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Thrilling Adventures
in the Jungle

(By FRITZ BLOCKI)

"Thrills! Adventures? You can't very well go into the jungle without having them. The peculiar thing is, though, that when you're in the jungle as a member of a scientific expedition, you're not likely to be conscious that you're undergoing an adventure until after it is all over. What you're interested in at the time is capturing a particular specimen of bird, beast, reptile, or fish—whatever it may be.

"That the specimen may chew your hand off or leave the mark of its claws on your face in its effort to get away somehow doesn't seem to occur to you while the fight is on. It isn't until afterward, when you sit down to think things over at your leisure, that the thought strikes you that you may have had a narrow escape."

It was William Beebe talking. He is honorary curator of ornithology at the New York Zoological Park, known more familiarly as the "Bronx Zoo," and is director of the tropical station of the New York Zoological Society. He had just returned from a five-month expedition into the wilds of British Guiana, South America, in search of zoological specimens to add to the Bronx collection. He had brought back innumerable cages filled with queer jungle creatures, some of which never before had been seen in this country. Among these were tree-climbing porcupines, agoutis, long-tailed rodents, and yellow headed vultures.

Beebe is a very tall, very slim man of 47, who looks like a scholar, and talks like one—in precise phrases, uttered softly and rather diffidently. His face, his hands and forehead have been burned to the hue of mahogany by the tropic sun on his many expeditions into the wilds. Otherwise, in neither appearance nor manner does he suggest his adventurous calling. Yet on more than one occasion he has attacked and subdued some of the fiercest creatures of the jungle with no weapon more dangerous than his bare hands and his courage.

On the expedition from which he just returned he lay in his cabin one night and permitted a vampire bat to creep over his body, hoping that the creature would sink its teeth in his flesh and thus permit him to disclose to science for the first time the sensation of having one of these strange and elusive animals suck the blood from his veins!

"About the most disquieting time we had on the expedition," Beebe told me "came one night when we were hunting nothing but a breath of air. Several of us were wandering about in the jungle, picking our way among the enormous trunks of the giant mora trees, and little thinking of any danger in store for us.

"Suddenly one of the party gave an involuntary gasp, and pointed toward a pool of moonlight that filtered through the trees not 50 feet away. In the centre stood a full-grown jaguar, glaring inquisitively at us with furtive, glowing eyes!

"We stopped abruptly. There wasn't a thing we could do save to stand there. In the whole party there wasn't a weapon of any kind—not even a pocket-knife. And then, a most extraordinary thing happened. The jaguar turned about, as if bored, and marched calmly and leisurely away!

"A day or so later we had a real adventure—one in which the danger was real and present—yet there wasn't one of us who thought of possible peril until it was all over. We had our headquarters in a large bungalow in a clearing at the edge of the jungle at Cartabo, a point of land at the junction of the Mazaruni and Oyuruni rivers. The whole party was in camp one afternoon when I happened to notice what appeared to be a large stick protruding from the water at an angle and dotting down the river toward us, and floating down the river toward us, shouted to the others of the party.

"We got nets and oars together, jumped into two rowboats and started down the stream. We caught up with the beast and entangled it in our nets. The ant-eater threatened the water, slashed the air with its long nose, splintered the oars we thrust at it, and fiercely fought off our attempts at capture. And at last it hooked its big curved claws over the gunwale of my boat, and climbed aboard.

"Fighting an enraged ant-eater in the cramped quarters of a small boat is about as thrilling an undertaking as I can imagine. Yet we went about it calmly and carefully. I was nearest to the animal, so I engaged its attention with an oar while

the others worked the boat ashore.

"When the boat grounded, we drove the animal out, surrounded it, and kept it at bay with sticks and clubs, seeking to prevent it from clawing its way through us to freedom until some one could obtain a box or crate in which to imprison it. One of the women members of the party, without pausing for orders, bustled herself about providing this, to find that the only crate we had large enough to accommodate an ant-eater was already occupied by a box constrictor that had been captured a few days before!

"Some women may be afraid of snakes, but this one isn't. She reached down, picked up the box, and without any hesitation thrust it into a smaller box with the two other women members of the expedition rushed down to the shore with the packing-case. At last we succeeded in driving the infuriated ant-eater into this. Then we were able to take a calmer view of our captive.

"It was one of the largest ant-eaters I have ever seen. Its eight feet of length included a nose almost two feet long. This is what we had seen in the water, for the rest of the animal's body is submerged when it swims. The body was covered with long, coarse black hair, and it had a great bushy tail. The claws were fully three inches long—more than twice the size of a lion's claws—and curled backward and upward so that the points would not become dulled in walking.

"Ant-eaters, you know, live on ants and antlike creatures called 'termites.' They tear open the nests with their claws and lick up the insects with their tongues, which are longer even than their noses. We couldn't supply our captive with its customary diet, but after a little experimenting devised a ration that seemed to suit it very well—eggnog three times a day; a half dozen eggs and several quarts of milk.

"There was another afternoon of excitement when the women members of our party were alone in camp. Suddenly some of the natives started a frightful hubbub, shouting that an enormous snake was approaching in the underbrush. Running toward it, the women saw that it was a rainbow boa, more than nine feet long and several inches in diameter. This snake is beautiful and not poisonous, so they decided to capture it.

"One of the women made a dive for it, seeking to seize it behind the head, but the snake was too quick, and a real battle was on.

"Several times the women barely escaped being encircled. At last, though, they managed to drag the boa to an empty packing-box and to dump it inside. This snake is now housed at the Bronx Zoo.

"The wonders of the wild life of the tropics furnish much more interest to a scientific expedition, of course, than do the possibilities of adventure. For instance, we found an insect that looks a good deal like our common ant. These little creatures, though, are able to destroy a house in a short time! They are called 'termites.' They live entirely on wood. When millions of them attack a wooden dwelling or a tree, it soon crumbles into a heap because so many tiny holes have been bored in it. The termites build great nests on the limbs and trunks of trees that are found by the ant-eaters and torn to pieces.

"Another interesting pest makes farming almost impossible down there. One night an army of these walked off with the entire garden that one of our party had planted. These insect robbers, which also resemble our common ants, did the job so completely that the only trace of garden left was a bare patch of earth.

"When we awoke in the morning, and found the garden gone, our friend rushed out, amazed and bewildered. Just in time to see the results of his labors winding in a tiny crooked path along the ground. The garden was literally moving into the jungle before his eyes in thousands of tiny pieces of green!

"These pests are called 'leaf-cutting ants.' They live on green leaves that they carry off and chew but do not eat. They swing these little bits aloft, carrying them upright in their mouths like little green banners as they wend their way back to their nest, which may be as far as a quarter of a mile away. They remind one of a cavalcade of tiny warriors going off to battle in single file and carrying tall green spears before them.

(To be continued.)

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NEW YORK, Oct. 27.

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of the 100 passengers aboard were injured and the boat suffered no damage. She continued on her course after an hour's delay. The steamer ran aground when she went out of her course to avoid a wreck which was being dismantled.

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Four weeks after date hereof Application will be made to His Excellency the Governor-in-Council for Letters Patent for "New and Useful Improvements in Signalling Systems" to be granted to George A. Locke of Glen Cove, State of New York, United States of America, Telephone Engineers; AND ALSO, for "New and Useful Improvements in Submarine Signalling" to be granted to John J. Gilbert of Douglaston, State of New York, United States of America, Telephone Engineer.

Dated at St. John's this 17th day of October, 1924.

GIBBS & BARRON,
Solicitor for Applicant,
Bank of Montreal Bldg.,
St. John's. oct26,41,m

SNOODLES

It Sounded Suspicious.

By CY HUNGERFORD

