

DRAWN BY KENYON COX.

CEYLON SURF-BOATS, AT SINGAPORE.

ENGRAVED BY GEORGE P. BARTLE.

LIFE IN THE MALAY PENINSULA.

AS a very young man, with no great knowledge of the world, I left London on May 24, 1882, for the Singapore Straits Settlement to engage in coffee-planting in the Malay Peninsula.

With me was my partner, who was acting as agent to his highness the Maharajah of Johore.

Journeying by way of Alexandria, Egypt, I first encountered a tropical climate at Colombo, Ceylon. This island possesses some of the finest scenery in India. The town of Kandy, situated on the highest point of the island, is Arabi Pasha's place of exile, where he is allowed by the British Government every luxury except his freedom. Having to wait three days in port during the coaling of our steamer, I went, in company with our captain and some of the passengers, to a native village called Mount Lavina, where we saw the native women gathering the coffee-berry from the tree. The Singhalese are a prepossessing race, their ways and customs being exceedingly gentle. They deal much in precious stones, the sapphire being among the jewels largely found in Ceylon.

We left Ceylon for Singapore on a Tuesday evening, and arrived there the Wednesday of the

following week. I was much impressed by the beauty of the harbor. I was met by the European secretary to the Maharajah of Johore, who conducted me to the *Hôtel de l'Europe*, where I remained for a short time before proceeding to Johore. The town of Singapore is very peculiar; the houses are only one story high, and have no chimneys or fire-grates. The community is cosmopolitan, and includes Chinese, Javanese, Siamese, Malays, and Japanese. At that time the native population was about 300,000, with only 350 Europeans. The new town of Singapore was founded in 1822 by Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles, a statue of whom was unveiled during the jubilee of Queen Victoria. There was great rejoicing among the natives, especially the Chinese, who organized a procession of lanterns three miles long.

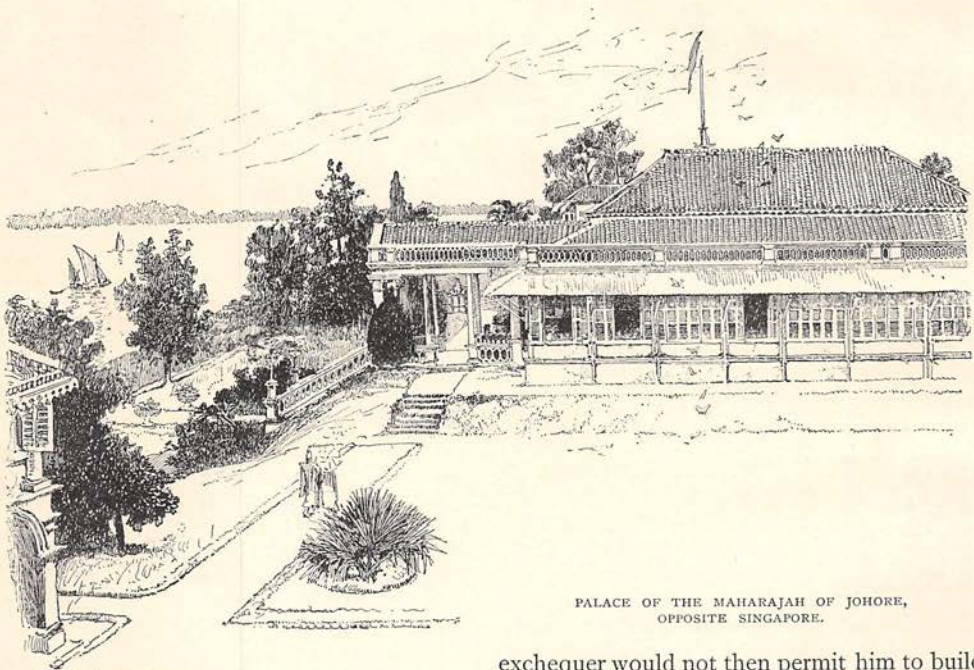
After a few days in Singapore we were joined by Prince Mat, nephew of the Maharajah of Johore, and commissioner of police. At this time the Maharajah contemplated the construction of a railroad in his domain, and I had been commissioned to confer with his Majesty upon the subject on behalf of a prominent London railroad contractor. Accordingly, without loss of time I requested an audience with the

monarch. The English secretary of the King introduced me to the native secretary, Datu Ama. After tiffin, or luncheon, Datu showed me through the palace grounds, and then conducted me to the King's audience-chamber, a spacious apartment.

The palace of Istana is built of wood upon a brick foundation, and is finished in the inside in Italian marble. The building is 160 feet long, one story high, and stands in an inclosure. The palace is reached by a long circular driveway like a coiled watch-spring. A magnificent garden surrounds the palace, in the rear of which is a fine menagerie.

and a cigar, which he took from a gold case that was presented to him by the Prince of Wales. At that time he was fifty years of age.

After I had remained standing a few minutes his Majesty invited me to be seated, himself taking a seat upon a chair, and beckoning his servants to give him a cigarette. In answer to his invitation to take refreshments, I took a popular English drink, while he, as the head of the established Mohammedan church, and therefore an abstainer, drank lemonade. He spoke English very well, but upon that occasion, which was supposed to be formal, he spoke Malay. He informed me that the state of his



DRAWN BY HARRY FENN.

PALACE OF THE MAHARAJAH OF JOHORE,
OPPOSITE SINGAPORE.

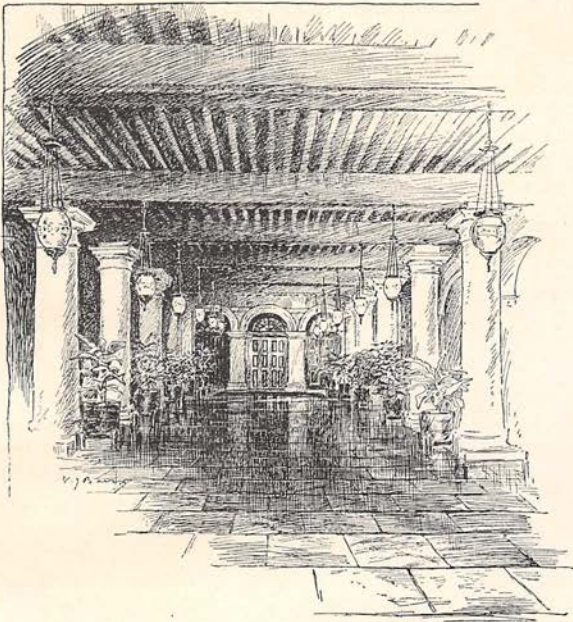
Datu and I waited a full hour in the audience-chamber before his Majesty deigned to appear. When he came he was followed by two servants, one of whom carried a silver case full of cigarettes, and the other a small match-case. His Majesty was dressed in a loose white-silk blouse and a pale blue-silk skirt. Tan-colored and jeweled sandals incased his feet, and his white curly hair was worn short. His large white mustache was curly, and his eyebrows were bushy. Upon the wrist of the right hand he wore a cable bangle, which I afterward learned weighed six ounces.

I arose and bowed, and King Aboubaker approached smilingly and extended his hand, which I shook. He spoke in Malay, and the court interpreter repeated his words of welcome. He immediately offered refreshments,

exchequer would not then permit him to build the proposed railway, but added that a warm welcome would always await me at the palace. During a five years' residence in Johore I often played billiards with him, his passion for the game being about as strong as his love of the chase, particularly of tiger-hunting.

After the audience I was shown the palace by Datu. This official residence overlooks the Straits of Malacca, and is directly opposite Singapore. It consists of suites of apartments, with quarters for bachelors on one side, and for married guests upon the other, for his Majesty entertains a great many people.

The Maharajah also bears the title of Sultan of Johore, through the courtesy of Queen Victoria, Empress of India, of which Johore is an independent state. The Maharajah occupies a suite of only three rooms, one of which leads into his harem.



DRAWN BY W. J. BAER.

MARBLE HALL OF THE PALACE.

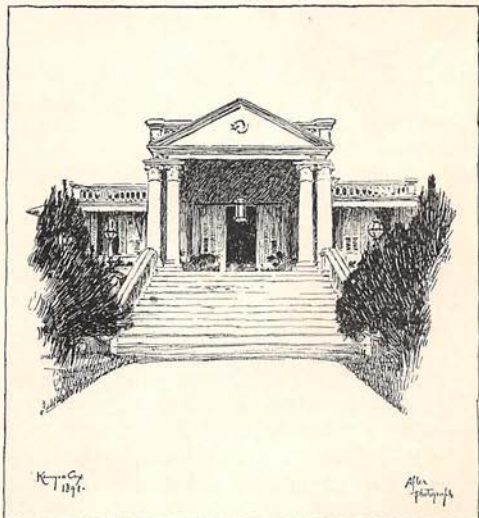
The harem is a separate building of white marble, one story high, and decorated with flowers and palms. There is a large square room in the center of the building, and about it are some fifty sleeping-rooms. His forty wives were mostly Circassians, who had been purchased by him. The Sultana, or legal wife, resided at the palace of Maor, some two hundred miles from the palace of her lord, with whom she had not been on good terms for ten years. Her children, the official princes and princess, were two boys and a girl.

I once got into the harem by accident, but my stay was very short. I wished to see the Maharajah on business. There was always a great deal of fuss in trying to see him, and I thought to avoid this by going around to a side door and entering quietly. This I did, and suddenly found myself in the harem. There was an officer there in charge of the women, and when he saw me he called out, asking what I was doing there. It is needless to say that I turned, and made my way out as quickly as possible. The interior of the harem was very beautiful. Handsome lamps hung from the ceiling, pictures of female beauty covered the walls, and the floors were strewn with rich rugs. There were also fountains and burning incense. The women appeared to be sitting about smoking and tossing jewelry. However, I was so astounded at finding myself in such a place that I took very little notice of my surroundings. It is very difficult even for ladies to gain admission to the harem. My wife tried to do so several

times, but without success. Every Monday the Sultan holds a levee for women, to receive their grievances and to listen to their grievances. They assemble at 6 A. M., and when his Majesty arrives, the women fall upon their faces, and exclaim, "Our King!"

The Maharajah is now much more civilized than he was twenty years ago. Before the English went to Johore he lived in a mud hut, and ate without the aid of knife or fork, and did not know the value of his income. He now speaks English. His income is derived from the plantations, and from his share of the profits of the tin-mines. There are no duties on exports. He is really a landlord, and has a certain percentage of all the profits of the land. He lives more at Singapore than at Johore. At the former place he keeps his horses, of which he has many valuable ones. He goes heavily into racing. He goes to Johore only on fast- and feast-days, and to visit the people, who are much disappointed if he does not come as often as they think he ought.

He is very good and kind to the people, and will do almost anything they wish. There is not a single beggar in the whole place—that is, among the Malays. They are all pensioned. The police and magistrates get a salary, which is drawn once a month. The relation between Singapore and Johore is about the same as that between London and Ireland. The Maharajah owns land at Singapore, but has nothing to do with the government; yet as to rank he is recognized as next to the Governor. When he



DRAWN BY KENYON COX.

PORTICO OF THE HAREM.

dies all his possessions will go to the English government.

Two gunboats and an army of five hundred men were the force at the command of the Government. The climate is damp, and the thermometer ranges from eighty to one hundred degrees all the year round, and there is a great deal of malaria. The soil is red

nine months to mature, and has a strawberry flavor; yet it has an odor so disagreeable that during my first three years in the country I was unable to taste it. The soursopp is an acidulated fruit resembling in size and shape the pineapple. It is green in color, and grows in the forks of the branches of the tree, which reaches the height of the beech. The chief

minerals are tin and gold. All the luxuries of the East, its delicious fruits, and other products, furnish little compensation for the torture of such a climate, and for the fearful fever produced through the excessive heat and dampness.

In stature the Malay is short and thick-set; he has a flat nose, and his skin is copper-colored. His hair is long and silky. Ordinarily the dress of men and women is the *sarong*, or skirt, with a blouse for an upper garment, but "up country" neither men nor women wear clothing. A black velvet turban commonly adorns the heads of the men, but the women have no head-dress. Their teeth are uniformly good, but both beaus and belles stain them black.

The Malays are devoted followers of Mahomet. They refrain from eating

pork, or meat killed by other than Malays, and do not take alcoholic drinks. They are subject to a kind of madness called "running a-muck," which often occurs when a man is in the best of health; for I remember once that in one of the most thickly populated streets in Johore a man was seized with an attack of this malady, which resulted in his killing five people before he could be overpowered.

Malay huts are usually built upon bamboo piles over the water. They are constructed of ra-



DRAWN BY MALCOLM FRASER

DURIAN FRUIT.

and fertile, and many people live by cultivating sago and ratan. They do not plant the trees, but merely cultivate those that are already growing. The foliage is magnificent. Pineapples, mangos, and bananas grow wild. The most remarkable fruit indigenous to the country is the durian. This tree grows to a height of sixty feet, spreading like an oak, and taking seven years to mature. After the seventh year it bears once a year. The fruit is large and of a light green color. It takes



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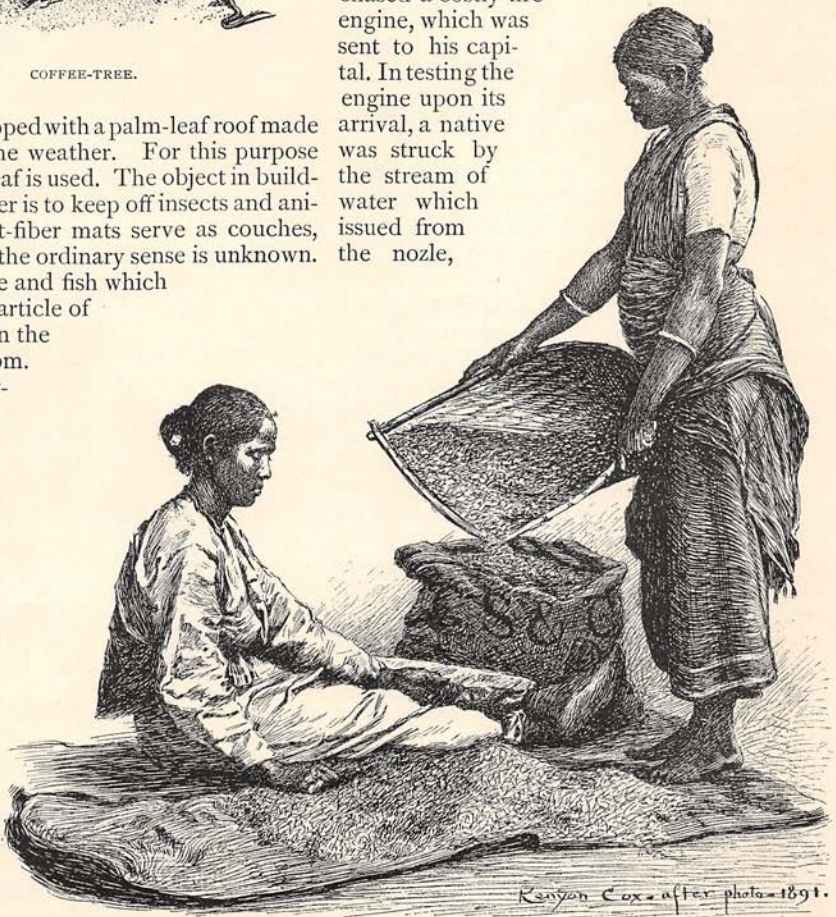
COFFEE-TREE.

tan laths, and topped with a palm-leaf roof made impervious to the weather. For this purpose the sago-palm leaf is used. The object in building over the water is to keep off insects and animals. Coconut-fiber mats serve as couches, and furniture in the ordinary sense is unknown. The curry of rice and fish which forms the staple article of food is cooked in the middle of the room.

Early marriages are the rule, and the groom makes handsome presents to his father-in-law, which invariably include a sum of money. This money is not to be used by the bride's father, however, but must be kept for some emergency, such as divorce, in which case the portion is handed to the wife for her maintenance.

Incompetency in household matters, negligence, and incompatibility are good grounds for divorce, which is granted by the priest. Unfaithfulness on the part of the wife is invariably punished with death, and the punishment is horribly brutal. In this part of India there is a bamboo cane that grows more rapidly than a mushroom, its length increasing two feet in twenty-four hours. The executioner selects a young bamboo just sprouting from the ground, and whittles the end to a sharp point. The condemned woman is lashed to stakes over the bamboo, and in two days is impaled. Infidelity in the man is not punishable. Murder is punished with death by an instrument called the *kris*, a small sword with jagged blade. The steel is coarse and rough. The kris is kept with the crown jewels, and is a weapon almost sacredly revered.

Malays are superstitious in the extreme, as one instance will serve to illustrate. When the Maharajah was in London attending the Queen's jubilee, he purchased a costly fire-engine, which was sent to his capital. In testing the engine upon its arrival, a native was struck by the stream of water which issued from the nozzle,



Kenyon Cox - after photo - 1891.

DRAWN BY KENYON COX.

TEA-SORTERS.



DRAWN BY MALCOLM FRASER.

PART OF THE VILLAGE OF JOHORE—OPEN-AIR THEATER AT THE LEFT OF THE PICTURE.

and was whirled many feet, and killed. From that day the natives regarded it as a fetish, and refused to go near it.

The state of Johore has about fifty thousand inhabitants, the village itself from ten to eighteen thousand. A great many Chinese have lately gone there. The village of Johore is very much scattered, being little more than a series of groups of houses extending over several miles, with a few shops and open bazars and theaters. I once saw a Chinese performance in one of the theaters which lasted from six o'clock in the morning until nine in the evening. The play was a tragedy; the costumes were very elaborate, and were constantly changed. On feast-days performances go on continuously, and gifts of fruit are made to the assembled people. This is among the Chinese, who have settled here in great numbers, as workmen on the plantations. The Malays are too lazy to work, and so long as they can get fish and rice will not lift a hand. They get plenty of fish in the waters about, and part of these they exchange at the bazars for rice and other articles. These bazars are built of bamboo, and are thatched with dried palm-leaves. The reika-nut, which they chew, grows on the trees along the streets. Their boats, which they call *praus*, or proas, are built without nails,



DRAWN BY KENYON COX.

EAST INDIAN BANKER.

being put together with wooden pegs and ratan. Even the sails are made of palms sewed together with ratan. The cable is made of green ratan, and is very strong; the anchor is made of wood, weighted with two heavy stones at the flukes. The cable runs through a hole in the deck, below which it is coiled. When the anchor is taken up, four men pull at the cable, and one guides it into the hole.

Once a year, during the typhoons, all the houses along the water front are submerged.

of Singapore, and let it out at a greater interest than they pay to the banks. They lend both to the Malays and to the Chinese. The people mortgage their crops to the chitties, who sell them in Singapore. These chitties are very miserly, and keep their money in boxes, on which they sleep. They do not own the houses which they occupy, but rent them from the Malays. Perhaps fifty of them will live in one room. All business is done on credit. If you enter a bazar and call for refreshment, you do



DRAWN BY HARRY FENN.

MALAY HOUSES BUILT OVER THE WATER.

ENGRAVED BY C. W. CHADWICK.

Rest-houses are built by the Government, and serve as inns. No food is furnished, and the houses contain no furniture, but a cot is carried in, and on this the traveler spends the night. The key is kept at the police station. If a man is absent from home, and is overtaken by night before completing his business, it is not safe for him to go home, on account of the tigers which might be met on the road. The rest-houses are to be found at intervals of from eight to ten miles.

Among the people the Chinese are the principal merchants; the bankers, or *chitties*, as they are called, are men who have come from Bengal. These men borrow money from the banks

not pay for it in cash, but simply give what is called a *chit*, or note, which is redeemed on a certain date. If you take a cab for a drive through the place, the payment is made in the same way; you give the driver a *chit*, and tell him where and when to call for the cash. These *chits* are also used as currency, since they pass from one merchant to another at a discount. Of course *chits* are not accepted from people unless they are in a position to pay them. If one has no occupation he gets another to sign for him. When a debtor is brought before the court, if he can prove that he has no occupation or means of livelihood, the debt is canceled. With such a system the courts are kept



DRAWN BY HARRY FENN.

JUNGLE BETWEEN SINGAPORE AND JOHORE.

ENGRAVED BY F. H. WELLINGTON.

pretty busy. The chitties all dress alike, in thin linen. White marks on the chest and arms of the chitties show that they have said their prayers; marks on the arms signify that they have prayed during the evening, those on the breast that they have prayed in the morning. The chitties, who are Buddhists, and cannot pray without going to a temple, are not so conscientious as the Malays, who are Mohammedans. The chitties shave their heads, the Malays do not. Little booths are erected by the roadside for the Mohammedans to pray in. They are built by the Government. The Mohammedans have better churches than these, but they are used only on special days; they have a month of fasting during the year, in which they take no nourishment of any kind from six in the morning till six in the evening. At such times special houses are erected for worship.

The bungalow life in India was invented by the Europeans. It is a compromise between the East Indian and European methods of living. The bungalow shown on page 585 is about three miles from the Maharajah's palace.

This style of house is necessary on account of the climate. During the day the shutters are closed, and the sunlight is shut out entirely. A European, if he is wise, never goes out between the hours of eleven and three. The kitchen is separated from the house, with which it is connected by a covered passage. The sleeping-rooms are in the second story, and the dining-room and living-room are down-stairs. Singapore being so near the equator (within one degree), it is daylight at six in the morning and dark at six at night, the year round. Refreshments are served at half-past six in the morning, breakfast at eleven, dinner at seven. Some people take tiffin at half-past one, and tea at five in the afternoon. The Europeans who live in these bungalows are nearly all coffee-planters. They are now trying to raise tea, but the soil is better adapted to coffee-raising. The diet at a bungalow consists of curried chicken, rice, canned meats, and a large variety of fruit. It is seldom possible to procure fresh meat. During meal-time the punka — an immense fan fastened to the ceiling over the

table—is constantly kept in motion by a coolie. To a long bamboo pole is fastened a piece of cloth hanging like a curtain. The long pole passes through a hole in the side of the house and is kept in motion by the coolie outside. If it were not for this artificial circulation of air, a European could not eat with comfort.

There are many serpents in the jungle, which enter the houses in search of rats. Not more than one enters a house at a time—there is not living enough for two. They are not poisonous, but very strong, like a python, with diamond-shaped head and spotted breast. About ten miles from the bungalow mentioned is a very good sample of jungle, which is shown in the picture of a road on page 584. On this strip of road an English sailor who had come from Singapore was eaten by ants. He had been to Johore, where a Chinaman had served him with drink. He was probably overcome by the heat, and lay down. The ants had overpowered him in some way, and the next morning he was found dead.

Tigers have been caught in this jungle. Pits are dug for them not more than ten yards from the main road. Sometimes tigers come into the village, and they have been known to swim across to the island of Singapore. A Chinaman who worked a pepper plantation about midway between Singapore and Johore was one day lying down in his bungalow when, without any warning, he was suddenly in the jaws of a tiger, who left him headless a few yards from his home. The Government offers a bounty of \$500 for every tiger, dead or alive.

In trapping tigers for export the Malays dig a hole about ten feet deep, making the bottom twice as large in area as the top, to prevent the animal from jumping out after being once in. The hole completed, small brushwood is



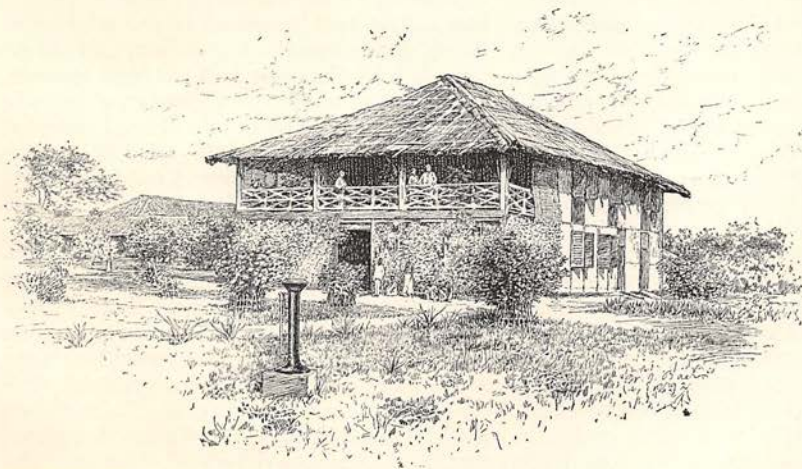
DRAWN BY KENYON COX.

NATIVE WOMAN OF JOHORE.

lightly laid over its surface, and close by in the direction of the mouth of the pit a bullock is chained to a tree. On seeing the bullock the tiger springs for his expected prey, and alights in the pit. A bamboo cage is placed over the pit, which is then filled with earth, the tiger gradually coming to the surface. Once in the cage, the Malays lace and interlace bamboo and ratan under the tiger. Spring-guns are some-

times used, but not often, as they are dangerous to dogs and human beings.

I once went on a tiger-hunt, but it ended in a buffalo-hunt. We organized a party of five Europeans and ten natives. We started on foot, because it is impossible to ride through the jungle on horseback. On finding a tiger's footprints, we



DRAWN BY W. J. BAER.

EUROPEAN BUNGALOW ON THE ROAD TO JOHORE.



DRAWN BY MALCOLM FRASER.

ON THE ROAD TO JOHORE.

ENGRAVED BY H. E. SYLVESTER.

followed them to a ravine, where the tiger had been drinking. Here we took our tiffin, and, while eating, heard groans which we thought were from the tiger. Following the sound, we saw an enormous man-eating tiger dashing away through the brush. Shots were fired without effect. On going farther, we discovered that he had found a buffalo, and had been making short work of him. These buffaloes are not like those found in America, but smaller, and more like an ox. Later this same tiger was caught in a trap. We knew it was the same, for not more than one is found near a village at a time. On an average four or five people were killed by tigers on this road in the course of a year. They generally seize their prey after dusk, and for this reason it is never safe to travel on these roads after six o'clock at night. It is said that a tiger often selects his man during the day, and perhaps follows him for miles, until overtaken by dusk, when he springs on him. Two gentlemen were once walking over a pineapple plantation, when they discovered that they were followed by a tiger. They were three miles from home, and, having nothing but shot-guns for weapons, could not fire at the animal. He kept at the same

distance behind them all the way, and they reached home before he attempted to attack. The natives are in constant terror of these animals, and it is almost impossible to send them out after dark. I have paid twenty dollars to a native for taking a message to the Maharajah after six o'clock at night.

There are many varieties of monkeys in Johore. The best specimen is the wow-wow, which stands upright like a man, and has no tail. It is buff in color, and has good features. I once found one that had broken a finger in jumping from one tree to another. I picked it up, and while in my arms it cried like a little child. They are never hunted, not being at all wild or fierce. The Malays sometimes catch them, and sell them in the towns as pets.

The waters about Johore are full of crocodiles. Small Malay children, while fishing from boats, often serve as food for them. Three gentlemen were once crossing the Straits to Singapore, when a breeze sprang up, and, the sail becoming unmanageable, their boat was overturned. One of the men was caught by a crocodile, and when his body was afterward found it was discovered that the leg had been bitten off at the hip. The Government pays a bounty of \$25 for every

crocodile that is killed. For snakes it pays \$1 a foot. The python is often thirty-eight or forty feet long. I saw one brought into a village for bounty that was about a foot in diameter.

The Malays are inclined to be conservative, and have little social intercourse. On their Sunday, which falls on our Friday, they quit work at twelve o'clock, and go to the mosque.

The principal industry among the Europeans is the planting of coffee. The first thing

ceed seven feet in height; but, if permitted, they attain the height of twenty feet without bearing fruit, while the root will destroy the other trees. When the berry is first developed it is very much like an olive, only round; when ready for picking it is red like a large cherry, having inside two stones, which are the coffee-beans. One tree like that on page 581 will produce about two bushels of unpulped coffee. The blossom remains twenty-four hours on the



DRAWN BY HARRY FENN.

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF JOHORE.

ENGRAVED BY HORACE BAKER.

to be done in opening up a coffee plantation is to secure from the Maharajah from 300 to 500 acres of jungle. The forest is fired, leaving nothing behind but skeleton trees, which are hewn down and allowed to rot, thus fertilizing the coffee. When the coffee-trees are six inches high they are set out in rows four feet apart. Three years elapse from the date of planting to that of bearing. The blossom is pure white, and in fragrance like stephanotis. The trees are kept pruned so as not to ex-

tree, then it falls, and a month thereafter the berries are mature. The coffee-tree flowers twice a year, and usually produces two crops. The berries, after picking, are taken to the pulping-house, where the husk or skin is taken off, and then placed in sheds to ferment; here they remain for ten or fifteen days, being afterward taken to the peeler and washer, and dried on ratan matting, and afterward conveyed to the storage shed, where they are packed in bags for shipping.

John Fairlie.