

# JOURNAL OF A TRIP TO PAHANG, &c.

WITH

H. E. THE GOVERNOR.

*August, 17th to 27th, 1889.*

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Started from Singapore in the *Sea Belle* at 4.45 P.M. on Saturday, the 17th August. Reached Pulau Tioman before daylight on the 18th. Put into a bay on the S. E. side of the island, but, owing to the heavy swell, had to go on to Nipah Bay on the western side.

The Island of Tioman is hilly, very rocky, and heavily wooded. We landed at Nipah Bay soon after 6 A.M., and returned on board soon after 9 A.M. At the spot where we landed there is a small Malay Settlement called Kampong Nipah. The beach is sandy, with a large admixture of coral detritus. Beyond high-water mark, the beach is covered with grass and a variety of plants, the most conspicuous being the Goat's-foot Convolvulus. Beyond the beach, and running parallel with the sea-line, is a creek twenty to thirty feet wide, discharging into the sea at the base of a hill about a couple of hundred yards to the south of where we landed. The ground commences to rise almost immediately behind this creek. The whole place is heavily wooded, and everywhere there crop up boulders, of all sizes and shapes, of granite. There are a good number of coco-nut trees, but they appear to have been badly attacked by beetles. There was one splendid grove of durian trees, and many others scattered about the kampong. I noticed also several lime-trees, one with a large number of unripe fruit on it.

Of birds, mammals, reptiles and insects, I saw hardly anything. Of birds, I only saw one snipet (*Tringoides hypoleucus*),

and a few specimens of the Eastern pied robin (*Copsychus musicus*). I heard some hornbills flying overhead, but could not see them, and so could not determine the species. I saw also a few pigeons, but could not obtain a shot. I only actually procured two specimens of the red-headed tailor-bird (*Sutorius ruficeps*), and two specimens of the common Malayan sun-bird (*Cinnyris malaccensis*). These latter were moulting and not fit for preserving.

Of mammals, I obtained one specimen of the common squirell (*Sciurus atrodorsalis*), and I saw a few small bats, which I failed to obtain.

I did not see any reptiles, and of insects the best thing I got was about a dozen specimens of a Caddis-fly (*Trichoptera* sp.?). These I obtained over a small stream that came down behind the village. The butterflies I observed were the common species of Singapore, the most common being *Papilio polytes* and *Danais vulgaris*. Of these, I obtained specimens, as well as a few small blues belonging to the *Lycenediæ*.

In the stump of an old coco-nut tree examined by Mr. RIDLEY we obtained one perfect specimen of the coco-nut weevil (*Rhyacophilus ferrugeneus*), and a number of its cocoons, and a few cockroaches. Mr. RIDLEY, also obtained for me, from a stream up which he worked, some specimens of a small fresh-water shrimp.

Flying about over the sea I noticed a number of terns (*Sterna melananchen*), a few gulls, probably the laughing gull (*Xena ridibunda*), and a noddy (*Anous stolidus*).

Soon after getting on board we commenced to steam along the western side of the island, keeping close inshore. The appearance of the island was much the same throughout, being heavily wooded, with indications of existing or abandoned kampongs.

We arrived off Kwala Pahang in the afternoon, and went ashore soon after, and met Mr. RODGER and Mr. WISE.

Almost as soon as we landed, a drizzling rain set in, which continued more or less the whole time we were ashore, so that it was almost impossible to obtain any specimens. All I obtained was one tailor-bird and one edible-nest swiftlet

(*Collocalia spodiopygia*). I saw a number of other birds, but as they were all of the common species obtainable at any time in Singapore, I contented myself with merely noting their occurrence.

At 7.45 on the morning of Monday, the 19th, we started for Pekan, two boats being towed by the steam launch. The river was very winding and full of sand-banks, so that the journey took more than two hours. Immediately after breakfast, about 11 A.M., Mr. RIDLEY and I started to collect.

The country in the immediate vicinity of Pekan is quite flat, the plains being covered with short grass. Here and there the ground is more or less swampy, the swampy ground is everywhere covered with clumps of the palm from which the sticks known at "Penang Lawyer" is obtained. On the higher and drier ground, are larger or smaller patches of scrub or secondary jungle, and occasionally a Malay house, surrounded with plantain, durian, and other fruit trees, is met with. Far in the distance could be seen heavy forest, but within many miles of Pekan nearly all the larger forest has been felled.

Birds and insects were not very numerous, and, as at Pulau Tioman, they appeared to be only of the commoner species found on the western side of the islands. The bird that was most numerous was the little white-headed finch (*Munia maya*). Of these I found several new nests, but Mr. RIDLEY was fortunate in finding one with four fresh eggs. The yellow-wattled myna (*Eulabes javanensis*) and the metallic starling (*Caloruis chalybæus*) were also common. I heard and saw at a distance several parties of the common Malayan hornbill (*Hydrocissa convexa*). OMAR KHAN, Government Peon, shot a specimen of the lesser serpent eagle (*Spilornis bacha*), which he gave me for the Museum. Green pigeons were not uncommon, but seemed to consist of but one species (*Osmotreron vernans*). The above were the most noticeable birds, and I saw nothing else during our three days' stay in Pekan worth recording. I forgot to mention that the common Indian black raven or corby (*Corvus macrorhynchus*) was very common, and the maroon kite (*Haliastur indus*) was frequently seen.

On the evening of Tuesday, the 20th, I accompanied His Excellency across the river, landing a few miles above Pekan. The country here was flat, the soil sandy, and everywhere covered with bushes, and fringed with secondary jungle. Here the green pigeon (*O. vernans*) was very numerous, flying overhead, in parties of five to ten or more, back and forwards between the clumps of jungle. The best bird I obtained while at Pekan was a specimen of Raffles hawk owl (*Minox scutulata*). This bird had flown into the room the night before our arrival, and had been captured by Mr. OWEN. It had died during the night, and had been thrown away, but on hearing about it, I searched and found it. It was not injured as to its plumage, and has made a very fine specimen, the only one we at present have in the Museum.

I obtained specimens of all the butterflies and other insects that I possibly could, but, as before mentioned, they were all of the common forms obtainable on the western side of Peninsula.

At 3.30 P.M. on Wednesday, the 21st, we left Pekan, and arrived off Tringganu early next morning. A delay occurred in landing, as a Dato had to be sent ashore to make arrangements for the reception of His Excellency the Governor. After breakfast we started, and on landing at the town Mr. RIDLEY and I started at once to look for collecting ground. The only bit of likely ground in sight was the hill on which the fort was placed, but we were not allowed to ascend this, so we crossed the river and landed on a narrow spit of sand, sparsely covered with vegetation, which consisted chiefly of the Madagascar perriwinkle. Though apparently fair ground for botanizing, it yielded nothing zoologically. All I got was a rare butterfly (*Papilio clytia*) and a number of small bivalves that had been left stranded on the beach.

The town of Tringganu is very thickly populated, the number of women and children being remarkable. The women there and at Kelantan are not shy, and mingle freely with the men. At a small market that was being held, the sales were being conducted by women. I noticed in several places in the town large quantities of salted limes put out in the

sun to dry, so this fruit is evidently largely produced. Coco-nuts, too, were numerous, and are largely exported to Siam. The coco-nut trees from Tringganu northwards do not seem to be attacked by beetles. Fishing seems to be the great occupation of the place, and on the morning of our arrival we passed through a fleet of over a hundred boats standing out to sea, each boat having from eight to ten men. The Chinese, of whom there are several hundred in the town, are kept to the further end of the town, and not allowed to mingle with the Mahomedan population.

We arrived off Kelantan early on the morning of the 23rd (Friday). Soon after anchoring, the Dato started in the steam launch to make the necessary arrangements for the reception of His Excellency, but it was nearly dark before he returned; in consequence we were detained the entire day on board, and were unable to land. Being unable to land, we started dredging by dragging a bucket along the length of the ship and then carefully washing the bucket-full of dark tenacious clay so obtained. A number of small shells were obtained, mostly dead, one fine specimen alive, of a beautiful star-fish (*Ophiocoma* sp.?), but so brittle that, before it could be safely stowed away in spirit, it had become imperfect. We also got half-a-dozen specimens of a *Holothurus* or sea slug, small but apparently adult.

At 8 A.M. next morning (Saturday, 24th) His Excellency started for Kelantan, Mr. RIDLEY and I following in the whale-boat very soon after. We sailed up the river, and first landed at a kampong, but did not obtain much. We then landed on a low sandy and marshy island, covered for the most part with a sedge, in which I saw specimens of the white-breasted water-hen (*Erythra phænicura*) and the banded rail (*Rallus striatus*), a small sedge warbler (*Costicola exilis*), and the lesser coucal (*Centrococcyx bengalensis*). I here also got, on some small flowering shrubs, a number of good insects, the best being a green fly (*Stilbum*) which will not unlikely prove to be an undescribed species. At present only two species of this genus are recorded from these parts (*Stilbum splendidum* and *S. oculata*), and it is

neither of these. I also obtained specimens of several species of wasps. After leaving the island, we proceeded a couple of miles further up the river, where there was a small kampong. The place looked, and proved, a good collecting-ground, both zoologically and botanically. The country was flat, chiefly paddy-land, but now dry, margined with strips of secondary forest, and, on the higher and drier parts, everywhere dotted with clumps of bamboo.

The first bird I got was a fine female of one of the serpent eagles (*Spilornis rutherfordi*). I also noticed a flock of the pink-breasted parroquet (*Palæornis fasciatus*). Vultures (*Pseudogyps bengalensis*) were also common. A few Indian ravens were seen, but they were not so numerous as at Pekan. No snakes were seen here or at any other place visited, but at this kampong I shot two lizards—one a species of *Varanus*, which I have not yet identified, and the other a burrowing lizard feeding on vegetable substances, and which will probably prove to be *Liolepis guttatus* or a closely-affined species. A few insects were obtained at this spot, but none calling for particular notice.

Kelantan differs considerably from Tringganu, in that at the latter place fishing seems to be the chief industry. The manufacture of sarongs, krisses, &c., is largely carried on, while to agriculture but small attention seems to be paid. At Kelantan it is different, the people being apparently chiefly agriculturists, paddy and coco-nuts being extensively grown, Indian corn and tobacco to a lesser extent, and such minor products as croton and castor-oil seeds are not overlooked. Buffaloes and cattle are numerous, and the sheep *are* sheep, not the miserable hybrid-looking animals called sheep in Tringganu and Pekan. Poultry is abundant, and fine large fowls cost about five cents each. Fishing is carried on to only a small extent, and sarongs, krisses, &c. are not made, these being imported from Tringganu. In Kelantan, as in Tringganu, the women, though Mahomedans, mingle freely with the men, and are not in the least shy. The inhabitants very markedly show the admixture of Siamese blood, and this is specially noticeable in the women, who are above the

average height of the Malays, some indeed being very tall, and men, women, and children, instead of, like the Malays, being shy, retiring, and silent, are vivacious, talkative, and rather forward.

The banks of the Kelantan River are very beautiful; the admixture of coco-nuts and clumps of bamboos, with stretches of bright green paddy, with a back ground of dark forest, makes a pretty picture. The coinage differs from Pahang, consisting only of the silver dollar and small circular tin coins, about the size of, but not so thick as a cent with a hole in the centre. Five hundred of these coins are the equivalent of a dollar. Copper cents, or the smaller silver parts of a dollar, are not accepted.

Got back to the steamer about noon, and left in the afternoon for the Cheranting River, where we arrived at 8 A. M. the next morning (Sunday, the 25th).

The river is situated at the head of a fine bay, but is a miserably small stream, with its mouth completely blocked up with fallen trees, and with only sufficient water to float a dug-out drawing but a few inches of water. Landed on the right bank just at the entrance of the stream, and stayed a short time on shore. Tracks of game, such as deer, pigs, tiger, and peacock, were numerous along the beach, but we did not actually see anything. I obtained two shore plover, which were interesting, shewing as they did the remains of the rufous breeding plumage. One was the larger shore plover (*Ægialitis geoffroyi*), the other the lesser shore plover (*Ægialitis mongola*). The most northern point where these birds have been found breeding is in Siberia, on the banks of the Yenesei.

After lunch started for the Rumpin River, fifty miles south of Cheranting, and twenty to the north of the Endau River, the boundary between Johor and Pahang. Anchored about 7 P.M., off the mouth and about four miles from shore.

On Monday, the 26th, at 5.30 P.M., steamed close in to shore, and landed on the right bank, where a Police Station is being erected. His Excellency and Mr. RODGER proceeded up the river to the Settlement, about twenty minutes'

steam in the launch. This was quite the best collecting-ground I had met with ; birds were numerous, and the sandy soil round the new station was full of the burrowing lizards (*Liolepis*). I obtained six fine specimens. Of birds, I got four specimens of the beautiful tree swifts (*Dendrochelidon comatus* and *D. longipennis*). I also got male and female of an aberrant cuckoo (*Phænicophaës erythrognaethus*). The plumage in both sexes of this species is alike, but the irides of the male are pale blue, those of the female bright yellow. I obtained also a number of other species of birds.

We returned to the steamer about 10 A.M., and started almost immediately back for Kwala Pahang, where we arrived at 5 P. M., and there Mr. RODGER left to return. We then steamed south *en route* for Singapore, where we arrived at 9.20 A. M. on Tuesday.

The coast-line between the Cheranting and Rompin Rivers is very fine, the hills coming in many cases to the water's edge, and tier above tier rising away into the interior. In some cases the hills that we could see in the far distance must have been from eight to ten thousand feet high. On Pulau Tioman and in the Rumpin River mangrove was met with, but the other places visited seemed to be free from it. The beach, or rather only that portion of it covered during the N.E. monsoon, was covered with pumice-stone. In many places, as at Cheranting and Rumpin, the pieces were often about six inches across.

At Tringganu, on the beach, His Excellency the Governor collected a number of the shells of an oyster. These are so delicate and translucent that at first I mistook them for the scales of a large fish. They are small, barely two inches across, but as pearly on the outer as on the inner surface. His Excellency has kindly given me for the Museum the best pair he collected.

It was rather remarkable that during the entire trip no land snake was met with ; a few sea snakes were seen.

WM. DAVISON,

*Secretary, Raffles Library and Museum.*

*Singapore, 30th August, 1889.*



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