malays themselves there are many types, and this is perhaps not surprising since the race is a widely scattered one ; the Malay language, which varies considerably in different localities, is spoken as far west as in Madagascar, while it extends eastwards to New Guinea. In olden days the Malays had an unenviable reputation as pirates and as a thoroughly bloodthirsty and undesirable race. Only the most daring explorers had, up to a century ago, come into contact with these people, and either the stories spread about the Malays are exaggerated or the Malays have undergone a rapid and great change, for to-day they are as happy and contented a community as any in the peninsula. Rather than being considered down-and-out ruffians they have a reputation for being singularly lazy and careless concerning the affairs of life. To be in a position to live without having to work for the daily necessaries is the essence of bliss. A Malay who owns a house with sufficient crops adjoining it to support his family is indeed a lucky man and one who accounts himself perfectly contented. His wants are few, but he is improvident, and he must live. Thus, if he is unlucky enough to be compelled to work in order to supply the daily rice, he will only do just enough to purchase the necessaries. Should he own a few rubber trees, and should rubber be fetching a good price on the local

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market, he will only tap half his trees, if that will ensure his food bill being paid. But should rubber be a drug on the market—as it was during 1921 and 1922—it may be necessary for him to tap three, or even four, times a day, to the detriment of his trees and at great inconvenience to himself.

Many of the better-class Malays have been educated in England, and the tendency is to educate on British lines. With this end in view, Malay College has been founded at Kuala Kangsar, the Malay capital of Perak, and it is conducted as nearly as possible on the lines of an English public school. At about the age of eight or nine the young Malay is sent to Kuala Kangsar, where, unless he subsequently comes to an English University, he completes his education. In a pleasant-looking building built of red-and-white stone are the classrooms, dormitories, and other rooms where the boys are accommodated, while in front are the playing-fields, where cricket and football are played. The idea is very rapidly gaining ground among the Malays that English education will do more to improve their race, of which they are justly proud, than anything else. Consequently Malay College is full and is making excellent headway.

But if the upper classes in Malaya appreciate the benefits of a good education, it is to be feared that the more lowly Malays are less keen on books. The village school is a praiseworthy effort to instil know-

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ledge into the youth of the country, but it nevertheless fails. The Malay schoolboy plods as unwillingly to school as any, and shows a more marked aversion to imbibing learning. He is taught to read and write, and he learns extracts from the Korán. In due course he proceeds to country pursuits, and promptly forgets how to read and write. He will forget his Korán also unless he has a particularly conscientious *imam* to keep him up to the mark.

As Mahomedans the Malays are strict teetotallers, and it is very seldom that they take strong drink. They are intensely loyal to their Sultans, who are very popular amongst their subjects. The Sultans in turn are extremely satisfied with the progress the country has made under British administration. It was the late Sultan of Perak, Raja Sir Idris Mersidal-Aazam Shah Al-Merhum Iskandar Shah, G.C.M.G., G.C.V.O., who initiated the idea of Malaya presenting a battleship to Great Britain. The gift was gratefully accepted, and H.M.S. *Malaya* took a prominent part in the Battle of Jutland. A battleship of the *Queen Elizabeth* type is a noble gift, and she adequately represents the feeling of the Malays towards Great Britain.

CHAPTER III

THE SAKAIS

Happy the people whose annals are blank in History's book.—
MONTESQUIEU.

COMPARATIVELY few of the white population of Malaya have ever set eyes on a Sakai. It requires an abundance of energy, necessitating an unusual amount of rough walking through jungle tracks, to penetrate the mountain haunts of the aborigines of Malaya. Such vigour is not common in the climate of the peninsula, with the result that the Sakai is allowed to live undisturbed in his solitary home except for a periodical visit from a forest official or some other irritating person who has business in the settlement.

If the Malays are actually in possession of the territory, it is the Sakais who claim to be the original and rightful owners of the land, for they inhabited the country long before the advent of the Malays. But the Sakais do not worry at being relieved of the responsibilities of ownership, and they are quite content

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to look down from their mountain lairs and see the perfectly useless—from their point of view—labour being carried on in the towns beneath them. The Sakais, in short, are the aboriginal jungle-dwellers of the Malay Peninsula.

These Sakais are the first known inhabitants of Malaya, though traces have been found of a race of men which existed in prehistoric days. Sakai life is primitive and extremely dull according to European standards. They live in colonies high up in the mountain jungles, and never mix with civilised life in the valleys below. Their houses, built on poles, are most primitive, and their clothes consist of a loin-cloth. They cultivate simple crops, but to a very small extent; and their weapons, with which they kill beasts of the jungle, are a long blowpipe and arrows poisoned with the juice of the *ipoh* plant.

The Sakais are slightly fairer in complexion than the Malays, and are quite tolerably well developed, in spite of the fact that they are a thoroughly debased and degenerate people. How many there are of this strange race it is impossible to tell with any accuracy, as the census officer cannot search out all the colonies, of which there must be many never visited by a white man. Since they are quite harmless and unproductive from the point of view of the administration, it is a matter of very minor importance how many there are. They cause no trouble and are perfectly

The Sakais

peaceful, so they are allowed to live unmolested by the rulers. The late Captain Cerutti spent years among the Sakais, and left his impressions in his book "My Friends the Savages." *

* Tipographia Co-Operative Comense, Como, Italy.

CHAPTER IV

SPORT IN MALAYA

*If all the year were playing holidays,
To sport would be as tedious as to work.*

SHAKESPEARE.

NOTHING is more essential in a tropical country for the maintenance of good health than a moderate amount of exercise. In the large towns of Malaya there are always one or more *padangs*—extensive open spaces covered with grass, whereon football, cricket, hockey, etc., may be played, weather permitting—which generally face the European Club. The daily rains, however, frequently reduce the *padang* into an unplayable morass just at the time when games are played—the evening between four and six; but, on the other hand, they have the advantage of making the grass perennially green. A football ground, played on perhaps three hundred evenings in the year, shows but little sign of wear. This may be partly due to the fact that most Orientals play in bare feet, innocent of studded football boots, but it is also very largely accounted for by the regular rains, which occur almost daily. Matting wickets for cricket is unknown,



EVENING IN A MALAYAN FISHING VILLAGE.

Under the Coconut Palms.

Sport in Malaya

while tennis is played as frequently on grass as on hard courts.

Association football is the most popular game in Malaya, and is played by all races—European, Malay, Chinese, Indian, and Ceylonese. Of all the Orientals the Chinese are the keenest and best, but, unfortunately, their enthusiasm often leads them to regrettable breaches of the elementary spirit of sportsmanship. The Orientals prefer to play football without boots, and it is remarkable how skilfully they propel the ball; it is quite a common occurrence for a goal kick taken with a bare foot to reach the halfway line. Leagues have been formed in many districts and are keenly contested, while inter-State and Colony matches are followed with the greatest enthusiasm.

“Rugger” is played only by Europeans, but the Orientals are always present in large numbers as interested spectators. They seem to take an impish delight in seeing white men pulling one another about, and a successful tackle is greeted with shrieks of joyful mirth. The handling code is not played so regularly as “Soccer” is, and September to January is generally considered the season, with perhaps a few games in March and April. It is quite common to find men who play “Soccer” also devotees of “Rugger,” and many represent their State or Colony at both games, while not a few also get their colours for hockey and cricket. Play is amazingly fast, and

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it is not surprising to find that games do not last for more than fifty minutes or an hour.

Cricket is played during the periods when "Rugger" is in abeyance, chiefly by Europeans, with an occasional leavening of Indians. As a cricket match cannot be finished in the cool of one evening, it must be played all day, which is a disadvantage in a tropical country. There is little pleasure in fielding in the sun with the thermometer standing at 130° . Big scores are rare, and 150 or 200 is a winning advantage.

Hockey is also played and has a good following, but it is not so universally played as football or cricket. Tennis is, however, most popular with both sexes, and is played regularly every evening when the courts are not flooded. The Chinese are very keen tennis players, while the upper-class Malays are taking it up seriously, and some play uncommonly well.

Golf is played most evenings, and on Sundays and holidays. There are several "plus" players in Malaya. All the big towns—Singapore, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Taiping—and not a few of the smaller places have their courses. To the player fresh from England the Malayan golf course will seem abnormally fast. Drives will roll farther, unless there has been a deluge of rain, while putts have an annoying habit of rolling off the green even when only tapped lightly. The golf clubs are also social clubs, where billiards and cards may also be played.

Sport in Malaya

One of the most fascinating sports to Europeans and Orientals alike is racing. There are race-courses at Singapore, Seremban, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, and Penang, where meetings are held twice a year. Ponies are imported from Australia, whence the jockeys also come. It is usual for the members of a gymkhana or turf club to subscribe for a certain number of "griffins." Sometimes two, three, or more will form a *kongsi* and buy a "griffin." At Singapore, where the "griffins" disembark, they are numbered, and simultaneously the subscribers draw in the town to which the "griffins" belong. On their arrival they are claimed by their owners, who name their ponies and enter them for the next race meeting.

An Oriental race-course on the day of a meeting is a blaze of colour. Offices are closed, and there is a general holiday on race-day afternoons, which usually fall on the Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday of the week. Everybody goes to the races, and the course presents a gay appearance. In the Club enclosure the Europeans foregather with a few of the more prominent Malays and Chinese. The ladies are dressed in their prettiest frocks, and the paddock rivals Ascot or Goodwood at its best. It is, however, the part of the course patronised by the Orientals that gives the most bizarre and picturesque view. Malays, Chinese, Tamils, Chetties, Sikhs, Cingalese, and the other varied races which inhabit Malaya, mingle with one

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another in one dazzling array. Every shade of colour is there, and every language can be picked out from the babel of tongues.

Europeans, Malays, Chinese, and Indians own the race-ponies. The high-class Malays are very keen, and the Sultans of Perak and Johore are prominent and successful owners. Excellent sport is witnessed, and the race weeks are devoted to a round of social functions, which make them all the more enjoyable.

Little polo is played in Malaya, probably on account of the fact that, apart from half a battalion of Burma Rifles at Taiping, the only military in the peninsula is a single infantry battalion at Singapore. The Sultan of Perak has a polo team in which he himself plays, but the game is not so popular as it is in India.

Needless to say, there is plenty of big game in Malaya, but various licences must be obtained before the hunter can indulge in sport. There are also various penalties with which it is well to be *au fait* before commencing operations. Elephants, tigers, leopards, rhinoceros, seladang and wild pig provide excellent sport, while among the birds which provide for the sportsman are pigeon and snipe. There is plenty of good sport to be had in Malaya, since it is not so generally known as a field for the big-game hunter as Africa and India are, and it is more off the beaten track.

CHAPTER V

THE "WAYANG"*

The real object of the drama is the exhibition of human character.
—MACAULAY.

IF the Oriental population of Malayan towns enjoy a visit to the *wayang*, Europeans appreciate equally well the theatrical shows which periodically make their appearance. But the reasons for their gratification are wholly different. The Asiatic, be he Malay, Chinese or Kling, goes entirely for the sake of the performance, whereas the *orang puteh* visits the *wayang* on account of the unconscious humour which is almost invariably to be derived from it.

There is generally a Malay, Chinese, or Tamil show going on, but from the European point of view the Malay *wayang* offers most opportunities for hearty laughter. The general surroundings give the impression of Oriental enjoyment. In the front row of the "stalls," seated on rattan chairs, are the Europeans and perhaps a few wealthy Chinese dressed in Euro-

* *Wayang* in Malay means theatre.

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pean clothes. Behind and in the gallery are Orientals of all descriptions gaily clad in their picturesque garb—Malays in their brilliantly coloured *sarongs* and *bajus*, Chinese *nonias* with their super-greased hair scrupulously dressed with enormous combs and attended by sedate *toiwkays*, a few gaudily dressed Tamils, a motley but amusing crowd studiously chewing the eternal betel-nut in the stifling, smoke-laden atmosphere.

Although Malays have their own dramatists, they show a very marked liking for Shakespeare, and “Hamlet” and “Romeo and Juliet” are first favourites. The Malay-inspired operas are inclined to be tedious, but whether the author be Shakespeare or a Malay the performance never ends before one or two in the morning. To appreciate Shakespeare or any other author, it is well to have some knowledge of the Malay language, but in any case it is a screamingly funny experience. “Hamlet” is the *pièce de résistance* of Malay opera. On the discovery of Yorick’s skull, the grave-digger produces a telephone and informs the police of his find, whereat a burly Sikh *mata-mata* (policeman) arrives on the scene and takes down full particulars. It is considered essential to introduce English comic songs of two or three decades ago, and “The Man who broke the Bank at Monte Carlo” never fails to please.

But if the adaptation of Shakespeare’s masterpieces may seem strange to Europeans, the acting is often

The "Wayang"

good. The Malay is naturally a good mimic, and he frequently burlesques a character with admirable precision. His voice is inclined to be monotonous, and his singing can only be described as "twangy" in the extreme. It is really painful to listen to Malays of both sexes singing. As comedians Malays excel, but in tragedy they seldom shine. But it matters but little to the European in search of amusement, for tragedy and comedy are equally laughter-inspiring to him.

It is by no means unusual to make a circuit of the Malay, Chinese, and Tamil *wayangs* in a single evening, especially if the party consists of planters on a monthly visit to town, bent on cramming all the amusement possible into the all too short hours. Even the most hardened patron of the Chinese *wayang* can seldom stand more than ten minutes of the ear-splitting din which is the salient feature of these shows. There are no proscenium, no wings, no back-cloth—in fact, there is no scenery at all. At the back of the stage is a wall in which are doors through which the actors and actresses make their entrances, waiting at the side of the stage until their cue is given to advance to the centre. At the centre of the back of the stage is a roped-off enclosure in which the band is seated. This band, be it said, is the most ear-splitting orchestra that ever performed. The general impression is that it is composed entirely of cymbals, but a careful investigation will reveal the fact that there *are* other instruments,

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peculiar to the Chinese and probably without English names. The orchestra dominates the drama in the Chinese *wayang*. What the play is about does not really matter, as it is spoken in Mandarin Chinese, a language which few know in the Straits, and, as there is very little acting and the "book" consists of very long speeches spoken without any action or indication of what they mean, it is practically impossible to follow the plot. However, ten minutes or a quarter of an hour in a Chinese theatre are enough to give impressions which will last a lifetime.

Performances in Tamil resemble those in Malay rather than those in Chinese, but they are not so amusing. In fact, they are generally the essence of dullness. The dresses are often gorgeous, but the play is generally obscure and the acting mediocre. It is the native *wayang* that is the thing to see in Malaya, and that is perhaps as it should be.

Another entertainment, popular both with Europeans and Orientals, is the *wayang gelap*—the "dark theatre"; in other words, the cinema. Most of the films emanate from America, and all reels are censored by the police before they are publicly shown. Every town and many villages possess at least one picture palace, which is generally crowded. The Orientals literally shriek with delight at the pictures, and both comedy and tragedy appeal to their tastes.

CHAPTER VI

“MENGGELUNCHOR”

*Bliss was it in that morn to be alive,
But to be young was very Heaven.*

WORDSWORTH.

MALAYA is a country in which strange things abound, but there is nothing quite so peculiar to the peninsula as *Menggelunchor*. It is a strange word which has no particular meaning in itself. It would convey nothing to a Malay in, say, Selangor or Pahang. *Menggelunchor* is a word used only for a particularly delightful form of picnic which is held at one place only, a few miles from Kuala Kangsar, in the State of Perak. There is no other locality in which it can be held, for the surroundings at the scene of *Menggelunchor* are unique.

Four and a half miles out of Kuala Kangsar on the main Taiping road there is a jungle path on the left-hand side. Here the picnickers assemble during the morning and find elephants, equipped with panniers, waiting, ready to convey the guests to *Menggelunchor*, from which it must not be inferred that *Menggelunchor*

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is a place. Rather it is a rite, but this unique word cannot be classed as any part of speech. Having mounted the elephants, the party are conveyed along jungle paths to the scene of *Menggelunchor*. Should it happen to be the season when jungle fruit is hanging on the trees, the guests amuse themselves by bombarding one another with such as may be plucked when passing. At last the wonderful *Menggelunchor* is reached, and the serious business commences. A natural water-slide ending in a deep pool is the primary joy of this unrivalled picnic, and a speedy change is made into bathing attire. At the side of the "chute" is a path to a ledge at the top, and up this the bathers climb, armed with a palm-leaf, which is used as a toboggan when sliding down the slippery descent. It takes much practice to land gracefully in the pool below, and it is only those who have many *Menggelunchors* to their credit who arrive at the bottom with any semblance of elegance. The beginner describes circles, semicircles, and other strange antics during his wild career to the pool, where he may easily arrive head first. All enjoy it, whether adept or tyro, and there is no picnic quite so enjoyable as *Menggelunchor*. Whoever discovered the *mandi* (bath) deserves a permanent memorial on the site of his find.

Bathing and sliding finished, the party migrates to the inevitable curry tiffin which is in itself a feature of life in the country. The plate is heaped up with

“ Menggelunchor ”

rice and curry, and the “boy” brings a large tray on which are the *sambals*. *Sambals* are side-dishes innumerable such as chutney, dried prawns, sliced eggs, grated coconut, cucumber, chillies, and other tasty morsels and spices, the whole making a most delicious dish, which must be washed down with beer. Discretion must be exercised in selecting the *sambals*, which, especially the dried prawns, may easily set up ptomaine poisoning, and the new arrival will do well to be wary with these excellent though risky side-dishes.

Tiffin over, the guests again mount their elephants and return to the road, where the cars will be found waiting—a prosaic ending to a romantic picnic.

CHAPTER VII

SUPERSTITIONS AND LEGENDS OF MALAYA

Never confuse a myth with a lie. . . . The thoughts of all greatest and wisest men hitherto have been expressed through mythology.—RUSKIN.

IN the grounds of a European planter's bungalow near the southern foot of the Taiping Pass, in the State of Perak, there is a solitary grave surrounded by a rough-hewn stone kerb. It stands some twenty yards from the main road from Taiping, where the British Resident has his seat of government, to Kuala Kangsar, the Malay capital with the Sultan's palaces. The railway, too, is in full view of this tomb, which is wrapt in mystery. Around, on every side, are mountains which are to a very great extent covered with rubber plantations. It is an isolated spot fifteen miles from Taiping and eight miles from Kuala Kangsar, and Europeans seldom stop on their journey to visit this unpretentious mound, which escapes the notice of the traveller unless he is looking for it.

Yet this cemetery with its single grave is one which is greatly revered by Malays, who travel from

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all parts of the peninsula to do homage to the great general whom, legend avers, is buried there. At some remote period it appears that a mighty battle raged on the surrounding heights, and that a great Malay *panglima* (fighting man or general) was slain and subsequently interred at a spot now close to the road. Who was this hero? Although his grave is daily visited and decorated with little candles and coloured paper flags, especially during Ramadan, the Mahomedan month of fasting, none can say who he was. Not even the priest at the mosque down the road can give any information. Yet a glorious legend exists round the personality of this "Unknown Warrior," slain who knows how many centuries ago. Curiously enough the names of the two adjoining rubber estates recall a battle of more modern times. They are called "Wellington" and "Waterloo."

The foregoing illustrates the love which the Malay entertains for legends. Like all Oriental races he is intensely superstitious. Woe betide the man or woman who has a curl of hair on the back of his or her neck, for this is a sure sign that the unfortunate person will meet his or her end prematurely by being mauled by a tiger. Various ancient monuments which exist have legends woven round them, one being that they are the petrified worldly chattels of some long dead holy men. The early history of the Malays is so obscure that it is

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difficult to trace the origin of their many legends and superstitions. They have a great dread of the *hantu*, or ghost, and many eerie places may not be approached by night.

There is quite an interesting little legend regarding the vexed problem of how man found his way into the moon. Since it is no crime for a Malay to pick up sticks on Sunday, it is obvious that there must be some other solution for this riddle. It appears that in the remote ages a tribe of Sakais, who are the aborigines of Malaya, and a *kampong* (village) of Malays were waging a more or less endless war, and that the Sakais, owing mainly to the daring deeds of their chief, were getting the best of it. The Malays, spurred to energy for once in a way, decided that drastic steps must be taken, and forthwith consulted their *pawang* (witch-doctor), who promptly devised a magic plan. Disguised as a Sakai he visited the enemy's village and told the chief that he had invented a way whereby the two could climb to the moon, and invited him to go. This was readily accepted, and the two commenced to build a long ladder from trees and palms in the jungle. At last it was finished and erected against the moon; then the two started to climb. The Sakai chief was an old man and had to stop frequently to rest, but encouraged by the *pawang*, he at last reached the goal, and, lying down, went to sleep. Then the

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pawang descended the ladder as quickly as possible, cut it away, leaving his enemy stranded in the moon, where he is, still sleeping, to this day. When he turns over in his sleep he covers the moon and thus causes an eclipse, while when he kicks he knocks pieces off the moon, these being shooting stars. It is a pretty legend which is firmly believed by many Malays.

The Chinese also have their myth concerning the moon. They believe that a beautiful serpent lives in the moon. When it crawls out for exercise it is seen in the form of a rainbow. The moon is also inhabited by a monstrous dragon which periodically eclipses it. This portent is a sign for all the Chinese to shout, beat gongs, and make all imaginable kinds of noise to drive it back. In due course Nature does her work, and the eclipse ends. The Chinese are perfectly satisfied that their incantations and shouting have been responsible for the return to normal. When there are signs of rain the Chinese coolies working on rubber estates may be heard shouting and wailing to drive the storm away, and they believe implicitly in the efficacy of such demonstrations.

Oriental religion is such that it lends itself to fanaticism which would not be tolerated in the West. That some of the superstitions which lead to unpleasant public displays should be permitted to

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survive is only possible when the fact is borne in mind that religious freedom is allowed within the utmost permissible limits. Thus a Chinese torture procession, revolting as it is to European eyes, cannot be said to harm anybody, except those who voluntarily undertake such disagreeable forms of penance as having hatpins stuck in at one cheek and out of the other, or dragging a heavily-laden cart by means of hooks in the shoulders. The Hindu fire-walking is another example of fanaticism. This necessitates the walking over a bed of burning charcoal with bare feet, while the more zealous will dance all day with a cauldron full of burning wood and charcoal in their hands, finally prostrating themselves before the temple. Cock-fighting is common in the archipelago, and in some parts—the Dutch island of Bali, for instance—it has some religious and superstitious meaning.

Every district in Malaya has its own superstitions and legends, which, though known locally, do not penetrate far afield. But the Orientals are thoroughly superstitious wherever they are, and collectors of legends may find some welcome additions in the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago. Probably the latter is more fruitful, since the hand of the *orang puteh* is not so much in evidence there, and among the more savage races in Borneo and New Guinea some wonderful legends exist.



THE MOSQUE, KUALA LUMPUR.

CHAPTER VIII

“AMOK! AMOK!”

And one day Radin di Klang went to Kampong Kling to amuse himself. And a man ran amok and all the people scattered and ran away, every one of them. But Radin di Klang stood still and drew his kēris, waiting for the runner-amok; and the runner-amok came and had a stabbing encounter with Radin di Klang; and they stabbed simultaneously, each striking the other's breast, and both died, one falling to the left and the other to the right.—SJARAH MALAYU.

TRAGEDIES such as befell the plucky Radin di Klang are fortunately rare in these more enlightened days, when the fact has been impressed upon the Malays that they must not indulge in indiscriminate slaughter. It is seldom that the terrible cry of “*Amok! Amok!*” (pronounced “ah-mo” and not “amuck” as it is frequently in England) is heard in the streets.

Though the word *amok* is of purely Malay origin, it has found its way into the English language. Here in England the word has a much less significant meaning than it has in Malaya, and it is frequently used when comparatively trivial crimes are committed. But in far-off Malaya the cry of “*Amok! Amok!*”

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brings dread to the hearts of all who hear it. It means that some wretched Malay has taken entire leave of his senses, that he is "seeing red," and that, armed with *kěris*es, those terrible Malay daggers, he is rushing wildly about, quite unable to account for his actions. Running madly here and there, he stabs everybody he meets, irrespective of whether he knows his victims or whether he has never seen them before in his life. All and sundry who confront this madman are stabbed, and his lust for blood is such that he cares not whom he slays. His passions are aroused to such an extent that he is forgetful of right and wrong. The *amok* generally starts with the discovery of some domestic misfortune, and he commences his vengeance by slaying his wife and children. Then he blindly attacks all who cross his path indiscriminately, until at last his mad career is checked either by force or cunning. Once captured and disarmed, the man who commits these ghastly crimes is imprisoned, and it is often found that he has seemingly but a vague idea of the terrible havoc he has wrought. Once he has returned to his right senses he is deeply repentant.

Of recent years *amoks* have become rare occurrences as the Malay has commenced to realise that he cannot gratify his blood-lust in this terrible fashion, and in ordinary cases, in which the use of a *kěris* would no doubt be a simple and speedy way of settling the

“ Amok ! Amok ! ”

difference, the legal remedy is safer. Nowadays the Malay is forbidden by law to carry a *kěris* or any other weapon, so that the temptation to run *amok* is not so great as in days of yore when he carried a *kěris* as naturally as we carry an umbrella or walking-stick. The Malay has learned that murder is not countenanced either by the British Government or by the Malay Sultans, whose subjects are fully aware of the penalty that must be paid by “runners-amok.” Consequently the old practice of running *amok* has fallen into disuse.

CHAPTER IX

MALAY DRESS AND ACCOUTREMENTS

Given a living man there will be found clothes for him ; he will find himself clothes ; but the suit of clothes pretending that it is both clothes and man.—CARLYLE.

UNFORTUNATELY for the picturesqueness of the Malay, there is a growing disposition to assume European or partly European clothes. It is a great pity, for not only is the native dress extremely becoming, but it seems to enhance the charm and simplicity of the wearer. The Malay must, however, continue to wear his *sarong*, for without it he considers himself insufficiently clothed. There is nothing to prevent him wearing trousers and a frock-coat as long as a *sarong* partly covers his nether limbs, but without the *sarong* he is improperly dressed. It is of course perfectly decent to wear a *sarong* alone, and a vast majority of Malays do ; trousers, alone, however, do not fit in with their idea of what is becoming, and they must not wear them. This custom is, nevertheless, passing, and some of the upper-class Malays

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shock their social inferiors by appearing in public in European dress, but with the little brimless hat, rather like a Turkish fez without the tassle, and made of red, black, yellow, or green velvet, which is always worn. The cap is made without a brim in order that, in accordance with his Mahomedan faith, the wearer may prostrate himself the more easily on the ground. The presence of a brim would prevent his forehead from being brought into contact with the dust. In some parts a coloured handkerchief is wound round the head, but this has rather a slovenly appearance and is less attractive than the cap.

The *sarong* is essentially the salient feature of the Malay's rather scanty dress. When bought it consists of a long strip of coloured linen about six feet long by two and a half feet wide, but the two ends are sewn together, thus making a tubular garment. This is either put over the head or pulled up from the feet, and fastened by a twist which can only be learned by observation and experience. Though the attachment is apparently of the slightest, it is wonderful how well it keeps up when skilfully adjusted. *Sarongs* are made in a marvellous number of vivid colours and quaint designs, the latter varying according to the district in which they are made. Pahang has the reputation for producing the choicest designs in *sarongs*, but this is very largely a matter of taste, and most places have pleasing enough garments to offer. Many

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Europeans who live in the Straits use *sarongs* in lieu of pyjama trousers, as they find them cooler.

For a covering for the body the Malays wear a garment called a *baju*, which is a loose-fitting coat open at the neck, with two pockets, one on each hip. The *baju* is worn outside the *sarong* and is not tucked inside it. It is unusual to see a Malay wearing anything on his feet, though the upper classes wear socks and shoes of European make. In some parts the poorer Malays sometimes wear wooden sandals, called *trompaks* from the sound they make on the roads.

This, generally speaking, describes the not very extensive wardrobe of the average Malay. On feast-days, having attended their mosque and monotonously chanted such portions of the Korán as are appointed for the particular festival, Malays resort to the nearest village or town, where, dressed in their brightest and best *sarongs* and *bajus*, they parade the streets, making a picturesque and striking scene. It will be noticed that the raja-classes wear much finer clothes, which are frequently embroidered with gold or silver thread, while the material is fine silk instead of cotton or inferior silk.

The Malayan *kěris* (the *e* is hardly sounded) is a weapon whose name is known in most parts of the civilised world. Although the law forbids Malays the privilege of carrying their national arm to-day, the *kěris* will be found hidden away in every Malay house,

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for it is handed down from generation to generation. It is in consequence by no means easy to acquire a really good specimen of this deadly dagger. There are some excellent examples in the Taiping museum. There are many kinds of *kěris*s, varying from those with seven waves to those which are straight ; some are short while others are long, the length being determined by the second joint of the forefinger ; the handles vary in design from those of plain wood to those of carved ivory and inlaid with gold and jewels. There is value to the Malay in the blade, not only on account of the temper of the steel but on account of its traditions and the number of victims it has to its credit. A *kěris* which has no history or record is not of much account in the eyes of a Malay. Some of the hilts are really wonderful work. One carved in the shape of a kingfisher's head seems to be very popular. The scabbards, too, are very ornate in design, but the acquisition of a *kěris* complete with scabbard which has any value, either historically or from the intrinsic point of view, is very difficult.

There are also a number of Malay swords, straight and curved, made in various designs, while the *tumbok loda*, a small knife, and the *parang*, a larger knife which the Malay uses for chopping wood, are other examples of native armaments. The *tumbok loda* is a venomous little weapon, so small that it can be concealed in the hand without difficulty.

CHAPTER X

LIFE ON A RUBBER ESTATE

Everything useful to the life of man arises from the ground, but few things arise in that condition which is requisite to render them useful.—
HUME.

EVEN in the sweltering climate of the Federated Malay States there is a chilly nip in the air in the early morning when the rubber-planter starts his day's work. But there is something refreshing in the atmosphere as, clad in khaki shorts, a shirt open at the neck, stockings or puttees and a *topi* or double terrai hat, he tramps out to attend "muster-roll" just as the sun is rising and the birds of the jungle are bursting into song.

The beauties of a Malay morning once seen are not likely to be forgotten ; yet it is to be feared that the average planter cares for none of these things and soon his appreciation wanes. Monotony is the curse of the rubber-planter's life, and even Nature's most wonderful effects become tedious in time. But it cannot be denied that early morning is the most



PADI FIELDS AT PANTAI, NEAR SEREMBAN.

Life on a Rubber Estate

charming time of day in the tropics. Everybody, whether he is a town-worker or engaged up-country, rises with or before the sun in Malaya. Mists hang over the upper slopes of the mountains until, later, they are dispelled by the sun ; the air is fresh and even sharp at times, while it begins to grow light with the rapidity of the tropics as the planter hurries to the spot where muster-roll is called. Soon the sun will burst forth in all his glory, and intense heat and another torrid day will have begun. Later the heat will be wellnigh unbearable, and it is well to make the best of the early morning. The evening, of which more anon, has its compensations, but it is not the same as dawn and the early hours of the day.

Assembled round a tall Indian of commanding appearance who is clad in English clothes there stands or squats in Oriental fashion a strange collection of dusky humanity. They are all Tamils who have been brought from India to work on the estates. Elsewhere there are Chinese coolies working for a Chinese contractor, and these, should perchance rain threaten, will soon make their presence heard by their dismal howling and wild shouting whereby they hope to drive away the impending storm. But here are Tamils—long, lanky, brown-skinned Indians with hairy bodies clad in nothing but loin-cloths or Malay *sarongs*. There are women, too, with preposterous pieces of jewellery stuck in their noses and

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enormous earrings. They wear more clothes than the men and sport a dress, generally red and white, which is tightly wound about their bodies and legs. Muster-roll over, they saunter away with all the nonchalance of the East to their work—tapping, weeding, or what not. It is no use trying to instil energy, even in the cool of the morning, into these folk. They were born without vigour and sooner or later they will die peacefully without having known what vitality means. And so they amble away to their allotted tasks. In their own way they will get their work done, and at the appointed time the latex will be delivered at the factory. When pay-day comes along they will line up to receive their *gaji* (wages). If possible it is usual to keep back a week or two's *gaji* as a guarantee of good behaviour and as an incentive not to bolt, the arrears of course being paid when the coolie finally leaves the estate. But in practice it usually happens that the reverse is the case and that the coolie's account is overdrawn, for he is an improvident soul and an easy prey to the rapacity of the money-lender, whose interest is enormous.

During the early hours of the day the work of tapping goes on, for it is then that the latex flows most freely. Night tapping would be ideal, but it would entail the use of artificial light, which is impracticable. Tapping requires careful supervision in order to ensure that the coolies do not cut too deep into the

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tree or remove bark more than one-twentieth of an inch thick. Various systems of tapping, by which the latex is made to flow from the tree down a short spout into a cup placed on the ground, are employed. Constant supervision of the coolies is necessary, and it is not till about eight-thirty or nine that the planter will return to his bungalow for *makanan pagi* (breakfast).

Plantation life becomes extraordinarily monotonous after a time. Rubber trees, never renowned for their natural beauty, are planted with mathematical precision and become veritable nightmares. But the planter with a taste for natural history finds much to interest him. One man I knew collected snakes of all kinds, from the harmless grass variety to cobras and pythons, and had a fine and ever-growing collection of skins hung round the walls of his bungalow. Occasionally one hears of a tiger invading an estate, while raids by elephants sometimes do considerable damage. Though the trees suffer from such incursions the planter gets an opportunity for sport which he would not otherwise obtain, since, unless elephants are damaging crops, a big-game licence costs \$50 (£5 16s. 8d.) for every five head, and few planters are able to afford this luxury.

By the time that work in the factory begins the sun is well up, and operations in this department are the least pleasant of any the planter has to perform.

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Work here consists of straining the latex to remove all impurities which may have found their way into it, for it is collected in a bucket from the cups under each tree. The latex is then coagulated by means of a little acetic acid and the rubber is then pressed by machinery and smoked. Work in the factory is hot and wearisome ; it is essential that it should be carefully done and the work requires constant supervision. If it is possible to make a mistake the coolie can be relied upon to make that mistake unless he is watched. It is fatal to assume that a job is so simple that errors are impossible, and it may here be remarked that the two most essential qualities that a planter must possess are patience and forbearance. Nothing is more trying than the childish mistakes made by the coolies, or their trivial worries which they insist on confiding in the planter, who is looked upon as being *in loco parentis*. The coolie lines are little more than nurseries for grown-up Orientals, except when, periodically, inter-family or inter-racial riots break out. It is then that the qualities of the planter are tested, and nothing but tact and firmness on the part of the *orang puteh* in charge can save a wholesale slaughter. Many critical situations have been averted by tact, while a lack of appreciation of Oriental psychology and weakness on the part of the white man in charge have led to bloodshed. When coolies attack their white *tuans* (masters), as they

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occasionally do, it is generally owing to failure on the part of the planter to handle his coolies with tact, forbearance, and—firmness. Men who are excellent in every other respect have been packed off home simply because of their inability to handle their coolies.

Not only does the planter have work on the estate and in the factory, but he is responsible for the book-work of the division, and this entails the keeping of ledgers, rolls, etc. The planter must, therefore, combine some knowledge of botany with a smattering of engineering and of accounts; the personal attributes previously mentioned are also very important.

Some estates, more especially the large ones employing a large staff of Europeans, boast a club where the assistants foregather in the evenings to play cards or billiards and quaff the inevitable *stengah* (whisky and soda). At some estate clubs there is even a tennis-court, but on clubless plantations the evenings are deadly dull. Too frequent visits to the nearest town are discouraged by the powers that be, and, in any case, the expense of such journeys often is beyond the pocket of the average planter. But most managers are human and realise that their subordinates must occasionally get away from the monotony of estate life, and leave is granted within reason to visit the nearest town, the drawing of *gaji* from the bank for the coolies being frequently made an excuse.

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Between eight and nine the company disperses from the club, each man to his own bungalow to dinner and bed. Another day has ended, and to-morrow and the day after will follow with unvarying monotony. Those at home, possibly drawing dividends from rubber, have little or no idea of the wearying life the man who produces the stuff leads. Up to a point the life is healthy enough, but there are always dangers of which those who are unacquainted with the inner working of rubber-planting are unaware.

CHAPTER XI

FAUNA AND FLORA

*Where are forests, hot as fire,
Wide as England, tall as a spire,
Full of apes and coconuts
And the negro hunters' huts;—*

* * * * *
*Where in jungles near and far,
Man-devouring tigers are.*

R. L. STEVENSON.

FAUNA

MALAYA possesses a large selection of animals, big and small, which provides ample study for the naturalist, whilst the big-game hunter will find the peninsula an excellent ground for sport.

Elephants (*gajah*) abound in Malaya and are used in some parts for haulage purposes, as they are in other places in the East. The Malay elephants, while smaller than those in India, are larger than those found across the Straits of Malacca in Sumatra. They do considerable damage at times, both to plantations and railways, while telegraph poles in

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remote parts are often broken down by elephants, which have also been known to hold up trains. The story is told of an elephant suddenly appearing one night on a road and causing the occupants of a Ford car to beat a hasty retreat. The motorists having abandoned their car, the elephant showed its contempt by picking up the Ford with its trunk, depositing it at the side of the road and then proceeding on its way. I am not prepared to guarantee the truth of this story.

The rhinoceros (*badak*) is found in the peninsula, the two-horned variety being more common than the one-horned species, which is almost extinct. The Malays have an interesting labour-saving method of trapping the *badak* which does damage to their crops. First they dig a pit large enough to hold their victim and bait it. A trap consisting of bamboos and other jungle wood is then constructed, but it is not taken to the pit until the victim is safely caught in the hole; then it is placed over the *badak*. The problem now is to remove the rhinoceros from the pit and keep it inside the cage. The Malay, being opposed on principle to doing any unnecessary work, lets the *badak* solve the problem. Anger at being caught enrages the victim, who tramples away at the sides of the pit and before long he has trodden away sufficient earth to walk over and out of the pit. A strong pole is placed between the animal's legs and

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thus, inside the cage, the rhinoceros is triumphantly led away.

Malaya and South America are the only two parts of the world in which that curious relic of prehistoric ages, the tapir, lives. Fossilised specimens of the tapir have been found in other places, but it survives only in Malaya and South America. It is a curious-looking yet harmless animal and is easily tamed, being found useful on estates.

The *sěladang*, a species of bison, is fairly common in some parts of the peninsula and is hunted, while the *kambing grun*, a mixture of goat and antelope, is found in rocky, mountainous districts, but is seldom shot on account of its shyness.

Tigers abound in Malaya and are frequently seen near the big towns as well as in the more remote up-country districts. The *harimau* of the Straits, though large, does not equal the tiger of India in size, nor are its propensities for man-eating so great. Black panthers are numerous but the spotted species is comparatively rare. Leopards frequent some parts of the peninsula, and a small though savage bear is another inhabitant of Malaya.

A large anthropoid ape, which makes a companionable pet for those who live a lonely life, inhabits the mountainous regions of the north, and there are gibbons which are also easily domesticated and are found throughout the country. A number of species of

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monkeys and macaques haunt the jungles and may be seen in coconut trees on estates.

Although there are scores of different snakes in Malaya, very few are dangerous. Pythons grow to an immense length and cause damage by raiding fowls, etc. Their chief danger lies in their constricting powers. By far the most dangerous snake of the peninsula is the hamadryad or King Cobra, which, unlike other snakes, will attack without provocation, while its bite is fatal within a very short time. The common cobra is found all over the Straits and in most kinds of country, though it has a marked preference for living near towns and villages rather than in the remote parts. There are a few other deadly snakes (*ular*) and many harmless species.

In the rivers there are many crocodiles, which render bathing a dangerous pastime unless precautions in the form of a fence have been taken. There are several species and some grow to an enormous length.

Of nocturnal beasts there are many bats and the flying-squirrel, a curious creature which glides from branch to branch. The *musang* is a civet which makes the night horrible with its noise, and is much prized by Orientals for certain parts from which they make scent, which is strange to the European since its natural smell is anything but pleasant.

Birds abound in the forests and fish frequent the rivers and sea in millions. The Malay Peninsula

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contains material for many books on its natural history, which cannot be compressed into one short chapter.

FLORA

From the mangrove swamps which fringe the shores of Malaya to the summits of the highest peaks there is dense vegetation. Much of the country is covered with thick virgin jungle wherein no man has set foot. The general impression given by the forest-clad mountains is a sea of dark green with occasional patches of lighter green. Like the naturalist, the botanist will find a wealth of interesting specimens, but he will have to undertake a trip into the jungle, for round the towns the flora, though many-hued, are common—hibiscus, “flame of the forest,” and even some English flowers, such as roses. The beautiful *angsená*, with its powerful scent, is seen in the streets of many towns, while the betel-nut tree is also common. In the country there are hundreds of different trees and flowers which only a botanist can name! The stately coconut palm is generally to be seen, while the *pisang* (banana) grows by the road with its green fruit hanging in clusters. Two trees which are a feature of Malaya are the mangosteen and the durian. The mangosteen produces a most delicious fruit about the size of an apple and purple in colour. When split open half a dozen or so white pips are found, and it is these that are so

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highly esteemed by Europeans. The durian is a fruit which the natives will almost commit a crime to possess. It is large, about the size of a big coconut, and is covered with sharp excrescences. Inside the thick skin are a number of pips which the Orientals prize. The prejudice against the durian is not so much on account of the pips, but because of the nauseating smell of the rotting skins which the natives cast aside in their eagerness to reach the fruit. The penetrating rotten odour of the durian skin is all-pervading when the fruit is in season. It haunts the nostrils wherever one may happen to be, and it is on this account that the durian is so unpopular with the white population. Besides the coconut, *pisang*, mangosteen, and durian, there is the mango, a large, coarse, and juiceless orange, and the *pinang* (betel-nut), which is chewed eternally by all the Orientals. The *papeia*, or paw-paw, a green, melon-like fruit in appearance, is also eaten both by Europeans and Asiatics, but the taste for it is acquired, and most people dislike it on first acquaintance.

There is an indigenous rubber tree, the *ficus elastica*, but it is not this species but the *Hevea brasiliensis* which is grown commercially on the estates. There is a varied selection of palms, while the coarse *lalang* grass grows in profusion. The humidity of the climate is responsible for the luxuriant growth of vegetation of all kinds, but the *lalang*, curiously enough, seems to

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thrive better on jungle clearings which have been burned.

A tramp—it can hardly be called a walk—through a Malayan jungle will reveal many interesting sights for the botanist, who will find rare specimens to add to his collection.

CHAPTER XII

MALAYAN NOMENCLATURE

There is a magic in a great name.—S. LOVER.

IN spite of the number of foreigners that have settled in the country, the Malays have contrived to preserve their own names for the towns and villages of the peninsula. A few places, such as Port Swettenham, Port Weld, Port Dickson, and Butterworth, have British names, probably because they were built on spots where no Malay village previously existed. *Taiping*, originally *Thai peng*, is the only example of the Chinese being able to impose a name on a town. *Taiping* in Chinese means "Everlasting Peace," a name which is to-day quite appropriate, though hardly so suitable fifty years ago. For the rest, a glance at the map shows nothing but words with a Malay meaning.

There are several words used in conjunction with others that frequently occur. *Sungei* (river) is often found, not only as a prefix to a stream, as *Sungei Perak* (Silver River), but as the name of a town, *Sungei Siput*

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(Shell River), between Kuala Kangsar and Ipoh. *Kuala* means mouth (of a river), *Kuala Lumpur* implying "Muddy Mouth of a River." During the war a business man sent a cable to *Kuala Lumpur*, but the censor refused to pass it because the address was in a foreign language and, as such, was not allowed. The next day the cable was addressed to "Muddy Mouth," which puzzled the censor far more than the original did. *Gunong* is a "mountain" and crops up from one end of the peninsula to the other—*Gunong Besar* (Great Mountain), *Gunong Gugup* (Mount Fishtrap), *Gunong Kerbau* (Buffalo Mountain). *Kota* (fort) is another word which occurs frequently, as *Kota Bharu* (New Fort), *Bukit Kota* (Hill Fort), and these doubtless originate from the days when practically every village lived in a state of defence.

If one were to delve into Malay history and were to collect all the local legends, it is probable that some very good reason would be forthcoming for every place-name in Malaya, and that it is associated, very remotely no doubt, with some past incident which occurred at the particular village. Possibly the episode which left such a lasting mark would appear trivial to the Western mind, but it left a deep impression on the Malays. Thus, somebody's horse died a premature and sudden death, and the place where this tragedy occurred is to this day known as *Bukit Kuda Mati* (Dead Horse Hill). Other places apparently derive

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their names from trees or plants which in the forgotten past grew there. *Ipoh* is the poisonous shrub from which the aboriginal Sakais procure the venom for their arrows. *Padang Rengas* (Rengas Field) is similar, *rengas* being a poisonous tree which certainly does not grow in profusion there to-day. *Batu Gajah* (Elephant Stone) is another place which doubtless owes its name to some interesting episode. And so from *Singapore* (the Lion City) to *Penang*, or more properly *Pinang* (Betel-nut), there is a meaning in every town, village, and *kampung*, the origin of which is often obscure or untraceable, but it is generally interesting as affording an insight into the Malay mind if it can be discovered.





LOOKING OUT TO SEA FROM TAIPING HILL.

CHAPTER XIII

GUNONG KERBAU*

A NOCTURNE

Three thousand miles of ocean space are less impressive than three miles bounded by rugged mountain walls.—JOHN BURROUGHS.

Parting day

*Dies like the dolphin, whom each pang imbues
With a new colour as it gasps away,
The last still loveliest, till—'tis gone, and all is gray.*

BYRON.

WITH all the suddenness of a tropical evening night falls on Ipoh. Footballers and tennis players have stopped their games, and the Club is alive with the buzz of voices. Outside on the verandah the ladies sit gossiping and sipping their cool drinks. Behind the Kledang range, to the west and the other side of the Club, the sun is setting—a red ball of fire

* *Gunong Kerbau*—i.e., Mount Buffalo—7,181 feet, is in the State of Perak to the east of Ipoh. It is the second highest eminence in Malaya.

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casting long shadows of the buildings across the *padang*.

A wonderful purple shadow creeps over *Gunong Kerbau*, that massive mountain clad with virgin forest, which keeps guard over Perak on the one side, and Pahang and Kelantan on the other. In places stray patches of sunshine light up the verdant sides of the mighty hill, gradually creeping upwards as the sun sinks over Kledang. The period of twilight is short in the regions which border on the equator, and the sun has hardly sunk when total darkness sets in. *Kerbau* stands out a dark mass against the sky-line, while lights twinkle in the houses across the *padang*, and the brilliantly bright fire-flies flit here and there on the terraces which lead from the Club to the field below.

* * * * *

Over *Kerbau* a shimmer of light appears as slowly the moon rises, bathing the country in her brilliant silvery light. The strange patch to the south side of the mountain, which always appears an unpleasant yellow by day, looks a pure white under the influence of the moon's rays, and the trees are as plainly seen as when the sun is at its height. But the picture is softer, and the haughty mountain seems to have become less arrogant, and to have affected a gentler air than it did under the blaze of the tropical sun. As the moon rises so the fire-flies grow dimmer, and

Gunong Kerbau

the lights in the town twinkle less brightly. *Gunong Kerbau* shimmers brilliantly in the moonlight.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank !
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears : soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.

SOME ORIENTAL TYPES

THE following series of pen-pictures of types of Oriental characters originally appeared in the *Netherlands Indies Review*, and are republished with the kind permission of the British Chamber of Commerce for the Netherlands East Indies :

I. THE RUBBER-TAPPER

In the East Indies there are many thousands of rubber-tappers, Chinese, Tamils, and Malays, who form a large and important part of the population in these islands.

It is impossible to say which is the best or worst tapper, the Chinaman, the Tamil, or the Malay. They all have many faults and extraordinarily few virtues. All are lazy. All are dirty. All make it a point of honour—the only point of honour they have—to be dissatisfied, and in general they may be described as the scum of the respective parts of the world from which they hail.

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Practically all the Chinese work for a contractor, who is in fact the arch-thief of many thieves. He has entered into a contract with the manager of the estate to provide the labour and get the rubber from the tree to the momi cases for a fixed sum. Thereupon, in order that he may personally make as good a thing as he can out of the contract, he sets about to hire the cheapest Chinese labour he can find in the district ; an easy job generally. But, unfortunately, these Chinamen are past masters in the "ways that are dark and for tricks that are vain," and contrive more or less to make a good thing out of the contractor, who in turn endeavours to retrieve his misfortunes by way of the estate. The Chinese tapper looks a soulless individual, with the eternal dull look and sunken eyes. He goes about his work in a listless sort of way without any apparent interest in what he is doing. Should there be signs of rain he will utter a long-drawn-out wail to drive the storm away. Such is the Chinese tapper.

All the Tamil tappers are imported from South India, and as specimens of humanity they are about as miserable as can be imagined. Men, women and children alike bear the whipped cur look as they slink along the road at intervals of about ten paces, the man leading, followed by his wife and family. They present a depressing sight. If they get an opportunity to steal they will, but it will be from another Tamil

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and not from the *orang puteh*. They will assault one another, but the average Tamil will respect the European, though the Telegus not infrequently attack the white man. But, on investigation, there is generally some reason at the bottom of it. The Telegus are not so spiritless as their brethren. No Tamil is ever really happy out of his own country. He regards himself as a slave of circumstances, and is considered an outcast by all and sundry, even by the higher caste of Hindus. The Chinese look upon him with contempt and the Malays as a necessary evil only to be permitted as a means to an end—namely that he does work which otherwise they would have to do.

Supreme laziness is the outstanding characteristic of the Malay. He is, however, the most trustworthy and honest of all the races engaged in the work of tapping. When he is given a job of work to do he does it honestly and, to the best of his capacity, well. On estates Malays are in a minority, since they prefer a less strenuous life if circumstances permit. If Allah has been good they have their own house with a small allotment sufficiently large to grow enough padi for their families' needs, with a few coconut trees and some fowls. Then all is well. It is not necessary to work, which is the Malay's idea of bliss.

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II. THE HYLAM "BOY"

Of all necessary evils in the archipelago, the Hylam "boy" is the most necessary. The "house-boy," as his full title is, includes the domestic servant and cook, while at hotels, etc., he will be found in an administrative capacity. "Boy" does not mean that he is one of immature age, for you may find him quite old and decrepit. But this is unusual, for the sole aim and object in life of the Hylam is to make his fortune by fair means or foul and retire to the sordid squalidity of his native island, Hainan, in the China Sea. By a merciful dispensation of Providence, the female Hylam is, by some religious law, custom or tradition, forbidden to leave her precious island, so that one is not worried by them. "For this relief much thanks."

For some reason the Hylam more or less holds the monopoly in the particular part of the East in which the Federated Malay States are situated, as a domestic. The Malays and Tamils are also found, but the Hylam outnumbered them by twenty or thirty to one. I have suffered all, but mostly the Hylam. His sole recommendation is that he is clean outwardly. So is the Malay, but the Tamil is not. Few Hylams are honest, and their dishonesty may

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commence before engagement. Bland of countenance and with a self-satisfied look Ah Bun will arrive with sheaves of references, dating back, maybe, to days when the applicant must have been in the cradle. References, apparently, are valued family heirlooms among the Hylam fraternity. With sundry ominous gaps in the dates of the references, which are invariably explained with amazing glibness, they are brought more or less up to date. All state that Ah Bun is honest, clean, and that he is, in fact, a paragon of virtue. One would gather from the references which a Hylam "boy" carries about with him that the island of Hainan was a sort of Valhalla of Virtue, but a careful scrutiny of the documents will often reveal that the original name has been carefully deleted and that Ah Bun's has been substituted. This proves awkward for Ah Bun when it is possible to summon one of the references by telephone and he is unable to identify his erstwhile "boy."

Once you have got your "boy" or "cookee" he must be watched with the eye of a hawk. Little things have a way of disappearing; he has a veritable passion for safety razors, which will fetch a good price at the pawnshop. But as a servant, putting aside his grasping propensities, he is good, and one naturally expects that "cookee" will make a bit out of marketing. Your Hylam is a born bargainer, and has probably got your daily food at a much cheaper



HOUSE-BOATS AND DUG-OUTS ON THE PERAK RIVER AT KUALA KANGSAR.

Some Oriental Types

rate than he registers in the book, which he daily presents for inspection. They clatter about the servants' quarters of the bungalow in thick wooden sandals, but these are discarded when they enter the *tuan's* part of the house, and they are as silent as ghosts.

But if you should invest your "boy" or "cookee" with the order of the boot, however well merited, you will have untold trouble in replacing him, for he belongs to a *kongsi*, or union, and your name will be on that *kongsi's* black-list for ever, and you will, if it be a strong concern, be outlawed, as far as obtaining Hylam servants is concerned, for miles round. You will get indifferent attention and studied insolence in the clubs and hotels if the "boys" know that you have sacked a member of their *kongsi*.

So strong are these *kongsis*, which are opium and gambling dens in disguise as well as trade unions, that they can actually keep up their wages. "Boy," said his employer not long ago, "the cost of living and the price of rice have fallen. Trade is very bad and I am justified in slightly reducing your wages." "*Tuan*," was the reply, "you may be justified, but the *kongsi* has decided that the Hylam 'boy's' wages are not to be reduced." That employer dared not reduce his "boy's" wage since he knew that he would never get another. Neither is the Hylam above intimidating others, and he will terrorise the Malay

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or Tamil "boys" if it suits his convenience and he can gain thereby.

No doubt there do exist good Hylam servants among the high and mighty, who in consequence do not know what the less fortunate suffer at their hands. But it was poetic justice when the Hylam "boy" of one of the British Residents in the F.M.S., who had always been a great upholder of the Hylam, was found with his trunks full of Residency spoons and forks and cigars which that particular Resident was known to stock.

III. THE DHOBI

In the West it is customary, and in many cases not without a certain amount of justification, to curse with book and with bell the up-to-date laundries at which our clothes and household linen are washed. They are considered to be arch-destroyers of our collars and shirts, the former returning from the wash more resembling a circular saw than an article of apparel.

In the East it is much the same, the only difference being that the dhobi, without the use of modern mechanical appliances, has brought the art of destroying clothes to a far higher pitch of perfection than has the most up-to-date steam laundry in

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England. With nothing else but water and a stone—preferably with a sharp, jagged edge—the dhobi will reduce your clothes to rags in a quarter of the time that the laundress at home takes to achieve in attaining her end.

Usually there is a special quarter of the town, called the Dhobi Lines, reserved for these angels of destruction. Here they live and have their being, meeting presumably at odd intervals to discuss new methods and means of destruction. Tamerlane, the Prince of Destruction, must have been an honorary member of the Worshipful Company of Dhobis, if indeed he was not their founder.

Originally the dhobi came from India, being a low caste of Hindu, but the name has spread all over the East, and to-day you will find dhobis of all nationalities, the Chinese, with their usual business push, having found it a profitable pursuit. To be a really first-class dhobi one must also be a trick cyclist of some merit, for the washerman of the East cannot afford a car, not even a Ford, to fetch and carry. Therefore he must be able to carry on a cycle what otherwise he would convey in a car, and it is wonderful to see how he contrives to do it. As a matter of fact, the average dhobi is usually a far better cyclist than washerman.

As regards the gentle art of dhobi-ing, it is both simple and crude. First he seizes the unoffending

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garment in his hand, and douses it with water. When it is thoroughly soaked he lays it on a flat stone and beats it with a stone, the sharper the better, until all the dirt is removed. What simpler method could be evolved? Then comes the process of drying, which is quick in the tropics, and pressing. Where necessary a minimum amount of starch is used, and lo! the garment is well and truly dhobi-ed. The dhobi will either wash by the piece or by contract. The latter is generally the more economical in a place where at least half a dozen white suits are worn a week, not to mention the other items, including one's household linen, which comprise the weekly dhobi list. For about the equivalent of 15s. per month it is possible to get all one's dhobi-ing done as well as it is ever done in the East.

It is absolutely essential, as it is in all other parts of the world, to keep a careful check of all that goes to the dhobi; but if a list is made in duplicate, one copy being given to the dhobi and one kept, the *pakeian* will generally come back all right. And buttons! Like all others of his profession he has a mania for tearing off and breaking buttons. But he would not be a dhobi if he didn't.

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IV. THE CHETTY

Those who are wise will shun the Chetty as they would the plague. It is not often that a European gets into the clutches of the "bald-headed uncle of the East," but if he does, woe betide him.

As may be gathered from the foregoing, the Chetty is the money-lender of the East, and, as such, is to be avoided at all costs. He is a Hindu and, in his own opinion at any rate, a Hindu of high caste. He clothes himself, as far as he clothes himself at all, in pure white, but this is not emblematic of his business deals. His body is generally bare and is usually smeared with streaks of greyish ash—some cabalistic caste mark. For the rest he is arrayed in a loosely fitting white garment, while his head is cropped if it is not by nature bald, which is frequently the case. On his forehead, in the centre, is a red or pink caste mark, and again the ash is copiously smeared on in lines from temple to temple.

"Uncle" Chetty is a veritable hawk in his monetary transactions, and the Jew is a dove by comparison. Thirty-three per cent. per mensem is the modest demand made by the Chetty as an irreducible minimum as his interest. Frequently, if the security is not absolutely A1, he will demand as much as 70 *per cent.* In consequence of this the native labourer is seldom out

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of debt, and frequently his *gaji* (wages) are mortgaged months in advance, which only leads to further trouble. As the Oriental workman frequently "touches" his employer for an advance, there are often complications, as the employer deducts his share on pay-day, and the Chetty has, in consequence, to go short. A European employer, when approached with regard to this deficit, has little use for the Chetty, but the Chetty will seldom take a case to the Courts, where he gets little sympathy and probably no more than an order for a small amount—less than he can extort without legal proceedings.

But the Chetty, although a stern man of business, has a kindly heart for the poor. On the occasion of the *Visagam* festival—in May, if I remember right—the Chetty fraternity supply limitless rice and other food for the poor of the district, who for two days feed at the expense of the Chetties. The Chetties, however, do not forget to impress their kindness on all and sundry, and I remember in 1920 being invited to be "garlanded" and witness the feast, together with all the other Europeans in the neighbourhood. With two others I proceeded to the Chetty temple, where the chief Chetty priest received us and insisted on shaking hands. We were then led to the sanctuary, where we were ushered into chairs (of the Windsor type) in front of a brilliant golden image, set with diamonds and rubies, of the god.

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Then the great ceremony of "garlanding" commenced. Firstly, we were freely sprinkled with a nauseating scent to exorcise, I believe, the evil devils we possessed. Two limes were then placed in one hand and a piece of extraordinarily sticky sugar in the other. It was etiquette, I was told, to return one lime, which I gravely did, wishing that it was the sugar and not the inoffensive lime. After this another Chetty, one of high degree, bestowed the honoured garland, made of exotic flowers with an overpowering scent, hanging it round my unwilling neck. Thus arrayed we inspected the temple, the image, and the paupers filling themselves with rice.

Thus it would seem that the Chetty, in spite of his rapacity in business, has his good points, and he is regarded with great esteem by the poor. It is seldom that a European gets into the clutches of "Uncle" Chetty, for the simple reason that if he has sound securities he can get his loan from a bank at less interest than 33 per cent. per mensem.

V. THE TUKANG CHUKOR

Practically every labourer has the word *tukang* attached to the name of his profession in the Ma'lay Archipelago. *Tukang* simply means workman. Even the doctor is the *tukang obat*, the medicine workman, while the *tukang chukor* is the shaving workman and

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hence the barber, or the tonsorial artist as he sometimes prefers to be called to-day.

There are barbers of various nationalities in the East, Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, Tamils, and Filipinos being the most common. Of these I prefer the Javanese and the Japanese, who give one the impression, rightly or wrongly, of being the more cleanly of the bunch. The Tamil is generally to be avoided at all costs, while the Chinese frequently has a peculiar and sickly smell about his "saloon."

If you go into a Japanese hairdresser's shop you are bound to see the inevitable picture of the famous Fujiyama mountain in one of its many guises. It is as essential to the Japanese hairdresser or anyone else to possess this picture, as it is apparently essential for the country hotel-keeper in England to display "The Monarch of the Glen," or "Dignity and Impudence," in his coffee-room. They are admirable pictures in their way, but familiarity breeds a certain amount of contempt. The hairdresser of every nationality has his shop hung with pictures according to his own tastes, which tastes, it may be here mentioned, are frequently somewhat bizarre. Every hairdresser's shop is equipped either with a *punkah* or an electric fan according to the prosperity of the owner of the shop. Most of the shops have open fronts so that the operation of shaving or hair-cutting is performed in a comparatively cool atmosphere. There are dis-

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advantages, however, in the open shop-front, for it provides an admirable opportunity for the young Chinese, Malays, Tamils, etc., to get a free entertainment, which is equalled only by a visit to the picture palace. Crowds of youths and girls collect to watch the *orang puteh* undergoing his tonsorial operation.

The majority of Orientals will shave you as well as the average London barber, but occasionally his efforts at hair-cutting are fraught with somewhat odd results. The barbers of the East are experts at shampooing, but it is seldom one finds the more elaborate tonsorial arts practised in the East.

Chinese barbers are by way of being ear experts and combine this with their tonsorial business, while the Chinese generally select the street as the place where they have their heads shaved absolutely clean. Since the revolution it is unusual to see a pig-tail, but the few who still wear this badge of servility carry it done up in a "bun" at the back of their heads.

But the hairdresser of the Orient has three indisputable assets which his Western brother cannot claim. He does not talk while he is doing his job ; he does not try to sell you the best hair-wash in the world ; and he does not expect a tip, *baksisi* in Malay, and an obvious corruption of *backsheesh*. Barbers' shops as a rule are equipped with mechanical chairs the like of which are seldom seen in English saloons. They are of American make and resemble the dentist's chair

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rather than that of a barber. The *tukang chukor* does not overcharge and has many things to commend him. He works quietly and seems to prosper.

VI. THE SAIS

Originally the sais—or syce as the word is frequently spelt—was the coachman or groom of the East. With the advent of the mechanically propelled vehicle the sais came to mean chauffeur, and it is with the driver of the automobile that this sketch deals, rather than with his equine prototype.

With the usual Oriental fatalism the chauffeurs of Asiatic birth have no fear of death, either for themselves, for those whom they happen to be driving at the time, or for others who may be on the road. It is *Kismet*, or to the Malay *Tid 'apa*, a national idiom meaning "Never mind" (which admirably expresses the Malay mentality on all occasions), if an unfortunate accident should occur and the whole car-load get smashed up by running into a brick wall or a river. Good nerves are essential when driving behind a sais, for he is no respecter of persons, either in the car or on the road. The phlegmatic Chinese is by far the worst offender, and as an out-and-out road hog the Celestial is hard to beat anywhere. Malays and Indians are gentlemen as compared with the wild Chinese.

Some Oriental Types

There seems to be one idea instilled into the brain of the Chinese syce when he is in charge of a car, and that is: "This is my car and I own this road." And so, with that idea firmly embedded in his opium-sodden mind, he drives madly along, sometimes on the road, sometimes on the grass by the road, respecting no rule of the road as to keeping to the right or left. To get there and get there quickly is his sole aim and object. And yet there are comparatively few accidents. Those who live in parts where the Chinese driver lives, moves, and has his being, learn quickly that he must be given the widest possible berth, which accounts for the paucity of fatal accidents. Frequently they are prosecuted for dangerous driving, but the ridiculously small fines that are imposed do not act as deterrents.

Some saises have a good technical knowledge of their cars, but generally there is an entire lack of sympathy between the man at the wheel and engine, while the gear-box is the deadly enemy of most drivers. The way the gears scrunch into mesh would appal the average chauffeur in England. It is a mystery how the gear wheels have a tooth after being on the road a week, and speaks volumes for the quality of the materials with which they are made. With the exception of public hiring cars, which are always in a disgraceful condition, the average car is generally well kept outwardly, but it is frequently a whited sepulchre. At gymkhanas it is common to have a drivers' com-

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petition, in which the competitors have to diagnose faults which have been made by the judges, who have wired the car wrongly, turned the petrol off, etc., and it does not take the good sais long to find out what is wrong. He is smart enough when there is a prize to be won. Apart from reckless driving the sais's chief fault is an entire lack of sympathy and judgment. On a hill he waits far too long before changing gear, with the result that the engine stops dead on a hill and the car runs backwards, frequently with disastrous results before it can be stopped.

It is the driver of the hired car who is the worst offender on the road. It is a marvel how his car contrives to hang together at all, for the treatment it receives is appalling. Ten full-grown Asiatics are frequently squashed into a car licensed to carry five, which is a great tribute to the vehicle.

It is no particular pleasure going for a drive with an Oriental driver, and perhaps this is why Europeans prefer to drive themselves.

VII. THE TUKANG KEBUN

Kebun in the Malay tongue means "garden" or "plantation," and *tukang kebun* is the garden workman, in other words the gardener, as lazy a fellow as it is possible to come across anywhere.

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Your Oriental gardener may be a Malay, a Kling, a Chinese, or any other of the polyglot races that frequent the East. Slowly he wields his scythe, cutting one patch a needless number of times, before he condescends to move on to the next piece of ground which claims his attention. And so he goes on with irritating sloth, aimlessly scything, apparently without any interest in what he is doing. And if you can imagine the *tukang kebun* performing any other horticultural operation in the same slow, aimless way, you have an idea of this Oriental gardener working at his hardest. If you meet him on his way to work the same annoying nonchalance pervades his movements. The only time he seems to evince any interest in life is on the last day of the month, when he trots up eagerly to your bungalow with outstretched hands for his *gaji* (wages), which he receives with undisguised joy and profuse thanks, though, as likely as not, the whole amount is due to the Chetty, who is lurking somewhere in the vicinity, ready to relieve him of his easily earned wealth.

Sometimes the *tukang kebun* is used as a punkah-puller, but it is work he resents as being too hard and beneath his dignity. It is, he thinks, work for the *tukang ayer* (water-carrier), whose social position is far below that of the gardener.

It would seem as if all the failures of other callings in the East become gardeners. At any rate it is a

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simple job, for either a plant or tree will grow or it will not grow in the tropics. There is no tiresome intelligence necessary, such as seeing that a greenhouse is properly heated, neither is there any watering to do. In the Malay Archipelago, at any rate, the *kebun* is either naturally watered, or if it is the dry season the water is being carefully husbanded against a possible drought. And so the *tukang kebun* has but little else to do but keep the garden tidy. But let it be said, he generally contrives to do this, in spite of the slowness of his movements, and the gardens of the East are usually a blaze of colour with weedless paths and close-cut borders.

Red hibiscus of great size and a gorgeous shade is generally found in the hedge, bordering the road ; in fact, it grows wild, needs no care, is perennial and is seen everywhere. Few trees are more gorgeous than that which is called "Flame of the Forest," with its magnificent panoply of orange-yellow blossoms. The *angsen*, too, is common enough, with its powerful smell. The general effect of an Oriental garden is one of gorgeous beauty, but it would be wrong to place too much credit for this to the *tukang kebun*, for the plants themselves for the most part grow without his assistance.

Those who travel to the East expect wonders in the matter of fruit. It is a question of taste, for many return ditterly disappointed. The Malay

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Archipelago is chiefly famous, as regards fruits, for its mangosteens, pineapples, and—durians. For the sake of experience taste a durian once ; then let the natives feed themselves on a fruit which must on no account be admitted to the bungalow, for its noxious smell, or rather that of the skin, is overpowering and nauseating. Pineapples are quite unlike those grown in England, being far jucier and less stringy, and the mangosteen is unlike any fruit known in the West. Other fruits are the banana (*pisang*) and mango, but the *tukang kebun* can take little personal credit for their production.

VIII. THE KERANI

Though the European business man of the East would, in the majority of cases, prefer to have Europeans as clerks and typists in his office, there are very good reasons why the *keranis* should be of Oriental birth. It is sometimes found that the head clerk is a European, but the rank and file are generally either Chinese, Malays, or Indians, while Eurasians, of both sexes, are frequently found.

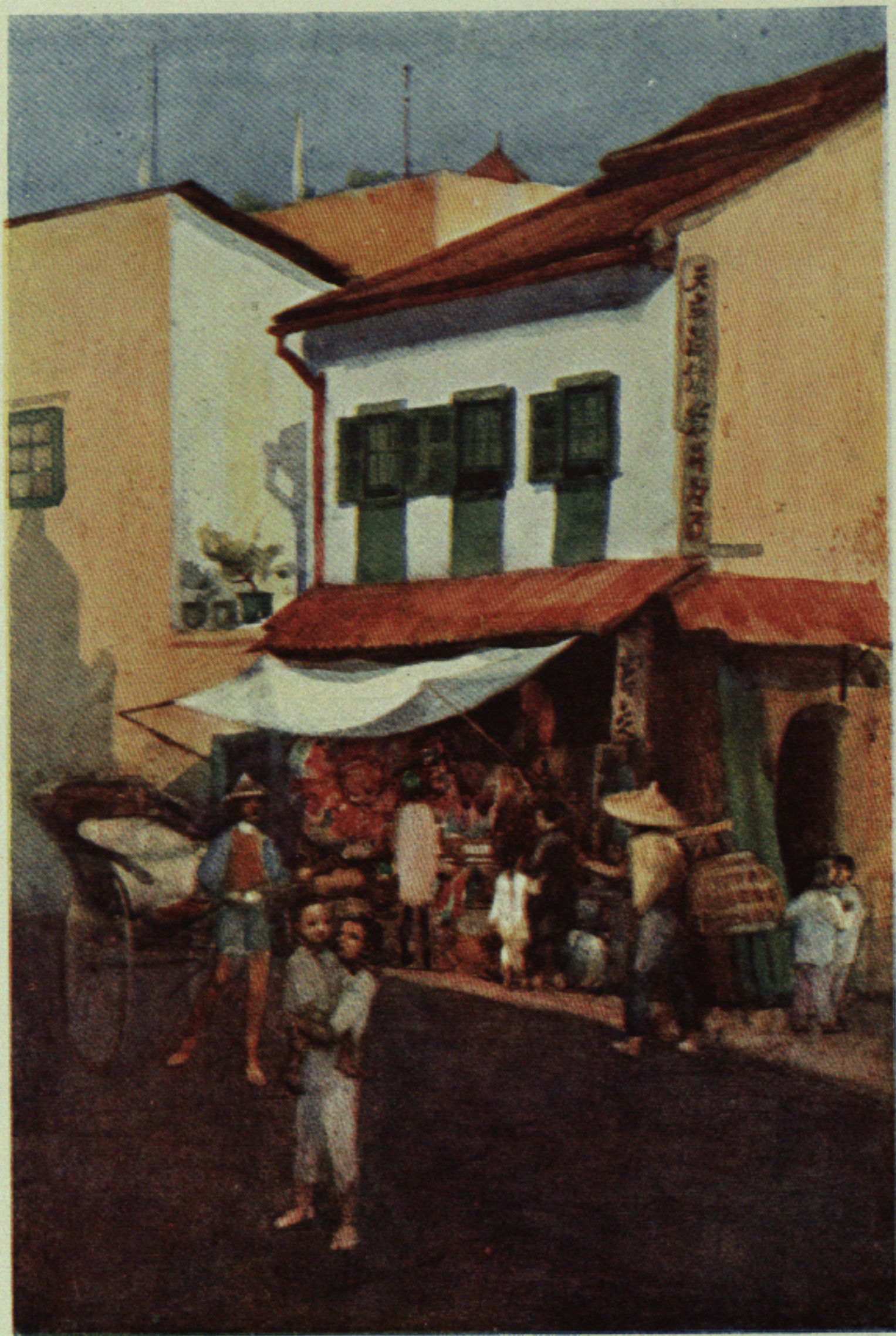
The question of economy rules the choice of a clerk in the East, for whereas a European would require, say, \$300 a month, the Oriental will work for a third of that sum or even less. Even with the

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changes that have overtaken the East since the war the mode of living by the European and Oriental remains the same, and the gulf between East and West is as wide as ever. Europeans fit in all right as heads of departments, but they can never be put to work under Orientals, neither can they fill the lower posts in offices.

There is a certain amount of unquestionable efficiency in the *keranis* as found in the Malay Archipelago. The Chinese, with their innate business instinct, make excellent book-keepers and, with no more exceptions than are found in the civilised West, are trustworthy and honest. In the Malay Peninsula there are "Straits-born" Chinese, who are British subjects, and they usually are found in offices in some administrative capacity. They are very superior persons, very proud of being British-born, and dislike mixing with other Orientals. They are quite the best of the Oriental clerks, and they know it. The Straits-born Chinese are often found in shops as assistants, and often as proprietors of shops. They are, like all Chinese, thrifty, and they look forward to an early retirement.

Malays who have the energy to become *keranis* generally turn out well, but the natural dislike of work, combined with the bucolic tastes to which they have been brought up from birth, are reasons why comparatively few are found in offices. The usual



THE CHINESE LANTERN SHOP IN KUALA LUMPUR.

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start in life which a Malay receives is to be sent to the nearest *skola* (school), where he (unwillingly) learns as little as he can. When he leaves school at an early age he contrives to forget what little he has learned as quickly as he can, and, as long as he can look after his small ancestral domain and manage to keep his usually prolific family, he is quite happy and contented. Consequently, he is not usually anything like fitted for an office life unless he is of a very superior class or is unusually gifted with energy and ambition. But when the Malay does summon up the desire to enter an office he usually does well, and his knowledge of local customs, etc., is often useful.

In many parts of the East, Indian and Ceylonese *keranis* are common, and they frequently rise to positions of trust. They are intensely keen to please. But there is always the unfortunate habit of quaint phraseology for which the Indians are so justly famous, and for this a careful watch must be kept. But in the case of all *keranis*—not excluding the typist at home—care has to be exercised when reading through script for spelling mistakes.

Eurasians go in very extensively for clerical work, and they are, if steady, probably the best, though they are more expensive, since their tastes are European and frequently ultra-European. As they usually talk one European language and two or three native tongues, they are a distinct asset in any office. They

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are quite reliable, but their love of cheap and very nauseating scent is frequently a drawback which has to be considered when engaging them.

IX. THE WATCHMAN

In the part of the Orient which I have in mind the ancient and easy occupation of *jaga-ing* is entirely in the hands of Sikhs, who also hold a monopoly of driving the *kreta lmbu* (bullock wagons).

The Sikhs are a curious people, originating in a religious sect formed during the fifteenth century in the neighbourhood of the now famous Amritsar in the Punjab. During the eighteenth century they organised themselves as a military power, being trained by French officers. After breaking their treaty with the British they were finally subdued, and eventually and quickly became amenable to British rule, fighting with conspicuous bravery in the Indian Mutiny. Naturally a warlike race, it is, perhaps, easy to understand why the work as a *jaga*, with the opportunities it offers for an occasional fight, appeals to the Sikhs. The duties, moreover, are not arduous, for they mainly consist of sleeping on a bed outside the particular building they are guarding. The day may be profitably employed in playing cards with the neighbouring *jagas*, while, since the majority of watchmen indulge freely in the use of opium, the nights

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pass pleasantly and peacefully. It may be inferred from this (and with some justification) that the *jaga* is not taken very seriously, and that as a protector of property he is ornamental rather than useful.

Ornamental the average Sikh certainly is, for with his white turban and white flowing robes he is both picturesque and imposing, while his height and sturdy build make him a decidedly impressive figure. Should the *jaga* detect a malefactor, it will go badly with that wrong-doer, who will get very severely handled—especially if he be a Chinese, for whom the Sikh entertains no love. On the other hand, the Sikh is delightfully simple-minded and childish, and it is quite easy for the cunning Chinese to impose upon him. On one occasion every padlock in a street was removed while the *jagas* slept their sound sleep, and, though it was never discovered who did it, suspicion rested on certain Chinese.

Those *jagas* who do not indulge too freely in the use of opium make magnificent athletes, wrestling being a very favourite pastime. One hoary old *jaga* over sixty years old, whom I knew, held the local wrestling championship for thirty years, and when last I saw him he was still unbeaten. The younger Sikhs are excellent footballers, and invariably play in their turbans and generally in bare feet. The highly desirable position of *jaga* only comes to those Sikhs who have reached an age when they are unfitted for a more

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strenuous occupation, though they must be sound of wind and limb for their duties as watchman. Thus the superannuated *mata-mata* (policeman) can be sure of congenial work when the time comes for him to cease directing traffic or raiding Chinese gambling dens.

To the Sikh the cow is a sacred animal, and must not be eaten or in any other way profaned. In connection with this a story may be told. There was an epidemic of smallpox prevalent in a certain town, and the *tuan besar* of a certain firm decided to have his whole staff, from himself to the lowest *tamby* (office-boy), vaccinated. The turn came for the Sikh *jaga* to face the *tukang obat* (doctor), but somebody had apparently told him that he was to have some part of the cow—blood, I think—injected into his arm. This naturally upset the poor old man, who strongly objected to be vaccinated until he was assured that it was not cow's but tiger's blood that was being injected. Even then he had his doubts, as he argued that the liquid with which he was being vaccinated was not red like tiger's blood.

X. THE RICKSHA COOLIE

To the Western mind there is, for some inscrutable reason, a certain peculiar attraction in the ricksha. It looks a jolly sort of way of getting from place to

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place, and, in pictures at any rate, the man who pulls the ricksha looks the happiest man on earth. He has every appearance of doing the job because he likes it, and not for any sordid money which may be his due at the end of the journey.

Why people imagine the ricksha to be the acme of comfort, a sort of Rolls-Royce with a human engine, or why the coolie who propels it is invariably depicted as a person who enjoys life to the full and has no grievance against any man, is a mystery, but it is so. As a matter of fact the ricksha is about the most uncomfortable vehicle devised by man, and the coolie who pulls it is about the most unpleasant scoundrel who, if he be a Chinaman, ever came out of the underworld of Canton.

Having persuaded John Chinaman graciously to accept you as a fare, and having given him some indication of the direction in which you wish to go, he takes up the shafts. Should you happen to arrive in a strange place, you will be lost unless you chance to know Hokkien or Cantonese, for the ricksha-puller probably speaks one of these and will not know any other language. A few of the more intelligent may know the more important landmarks, such as the Club, but as a rule the directions have to be given by signs and grunts. Hence a stranger in a town is always at a disadvantage.

When the coolie picks up the shafts he will do so

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with a jerk which will throw you back violently, hitting your back against the upright part behind the seat, and as you jog along this will be a constant source of discomfort. To suit his own convenience the coolie raises and lowers the shafts at intervals, and this necessitates the passenger shifting his position. Some of the uninitiated then, out of well-intentioned kindness, try to help the coolie when going uphill by leaning forward, but it is, of course, the very worst move possible, as it drags the shafts down and makes the work harder, earning curses instead of blessings from the puller.

Arrived at the destination, which has probably been reached by a circuitous route if the passenger is not *au fait* with the neighbourhood, there is almost certain to be an argument as to the right fare, but a threat to call the police generally settles the question without further trouble.

The Chinese ricksha-puller is picturesque in his wide-brimmed hat, bright blue shorts, and his copper-coloured skin, which is often marked with knife wounds, for he is a quarrelsome customer, but here his beauty ends. He is an inveterate gambler and opium-smoker, with one aim and object in life—to make money by fair or foul means. He is surly and hates work, but it must be said that physically many of them are wonderfully sound in spite of their opium smoking, though varicose veins are common among

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them. After all, one can forgive them some of their unpleasant habits, for it must be pretty awful pulling a ricksha and passenger in the tropical sun.

It is more than likely that those proceeding to the Far East will call at Colombo, where it is possible that they will make their first acquaintance with the ricksha coolie. The Cinghalese puller is as extortionate as his Chinese brother ; indeed, the chief feature of all native Colombo traders is one of extortion equal to anywhere in the East. The ricksha-puller will endeavour to obtain anything from a rupee upwards for a journey to the Galle Face Hotel, whereas the legal fare is a few annas.

There are rumours that the ricksha will soon be a thing of the past. A picturesque vehicle and personality will then have departed, but neither will be missed any more than the London cab and "cabby."

