



Twenty Years in Borneo

CHARLES BRUCE

TWENTY YEARS IN BORNEO

By
CHARLES BRUCE

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NICKEN

FOREWORD

THE stories in this book are intended to record the lighter side of life in the tropics. They have one virtue, that of accuracy in substance.

The photographs are reproductions from a collection which was started in my first month in Borneo, and is still growing. My own efforts contributed to the collection, but the bulk of it is the result of importunity and the kindness of fellow-photographers. In cases where I am certain of the origin of a photograph, I have made acknowledgment; in others, a faulty memory, and not discourtesy, must be my excuse for the omission. In all cases I tender my deepest gratitude.

C. B.

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TWENTY YEARS IN BORNEO

CHAPTER I

JOURNEY TO SINGAPORE—ARRIVAL AT SANDAKAN

TOWARDS the end of 1901 I heard casually that there was a vacancy for an officer in the Armed Constabulary of North Borneo. My career up to this time had included a year serving articles in a solicitor's office, some months variously employed in Canada as a "chore-boy" on a farm, as a cook in a lumber camp and as a paper-seller on a train, and, finally, some six months as articled clerk to an accountant. I had, it is true, been a member of the Rugby School Cadet Corps and had held a commission for a year in a volunteer battalion of the Royal Fusiliers, but the sum total does not sound like very adequate preparation for the profession of arms. However, nothing venture nothing have, and in October, 1901, I presented myself before the Court of Directors of the British North Borneo Company and was shipped off within a fortnight, nominally as a "general utility" cadet in the Company's service, but actually destined for duty with the Constabulary of the State of North Borneo.