



JIN ABU FINDS AN ELEPHANT

By CASPAR WHITNEY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY THE AUTHOR*

AS the crow flies, it is about two hundred and fifty miles from the mouth of the Siak River, on the east coast of Sumatra, to the low mountain range which runs along the extreme western shore from northwest to southeast. But in Sumatra you do not journey as the crow flies. Until you reach the foothills trans-island travel is impossible; therefore you follow the rivers, of which there are many, and tortuous. By the time I got to the higher ground where I hunted, I had gone over four hundred miles, and just about boxed the compass *en route*.

Inland fifty miles on the river of same name is Siak, metropolis of the middle east coast and military headquarters of the Dutch, in whose hands rests the future of this potentially rich, though untraveled and undeveloped East India island. Officially, Siak for one mile covers both banks of the river, but literally there are no more residents than could find easy elbow room in a few acres. Politically, the left bank is Holland, the right Sumatra. On one side are the house of the Dutch Governor, or Controller, the jail, the barracks for the Dutch local army, which consists largely of native soldiers, and the quarters of the Dutch officers; on the opposite side are the Sultan, his loyal host, and a few Chinese shops.

Here I disembarked from the *Hong Wan*, a Chinese tramp steamer of low speed and high stench, to be greeted, in bare feet and sarong,† by the Controller, who was most hospitable and accommodating. He insisted on taking me to his own house, where his pleasant-faced, good-humored frau made the most toothsome curry I have yet tasted, and promised that on the day following I should be presented to the Sultan, of whom, he assured me, it was necessary to get permission for my visit to the interior. The day of my

audience fell also upon the one chosen to celebrate the opening of the "palace" which the Dutch Government had recently completed for him, and was made the occasion of a public reception and much hilarity through the insinuating influence of a Dutch cordial called "pint"—whatever it may be. The Controller and his staff came in full uniform, but the Sultan received us in the European clothes he always affects on gala occasions, supported by his full standing army (of twenty, officers and men), and a semicircle of brass-tray-bearing natives among whom were distributed the royal betel-nut box, spittoon, cigarettes, tumbuk lada,‡ kris and spear. The Sultan was a rotund, pop-eyed little man of about thirty-five, with a mania for bestowing royal favors or orders (fruitful field for some of our distinguished war correspondents!) and a penchant for hanging brass chains upon his waistcoat, and binding diamond-studded decorations about his instep. At his feet, on the floor sat two coffee-colored sons of eight and ten years,—one of whom must have been by a favorite wife, for he was dazzling in purple velvet trimmed with gold braid; and each lad wore bracelets and anklets and was loaded with brass chains and covered by shining medals, which for the most part suggested dismembered tin cups, teapots, and soda-water bottle stoppers. I took photographs of the Sultan in all his glory, but, together with other used films and some hunting trophies, they were subsequently lost on one of the several occasions my skilled watermen upset our boats in descending the up-country rivers.

I was detained in an antechamber while this imposing spectacle arranged itself in the audience hall for my particular amazement; and if I was not amazed—at least I was amused. His August Majesty received me most graciously, as befitted a potentate of his quality; and after offering me a very bad cigarette, generously granted permission for me to hunt the

* These photographs were taken in heavy rain and in jungle where no sun penetrates; none will deny that they look it.—EDITOR.

† Skirt-like garment worn by men and women alike.

‡ Small kris, corresponding to dagger.

interior country, of which he knew nothing and influenced less, provided I presented him one tusk of every elephant I shot. Sovereignty over the interior, where none venture, not even the Dutch, is a little pleasantry with which the Controller tickled the *amour propre* of the Sultan and that of the commanding general of his standing army. And the Dutch pay well for their little joke; they give the Sultan \$16,000 (silver) a month, which enables his Royal Highness to periodically enrich Singapore shopkeepers; and to hang more brass chains on his waistcoats than he ever dreamed could be found in all the world—before the Dutch came to Siak.

Such a business came of my preparing for the trip! The Dutch do not hunt; no other white man had visited that section; and the natives have neither liking nor skill for the game. So there was a great how-to-do before I got away. First, the pow-wow with the Sultan; then, at his instigation, consultations with many old natives, who had never strayed from the waterway thoroughfares; and finally a formal dinner given by the Controller, that his staff *en masse* might give me the benefit of their advice, which, considering that the most daring among them had never gone fifty miles from the fort towards the interior, was of course very valuable. The Controller meant well and during my stay treated me with utmost kindness and consideration—for which he shall always hold a warm spot in my heart—but the sum and substance of the rare information which this two weeks of dining and “pinting” and pow-wowing developed, was that, at the foot of the range over towards the eastern coast, elephants were said to be plentiful, and if I “just followed the rivers” branch by branch in that direction, etc., etc., “until I could get no farther,” I should be well on towards the elephant country; simple directions surely.

And so we set out.

My outfit, gathered after days of persuasion and hours of consultation with the Sultan, consisted of a sampan, a beamy type of rowboat common to the Asiatic coast from Yokohama to Calcutta, a six-paddle dug-out, two Chinamen, and four Malays. I had no interpreter,—not even the Sultan could lay hands upon one. The provisions (rice, coffee, flour, salt and fish) and the Chinamen were in the sam-

pan; and the four Malays and I were in the dug-out. When it was impossible to camp on the river banks, as most usually it was, four of us slept in the sampan, the other three in the dugout; and when it rained, as it did for a great share of the time, I rigged a palm-leaf covering over the sampan and there spent my days as well as my nights.

The Chinamen were of just the ordinary patient, stolid, plodding John type, the industrial backbone of Siam and Malaya; but the Malays, so I was given to understand, were distinguished gentlemen, chosen by the Sultan, he informed me, as fitted to serve so “distinguished a traveler-hunter.” His Majesty possessed the true Oriental tongue. Certainly the Malays looked the part, for they came to me on the morning of departure each attended by a bearer carrying the paraphernalia which goes with betel-nut chewing. Every man of them had at least one kris* stuck inside of his sarong in the waist, two in addition had tumbuk ladas, and one carried a spear which bore an elaborately chased six-inch broad silver band bound around the business end of the four-foot shaft. I had no objection to the armory, but drew the line on the servitors; so after an argument that lasted all morning, and dragged the Sultan from across the river and the Controller from his noon nap,—we headed up river with the betel-nut bearers of my high-born servants standing on the bank.

For two weeks, always up stream, we worked our way from river to river, each precisely like the other in its garnet-colored water and palm-studded sides; each narrower and of swifter current than the preceding one. The water we boiled, of course, so that it lost some of its blackness, though very little of its unpleasant odor and taste. The stronger current reduced our rate of progress from four to three miles an hour,—but we kept at it from sunrise to sunset, much to the disgust of my aristocratic company, and so made good day’s traveling of it. At Pakam, where we left the Siak, the river was fully a quarter of a mile in width, but the stream we turned into narrowed to one hundred feet within a few miles, and to seventy-five feet after a couple of days; the next river was not half that width at its mouth, and much

* Long dagger-like weapon common to the Malays throughout the East Indies.

less where we abandoned it for another. These rivers were all really wider than they seemed; a species of palm growing a stalk two inches in diameter, and lifting its broad unserrated leaves six to ten feet above the water, flanked the river sides in dense growth and extended from ten to twenty feet in impenetrable array out from the banks. If you wished to get to the river bank you cut your way to it, but being at the bank, you found no footing, for the ground reached back, with creepers and vines and trees and gigantic bushes, coming together in one tangled swamp land.

did get a thirteen-foot python which unblinking, and stupidly it seemed, stared at me from a low limb on which its head and about three feet of body rested.

I also at the same time got the shivers with thought of the cold, ugly-looking, baneful thing's caress, had I missed the shot—for in that wilderness of undergrowth, running away was all but impossible.

But for the most part I did not leave the boats,—could not in fact,—and the only human beings we saw were an occasional glimpse of a native in a dug-out, swiftly, silently stealing out from the lane he had



Several Varieties of Natives at Siak.

Several times where I found footing I made difficult excursions to the back country. Once I saw and heard the little deer (about fifty pounds) that barks like a dog, common to Malaya and Siam; and again I saw a tiny and perfectly formed miniature of a deer, standing not over twelve to fourteen inches high at the shoulder; the smallest of all the known deer species. Twice I saw and once I killed what they call a fish tiger, which is of a grayish brown with black stripes, rather good-looking, and about the size of a small leopard; once too I shot but did not get a villainous-looking crocodile; and on the day following I shot and

hewn into the palms to reach a fish trap or perhaps some bit of high ground back from the river, where he gathered rotan (ratan) to sell to the Chinese traders. Usually at every junction of rivers we found a little settlement of three or four houses, either floating at the water's edge or set full six feet high above the ground on stakes driven deep into the mud bank.

The natives we encountered along the rivers were not friendly; nor were they unfriendly to the state of being offensive: they were simply indifferent and left us severely alone; churlish is the more apt adjective, and it so affected my Malays



The Sampan, which the Two Patient Chinamen Propelled.

that they grew morose and paddled with little spirit and not much more strength, until by cigarettes and a judiciously small libation of that insinuating "pint" I lifted them above their uncongenial surroundings. So it was, day after day, I kept heart in them by bribery and amusement; one day my camera afforded entertainment; another, my rifles and cartridges served; again my shoes, or my notebook and pencils; my pigskin case of toilet articles was a veritable wonder-box, and served unfailingly when the situation was unusually vexatious. The only members of my company who really rotated life satisfying were the two Chinamen they took turns in smoking, and in rowing the sampan; and when we stopped for any cause or for any period however brief, they curled up in the stern and slept peacefully, unconcernedly, while Malay aristocracy jabbered and gesticulated and tottered upon its foundation over failure to trade rice for the rotted fish which scented the air whenever we halted at a settlement.

Always, as we worked our way up stream, monkeys and birds of several varieties were to be seen and heard; and innumerable butterflies fluttered around the boats when we stopped near the banks. But it was not a cheerful chorus; even the butterflies were somberly painted. Ever there came to our ears the ascending and de-

scending cry of the monkey, which our scientific friends call the "singing gibbon," but which in its home is known as the Wa Wa. When this quaint-faced, long-armed creature ceased its plaintive wail, there came always at dusk a single mournful bird note, repeated continually and continually from deep in the jungle, where you must seek it out to stop its madding monotony. Even the hoarse croaking of the herons was relief. Frequently by day the poot-bird, with its chestnut body, wings and tail, and black head and neck, gave voice to joy of being, and now and again I heard the bird of two notes, a high and a low one, which so often I had met while hunting in Siam, and which is commonly credited with warning the jungle Free People of man's approach.

And thus we went along.

One afternoon, as in the gathering dusk I tried to shoot, for examination, one of the great fruit-bats* passing overhead in swiftly moving flocks, we came to the tiny branch river we had been seeking these two days; and about one hundred yards from its mouth found quite a little fleet of canoes tied up in front of several houses and a dozen or more natives with spears and kris in hand gathered on the bank in an obvious state of mind. Paddling toward

* *Pteropus medius*: locally called Flying Fox and common to East Indies.

them, it really looked as if we had a fight on our hands; and I must say I did not much care, for, if the truth be told, I was exasperated by the surly reception we had received all along from the river natives, whom I found the most uncivil of any I ever encountered in any frontier section. We slowed, but kept moving toward the landing, and while yet in midstream my Malays sent out a hail to which those on the bank responded; and forthwith followed much and animated conversation between them, which seemed to please my Malays increasingly as it continued. I could not understand what information my Malays imparted to the natives, but I seemed to be the object of increasing curiosity, and, when I went ashore, of marked attention. My guns appeared to create great wonder, and I gathered from my Malays' sign talk that it was the shooting which had caused so much alarm in the settlement, and that the natives wished to see the rifle work. So I brought down a Flying Fox from out of a nearby tree, and then shot it dead as it lay on the ground, with a 38 pocket revolver which I took the precaution to always carry on my East Indian hunting trips.

The amazement of that community, particularly over the revolver, and the discussion around the dead bat, lasted late into

the night; and the more they talked and smoked, the more firmly established became the reputation of the white hunter in that simple community. They cleared out an end in one of the houses, to which I was escorted; and here they brought me fruit and tapioca; and fish that once upon a time, long past, had been fresh. Evidently I had made a hit, for some reason or other. But I was not to be taken off my guard by blandishments, so I kept my guns in sight and my revolver on; and I did not sleep in the house as my hosts insisted, because I remembered the pleasingly quiet and effective method Malays have of putting out of the way those whom they cease to love. At such a time, in the still of night, they visit the abode of the erstwhile beloved, and, standing beneath his open ratan floor, they prod inquiringly—and strenuously—upward (after the manner of testing a roasting turkey), until the warm blood-trickle down the spear shaft signals that their dear enemy has been found—and stuck.

I had no apprehension of trouble,—my attitude was simply the cautious one I always take when among unknown, and the not generally friendly people of untraveled countries. If I am to make mistakes, I much prefer them to be on the side of safety; and then, too, I do not believe in



The Little Settlement where First I Received Native Hospitality.

putting temptation in another's way. So I had my belongings in sight, and slept where there was but one avenue of approach, for I never lost sight of the pretty box I should be in if my disgruntled followers together with some of the settlement natives found it easy to desert me and carry off my guns!

But though I would not sleep in the house of my host, I spent the evening under his roof with much interest the entertainment offered me, and some amusement at the airs given themselves by my Malays, whose hearts I now made joyous by hand-

sical boom of the village drum,—a hollowed tree trunk, vigorously pounded by an aged person whose office was considered an honored one. Later there came metal gongs and liquid noted wooden affairs, patterned somewhat after the xylophone. Here, as elsewhere, I always found Malayan music soft, carrying to my ear melody rather than air, and always pleasing.

The house I found myself in, and which may answer as a type, was built of bamboo, raised about eight feet above the ground, square, and reached by a ladder,



The Barrier Palms Reaching Out into the River—a Typical View.

ing over to them all the "too, too old" fish, and much of the fruit. While I smoked the villainous cigarettes my host offered me, and which out of respect to his feelings I did not refuse, the room filled with gaping natives—men and women. They came silently, squatting instantly and staring intently, the while chewing betel-nut industriously. By and by, as the evening wore on and curiosity wore off, some not unpleasant, weird chant-like singing arose outside, accompanied by drums (two feet long by eight inches in diameter) played upon with the fingers. Now and again there came the long-sounding, not unmu-

pulled up at night. The floor of this single room was made of ratan strung from side to side, leaving open spaces, through which domestic refuse was thrown, and house-keeping thus made easy. In one corner sat a woman making baskets, of which in a few simple patterns they are industrious weavers; in another corner was a kind of box upon which the cooking was done in a brass pot of most artistic shape. Around the room hung the simple and few belongings of the family, with completed baskets and the everlasting and ever smelling fish swinging from the rafters overhead. In appearance the Sumatra Malays differ but

very little from those of the Malay Peninsula; what difference there is, is in their favor. Some of them affect a trouser sarong of pronounced peg-top variety, and others wear rimless hats that advertise religious pilgrimages, but for the greater part the natives of mainland and island are similar in habit, dress and looks. The food of the Sumatra Malay is rice, half or fully rotted fish, and tapioca, which with gutta percha and ratan constitute the native industries and articles of export—though the business of it is practically in the hands of the Chinese traders. As habit-

tality to the wayfaring stranger; time and again in both Siam and Sumatra I rested at a native's house without being offered even fruit, of which there was abundance—an experience differing from any had with uncivilized tribes among whom I have elsewhere traveled, especially the American Indians, who have always divided their last shred of meat with me. There were, however, two features of Sumatran life which more than made amends for other shortcomings—(1) absence of vermin on the human kind; and (2) scarcity of dogs at the settlements; and it is difficult to decide which brought



The Head Waters where Our Little Party Took UP Its Packs for the Interior.

ual among uncivilized people, the women do all the work. The men fish, using traps almost entirely, and hunt small game with strategy and desultoriness; chiefly they smoke cigarettes of native tobacco rolled in leaf. The men also chew tobacco and have the unprepossessing habit of pushing the large cud under their upper lip, where it hangs partially exposed as they talk. Both sexes of all ages chew the betelnut and a few stain their teeth, although the custom is not prevalent as in Siam, where black teeth are the rule, not to say the fashion. Another trait these peoples share in common is their lack of hospi-

the traveler greatest relief. The Sumatrans are rather modest, for Malays, and in some respects well mannered; for example, I observed that my men in nearing a house invariably gave a loud and repeated *ahem* as a signal of some one approaching.

We had now come to the little river having its source in the higher country we sought, and which, though less than ten feet separated the up-standing palms guarding its two banks, was fairly deep as is characteristic of the Sumatran streams. Even had it been wide enough, the current was so strong as to make it im-

practicable to take on our sampan farther, so here, with its philosophic Chinese crew, we left it; while the four Malays and I and the outfit loaded into the dug-out, which under the added weight, set so low as to leave only a couple inches of freeboard.

They told us it was about forty miles to the head waters, but our five paddles plied a full ten hours each day of two, and must have sent the easy lined canoe through the water four miles the hour for every one of the twenty, despite the current. Gradually, as we advanced, the palms in the river grew thinner until they finally disappeared, and the banks, now more or less defined, and heavily laden with undergrowth, drew nearer us. Eventually there seem to be little or no current as we made our way silently, and swiftly now, through a dense, narrow lane, reaching crooked and dark before us, with arching jungle overhead. Where the lane opened out a bit and the stream's banks grew higher, we came finally to its source; and here we cached the dug-out and distributed its contents among us; for from now we were to be our own pack animals, none but two-legged ones being known to this section.

We had understood from the people at the mouth of this little river that a day's travel from its head waters would bring us to the house of a Malay who was quite a tapioca farmer and to whom, in passing, came frequently other natives from the mountain side of Sumatra. It really proved to be a two and a half days' tramp, but the tiller of the soil was so much more good-natured than those we had been meeting, and gave me such an idea of elephants galore, that it seemed like "getting money from home." While we camped on his place for a half day, journeying natives also told of elephants towards the mountains. So I grew to feel that elephants were to be had for the mere going after them at any hour of the day, and found myself calculating how I could get all the ivory into that already over-weighted canoe. I had been told at Siak that the interior natives were unfriendly to the coast natives as well as to foreigners, but I never saw evidence of it. True, my Malays and those they met did not fall upon one another's necks, but they were civil to each other; while I personally found the interior natives more approachable and decidedly better mannered than

those of the rivers. They did not strew my path with roses, nor put themselves to any especial pains to aid my search for elephant; on the other hand, they added no obstacles to those already gathered. They had not before seen a white man, but they did not stand staring at me for all time; they had lost no elephants, but were willing to enter my employ if I made it worth while as I did, you may be sure; as I had to, in order to get packers.

Notwithstanding the reports—and reports are one thing and game quite another, particularly in the Far East—we searched the jungle four days, with the brother of the tapioca farmer as guide, for elephant signs, and found none sufficiently fresh to give encouragement. Except for being not quite so wet, the jungle here is something like that of the Malay Peninsula. In the interior and densest jungles of the Peninsula nearly every tree is a trunk with limbs and foliage at the top only, while in Sumatra one finds more trees in the jungle with limbs below the very top, though that of the Peninsula is the prevailing type. One rather peculiar jungle freak I observed in Sumatra was a tree supporting midway down its trunk a great clump of earth from which were growing small ferns and palms—a kind of aerial swinging garden. Every tree trunk is loaded, sometimes literally hidden, by creepers and vines, cane and ratan, hanging in great and manifold festoons from tree to tree, so that the entire forest is linked together. There is much less bamboo than in Siam. Under foot is a network of smaller cane, ratan and every kind of tough bushes, springing from earth covered with decaying vegetation and sending out its dank fever-making odor; underlying this, a muck into which I often sank to my knees.

Finally, however, there came a day toward the end of a week's travel when we fell on fresh tracks; and for six hours followed them into the densest jungle yet encountered. Through a forest of huge fern-like undergrowth, standing fully eight feet high and so thick as to be impenetrable to the eye, we squirmed and twisted; and now there were no bird notes or monkey screams; no sound of any kind save the squashing of our feet in the thick mud, which appeared to grow deeper and more yielding as we advanced. Nowhere

were delicate or beautiful ferns—coarseness on all sides. Our common fern, which grows to one and a half feet in height, here I saw attaining to six feet, with a stem over one inch thick. Now and again we came upon thickets of bamboo and cane torn up and broken down and scattered by the elephants, that are prone in sheer wantonness to extensive destruction of this kind. Even when not seeking the tender shoots at the bamboo tree-tops, they will rip them up or ride them down, apparently for pure joy of tearing things. I have seen clumps of

by a crashing in the nearby jungle, which sounded as if all the trees in Sumatra were being torn up and simultaneously smashed to earth. In the soundless midnight jungle the noise seemed tremendous, as indeed it was, and right at our very ears. It was my first experience with elephants, and I must confess it was nerve-trying to lie quiet with that crashing all around and no surety that the elephants might not take a fancy to stalk in upon us, or what minute the fancy might possess them. Nor did it lend peace to the anxiety of the moment to realize that one elephant, much



Some Elephantine Playfulness—Bamboo Clump Broken Down and Scattered.

bamboo, having individual trees two to four inches in diameter, pulled to pieces, and broken and hurled all over the place, as though they had been straws. After hours of wilderness tracking such as this, the apparently impossible happened, and the undergrowth got denser and so difficult to get through that knives were in frequent use to cut a path. Darkness overtook us with elephant tracks in view, but without sight or sound of the elephants. There was a disposition in my party to turn back, but I insisted on camping on the tracks; so camp we did.

In the night I was startled from sleep

less a herd, is only now and again provisionally stopped in his tracks by powder and ball; for at the base of the trunk and through the ear are the only instantly vulnerable places to your rifle bullet. To have an elephant break cover immediately beside you is not so serious a matter on hard open ground, where you may have good footing, trees, and it is not impossible to dodge; but in a jungle where you cannot make your way except by constant use of knife, and sink over your ankles in muck at every step, it is quite another story, and one full of trouble on occasion.

No charge is more dangerous than that of the wounded or infuriated elephant.

Needless to say, sleep was impossible while the elephants ripped the jungle into pieces, and it was too black to attempt hunting; so we lay anxiously, not to say fearfully, awaiting developments, given now and then an extra start by shrill trumpeting of the elephants, which, shortly before daybreak, suddenly moved away,—to leave all quiet once again. If anything is more disconcerting than the bugling of elephants in the still of the jungle night, as they inclose you in a

was not very successful, as you see by the reproduction.

Whether the elephants had got our wind in the still jungle where no moving air was perceptible to me, or whether it was habit, a great broad path led through the jungle, making straight away from where they had been feeding.

On these broad fresh tracks—which marked an easy path, to the hunter's delight, for no undergrowth stays the elephant's huge bulk, and where they go no jungle knife need follow after—we followed for five hours before coming to any



Some of My party—the Cheerful Burden Bearers.

crashing circle, I have yet to experience it.

We were astir at the first streak of dawn, you may be sure, and within two hundred yards of our camp a herd had practically surrounded us. There was evidence in plenty of their visitation, in fact the jungle in their wake looked as if a Kansas hurricane had passed that way; canes were torn up, ratans torn down, clumps of bamboo broken and scattered. I look a photograph of one of these shattered bamboo clumps, but the jungle was always too dense to admit the sunshine, most of the time the rain fell in sheets; my film

sign of cessation in the elephants' travel. Then it seemed they had stopped for a while and scattered, but careful hunting failed to disclose their whereabouts; and then again we came to a many-track path where they appeared to have moved on. For two hours more we plodded on as hurriedly as our packs would permit,—for of course we always carried our outfit with us, that we might camp where we found ourselves. Even I had begun to feel, as we followed on doggedly, that the elephants had gone out of the country, for on occasion they travel far and rapidly when disturbed, when I caught sound as

of a branch breaking. Stopping on the instant in our tracks, we listened intently. There was the stifled breathing of wind-blown men, the sucking mud as one sought to get firmer foothold,—louder yet, it seemed, thumped my own heart,—and then above all came the sound of tearing branches we had learned to know so well the night before. It is almost impossible to closely estimate distance in the jungle; you cannot see, and in the prevailing hush sharp sounds come very near and loud.

There was a slight air stirring and I now moved out from the tracks I had been following, that I might move towards the elephants up wind. But now we needed the jungle knife; from tree to tree we slowly advanced, cutting a way with utmost care, even absurdly holding our breath, lest we warn the huge creatures of our approach. By and by it seemed as though the elephants must be within a stone's throw, for the noise was at hand and had so increased that it was hard to believe fewer than a regiment were at work; but it was impossible to see twenty feet ahead. Moving forward now with the care of a cat approaching a mouse, I came on to tracks, and taking these crawled on my stomach, that I might move the more cautiously, and at the same time by getting low obtain something of a view ahead, however short. Thus drawing nearer and nearer the elephants, with every nerve alert for the experiences of this, to me, new game; my heart I honestly believe stopped beating for a second as I caught sight of the end of a trunk reach for and then twist off a branch. I could see no more, Only about a foot of that trunk; I lay absolutely quiet,—not daring to move nearer,—as I was at the time not over fifteen to twenty feet away. Pretty soon I made out the middle top of its back; but I lost the trunk and had not yet found the head. With absolute precision and in perfect silence I sought a position which would disclose the head, for that was the shot I wanted. Minutes were consumed in these shifts, for I was making no sound whatever. There came an instant when I glimpsed the bottom of an elephant's ear, and determined at once to make a chance shot at where I might calculate his head to be—for there was no knowing what second they might be off—and with the thought came a crash and a rush as of

big bodies hurtling through brush—and the elephants were gone.

Consternation seized upon my party and they showed inclination to give it up; but although elephants were new to me, hunting game was not, and I knew perseverance to be the power to which finally even ill-luck succumbs. So I started on, and the rest followed me. The tracks now were scattered and led through the thickest kind of jungle; most of the time I wallowed in mud nearly up to my knees, unable to get any view ahead. There were no leeches, but the mosquitoes and sand flies and red ants made life miserable enough. Nets were of no avail against the onslaught of the mosquitoes and the flies; while I crawled over the muck, they buzzed about my head in distracting chorus. And the steamy dank heat made travel all but unendurable. It was no child's play; I believe it seemed less endurable than the privations of Arctic hunting. But it is all in the game; and I wanted an elephant.

At last, after interminable wallowing, again I heard the elephants. It was impossible to work to leeward, as no perceptible wind was stirring for guidance. I was carrying my 50 caliber half magazine and had given my double 12 bore to one of my Malays whom I now motioned to follow me. We were still in the densest jungle, sinking over our ankles in mud at every step. Crawling on hands and knees for several hundred yards, I came finally to where I could dimly distinguish the dark legs of several elephants, which seemed to be standing on higher ground than we, but it was impossible to see clearly enough through the jungle to definitely locate them. My only course was to close in, so I continued crawling, in the hope of getting in position for a shot; but again they moved off. Whether they had got our wind I cannot say, though the sense of smell in the elephant is very highly developed. Lying there on my stomach, with head on the mud in an effort to peer through the bushes and ferns, I could hear them moving in the determined, persistent manner which means they are leaving and not feeding; then I saw the bushes give and sway, and the shadow of huge dark objects crossing directly ahead of me. I could distinguish absolutely nothing; only I could see the place where agitated undergrowth told of

great bodies pushing a way through the jungle not over twenty feet from me. There wasn't one chance in a hundred of me scoring on the invisible target, but in sheer desperation I determined to take that one, and without looking around I motioned my Malay, whom in my earnest stalk I had not thought of and supposed to be behind me, following, to give me the 12 bore; on getting no response, I turned my head and found I was quite alone. Then, with a hasty fervent wish that Providence might guide the soft-nose bullets, I shot twice rapidly into the bulging, snapping bushes,—the first and only time in my hunting career that I ever pulled trigger without seeing my mark. With the reports of my rifle there came such a smashing of things as made that of the night performance sound like the faintest echo. The entire jungle appeared to be toppling on me; on apparently all sides were the swaying and crashing of bushes and the squashing of the great feet as they rushed along through the muck. As I crouched with my feet mired it was no comforting thought that should the elephants come my way my chances of being trampled into the mud were most excellent. But they went on without my getting a view of them, and when they had passed I extricated myself from the mud to find the jungle round about me literally plowed up, and in one place a little splotch of blood to show that at least luck had favored me in the direction of my shot. Returning on my back tracks, I found my party several hundred yards from the scene of action, each beside a tree. Of course expostulation was useless. I could not talk to them in their own tongue, and they did not understand mine. Malays do not care for this kind of hunting. I induced them, however, to go forward to where I had shot, and for a while we tried to track the blood. But the elephants were going straight and fast, and the blood trail lasted only a short time, and then we camped. That night I was given to understand that our guide would turn back the next morning, and that my Malays would not go without him. It is rather hopeless to attempt persuasion in a language of which you know only a few words; and all the sign talk I could bring to bear upon the situation was unequal to the emergency. Threats, cajolery,

promises of presents,—nothing availed; and the next morning we turned our faces toward the place from which we had set forth about a week before.

On second day of our return journey we found fresh tracks of two old elephants and a young one, and these we trailed for four hours, seeing plenty of old signs and plenty of new ones. But when the tracks indicated that the elephants had increased their pace, my party would go no farther, and again we turned back. Two days later we met a journeying native who had a house near by, and who said he knew of elephants, to which he promised to take me if I would give him as a present my rifle (the 50) in addition to wages. My own Malays bore an attitude of distinct disapproval, but I rather liked the looks of the new-comer and decided to take a chance with him. So leaving my party, which was to meet me at the tapioca farmer's house, I shouldered my pack and two guns and set out with the stranger, who carried a somewhat antique muzzle loader. It was a walk of a few hours before we reached a little hut on stilts, where we camped for the night with what I assumed to be his son and his son's wife and children. My new guide, who made me know his name was Jin Abu, seemed to be a good-natured old chap, with a deal of pride in his gun, and a multicolored turban, twisted into a horn, which set on one side of his head and gave a rakish and dressed suggestion incongruous with the remainder of his scant costume. He appeared to be really concerned in my hunting, and we held long conversations, in which neither of us understood a word the other said. But I think we each got the other's spirit; it is remarkable how, under conditions where primal instinct rules, one senses what one cannot learn through speech. They made a great effort in that little house to administer to my material wants, and when I gave Jin a pocket knife and the son's wife a silver tical* which I had used as a button on my coat, unmistakable delight reigned in that Malay household. I made out during the course of the evening's confab that elephants were in the vicinity, and starting at sunrise the next morning Jin and I hunted two days, early and late, seeing abundant tracks, and once or twice hearing elephant, but on each

* A piece of Siamese money.

occasion being unsuccessful in our attempt to approach them. All the time, through very hard going in heavy rain, and under disappointing stalks, Jin Abu maintained his good humor and his running conversation. He was something of a hunter, too, and I enjoyed my days with him as I did no others in Sumatra. There were evidently elephants in the country, for every day we saw signs. Once, too, I saw a tiger cat, beautifully marked, somewhat like that majestic cat, the great "stripes," and perhaps of twenty pounds weight. In this higher country were deer, of which I also saw several, but of course I did not shoot; we were after bigger game. We heard no more of the Wa Wa with its pitiful plaint, but saw a good-sized bird of a grouse species, and a racket-tailed magpie of attractive appearance.

We had been following some rather fresh tracks all the morning of the fourth day, when we came up with a herd of elephants, though as usual the thick, high jungle prevented our viewing them. We crawled for quite a distance through the undergrowth, seeking to close up on the elephants, when, each of us intent upon his own stalk, we became separated, at just what point I know not, for I had gone a long way before I discovered myself alone. Sneaking forward as swiftly as possible, and as cautiously, I wormed my way towards where I could hear the breaking branches. I had just reached the edge of a comparatively open piece of jungle, on the other side of which I could see indistinctly several elephants, when there came a report followed by a tremendous crashing, and then suddenly

from out this space, and well to my left front, came Jin scrambling through the mud, minus that prideful turban, minus gun, and running for very dear life straight for the trees at the right of this oasis. After him, not over twenty-five feet away, at a gait that resembled pacing, charged an elephant with trunk curled up (not lifted on high as often I have seen written), and brushing aside the jungle growth as though it were so much grass. As the elephant broke from the jungle on my left, I gave it both barrels of the 12 bore in back of the shoulder just as its foreleg came forward, which decidedly staggered me, but seemed to have little effect on the elephant. Dropping the 12 bore, as there was no time to load it, especially with one of the ejectors out of shape, and swinging my 50 from my shoulder, where on a strap I had carried it since the day when my Malay deserted me, I sent a ball into the elephant's ear as he crossed in front of me, and dropped him dead.

Meantime Jin had disappeared in the jungle, but shortly afterwards turned up very much winded and very grateful. The confidential chat we had that night was a wonder. I found a very slight wound over the temple where Jin's ball had hit. Both of my 12-bore bullets had gone home, and my 50 went clean through the elephant's head, in one ear and out the other side of the temple. The elephant measured nine feet four inches at the shoulder, with tusks eighteen inches in length.

It was not a record trophy, but I was made happy by getting it; and so was Jin Abu.

