

"Across the central Watershed of Borneo"

By Dr. H.M. Miller

Illustrated with photoprops by A.C. Hamison Jr.

Putus Sibau is the last Dutch outpost on the Kapuas river, ^{and} while Fort Kapit guards the mouth of the Balleh river in Sarawak. Between these two fortresses lies an unbroken and, for the most part, uninhabited forest,-- uninhabited because the people of the Rejang river valley have been at war with the tribes living in the Kapuas Valley longer than their ^{olden inhabitants?} [old men] can remember, making this wide area the theatre for many an unrecorded duel and bloody battle scene, perpetuating tribal feuds and racial hatreds and rendering waste the mountains and valleys in which the Balleh and Kapuas rivers find their sources.

^{well armed natives}
Gutta-percha hunters, ~~well armed and ever alert~~, venture into the deserted mountains ^{in search of gutta percha} a few families of a nomadic tribe conceal their miserable huts in the dense forests, and, at long intervals, a band of Kyans cross the watershed ^{on their visits} to and from the widely separated settlements. But no Taman builds his long-house or clears his rice field: no Malay tethers his floating cabin to the banks of the streams and no Chinaman, that pioneer of Eastern commerce, dares [to] erect his bazaar so far from military support. The wild boar and the sambur deer feed undisturbed ^{on the banks of} by the streams, the rhinoceros ^{trails} makes his pathway along the tohen's crest, the monkey ^s swings ^{athwart} [up] the leafy highway, the hornbill goes trumpeting across the misty valleys, and the ^{pheasant} argus struts among the ferns,-- but ^{amid} the ^{is all human knowledge, no foot of} feet of the white man, so far as we know, ^s had never passed that way.

The government bungalow, a small bazaar, and a few scattering Malay houses form the settlement of Putus Sibau, where the Contrôleur and a dozen Javanese soldiers maintain the feeble authority of the Netherlands over the vast territory beyond. ^{there} We had already remained at this point several weeks, visited

daily by the members of ~~the~~ various tribes inhabiting the upper Kapuas, learning the legends of ~~every~~ mountains and streams ~~in~~ the ~~region~~, listening to ~~the~~ unchronicled history, and the recital of duels and assassinations, of deeds of valour and of treachery, ^{the gossip of} current ^{when,} in the upper waters, ^{through} Wearied of watching for countless days the level stretches of jungle that reached out to the foot of Gunong Telong, and debarred from further progress up the Kapuas by a taboo which a recent murder had placed there, we, at length, decided to cross this unknown forest on our way to the sea on the north side of the island.

The Controllleur lent his aid and counsel, advising us to secure the services of Tegang, a young Kyan chief, who would bring a number of his men to ~~act~~ as boatmen, porters and guides, and, if necessary, as ^{warriors} fighting men. So we sent ^{off} a messenger to his home on the Mendalam river, a day's journey by canoe, and the following ^{evening} day he appeared at the fort.

He was short of stature, thick-set and strong, with a good-humoured expression on his broad face; eyes [that were] ever twinkling with merriment, a forehead [which] ^{my} betokened intelligence, a flat nose, ^{but} and a mouth which ^{all;} marred [the remainder of his face], for, [being addicted to the use of the betul-nut,] his teeth were stained, ^{with betul-nut} and when he opened his mouth a ^{of blackness} [black] cavern ^{gawmed upon us.} [was revealed]. He wore the customary loin-cloth, ^{elongated} [as] his only garment, heavy metal rings [drew down] the lobes of his ears, a fillet of cloth confined his long black hair, armlets of bone, a mass of black fibre-rings under his knees, and here and there on his arms and chest were the tattoo marks [which ^{of} characterize] the Kyan tribe.

Tegang readily consented to accompany us to Fort Kapit, ^{ed} providing he could find a sufficient number of men who dared

follow us across the border, and also providing ^{ed that} the omens ^{should be} [were] propitious. All the nations ^{res} of Borneo are more or less superstitious, and consult ^{various} omens [of various kinds] ^{all} before undertakings [any venture], whether it be the most ordinary duty, or, as in this instance, an unusual and dangerous expedition. From the cradle to the grave ^{they} [their lives] ⁱⁿ [are influenced by the] fear of the unknown and ^{the} the mighty horde of spirits that infest every animate and inanimate object ^{which} enters into the weal or woe of their daily life. [The] birds are the especial messengers of the spirits and, if approached in an orthodox manner, give ^{notice by} [warnings of] good or bad omen, to these trusting jungle-folk; ^{whose} thereby bracing ^{ed} their courage for an honest endeavour, or, ^{else they} ^{are} ^{ed} affording an excuse to abandon an expedition of doubtful issue or propriety, -- ^{and are} ^{ed not only as to} influencing [alike] the time of planting and the time of the harvest, ^{but as to} the choice of a home-site, the peace and plenty of a season, [or] the success or failure of a war expedition.

Tegang returned to his home to repair the canoe, [to] collect his men, and [to] consult the [omen] birds, leaving us ample time to buy [the] rice, dried-fish, salt and tobacco, ^{for the men,} and to pack ^{everything} [the same] in small sacks of matting [the better] to facilitate [its] portage, and also to arrange our own provisions and outfit for a journey which might require from three to six weeks to accomplish. Conflicting rumors came down the river to us from the Kyan settlement: one time, that the birds had given good omens, ^{then} again that the expedition must be ^{abandoned} [declared off], or that a sufficient party could not be obtained. At the end of the second week Tegang himself came down to tell us that the "hisit" [^] had given good augury, that the "niho-blah", the white-headed hawk,

had also been propitious, but that, ^{unfortunately} just as they began their search for the "telajan" a woman had died in a neighboring house, and further search had to be ^{given up} ~~abandoned~~. Twenty-three ^{however,} men were collected together, the boats were in readiness, and, if we were willing to allow them to stop ^{on the way} en route and follow ^{their} the native ^{own} customs in the event of accident or signs of danger, they would be ready to accompany us; but, ^{Isengang} ~~he~~ ^{than} assured us, the Kyans would not alone undertake an expedition under such condi- ^{but} tions, and they trusted to the white men's gods to bring us a safe journey.

One morning we saw them coming down the river, not a paddle dipping, the boats lashed together, drifting down with the current. They made a very gay appearance with their war-bonnets and plumes, with the gala garments of the women who came to see the start, and with the sunlight flashing on their ornaments and weapons. Even then we were still uncertain whether some unexpected event had not again befallen them, and instead of being in readiness to go, this unusual ^{inactivity} gravity was intended to impress us with their sorrow at our disappointment.

A skillful steersman ^{brought} ~~landed~~ ^{to} them ~~at~~ the bank below the fort, and ^{then} in an instant all was bustle and excitement, arranging the bags of provisions in the five canoes, rushing to the bazaar to buy an all but forgotten cooking pot, repairing a boat, or building the palm-leaf shade over the central part of the canoe where sit the ^{drones who did not} non-workers.

Then, ^{with} the last messages, promises, and farewells, ^{with} as the canoes strung out in Indian file, hugging close to the bank to avoid the current, as we began the ascent of the river on our long journey across the mountains. The Controllleur waved his cap for the orderly to apply the fuse, and the rusty little

cannon roared a farewell salute, sending the news of our departure to the Kautus down river, to the Tamans up-stream, and far away to the Mendalam river, where the wives and mothers of our men sat in the Kyan long-house. As the echoes came back across the level jungle, they bore ^{the} message from them all:

"Salaamat jalan".

The Kapuas has many tributaries rising in this mountain range, yet the Sibau has always been considered the best route to Sarawak; [because] its waters are deeper and it has fewer dangerous rapids than any of the other streams, and, when once the watershed is crossed, the Menhuan, in turn, offers its safe and rapid current on the way to the sea on the north.

When the first Kyan rajah, with all his following, emigrated from the upper Rejang to the Sibau river, ^{and} even before that remote period, this had been the road for advance or retreat, for friendly visit or stealthy assault; and, in this verdure carpeted island where the jungle ^{obliterates} [claims] the trail long before the axe-marks disappear, [the] ^{as elsewhere} rivers have been used ^{for} [as] [watery] high-ways. Deep and sluggish in its lower reaches, where [the] crocodiles infest the muddy banks, the Sibau ^{becomes} [grows] shallower, clearer, and more rapid in the hills, dwindling to a mere brook high up in the mountains, where the [deep silent] pools are separated by tiny crystal cascades, and the sunlight falls in long shafts of golden ^{en} colour] through the over-arching branches into the cool [deep] shadows below. In the lowlands the (jungle tangle) hems in the horizon to narrow bounds, the sun ^{at noon} beats pitilessly down upon the naked boatmen, scarcely a breath of air comes to temper the stifling heat, and all nature seems to sleep except a ^{solitary} [lone] hawk, circling [around] in the blue depths

above; and the tireless oarsmen dip, dip, with their paddles through the long hot day; but at dawn, and near twilight the birds awaken to sing their matin and vesper songs, while the cicadas chant their chorus (all night long).

In the hills, on the other hand, there is life incessant. Strange birds, with gaudy plumage, flash across the stream, a monkey family startled from their feeding grounds [crash and chatter away to safer depths in the forest, and a ^{bend} [curving reach] of the river discloses some distant mountain peak sharply outlined against the sky, or clothed in its mantle of fleecy clouds. The over-hanging boughs throw grateful shadows, the paddles are abandoned for the long slender punting poles, and the men shout and leap at their work or plunge into the swirling waters to haul at the rattan ropes or to lift the canoe over the rapids and cascades, until, at last, the waters become so shallow ^{that} ~~they~~ (scarcely float the canoes) in the quiet pools; the hills have grown to dark sombre mountains, and the canoes must be abandoned : for this is the watershed -- the "tohen batu" , where divide the waters of the Kapuas from the waters of the Rejang.

Half an hour after leaving the fort the canoes drew up to the bank of the stream, and one of the older men kindled a fire of twigs, using for this purpose his flint and steel, for the sacred fire may not be lighted by the modern match. As the smoke column rose straight up in the still atmosphere, it carried a message to the small bird of omen which had first given them the propitious signs; ^{once} and again that day they halted to build a second fire, to insure the luck the white-headed hawk ^{Had then failed} had promised. Failing thus to notify by the smoke [signal] that

the good omens had been ^{seen} ~~heard~~, ^{no} ~~their~~ luck would ^{have} ~~not~~ ^{ed} follow them beyond the first catch of fish, and ~~the~~ evil spirits would ^{have} come trooping after them, bringing sickness and disaster ~~in their~~ train]. Pandora's box ^{did not} ~~ne'er~~ contained ~~ed~~ ^{which} one half the ills the Kyans fear will beset their path~~way~~, unless they keep an ever vigilant eye for the warnings ^{of} ~~which~~ the birds ~~give them~~.

There still remained one more bird, the telajan, the last of the ^{three which} ~~trinity~~ they deemed ~~ed~~ ^{before} it necessary to consult upon a journey. Many days passed without seeing its glossy plumage, or hearing its liquid note. But late one afternoon Ung Juan heard its distant call, deep in the forest on our ^{right} hand. They said the omen was propitious, called a halt upon a gravelly bank, kindled the smoke signal, and went on. But they did not disregard ~~the~~ other warnings when ^{our birds} ~~they~~ crossed our path. Once a busy little brown bird flew across the stream from left to right in advance of our boats, uttering its sharp cry, hi-sit, hi-sit, and the older men let loose such a flood of language that any one could tell it was a warning of evil. Again, as we were leaving a camp, we heard a bird call near at hand. Each man dropped his burden where he stood, tore a piece from his loin-cloth, and hung it upon the remaining poles of the hut's framework, and we waited half an hour before resuming our journey, for the evil spirit, seeing so many pieces of clothing hanging about the hut, would naturally think that this was a permanent camp, and would go away, leaving us to pursue our journey unmolested. These are but a few of the many ^{similar} incidents ~~of a like nature~~ encountered upon the journey,-- when we crossed the tohen, when we first drank of the waters of the river in the new country, when we saw signs of the enemy, or even when we had bad dreams, an appropriate and impressive ceremony fol-

lowed.

When the lengthening shadows warned them^{the men} that night was near, the canoes^{were} [would be] drawn up to the bank, preferably upon a pebbly beach, called a Karungan.^{While} Some of the men^{were} [would] secure^{my} the canoes by means of the rattan painters, others^{were} [would] search^{my} in the jungle for dry branches to be used as firewood, ^{and} [while] the remainder of the crew^t [would] build the rude shelter under which the men usually slept. A few poles lashed together by thongs of rattan or of creepers constituted the framework, while palm-leaf mats called Kajangs, or, failing these, leaves, would be employed as thatch, and the resulting structure would suffice to protect them from the heavy dews or the frequent night storms. Long^{before} [ere] the shelter was finished, a dozen small fires would be kindled. Over each would hang a small rice-pot, and a native would squat beside each tiny blaze to feed the fire and watch for his pot to boil.

In the tropics the sun drops suddenly from a golden sky into the darkness of night. There is no lingering twilight in the lowlands, the stars shine with a brilliancy not seen in the colder climes, and the little cooking fires burn yet^{low} in the [gathering] gloom. Sitting on a log of drift, smoking our pipes in patient anticipation of the frugal meal [to follow], we watched them night after night like a scene in a play. The rushing of the waters, the incessant chant of the cicadas, and the night-jay's^{ur} plaintive [tune]^{notes} furnished the orchestral accompaniment; and the curtain would fall when the fires died out, or the cook called us to supper with his announcement, "Makan sudah sedia".

When the^{meal was finished} [food had been eaten] the men^{were went to} [would] smoke their cheroots and talk over the events of the day. Then some would

repair to the hut or to the canoes, spread out their mats, hang their ^{Mosquito} curtains, and fall asleep. Others, if the night was clear, would stretch ^{themselves} out on the Karungan ^{so} wherever drowsiness overtook them, with neither mat nor curtains for protection. Often when sleepless I have left my mat to stroll down by the river-side, passing here and there the prostrate forms where, wrapped in the ^{once} ~~one-time~~ white sleeping cloth, the tired native slept ^{oblivious} ~~unconscious~~ of toil and danger. Here, one had improvised a pallet by placing the paddle blades side by side; there, another pillowed his head upon a shield, while one and all slept within easy reach of his spear and the long bladed knife, or mallat. The dogs would follow me ~~to~~ to recognize the friend or to bay at the foe; a light sleeper would raise ^{himself} on one elbow and pass the word, "Ada baik Tuan ?" [or a dreamer would mutter and moan]. The river sang [their only] lullaby, the stars [alone] kept [their] vigil, and ^{the men} ~~they~~ slept ^{like} ~~as~~ tired children [sleep] at the end of a long summer day.

When the gray dawn begins to fade before the rosy flush of day, and the birds try their first notes ^{before} ~~as~~ they break into the [full] jubilant chorus of their morning song, the men go silently down to the stream and plunge into the water, [and] soon afterward the [blue] smoke [spirals] rises from the cooking fires, the [morning] meal of rice and fish is spread out upon the leaf platters, and the men squat around [in a circle] as they hastily swallow their food. The hut is then torn down, the boats are repacked, and long before the sun has grown hot, they are under way again, with lusty paddlestroke or strong pull and haul.

There were many interesting characters among our men, and we soon learned the names and peculiarities of each. We knew the strong man, the councillor, the one who steered the best, the patient worker, and also the ^{passionist} grumbler; and who were ^{more} freemen and who were slaves, ^{more} for the latter's work was never ^{our} done, and we pitied them heartily. There was Tegang, our chieftain, and Tama Imang, his grand vizier; Ung Juan, experienced, cool, steady and true; the wise man he, for he knew the omens and lighted the sacred fires; Ngoh, who always sat in the prow, and Paron the Iban, who held the steering paddle; Nigi the Bukitan, a lesser chieftain, who had brought his own seven men; Laioh the Bukit, who bore on his back a long scar that an Iban had left there when he failed to take the Bukit's head. And there were many more whose individuality was not so pronounced, or who played minor parts.

These men were savages, all of them, and at times given to cannibalistic ^{disgracefully} rites, ^{on} furiously superstitious, blood-thirsty head-hunters [if] occasion ^{life} offered, skilled only in the most primitive needs of ^{transmitting} civilization, barely emerging from the iron age, deadliest of enemies, ^{many} passing their feuds ^{ed} down through generations; but like ^{some excellent qualities} most uncivilized peoples they ^{were not without} possessed many of the cardinal virtues. They had sworn friendship ^{to} for us; our dangers were their dangers, and our foes were their own. To us ~~they~~ were for the most part honest and truthful, courteous and kind, and under a strong leader would not only have remained true to us even in the last extremity, but would ^{tried to} have lessened all the difficulties and unpleasant features of the journey.

But Tegang was young, and, moreover, jealous and vain,

There are but few cardinal virtues:-
 Simplicity, Justice, Modesty & Fortitude.
 How many did they possess?
 An anti-climax.
 Transport & not
 to know difficulties
 from.

easily flattered and influenced by (the) Tama Imang, and fearful of the growing popularity of Nigi, the courteous, pleasant young Bukitan chief. For the first few days all worked in apparent harmony. When Tegang gave his commands, they were promptly executed, and all joined in the councils and stood share and share alike in the divisions of food, or toil, or danger. But the jealous rivalry, the smouldering feuds, and the secret hatreds which breed so easily among savage peoples, soon became manifest. There were small groups that sat apart conversing in low tones; the orders of the chief were tardily executed, or completely ignored. Tegang gradually drew away from the general camp, attended ^{only} by his slaves, and advised by the wily Ung Juan. Nigi drew his men about him in a closer band, and the two ^{swollen by rain} [rival] factions grew further and further apart. Then the river ^{ed} [flooded], changing ^{and held} the crystal stream to a muddy torrent, holding us in camp for days; ^{thus} and the enforced idleness increased the opportunities for quarrels and conspiracies. By the end of the first ten days our following ^{was} ^{were} was] sadly demoralized, and we began to think that an open quarrel among our own men was much more to be feared than an encounter with the Ibans from across the watershed.

But a common danger united ^s even foes, and more than once we saw them temporarily forget their disputes and work together for mutual protection until the danger had passed, when they again returned to their individual hatreds or grievances, as though no interruption had occurred.

We were punting slowly and laboriously up against the current, the sun beat down with a furnace heat. No one apprehended danger, no one seemed to have a thought beyond the necessities of the moment, and the canoes were strung out in Indian

When all at once a tiny chip was seen floating.

file for a quarter of a mile. [Then] a tiny chip floated down with the current, and the first boat ^{abruptly halted} came to a stand, ^{and the} [as they sent] word of warning ^{was sent} back to the others. There was a hurried consultation, followed by a prompt rush for weapons and war coats, and before we were fairly aware of the cause of the excitement every one of our following ^{ers} stood armed for battle. Each man ^{had donned his} wore a war-bonnet, decorated with the feathers of the hornbill and argus pheasant, a padded coat, or one of raw-hide, a spear, a shield and his mallat, the long bladed knife. Their ^{enthusiasm} [enthusiasm] was contagious and we too ^{felt} became infected by it. Hastily buckling on our revolvers and filling the chambers of our rifles, we joined them in their council of war. For ten days we had been travelling toward the centre of the island, without meeting with any signs which would indicate the recent presence of an enemy. It is true that from time to time we had seen an abandoned hut fast falling to decay, a rattan tied to a tree-root, a smoke blackened stone, or a few charred sticks from an old camp-fire, still nothing suggestive of immediate danger. But this chip, fresh and white, was unmistakable evidence that somewhere, higher up stream, some one, friend or foe, had that day felled a tree, and, since in this land of ^{it was most probably an enemy,} feuds, [an enemy was most probable, ~~we~~ we made our plans for an encounter. Nigi and Laioh, armed with the blowpipe and mallat, crept through the bush by the side of the stream, while Tegang, Ung Juan, Tama Imang, Itani, Harrison and I went forward in the smallest and fastest canoe, and the others followed more slowly with the laden boats. The stillness of death seemed to have settled over the jungle, the rushing waters alone broke the silence, ^{except} [save] when we ^spoke in whispers.

Carried away by the excitement we lost all thought of time, of heat, or of danger, and the desire of combat alone possessed us. With pulses throbbing, ^{sharpened} and eyes ^{on} and ears alert and muscles tense, we sent the boat quickly forward against the current, keeping ^{abreast} pace with the two ^{scouts} trackers on the bank. Now and then another chip or freshly cut twig floated past, and Nigi or Laich would stoop over a sandy beach to examine foot-prints; then turning to us would hold up two fingers, at the same time pointing up stream, and we knew that two men had recently passed that way. When at length the ^{scouts} trackers pointed out a slender trail leading up the bank by the side of a fallen palm, and then ^{they themselves} disappeared ⁱⁿ behind the jungle curtain, we beached our boat and all ran together up the slippery path, hemmed in on either side by fern and palm, reckless of surprise or ambush, and careless of the chances of life or death in a combat with superior numbers.

When the warning boom of a big brass gong reverberated through the forest, we thought that the Ibans must have heard us, and were calling their comrades for the defense of the camp; but we rushed on, and a moment later we broke through the jungle tangle into a clearing about a small hut. Nigi was beating the gong, Laich stood near him, and at that instant an Iban chief with one of his men, each with his spear poised in readiness to throw, sprang into the clearing from the opposite side.

There was a momentary pause as we surveyed each other, rifle and spear in readiness for instant use, a pause scarcely long enough for each to catch his breath, ^{before} ere the chief, seeing that he was outnumbered, said to his son, "They are going to kill us;" and in token of submission their spears slid through

their ^{hands} [nerveless] fingers, striking point downward into the soft earth at their feet.

Then Nigi, holding up his hand, replied, "Have no fear, for we are honest people." And to ^{assure} [insure] them that he spoke the truth we left our weapons outside as we entered the hut.

The Iban chief handed around tobacco and banana-leaf wrappers, the long cheroots were quickly rolled, and the curling smoke arose, which signs the bond of peace and friendship throughout the world. Then, from time to time, another Iban would break into the clearing, with startled gaze and pallid skin, but seeing us all so peacefully occupied, he would in turn ^{plant} [stick] his spear in the ground, and join the circle of newly formed friends. The young men looked at one another in silence, while the elders explained the unexpected meeting. ^B They were seven men ^{after gutta} from the Rejang river, [gutta-hunters], who had been out in the hills for several months. "Had we any tobacco or salt to spare?" ^{they asked} We had and, in turn, asked for information concerning the best trails, the chance of finding boats cached beyond the mountains, and the likelihood of meeting with other members of ^{the} [this] tribe, either hostile or friendly. They told us there were hundreds of Ibans ^{sucking} [hunting] gutta in the mountains, and our men shook their heads in doubt as to ^(the chances of peace as our) the next meeting ^{being so peaceably arranged.} They told us, however, how to find a boat they had concealed at the base of the watershed beyond, and asked for one of our canoes in exchange. To this we added a gift of rice and salt, heard their good wishes for a safe journey, and left them to recover from the shock our sudden appearance had occasioned.

(About a day's journey from the fort we passed the last

Isn't this 9 wrongly placed? The incident just related happened when you had been ten days from the fort.

15
P Scarcely a ~~single~~ day passed that some
event did not occur to keep us in a state of
expectancy and furnish us with a topic for con-

omit
settlement where we found the Taman^S busily engaged in making
rum from sugar cane. This was the last settlement that we
expected to see for several weeks, and from this point we were
continually on ^{the look out} our guard for signs of every kind. The track
of a deer suggested the possibility of adding fresh meat to our
limited bill-of-fare, the sight or sound of a bird was often
an omen of good or evil [portent], and the traces of men were
always indicative of a possible foe.

Beyond the Taman houses a bend in the river disclosed a
wooden javelin and a stone suspended over midstream by means
of a long creeper which hung from the over-arching trees.
This well-known sign gave notice to a possible hostile party de-
scending the stream that their coming was known and that the
Tamans were prepared to resist them.

We camped one night at the place where the Kyans had
built their first settlement in the Sibau more than half a cen-
tury ago, but the neighboring jungle had not yet regained its
former ^{luxuriance} [grandeur] where [the] rice fields had been made.

One morning we discovered that the cook's boat had
mysteriously disappeared with most of our supplies, and the
chances were very ^{many} [strong] that a restricted diet would be neces-
sary for the remainder of the voyage, but the searching party
found the canoe turning slowly round and round in a pool many
miles down stream, and the men called our attention to the fact
that nothing serious could befall us, since the omens had been
propitious. But ^{in spite of} [despite] their assurance they ^{never} [did not] neglected
to arm themselves hastily when the soft blue haze from a camp-
fire veiled the ^{neighboring} [nearby] hills, and they breathed more ^{freely} [easily]
^{when} after we [had] found the camp of some ^{that it was mainly} Taman gutta-hunters. ^{collectors}

Animals are hunted, not vegetable products.

We passed the mouths of tributaries quite as large as the parent stream, and we wondered how our men ^{knew} could tell which was the route to follow; but ^{when} ^{next} [if ever] you should pass that way you will ^{at once recognize our} [know] the tributary [we took when we left the Sibau], [because there is ^{by} a big tree on the opposite bank and a [big] clump of bamboo as you enter the Jenhait; and, as Tegang ^{remarked} [said], "You can't mistake your turning, for what other stream than the Jenhait has the bamboo near its mouth?"

^{Once} We crept up ^a the winding brook, scarcely deep enough to float the canoes; then we climbed ^a [the] water-fall where [the] cliffs hem it in, and ^{no glimpse for a hundred yards ahead can be had} you can't see around the curving rocks for a hundred yards. We passed Nangah Kanyo, nor could we decide whether the Kanyo or the Jenhait was the parent stream. Finally we came to the shallows where the keels grated and navigation ceased, and we built our camp, abandoned our boats, and made our preparations for the long climb across the mountains to the navigable waters on the northern slopes.

For five days the human pack-train, with their heavy ^{burdens} ~~bundles~~ strapped to their backs, trudged along in Indian-file up the rocky bed of a shallow stream, where [the] slippery stones ^{gilded} [offered but] treacherous footing, or on [the] uplands where the forests were open, and a game-trail made easy marching; then [dipping] down a declivity to [where] the dry bed of a brook [offered] the only way possible through the tangle of thorns and palm and fern; or swinging over [a] precipice by long rattans [to avoid a wide detour]; now panting up a mountain-side until each step seemed our last, stopping to breathe for a moment on a mountain summit, where through the trees we saw pretty vistas of [the] hills, falling away in waves of velvet green until the haze

merged sky and earth with a blue-gray neutral zone.

The midday heat ^{but} was insupportable, [while] from sunset until dawn we shivered under our scanty coverings, and the mists of the morning ^{clung} [hung] like [a] wet blanket ^{to} our shivering ^{limbs} [forms]. [The] thorns tore ^{us} [our limbs], [the] leeches ^{drained} [drank] our blood, ^{and} our strength failed so that we had to abandon all the provisions we possibly could spare. Some fell ill, others grew sullen, and the danger of mutiny increased ^{daily} [as the days went by]; but we ^{doggedly} continued our weary way with [that dogged courage which marks the hunter and the explorer,] the courage that [asks no questions, but] suffers in silence.

At the evening of the second day's march we had gained the summit of Bukit-Aseh, which separates Sarawak from the Dutch possessions, ^a [the] narrow watershed, from which ^{flows on the one hand into} [divide] the waters, ^{and on the other into} [that eventually find their way to] the China Sea, ^{or to} the ^{Java} Java Sea. Through ^a [the] narrow rift in the forest on either side we could see [the] mountains gradually falling away to hills, ^{but} [and] in the deep blue valleys we knew that ^{there were} tiny brooks ^{which were} were ^{destined} destined ~~coursing to join their fellows ere they became rivers that~~ would bear canoes on their swift current. ^{At this height} [Up here] the mists hung low, the air was chilly and the wind ^{at times} [soughed through the branches], suggesting the early autumn days at home. Along the ^{made by} tohen we saw the broad pathway [that] the rhinoceros [had made] ^{on his} [on his] travels ^{ed} to and fro ^{on} [among] the mountains, and Larong, the slave, feared to sleep that night, lest ^{a rhinoceros} in his nocturnal wanderings ^{should} [the rhinoceros] might [crash through our huts; for the old men had told Larong tales of such ^{incidents} [accidents] occurring] in the past; and ^{once} a few hours after abandoning the camp, a ^{man} party, returning for some forgotten utensil, found that a rhinoceros,

enraged at finding his ^{path} [road] blockaded, had totally destroyed the huts. It was long after dark before the camp on the tohen ? was completed, and ^{here, on} [as this marked] the border of their own country, the Negri Kapuas, our Kyans ^{had to} [must] propitiate the mountain spirits before they ^{dared to} descended into the new country, the Negri Rejang, else misfortunes would soon overtake them. They had brought eggs all the way from their home (for this purpose) ^{which} [These, together] with some uncooked rice, they placed in a dish, ^{dish} [and] this the chief passed ^{and} around ^{had} [for] each of us to lay our hands upon the eggs and to pass our fingers through the rice, while all looked on with solemn faces. Four small sticks had been thrust into the ground by the side of the narrow pathway, and into the forked top of each an egg was placed. The flickering lamps threw [but] a feeble light over the small circle of men, who, with upturned faces, ^{peered} [stared] into the inky blackness beyond, as though ^{to} [they could] see the mountain ^{spirits} [sprites] as they floated ^{my} by on their ~~the~~ ribbons of mist that blew across the crest of the mountain.

Then Tegang ^{breaking} [broke] the silence [that had reigned throughout], and ^{throwing} [as he] threw the rice by handfuls into the air, ^{uttered the} [he] ^{invocation} [spoke]: "Spirit of the Tohen, we make [you] these offerings of rice and eggs, ^{never} to show that your children [do not] forget you, [and] in return [for these offerings] we beg that you will give us your protection in the new land we are about to enter. Let no evil spirits pursue us; [let] no sickness befall us; [let] no one poison or kill us; grant us good omens, and a safe return to the home of our fathers."

^{omit} [And each native out there on the mountains, face to face with the hantu tohen, believed as firmly in his Invisible God as ever did the priest behind his cloister walls.

The northern slope of the watershed is very steep; [and] we hung to [the] boughs and creepers to avoid plunging headlong as we rapidly descended to a ^{small} [tiny] brook which they called "a child of a river", anak sungei. We followed this stream down, down, until often the waters reached ^{above} [beyond] our waists as we plunged through the pools; ^{then} [and] they now called it a river, the Tevulohpi. Where a small tributary enters this river on the south side, there is a ^{large} [big] tree, whose spreading branches bear a great burden of small stones, placed there by the passing travelers. Some of the stones had been ^{laid} there long enough to become embedded in [the growth of] the tree, while others had fallen to the ground, forming a mound at its base. If [you ask] the Kyans ^{marked} why each person must halt and add his contribution, they will tell you they [do not] know ^{no} the reason, ^{unless} [but] that any one who failed ^s to conform to the customs of his ancestors ^{would} certainly meet with misfortune. So we ^{said} [added] a tribute to Kyan superstition, and placed our ^{pibbly offerings} stones on the [already] overburdened altar. Here our pathway turned at right angles [to its former course], because the Tevulohpi has dangerous rapids, down which canoes cannot be guided, and we climbed across a spur of Mount Sebako, on our way to the less dangerous Menhuan.

One morning our chief pointed down the long ridge ^{ahead} [before] us, and said, "Follow down this watershed until you hear the sound of running water; this will bring you to the mouth of the Meduli; on the opposite bank you will see an abandoned hut, and here we must camp, until we can find or make canoes to carry us on to Kapit."

^{Took up the march} Then each man [traveled] with all the strength he possessed, those ^{with} [of] lighter burdens easily distancing the heavily laden. ^{After} [Beyond] midday the advance guard marched down the steep bank,

and plunged into the stream to drink and bathe : just at sun-
 down the last man straggled into camp. We had scarcely re-
 thatched the old hut when a thunder storm broke ^{over} upon us, and
 our exhausted men crowded into the ^{diminutive} narrow hut like sheep into
 a ^{cote} fold. All the next day they lay around the camp resting,
 quarreling and discussing ^{our anxious} the embarrassing situation, [for] we
 were now short of provisions, some were fever stricken, others
 suffered from wounds, -all were exhausted and in a strange coun-
 try, with hundred^s of the enemy before us, and an [uncertain] halt
 necessary in order to build boats, ~~the~~ their discouragement seemed
 quite justifiable. Luckily, however, we found the Iban canoe,
 and one that some Kanowit hunters had concealed. This we also
 seized. We sent part of the men back into the mountains to
 bring up the abandoned rice. Laich and Samun were detailed to
 set game traps, and to hunt for bird or beast with their blow-
 pipes and poisoned arrows, while the remainder of the men began
 to hew out another canoe from a big tree trunk which they had
 felled near to the stream.

By the end of the second day in our new camp our food
 [supply] was at an end, ^{except} all ^{save} a small quantity of rice; ~~neith-~~
 er were ^{was not} the hunters successful, nor did the traps ^{catch} ^{bring} yield any re-
 turn. We too, scoured the mountain sides with our rifles, re-
 turning ^{ed} empty handed and with appetites growing steadily ^{keen-} great-
 er. On every side we could hear the shrill cry of the argus
 pheasant, down by the streams ^{many a} the pigs and deer left their
 tracks [in profusion], but easily concealed themselves in the
 dense cover upon the hunters' approach, and still the diet of
 boiled rice remained unchanged.

Then Harrison resorted to a pastime of his youth. With
 a bent pin and a bit of string he angled in ^{one of the many} undiscovered pools.

The ^{innocent} [unsophisticated] fish rose to the ^{unwonted} [clumsy] bait, and thereafter ^{our lander} [the missing nutriment] was ^{replenished} [supplied] by his patient endeavors. After three days' absence the men returned with a few bags of rice, and the big feast that followed seemed to restore their failing courage. The work on the new dugout proceeded rapidly, the Kanowit boat was hauled down into the water and recaulked with strips of bark, and the Iban boat, which was found in separate pieces, was once more lashed together with rattan thongs into the semblance of a boat. Hope once more rose high, and we began to talk of what we should do when we reached Kapit, as though it was an assured event.

The Bukit, returning one afternoon from an unsuccessful day's hunt far away in the mountains, rushed excitedly into camp with the announcement that he had encountered an Iban on the mountainside, who had told him there were thousands of his people ^{collecting} [hunting] gutta percha along the streams below us. Laich had not quarreled with the Iban; he had not even stayed to question ^u farther, but had hurried back to warn his ^{comrades} ~~commander~~, and the ^{which followed} [resultant] excitement in our camp was ample ^{proof} [assurance] that he had acted wisely. Every trace of fatigue, of laziness, and of ^{quarrelling} [hostile feeling] vanished instantly, and the question on every tongue was, "What shall we do?"

Some counseled that we return to Negri Kapuas the way we had come; others, discrediting the Iban's assurance that they were gutta ^{collector} [hunters], advised that part of the men return to warn their families that a hostile invasion was imminent; while a few, among whom we were numbered, stoutly maintained that the wisest course was to pursue our way toward Kapit. They consulted omens of various kinds, but the warnings were either

uncertain or else yielded them scant comfort. They formed hurried plans for advance or for retreat, and as quickly abandoned them, and night came on leaving us still in doubt as to their intentions. We wondered if they would leave us there in the heart of the island, our journey but half completed, or whether they would have the courage to advance, believing, as most of them did, that ^{the Ibans were on} ~~this was~~ a head-hunting expedition under the guise of peaceful pursuits.

The boats were now in readiness, ^{but} the provisions again all but exhausted. To retreat meant starvation; the danger before us we thoroughly discredited, and once launched on the swollen current of the river, barring accidents, we would be in Fort Kapit within three days. The next day we renewed our arguments and entreaties, and late in the afternoon we finally prevailed upon them to start. The Kanowit boat, with Harrison and Nigi's men, shot down the swift and troubled waters of the Menhuan in the lead; Tegang and I following with the Iban boat, while Ung Juan ^{was the} captained the untried dugout. From the start the pace was furious; we scarcely noted the curving banks as we hurried on, [and the trees glided behind us as telegraph poles glide away from the moving train].

^{of a sudden} Then a fallen tree ^{met} [seemed to] dam the stream. To stop was impossible, to ^{advance} [strike] meant destruction. But at its centre the water poured over the tree in a small cascade. Nigi's canoe steered straight for this point, shot out clear of the water, dropped lightly with a splash beyond the obstruction, and their ^{shout} [yell] of triumph floated back to us as they ^{hurried onward} [tore] along. The other boats in turn scraped over the log, and continued their way in reckless pursuit of the leader. We rushed down

^{over} the cascades ^{Trachonius} [where] the slimy rocks [lay in ambush], steering wide
 where the waves ^{rose} [piled] high, ^{searching} [hunting] with practised eye for the
 waters that were flat and deep, the helmsmen, with war-bonnets
 and waving plumes standing up from time to time to look for the
 safest passage, the score of bronze backs and ^{muscular} [muscle] arms
 bending and swinging as they ^{buried} [dug] the paddles deep into the
 water and sent the frail boats straight across the swirling
^{current} waters, and the warning shouts were but half heard above the
 rushing of the waters.

Then a dull roar, ^{awful} ominous and awe-inspiring, ^{fell} [floated] ^{came from} ^{ears}
 upon the evening breeze], and the canoes drew up to the bank [in
 a convenient backwater], for the gihans were below us; the long
 tumbling series of cascades where the most skillful native often
 comes to grief. The older men now climbed along the rocky
 banks and surveyed the course. We could see them pointing and
 gesticulating as they shouted to one another, but their voices
 were lost in the roar of the rapids. Then they returned once
 more to the canoes, pushed out into the current, and and we
 were quickly borne toward the gihan.

^{they gave} [There was] a wild shout as they [all] paddled their ^{utmost} [strong-
 est] to gain steering-way before the current seized the boat to
^{bear} [drag] it [along] to destruction. Then all were silent, each man's
 skill and judgment were of [the] most vital importance. Far below
 us we could see the waves breaking and dashing; great moss
 covered rocks rose in midstream [and seemed] to bar the course;
 the waters ^{streamed} [piled] over the gunwale, half filling the boat; the
 prow shot clear of the water to drop again heavily, sending
 the spray flying on either side. A friendly current or a skill-
 ful paddle-stroke often saved us from ^{death} [our final reckoning], and

then, with a yell of triumph, we shot the last reach, and the canoes rode quietly in the great pool below the rapids, while our men sat in easy restful attitudes.

Where the Menhuan empties its waters into the Metevuloh we saw the first of the Iban camps. Each party asked the usual questions : "Who are you ?" and "Where are you going ?" The chiefs acted as spokesmen, while the younger men surveyed each other and silently coveted [the] heads [of their enemy]. All the next day at intervals we passed their camps; at times responding to their demands to stop and talk, more often passing quickly by as we shouted our replies to the repeated "Siapu itu ?" Sometimes they were sullen and forbidding, again they were friendly, and we repaid their kindness by begging rice from their own slender stock.

There is a custom in these hills that when a stranger enters a house he must lay aside his weapons, but our men, fearing treachery, repeatedly neglected this act of courtesy; furthermore, when they saw that the Ibans were friendly disposed they often passed insulting remarks, and it speaks well for the influence of Rajah Brooke that despite these incivilities the Ibans did not provoke a single quarrel.

The excitement ^{however} never seemed to lessen, ^{my} [for] each curling haze from a camp-fire, each ^{my tied-up} [tethered] canoe, was the ^{cause of} [signal for] a new alarm; and, when towards the end of the second day, we saw in the distance an unusually large camp, and a canoe shot out into the stream to intercept us, a silence fell upon all our men as they floated down with the stream in patient anticipation of the long expected ^{combat} [encounter]. Again their fears proved groundless, for this Iban chief was the well known Melintan from

the Kapit river, and he saluted us like a brother. Ignoring the suspicions of our men, the tribal hatreds and the perpetual feuds, he invited us to share his hospitality, gave us a much needed supply of rice, and placed our mats on either side of his own. When we had eaten the simple meal, we [all] lay out ^{along} on our mats before the smouldering camp-fire, smoking our cheroots as we listened to the news from The Three Rivers, [for] in Borneo all information travels by word of mouth, and ^{every} traveler is ^{hailed} [hailed] for his bit of news. They spoke of the recent murder of the two Tanjongs, of the capture of the murderers and their safe delivery at Fort Kapit by Queng Iran; of the nomadic Janin, who had at last made a clearing for his rice fields; of the recent head-hunting raid of the Uma Kulits; of old friends in the distant waters.-- this one ill, that one dead; ^{scantiness} of the [shortness] of the rice harvest; of the scarcity of gutta-percha; and the extortions of the traders; but with rare delicacy they never touched upon the subject which lay deep in the hearts of them all. For that one night the century-old feud was buried, a truce was ^{made} [proclaimed], and we talked as travelers talk when they meet unexpectedly in forests or deserts, on land or sea.

And here we ^{resigned} [buried] all our fears, for Melintan assured our suspicious following ^{ers} that the Ibans were ^{rally} hunting for gutta-percha, and not for Kyan heads. He also told us the welcome news that Fort Kapit could be reached in one more day if we paddled industriously. He gave us sufficient rice for another meal, and followed us down to our boats the next morning to wish us "good speed and a safe journey" as we pushed off into the mists that still hung ^{on} [over] the water.

The Metevuloh loses its waters in the Menivong, and where this latter stream empties into the Balleh there are great black masses of rocks which block the current. The scenery is wild and strange, and the wind draws through this gap in the hills with the strength of half a gale; and, as often occurs where Nature offers an excuse, the natives have a legend concerning this picturesque [bit of] scenery. They call it "Lirans

Once upon a time, LIRAN'S HOUSE.

House. [In the] long ago a Lugat chieftain built a long-house on the rocky bank at this point, and lived in peace and comfort for many years. This enforced peace was the cause of *the Lugats.* *destruction* [their] *downfall* for having no human heads to hang in their long-house, they collected the skulls of the lutong, the black spider monkey, and told their friends that they were the heads of their enemies. Moreover they ate the flesh of [the] monkey, and *wherby* *became like* [by so doing] their minds [simulated] the monkey's mind,-- they talked foolishly, they boasted, they told untruths, and did aimless and silly things.

(When) *once* Liran had boasted more loudly than usual, saying, "If what I speak be not the truth, may my house, my people, my dogs, my pigs and chickens be turned this instant into stone," he was overheard by Belari, the god of thunder, who *appears* [comes] in the form of a dragon or a snake. Though no one *was* has seen him, yet *everyone* [you] can hear the noise he makes. *At once, arose* There [was] a great windstorm above *and the din* [which] could be heard the awful voice of Belari, and when *the storm* [this] had passed Liran's house and all his belongings were changed into these rock masses which partially dam the Balleh. Liran and his wife were turned into evil spirits, condemned to eternal wanderings; and the Kyans still think

that people who are idiotic, who talk and act as the monkeys do, must have eaten of the lutong's flesh, and that Belari will come and suddenly snatch them away. This is the reason why ^{heard} [you always hear] the beating of gongs and ^{the} the wooden trough ^{is always} when thunder-storms break over a Kyan long-house, for the sound of the gongs will help to deaden the awful ^{voice} [noise] of Belari.

The fort at Kapit stands on a high bank of the Rejang river, half an hour below the mouth of the Balleh. A well built wooden stockade houses a dozen native soldiers and a single government official who keeps guard over the trading bazaar and the fertile valley below. Kyans and Kenyahs from the hills, Malays and Ibans from the lowlands, hear and answer the challenge which the sentinel shouts at every passing boat, "Who goes there ?"

Year after year Miuggu has sat at his desk, listening to lawsuits and collecting taxes, while the advent of the trading steamer or the occasional visit of the Resident from Sibu alone breaks the monotony of his lonely life. Day after day the bare-footed sentry paces to and fro in the lookout, groups of natives come and go, bringing jungle produce to exchange for the stamped paper which makes them "Children of the Rajah". The harvest follows the monsoon, and the feasting follows the harvest, but the unexpected rarely happens to Miuggu.

When the sentinel ran in to tell him that "two white men have just arrived from the upper waters", he would not believe it. "No white men have passed up stream, how could they be returning ?" But for once he was mistaken. Twenty-three days after leaving Putus Sibau we entered the gates of Fort

Kapit and the well known voice of Miuggu welcomed us back once more to the outskirts of civilization, ~~to a reeftree over our heads, and to safety.~~