

Capturing Giant Orang-Utan of Borneo Biggest Thrill of a Circus Animal Catcher

Natives So Impressed By Fireworks and Other Magic of Charles Mayer That They Think Nothing Can Harm Them On White Man's Hunt—and So a Terrible Tragedy Occurs in the Jungle.

After recounting some of his exciting and tragic memories of the circus last week, Mr. Mayer now returns to his experience in the capture and transporting of wild beasts from the jungles of the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra and Borneo. He has had no less than eighteen years of this adventurous calling, and few men either east or west are as noted in this same field as he.

By CHARLES MAYER

ODDLY enough, three out of the four letters left me one morning by the Eurasian postman in Singapore contained orders for good-sized orang-utans. America, Holland and Australia all wanted brangs.

Now orang-utans are found in but two places in the world, Borneo and Sumatra, both islands, and only in limited portions of these. So my morning's mail looked to me like the hand of fate pointing to Dutch Borneo.

I looked up steamers and called my Chinese "boy," Hsi Chu L. "Chu," I said, "you and I shall sail for Pontianak in three days. I am going to get some full-grown oranges."

I had learned to read. Hsi Chu L. placed face. It was depressed. His eyes dropped to my right leg, which I had almost lost five years before when a big orang grabbed my ankle. "Bad luck, tuan," he murmured.

I laughed and quoted a Malay proverb which runs, "That which brought bad luck yesterday may to-morrow hold gold in its hand."

Hsi Chu L. did not look convinced, but he saluted and went about getting my things ready for our four-and-a-half-days' voyage.

Reputed Witch Doctor

ON landing at Pontianak I called at the Dutch residency to give in account of myself and to get special permission to go inland. Then I went to the hotel, where I had a little stone room, with my own bath and a private veranda. I went with pajamas I lay there, stretched out comfortably in a long chair, and interviewed natives and gave them instructions about preparing for my trip.

I had long talks with Mohammed Yve, an animal-dealer whom I knew well. He made all the arrangements for me and sent a boat around on the twelve-day journey upstream, to prepare my old friend, Mohammed Munshue, for my coming. Munshue was the headman of a kampong. Still higher up the river there was another old friend, Omar, also a headman, whose village I was going to make a base of operations for the orang hunt proper.

On the evening of the twelfth day I could see in the distance the kampong of Mohammed Munshue. I got out my pistol and fired it into the air. My host, I am sure, was watching for me, because, while the barrel was still smoking, a rude log canoe put out. The men in it shouted, and their pointed paddles into the water and pushed as if to shove the stream from under them.

In a few moments they were beside us and not only Munshue but Omar stood up in the dug-out log, seized hold of the hatched roof over my head and sprang in under it. They caught my hand in turn, pressed it to their brows and grinned like delighted boys. Their greeting brought a lump into my throat.

I was pleased to find that a house had been built for me. It consisted of one bamboo room, on piles, with a roof of palm-leaves. Luckily, no terrible heathen rites were connected with house-building in this part of Borneo. In any case it would not have seemed necessary to guard me from demons, since I was reputed to be a witch-doctor.

Miracle of Fireworks

FIVE years before I had dynamited the river; stunned fish by the hundred had been gathered in and cured and even a crocodile, shocked by the explosion, had floated belly upward on the stream. Devils could have no power over the dwelling of such a white man.

The people begged me to perform the miracle again. I had come prepared for this request and once more there was a fish harvest. I always felt ashamed when I played this sportsmanlike trick on the fish, but I had the useful effect of making natives look at me with an awe almost like worship.

I had Munshue announce, as interpreter, that after dark I would have something to show the whole kampong. "Tell the women," I said, "not to let the children go to sleep until all have seen and heard." I did this not only because I wanted to give the little boys and girls pleasure, but because I had no idea of having them awakened in terror out of their first sleep.

When the sudden tropical darkness fell, Chu brought me out a package, his face as solemn as a Chinese god's. In it were the makings of a Fourth of July celebration.

As I arranged the inhabitants of the kampong (I should say there were a hundred and fifty of them) in a wide circle, I gave them a lesson in gallantry. I had the children squat

in an inner ring; I directed the women to kneel behind them and told the men to stand still farther back.

With Chu as my assistant, I made little mounds of the stuff which turns, when lighted, into colored turns. I placed the mounds in a sort of design and trained my line of black powder to each from the spot where I stood. I thought it best, when all this was finished, to have some kind of ceremony; so I waved my arms and chanted:

"Old Mother Hubbard,
She went to the cupboard
To get her poor dog a bone."

Next I touched a match to the spot where the lines of powder met. Ribbons of white flame ran along the ground; suddenly the whole place was red, then red and green.

There was a dead silence. A woman's shriek broke the spell, and then there was onescrunch after another. The children butted through the crowd and their mothers followed. They hid behind trees or ran to the bottom of the ladders that led to their houses.

Why Beast-Gazing?

NONE of the men ran. I would have taken a brave man to run. Dyaks hate cowards. They laughed to show their courage or perhaps to hide their fear. One wrinkled fellow, the great-grandfather of the village, threw back his head and gave the old Dyak war-cry. It was very strange. It began low, swelled, then died down and swelled again.

After that I produced the climax of my performance: Chinese fire-crackers plaited in a string two yards long. I lighted the end of the fuse and they popped and burst in twos and threes. My audience went wild. The young men began to leap into the air, in a half-crazy play, and they kept it up until the last cracker had exploded.

When all was quiet, I motioned to the crowd to gather round me and I called on Munshue to interpret. I asked him to tell them that I had come especially for orang-utans and that I wanted them alive. He said a deal of jabber on both sides. Munshue said to me: "I have told them, tuan, and they will be to you like the fingers on your own hands. But they say these wild beasts are ugly, they have empty stomachs that cry for food and, being fed, they will do no work. They ask why the tuan would carry beasts away with him and feed them in idleness as a raja feeds a woman of great beauty."

After a moment's thought I said, "In far countries it is good for the eyes of men, women and children to look upon beasts of the jungle."

He saluted me. "I will tell them, tuan, that in your country beast-gazing is good eye-medicine."

They were won by that answer and twenty of them responded to Munshue's call for men to collect material and work it up into traps and nets. I was so impatient to go up the river and after my orang-utans—I already thought of them as mine—that I left the completion and the setting of the nets to Munshue.

The people of Omar's kampong were even more kindly and simple, that that was possible, than those of Munshue's. It took me to pose before them as a magician with my dynamite and fireworks, but again I played the part.

One young fellow—Usup was his name—seemed to be fascinated by the performance. He took my orders afterwards with a sort of reverence as if I were a god. His companions caught his spirit. I never had a more willing corps of workers.

Orangs in Hotel

I EXPLAINED to Omar that my pet dream was a good-sized male orang and that I hoped to get him by a trap placed in a tree. With my usual diagrams in the sand I made it clear that this type of trap would be shaped like a box, with one end attached to the door, the other to grooves. From the middle of each side an upright would extend above the box, to meet a connecting cross-piece. Over this would rest, like a see-saw, the pole that held the door up. A piece of bamboo, fastened to a free end of the pole (the end not attached to the door) would be thrust down through the top of the cage and held there by a catch. To this catch I would tie a bit of fruit.

An orang, grabbing the fruit, would loosen the catch and release the pole, and down would drop the door. At the top of the door were strong catches which locked it, once it fell into place. I saw that there were no weak spots; for I was not going to risk repeating a troublesome experience I had had once in Singapore.

On that occasion I had sold two half-grown beasts to a man who put them into shipping-cages made of boards. He got the permission of Mr. Haas, the hotel-proprietor, to leave them temporarily at the hotel, in a hall used for theatrical performances and fitted up with a stage and canvas scenery.

Early one morning I was routed out of bed by the bad news that both



"A great male dropped upon the poor fellow's shoulders."

he covered the distance to the hotel in record time. The animals were out of their cages, but they were still in the hall with the doors and windows closed. There were a half-dozen natives—hotel servants—ready to help in the chase. Each had a cane and most of them had tom-toms. But one fellow—I believe he was the cook—was swinging a great tin dish-pan in one hand and a metal spoon in the other.

I took a tom-tom and a cane, opened the door and closed it behind me. The orangs, a male and a female, each four or five years old, were making a tour of investigation. They were like fish out of water. Their element was trees. They were at home only where tree touched tree and water was to be found in the cups of leaves.

There in the hall they slowly walked around, their heads turning and their little dark eyes blinking. When they stood erect, their arms, enormously long, touched the floor. With their hands half-closed, they walked on their knuckles, using their arms very much like a pair of crutches.

In Painted Forest

WHEN they saw me, they stopped together and stared. I struck the tom-tom once. Each threw up an arm, as if to ward off a blow. "Out!" they said, in their gruff voices.

I called the men in. "Drive them into the open cages," I directed. "Do not strike unless absolutely necessary, but make all the noise you know how."

What I should have done was to set all my assistants as a guard before the stage. The orangs could not spring from the ground like monkeys, but with amazing speed they hobbled across the floor, got on the platform and climbed up into the canvas trees. They clung there, looking down on us and snarling.

"Beat!" I yelled to the men. "More noise!"

I was enough of a carpenter to know what the result would be. The orangs swung from one painted limb to another. Rip went the canvas in a long ear, crack, and down came the flimsy frame-work. The orangs fell with a bump.

They were hurt no more than if they had been rubber balls. In a moment they were swinging from another canvas tree. As it began to ear and snap, they reached out their long arms and grabbed a fresh one. They changed their positions every second until what had been a romantic, semitropical set was ribbons and rags.

Above the din of the tom-toms, I heard yelling and a pounding on the outside of the door.

"You can't come in!" I yelled back. It was Mr. Haas, the proprietor. "Take care of my scenery!" he shouted. "Don't let anything happen to it."

"I'll do my best!" I bawled. When there were no more canvas trees left, we got in our work. We used all the noise there was and some caning. The male orang got hold of the bamboo stick I was using. I did not dispute ownership. I let him have it and took another. In a moment he dropped his. He could have had things his own way if he had got after us with it.

The outstanding fact about the creatures was that they had enormous strength with no knowledge of how to use it. We were pretty much worn out by the time we had driven them into their cages. It was warm work for the tropics. The orangs sucked up long drafts of fresh water, ate jackfruit and said "Out," as if they too had had a great time.

It was plain how they had got out, or at least how the male had got out. In his cage of planks he had found a loose silver and had amused himself by tearing it off with his

great eyetooth. After that he tore another and another until he had practically chewed through the wood. Then he broke it. I decided that, once out, he must have loosened the catch on the door of the other cage, accidentally, when climbing over it.

Free Lunch Stations

OMAR had a half-dozen more traps of bamboo, on which no tooth could start a silver-made like the model built under my eye. To put a trap in place took a whole day in the jungle. The tree was not one in which there was the sleeping platform, or nest, which only orangs use, but it was never far away from such a nest, and there had to be a convenient fork on which to bind the trap.

It was Usup, as a rule, who found the right tree. He seemed to have a sort of instinct for it. Once he had found it, he would place his notched bamboo pole against the trunk and go up like a cat. Three or four other men would follow. Then the trap, hauled up with rattan ropes, was laced to the fork, the door facing inward. In the end the trap was as firm as if it had grown to the tree.

Next it was lined with leaves and branches and covered with green stuff and trailing vines. And finally Usup tied fruit inside at the back and propped the door open. The trap was not set.

My idea was to make free-lunch stations of the traps until confidence was established. I believed that no orang would be tempted to go in until he had seen the monkeys try it and come out safely.

Monkeys never make a discovery in silence and they never fail to squabble over one. Their chattering would attract the attention of the orangs. Once the orangs were interested, they would drive the monkeys away. Eventually we put up seven traps within an area of a half-mile square. We visited them every two days and, if the fruit was gone we replaced it.

When our fruit began to disappear regularly, it was time to set the traps. Any branches that obstructed the movement of the doors were cut away, and fresh fruit was hung. Usup insisted each time on getting in and trapping himself, to be sure that all was right. The trap with which he took the greatest pains was one which hung with guavas.

The next day the door of this particular trap was down. Usup climbed the tree and peered in. He did not shout to us, for he had been forbidden to, but I could see from the movements of his agile body that he was elated. No wonder. I discovered, when the trap was lowered, that we had a double haul. A mother orang was inside, with a baby clinging to her. I was as elated as Usup.

I knew, as he did not, that they would make a most marketable pair. On our return to the kampong, it was almost impossible for me to prevent a demonstration that would have terrified the orangs. The early

days of captivity were trying times for them and anxious ones for me. I knew the natives would not understand consideration for the beasts; so I hit upon the idea of bad ears for myself.

Two Men Killed

I PUT my hands to the sides of my head and told Omar to say that the tuan had ear-sickness, so that any noise was to him like the rolling of thunder. The place was suddenly as quiet as an empty church.

When the orang with her baby was shut up in the cage, she was in a fury. Her mouth was twisted in a perpetual snarl. I sent every one away and put in charge the old man who had given the war-cry. No one was allowed to come even to the fence placed round the shed by the place. The mother orang was given boiled water but no food.

That was a trick I had learned. If food is pressed at once on a captured orang, nine times out of ten it will refuse to eat, will continue to refuse and will mope. But if it is allowed to get really hungry and is then offered food, it will eat and cheer up. In many ways the orang is very human. In a short time this one took kindly to the old man. She lost her bad temper, but she was never happy as a monkey seems to be in captivity.

Later on, I kept in the cage next the mother and her young, one, a small orang captured under strange and terrible circumstances, which confirmed me in my opinion that orang-utans are not solitary animals.

We started from the kampong that day a party of six men. There were many traps to visit and we separated into groups. Omar and six other natives went with me. After inspecting two empty traps, we came upon one in which there was a good-sized male. Just as we had succeeded in lowering it to the ground, we heard cries for help. Two natives, breathless with running, gasped out broken sentences that I could not understand.

Their bodies were torn and bleeding. They had plunged through the jungle regardless of thorns. I had caught the names of Usup and Abdul. Omar translated. Usup and Abdul had been killed.

The headman sounded the alarm, calling out strange words that ended with something like the wail of the Dyak battle-cry. This was to summon every man within ear-shot.

False Confidence Fatal

MEANWHILE the passing runners spoke a few sentences in the jerky Dyak way, and Omar managed to get their meaning and to convey it to me in Malay. It seems that a group of four men, Usup among them, had climbed up to it with a rush. He peered in between the cracks and called down that the orang was a very young one. With his parang he began to cut the rattan that held the trap. Before the older men had joined him in the

tree, the mother orang, who had been hiding in the upper branches, dropped on him and buried her teeth in his shoulder.

He clutched the cage, which fell, carrying him and the female with it. His head struck the ground, and the cage came down on his crumpled body.

The other men hurried to the rescue. With a yell they thrust their spears into the female orang. It was Abdul who was directly under the tree. Without any cry of warning a great male orang dropped upon the poor fellow's shoulders and bore him to the ground, biting deep at the base of his neck, then twisting his head with its strong paws and killing him.

The two survivors thought the jungle was alive with orangs. Yet in spite of their fear and exhaustion they went back with us. Omar was in the lead. I followed with my express-rifle set and ready.

Suddenly the headman stopped and pointed. I saw what I shall never be able to forget. Under the trap, which was lying door downwards, was Usup's body. The wounded female was tearing at the bars and trying to let her young one out. The male was jumping up and down on Abdul's body.

With one paw he grasped the Dyak's thick hair and, as he jumped, he lifted the head and shoulders from the ground. I fired and shot him dead. Before I could train my gun on the female, she dropped from her own wound.

The double tragedy filled me with a sense of guilt. Usup had heeded no warning. He had climbed the tree without looking to see if there were free orangs in it. He was on the white man's business, and the white man was a witch-doctor. Usup met his death through false confidence, and this, I felt, he had gained from the miracle of red and green lights.

Next week: Pursuit of the Mad Elephant.

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Walking Fish Can Climb Up Trees

Cross-Country Traveling Is a Favorite Pastime for Some of the Finny Tribe

FISHERMEN'S stories are usually received with incredulity, and one can easily imagine what reception would be accorded to the enthusiast who described his adventures with a fish that walked.

Yet the walking fish is perhaps the commonest of all the inhabitants of the temporary pools and still waters of the Indian plains.

During the hot months they bury themselves two or three feet in the mud, where they pass the prolonged period of drought. With the coming of the rains they are recalled to life, and travel long distances over moist ground. They propel themselves by using the pectoral and tail fins, first one of the former then that of the other side.

The walking fish builds nests for his family. He bites off the tops of water-weeds and rushes and after twisting them about the stumps with his tail, places his family inside the structure thus formed, and mounts guard over them.

Closely allied to this strange creature is the kol, or climbing perch. This is a greyish fish several inches long, with a very thorny ventral fin, by means of which it can climb trees. It can also travel long distances over marshy land.

Stories of the climbing perch are usually received with incredulity. But specimens in captivity not only walk about a room, but ascend a vertical sheet.

Because of the length of time a kol can live outside its own element, Indian jugglers carry them about with other paraphernalia, and use them to demonstrate their "magic" powers. But the only "magic" is Nature's.

The kol is easily domesticated, and will readily obey a well-known voice.

Both

POLICEMAN (at Marylebone): "I saw the prisoner use bad language." Magistrate: "I suppose you mean that you heard him?" "Yes, I heard him as well."

Her Tactful Way

"TACT," said the lecturer, "is essential to good entertaining. I once dined at a house where the hostess had no tact. Opposite me sat a modest, quiet man.

Radio Moving Pictures of World's Wonders Predicted

Scientists Say Landscapes, Mountains, and Architecture of Distant Lands Will Be Tuned In Like Music—Radio Pictures to Supplement Lectures in Schools

AFTER attending a big radio show a middle-aged man was asked what he thought was most interesting at the exposition. He said: "The fact that a large part of the audience were boys from 12 to 15 years of age. As part of the demonstration I attended a lecture, and the audience was doing its best to grasp the intricacies of the receiving mechanism. The sight of all the boys there set me thinking."

"They did not seem to be there to play, but to learn, and it looked to me as if they came of their own accord."

There are now over 18,000 amateur wireless transmitting stations in America and most of them are home-made, owned and operated by boys.

The amateur wireless stations have been restricted to wave lengths below 200 meters, and for many years this limitation was considered a detriment to long-distance communication between amateur stations. This led to experimenting and resulted in two-way communication being established across the Atlantic by boys, setting the ether in vibration with simple apparatus built in the attics of their homes. Thus while long waves of powerful transatlantic stations swooped across the sea with commercial traffic, boys in New England chatted back and forth with amateurs in France and England on the 100-meter wave length.

One program director said: "There are fascinations awaiting the boy or girl studying French or the geography of a foreign country when told that to-morrow he will hear a Frenchman speaking from Paris and an eminent English geologist speaking in London."

Scientists predict the day when television, or seeing by radio, will allow a person to sit at home and happen about the earth will be seen the minute they happen on a screen above the receiving set. Light will be turned into sound, so that a person can watch the happenings at the antipodes.

Instead of stereoscopic views to illustrate a geography lecture, physicists say that the geography lecturer will simply tune in moving pictures of the geyser and falls of Yellowstone National Park, the coast of Maine, the Rocky Mountains, Pike's Peak, the cataract of Niagara, the cliffs of Dover and any site of geographical interest. In place of the microphone to pick up sound waves, another instrument will take the picture and transform the light waves into Heitzian waves to be flashed to the schoolrooms throughout the world.

Radio research engineers are now trying to devise practical equipment to turn light waves into sound waves. Reports from Paris tell that French military radio experimenters have succeeded in transforming light from the star Capella into audible sound. However, this will not help those who want to "talk" with Mars. Planets and the moon shine by reflected light, and such a message from them would be a relay from Old Sol.

J. W. Reith, managing director of the British Broadcasting Company, recently said: "There is little doubt that television is theoretically quite possible. One has to look at the facts: Vision is due to the impinging of light rays on the retina of the eye. Seeing, however, that light and electric vibrations are identical in their essential details, it is obvious that there can be no fundamental barrier to converting the one into the other for the purpose of conveyance. How exactly this is to be done effectively and economically is only a matter of time. One can get a blurred image to-day. Wireless telephony was possible many years before it became a practical proposition."

"Terrors of separation will be lessened. Journeys in foreign countries and residence in the tropics will lose many of their drawbacks. One can see great educational advantages resulting from television. New landscapes, mountains, seas, river boulevards, busy towns may all be presented to breathless classes of children in their schools. To them may come direct living pictures of strange animals, rare birds, quaint and queer costumes, the varied types of human species, the colossal architecture of distant lands and bygone ages."

Human Electric Ray Marvel Man Can Flash Lightning

Scientists Amazed by Prodigious Powers of Italian—Radiations From His Body Light Up Dark Room—Dazzling Halo Around Head

By ELIJAH WIMBURNE

NOW we have the real "lightning man." He has indeed the world of reputable scientists and fact. He is the "Human Electric Ray."

His name is Erto. He is a middle-aged Italian, a manufacturer of liquor and lives in Castellamare di Stabia, a small town of Southern Italy. He has journeyed to Paris and there he has confounded no less than fifteen recognized scientists, including heads of great institutions.

This he has done by sending out of his body, while in a kind of typical sleep, radiant flashes fifteen feet long. These have, it is said, actually been photographed.

The investigation of this incredible man and of his prodigious powers was conducted in the most rigorous fashion by a committee headed by Dr. Charles Richet, of the Institut de France and Dr. Geley, president of the International Institute of Metaphysical Research. The experiments have been so stringent that there was not the slightest possibility of fraudulent intervention by either Erto or his friends. "I can assure you," commented Dr. Geley, "that the rigid precautions taken by men of such standing leave no room for doubt that a strange psychic phenomenon exists here which scientists cannot possibly contradict."

These radiations most closely resembled electric flashes. They were so brilliant that they lit up the dark room for several seconds at a time. They were bluish-white in color. Around his head they seemed like a glistening halo, a luminous, cone-shaped hat, from his left side they spread forth in the form of an incandescent fan.

Erto's "lightning flashes" are not merely ordinary light beams. They are said to have the power of piercing even opaque substances, like X-rays. They affect photographic plates even when these are inclosed in their protective holders, and wrappings. Such sealed plates, exposed during Erto's demonstrations, showed splashes of light. When sealed plates were held close to his outspread hands and taken away to be developed, they were found to register pictures of his fingers even in size and shape.

Erto is still undergoing tests, complete reports of which are promised shortly in Paris—New York World Magazine.



"Rip went the canvas in a long tear; crack, and down came the flimsy frame work."