

CANNIBALS AT CLOSE RANGE

Studies of an Austrian Scientist on the Island of Sumatra.

LIFE AND CUSTOMS OF THE NATIVES

How They Wage War and Why They Devour Those Who Fall in Battle—Some Remarkable Adventures.

The first scientific study of cannibalism and cannibalism is shortly to be published as a result of the experiences of an Austrian scientist and explorer, Joachim Freiherr von Brenner, who recently returned from Sumatra, where he has been for several years engaged in the study of the native blacks.

Although Von Brenner's work was undertaken for the sake of its scientific value in the fields of geography, history and anthropology, his experiences will include much that is of popular interest and entertainment. As may be readily believed, it was an undertaking of some hardship to study a tribe of cannibals at close range, and when the young Austrian announced his purpose he met with considerable opposition from his friends and associates, who freely prophesied that he would never return to announce the result of his undertaking.

"I set out on my trip to the land of the Batak, after having secured by inducements, which to them appeared extraordinary, a caravan of thirty carriers. There was but one European in the party besides myself. We were conducted by a native guide from one of the hill tribes, who was recommended as a thoroughly trustworthy man, and who indeed proved invaluable as time went on. Our course lay over the high mountains which lie a few miles back from the coast at Deli, and beyond which is the land of the Batak, in which, as far as I have been able to find, no European had hitherto set foot.

"The partially civilized tribes that I came across in the earlier stages of my journey, afforded many opportunities for interesting study, and our progress was therefore slow, for I reasoned that the more thoroughly I understood the customs and ways of these people the better I would be able to understand those in the wilderness beyond, which was our ultimate destination.

"One peculiar custom which was naturally among the first to impress itself upon me and which apparently prevails among all the natives of the island is the method of preserving the dead. The body is burned, but the head is placed in a bamboo basket on top of a bamboo pole as thick as a man's arm, and thatched over the top with the leaves of the sugar palm. Here it is left to bleach and dry, and the sight of these ghastly sign posts which we frequently came across was anything but reassuring. In some places the head is not detached, but the entire body is hung up in a sort of wicker-work wrapping, suspended between two posts several feet above the ground, and it is possible to view through the interstices in the basket-work the ghastly remains which the breeze swing to and fro, and which have a hammonious with a most uncanny effect.

"In climbing the mountain the constant rains which wash out deep gullies afforded greater obstacles to our progress than even the trackless undergrowth through which it was necessary to cut our way.

"Among the natives whom I first encountered I was an object of mild but intensely curious interest. It seemed to give them great delight to gather in great crowds and watch me whenever I went in bathing. The sight of a man bathing was not new to them, but it was apparently a thing as new as soap, and the latter produced by it was a marvel to all beholders. But it was impossible to get any of them to try its effects. The natives laughed at my explanation over and over again, and it was much easier to use the fingers. Another object of great curiosity to them was the camera, which they seemed to view with a sort of superstitious awe.

"By using the passport provided by many gifts of cloth and beads to the tribal chiefs, my progress was comparatively easy, until we entered the territory of one tribe which was at war with its neighbors. These tribes permit their carriers to pass until the impending battle was fought. This gave me an excellent opportunity to observe the native manner of carrying on war, and I watched the battle in company with the women and children of the tribe from a neighboring hill. It was a strange sight, several thousand naked Malay-advancing in irregular lines, in semi-circles, to meet upon an open plain. Each party had guns bought from native traders, who had introduced them from the Dutch settlements, but they were used almost as effectively as the Spaniards use theirs. The savages advanced with terrific shouts, trying to frighten their opponents. Each man had loaded his gun with a tremendous charge of powder, which he fired as soon as was ready. As the gun went off he fell howling to the ground from the 'kick' of the heavy load. This noisy firing, harmful to the owners of the guns alone, continued for about half an hour, when a shower came up and all of the combatants ran back to their huts for shelter. The battle was over. Although the tribe with which I happened to be admitted itself beaten by the greater noise of the enemy (there was not a soul killed or wounded), they returned as if they had been victorious and gave up the night to singing and feasting. The battle was to be renewed next day, so a war dance took place, but the women, not the warriors, did the dancing. When the whole tribe had gathered, a middle-aged woman, whose name I do not remember, rose and began to stamp the ground in time to the rude music of the drum and calash. Her movements became quicker and quicker, she loosened her hair, her eyes flashed, she seemed to be a raging witch. The chief joined the dance for a few minutes, and as he resumed his seat three other women dashed forward and joined the wild dance, shrieking and jumping as if possessed. Suddenly the music ceased, the dancers paused, deathlike stillness prevailed. The leading dancer was given a mixture of palm wine and camphor to refresh her, she danced again still more wildly until she fell exhausted to the ground, where she lay prostrate for some time.

"I sold her at market for my brother-in-law. His mother, the Gura (wizard) said, was as bad as her son, so we cut her throat a month later. "Did you eat her, too?" "Yes, of course." "Why are there so few teeth in the skull?" "The people broke them out to decorate their collars, so that when they strike these teeth it is the same as if they hit Si Kemat on the mouth." "But why do you eat men instead of birds or fowl?" "Why should we not? What else could we do with those enemies whom we slay?" "You might bury them." "But that would not be proper. To slay an enemy is not enough. When he is eaten the victory is complete." From other conversations which he had with other natives on this same subject Explorer von Brenner came to the conclusion that except among the very lowest and most degraded of the savages with whom he came in contact cannibalism was caused not so much by the liking for human flesh as by the desire to complete the humiliation and destruction of enemies. Many other curious customs and strange legends are reported by von Brenner as a result of his journeys through the country inhabited by more than 200,000 primitive savages, but there is nothing in all his notes quite so extraordinary as his interview with a cannibal on cannibalism—doubtless the first ever published.

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FOREST RANGING A FARCE

Important Measure of Reform Perverted by Scrubby Politicians.

FAILURE OF THE RANGER SYSTEM

Thousands of Dollars Appropriated to Protect Forests from Fires Used to Reward Political Luffers.

The recent destructive forest fires in Colorado and Wisconsin, by which vast areas of valuable timber was destroyed, re-awakened interest in the efforts of the government to prevent such disasters, especially in the mountain ranges of the west. The Washington correspondent of the Boston Transcript, who made an extended tour of the west during the summer and investigated the workings of the forest ranger system, inaugurated by the government a year ago, declares that the system is a farce; that instead of the money appropriated being honestly used in protecting timber land from fires it is employed as a reward for political workers. The correspondent writes as follows:

These rangers, or patrolmen, receive \$50 a month, their supervisors \$100 a month and their assistants \$75 a month. A section of forest country, watching for fires and taking necessary measures for stamping out such as are discovered. According to the present plan the government is expending about \$175,000 annually in this service. He complains of the fact that the system, after the terrible record of destruction of the first year under its operation, remains to be seen. If carefully investigated, however, some very valuable evidence will be forthcoming as to certain incidental features of our public practices.

Merit of the System. No doubt exists as to the essential merit of the forest-ranger system. In other countries it works well, and in the east forest fires seldom amount to anything, because the public so soon becomes aware of their existence, and even in the heavily forested regions, promptly put out the blaze. It was expected that the ranger system would do for the sparsely settled west exactly what it has done for the east. By assigning men to clearly circumscribed districts it was reasonably believed that a great improvement on past conditions might result. Why are these anticipations not realized? Why has the ranger system in the United States failed so far as the prevention of forest destruction is concerned? The answer is that it has, for this year at least? It is not a pleasant task for a correspondent at the national capital to assign the same reason for the deficiency of one after another of the services which Uncle Sam attempts to perform. Facts, however, cannot be denied. The forest-ranger system, Indian, internal revenue and a hundred other government services are stumbling constantly for the same reason that the ranger service has now fallen. On a recent trip through the west I made many inquiries as to this new experiment, everywhere being told that the system had failed in many instances to obtain illustrations of the same sort of facts. The ranger system, for which the United States pays \$175,000 a year, has not in reality been tried. Not over one-fifth of the employees are more than apologetic for forest rangers. The simple fact of the matter is that the system has been inaugurated by which salaries are assignable to forest rangers have been distributed as bribes to political workers, with little or no pretense of anything else. I found one forest ranger with a carpenter's shop on and nails in his pocket. He was helping to build a house, working as a journeyman on his trade, and yet drawing the regular salary of a forest ranger. I took pains to investigate his work, and learned that his district extended down a main road for twelve miles. Another man, who had received a letter from the department and knew every traveler on the road, told me that this carpenter-ranger had not in weeks been more than three miles from the place where he was employed. This, moreover, was not in a commanding position, so that he could not see any fire in the district. About three miles from the scene of the house-building this ranger had a little fire, to which he drove daily and threw on a bucket of water. A limited area had been so trenched about that there was little danger of serious consequences. The report was submitted to the department doubtless as a record of a considerable industry. This was in the Cascade region of Washington.

Barrels and "Bulls." In Colorado I met a forest ranger, somewhat over 60 years of age, that in itself is a sufficient disqualification for a mountain-climbing occupation, who had proved himself strangely incompetent in his duties. He was well informed and naturally indignant regarding the locality, this man in his travels had discovered several incipient forest fires. Instead of digging a trench and camping with the one first discovered, as he ought to have done so as to prevent its spreading, he went back to town, declaring that he could do nothing, and claiming to have discovered a solution of the fire problem. His plan was this: The government should raise his salary so that he could hire a lumber wagon and a pair of horses and with three or four barrels of water make his journey over the district. It goes without saying that such an arrangement would be useless in the mountain country. The ranger with his barrels of water could go only where there was an open road and hence could not get within miles of most actual conflagrations or of the incipient fires. It would have been just as wise to propose to carry as many barrels of whisky. Instances of this kind might be gathered in great numbers. Party workers who cannot get any other government office in the west are appointed rangers, and those who will accept the modest compensation provided are usually broken-down men, wholly unacquainted with the work and unfit for its performance. Their supervisor is usually an appointee, who is going among the people and helping to carry the caudles. This prevents the proper prosecution of offenders against the forest laws. If local campers, miners and trappers knew that they would actually be punished for leaving sparks behind them a good percentage of the forest fires might be avoided. Will it be fair, then, for congress to condemn the ranger system, when the appropriation next comes up, as having proved useless, when in reality no decent ranger system has ever been tried?

The Regulars as Rangers. In the opinion of many persons a vast improvement might be made by having the work done by the regular army. There is a doubt that it could thus be done efficiently. In the Yellowstone park, which is fairly well forested, exceedingly dry, liable to high winds, and having more than its share of good police and fire departments, the army keeps the destruction of fires down to a respectable minimum. But there is one great objection, at least, to assigning this work to the regular army. I find the people of the west very much opposed to a system of forest protection by the regular army. They would prefer to have the forest-ranger system, which is sympathetic with local conditions. While this is the natural sentiment of the west, not a few of its public-spirited citizens told me that they would much prefer the regular army to the present degradation of incompetents. But this preference is by no means general.

DEATH AND GLORY CAME AT THE SAME TIME TO A BOSTON CORRESPONDENT

The struggles of newspaper correspondents in Cuba furnish some of the most heroic chapters of the war with Spain, relate the Chicago Inter Ocean, which was killed at Tampa two weeks ago, gave up his life for a "scoop." He was full of the American grit that never lets a man fall down on a story. Collins worked for a Boston newspaper before the war. "Old Col" as he was affectionately called, was a back reporter. He worked hard, but he did not have a "turn up" news. He could write beautiful "stuff," but he didn't know news from ham sandwiches.

"I'm going to the front, boys," Collins announced in the local room the day after war was declared. "I don't intend that fifty years from now my name will be known to you," Grandpa wrote police news on a Boston newspaper during the war.

"Old Col" decision was greeted with roars of laughter. He was young for all of his nickname. He was a man of the front, and he was sensitive. What was his name? He was a man of the front, and he was sensitive. He was a man of the front, and he was sensitive.

When Collins called his paper had no idea it could depend upon him for big news. That was to be secured by a New York connection. "Old Col" was to write. If his stuff turned out first rate, well and good. If not, he was to be "scooped." He got on the ground just in time for the Rough Riders' fight and the big engagements that followed. When their correspondents were afraid to lead, they followed. Collins across country with dispatches, Collins trudged every bit of the way on foot. He dodged Spanish sharpshooters, swam streams, starved and fainted from exhaustion to reach the cable station. There he found that his paper had had a quarrel with their New York ally and that the cable-casting facilities. He had no idea how new his stuff was. To telegraph \$150 worth or more of stuff might mean that his paper would refuse to stand it and he would be discredited, besides having to bear the whole expense of his trip. He had been turned down so many times he doubted his own equipment. But he was such a good fellow, had struggled so and borne such hardships, that the correspondent of another big news agency took his matter and put it on the wire for him. Back went Collins into the thick of things, feeling that now he must be of considerable use to his country. He did not know it, but his stuff was a great "scoop." The other Boston reporters had been afraid to leave the trenches and Collins' account was the only one that appeared that day in a Boston paper. Collins worked the check, the position estimated a great delicacy. The chief drank some of the blood and then roasted the flesh slightly by the fire and ate it. Thereafter the rest of the warriors fell upon the victim and stripped the flesh from his bones, roasted and ate it amid fearful cries of pain from the captive, who saw his own flesh roasted and eaten. The savage feasters danced, shouted and rubbed their stomachs to show their enjoyment, while the victim's cries grew weaker as his strength ebbed away, until he finally died from loss of blood.

"Generally, cannibalism is an act of vengeance upon captured enemies, but among the Popaks the taste for human flesh has become so much developed that they often eat harmless slaves and old women. A Popak prince in Paganabahan told me that he had just given a feast at which eleven Chinese had been eaten, and he added that they were very good. This prince, by name Si Gollak, was very rich, having his teeth gilded and wearing a handsome jeweled collar, in the center of which a tooth was set, the tooth of an enemy whom he had slain and eaten. But he himself fell a victim to his foes, as evidenced by the skull and half-burned hand which I found some weeks later in possession of a Batak chief. Then a conversation took place somewhat after this fashion:

"Where did you get that skull and hand that you carry?" "They belonged to an enemy who fell into our hands."

"Did you eat him?" "Yes, my brother-in-law and his people ate him. His name was Si Kemat Si Gollak. He had fled from his country in which he was rajah with his brother, his wife and his mother. He called himself a wizard and sought to become ruler of Pantjo, where my brother-in-law was chief. My brother-in-law declared war against him and captured him."

"Was there a battle?" "No. We took him prisoner. We lay in ambush in the rice fields and when we saw him pass through alone we leaped upon him and brought him to the chief."

"And his brother?" "His brother fell in war."

"In a battle?" "No, we shot him at night while he was asleep. The ball hit him in the right arm, and he stood up holding a knife in his left hand; but we were victors, for we were many; we knocked him down and sent his head to the chief. Don't you call that war?"

"What happened to his body?" "That—we ate it. The head? Our chief put that in front of Si Kemat that he might know what to expect."

"Couldn't he ransom himself?" "Hansom? Impossible; he had to die."

"Didn't he cry?" "O, yes, but that did no good; he was bound fast."

"And then?" "We ate him up, of course. The next day when the sun ceased to rise and had not begun to set (noon) we brought Si Kemat out, threw him on the ground with his face down and my brother-in-law cut his head off. He received the heart and a mouthful of the flesh as he wanted and who else else wanted any took and roasted it with pepper and salt and ate it at cooked. The large bones were tied together and on the following day we buried his head in the path, so that even his wife should tread on it and make him his enemy."

"What happened to his friends?" "I sold her at market for my brother-in-law. His mother, the Gura (wizard) said, was as bad as her son, so we cut her throat a month later."

"Did you eat her, too?" "Yes, of course."

"Why are there so few teeth in the skull?" "The people broke them out to decorate their collars, so that when they strike these teeth it is the same as if they hit Si Kemat on the mouth."

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"You might bury them." "But that would not be proper. To slay an enemy is not enough. When he is eaten the victory is complete."

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