

The Lure of the Unknown Land.

THRILLING ADVENTURES IN SOUTH AMERICA—WHERE CANNIBALISM STILL PREVAILS.

BASED altogether on personal experience, a strange, stirring book of exploration and adventure of recent times is the simple narrative, "In the Amazon Jungle." Fascinating throughout, it rivets attention on a vast region of horror-infested jungles which white man had never penetrated before. There, we are told, is gold to be dug and rubber forests to be commercialised—at the risk of life every foot of the way. It is a rich field for the explorer-pro prospector of the future. Mr. A. Lange, the writer, travelled over 2,200 miles up the Amazon to spend some time with a medical friend at a village on stilt, Remate de Males, or "Culmination of Evils," a free translation and quite fitting the fevered town so built above its muddy foundation. Later he joined a party of rubber hunters, wandering far into the unknown jungle. A few of the party managed to return, but of the remaining members the author was the sole survivor.

Civilisation is still in its infancy among the rubber-workers at Remate de Males, but love of finery and fashion has set its stamp on the women in the most amusing manner. We get this picturesque glimpse of the natives:

"The rubber-worker is a well-paid labourer even though he belongs to the unskilled class. The tapping of the rubber trees and the smoking of the milk pays from eight to ten dollars a day in American gold. This, to him, of course, is riches, and the men labour here in order that they may go back to their own province as wealthy men. Nothing else will yield this return; the land is not used for other products. It is hard to see how agriculture or cattle-raising could be carried on in this region, and, if they could, they would certainly not return more than one-fourth or one-fifth of what the rubber industry does. The owners of the great rubber estates, or seringales, are enormously wealthy men.

"There are fewer women than men in Remate de Males, and none of the former is beautiful. They are for the most part Indians or Brazilians from the province of Ceara, with very dark skin, hair, and eyes, and teeth filed like shark's teeth. They go barefooted, as a rule. Here you will find all the incongruities typical of a race taking the first step in civilisation. The women show in their dress how the well-paid men lavish on them the extravagances that appeal to the lingering savage left in their simple natures.

"Women, who have spent most of their isolated lives in utterly uncivilised surroundings, will suddenly be brought into a community where other women are found, and immediately the instinct of self-adornment is brought into full play. Each of them falls under the sway of 'Dame Fashion'—for there are the latest things, even on the upper Amazon. Screaming colours are favoured; a red skirt with green stars was considered at one time the height of fashion, until an inventive woman discovered that yellow dots could also be worked in. In addition to these dresses, the women will squander money on elegant patent-leather French slippers (with which they generally neglect to wear stockings) and use silk handkerchiefs perfumed with the finest Parisian eau de Cologne, bought at a cost of from fourteen to fifteen dollars a bottle. Arrayed in all her glory on some gala occasion, the whole effect enhanced by the use of a short pipe from which she blows volumes of smoke, the woman of Remate de Males is a unique sight."

Rough surgery became a stern necessity, and combined with clean living and the wonderful forces of nature it is not surprising that it proved successful. We find the notable case of a native woman whose arm had become so badly infected that removal of a portion of it was undertaken as a last resort in an effort to save her life. Despite the author's fears, the outcome was most happy:

"We went to the room and got the history and the forepaw given me by a medical friend before I left home. Besides these, I took some corrosive sublimate, intended for the preparation of

animal skins, and some photographic dials. The secretary, after a search produced an old and rusty hacksaw as the only instrument the estate could furnish. This we cleaned as carefully as possible with cloths and then immersed it in a solution of sublimate. Before going to the patient's hut I asked the owner and the woman's husband if they were reconciled to my attempt and would not hold me responsible in case of death. They answered that, as the woman was otherwise going to die, we were entirely right in doing whatever we could. I found the patient placidly smoking a pipe, her injured arm over the edge of the hammock. By this time she understood that she was to have her arm amputated by a surgical novice. She seemed not to be greatly concerned over the matter, and went on smoking her pipe while we made the arrangements. We placed her on the floor and told her to lie still. We adjusted some rubber cloth under the dead arm. Her husband and three children stood watching with expressionless faces. Two monkeys, tied to a board in a corner, were playing and fighting together. A large parrot was making discursive comment on the whole affair, while a little lame dog seemed to be the most interested spectator. The secretary took the history

were spellbound unable to move a step farther or even to think or act on my own initiative.

"The snake still made no move, but in the clear moonlight I could see its body expand and contract in breathing; its yellow eyes seemed to radiate a phosphorescent light. I felt no fear nor any inclination to retreat, yet I was now facing a beast that few men had ever succeeded in seeing. Thus we stood looking at each other, scarcely moving an eyelid, while the great silent monster looked at us. I slid my right hand down to the holster of my automatic pistol, the 9mm. Luger, and slowly removed the safety lock, at the same time staring into the faces of the men. In this manner I was less under the spell of the mesmerism of the snake, and could to some extent think and act. I wheeled around while I still held control of my faculties, and, perceiving a slight movement of the snake's coils, I fired point blank at the head, letting go the entire chamber of soft-nose bullets. Instantly the other men woke up from their trance and in their turn fired, emptying their Winchester into the huge head, which by this time was raised to a great height above us, loudly hissing in agony.

"Our wild yelling echoed through the deep forest. The snake uncoiled itself and writhing with pain made for the water's edge. By this time we were relieved of the terrible suspense, but we took care to keep at a respectful distance from the struggling reptile and the powerful lashing of its tail, which would have killed a man with one blow.

"After half an hour the struggles grew weaker, yet we hesitated to approach even when it seemed quiet and had its head and a portion of body submerged in the water. We decided to stay through the night and wait here a day,

a signal of trouble among these Indians."

Instantly the words of Cowper, "Blythe as shepherd at a wake," leap to my mind as the writer describes the wretched scene following the death of a child:

"The body was then brought in and dressed in a white robe adorned with pink, yellow, and sky-blue silk ribbons. Loose leaves and branches were being taken not to conceal any of the fancy silk ribbons. Empty whisky and gin bottles were placed round the bier, a candle stuck in the mouth of each bottle, and then the whole thing was lighted up.

"It was now getting dark fast, and as the doors were wide open, a great crowd was soon attracted by the brilliant display. All the '400' of the little rubber town seemed to pour in a steady stream into the dining-room. It was a new experience, even in this hotel, where I had eaten with water up to my knees, to take a meal with a funeral going on three feet away. We had to partake of our food with the body close by and the candle smoke blowing in our faces, adding more local colour to our jerked beef and beans than was desirable. More and more people came in to pay their respects to the child that hardly any one had known while it was alive. Through it all the mother sat on a trunk in a corner peacefully smoking her pipe evidently proud of the celebration that was going on in honour of her deceased offspring.

"The kitchen boy brought in a large tray with cups of steaming coffee; biscuits also were carried around to the spectators who sat against the wall on wooden boxes. The women seemed to get the most enjoyment out of the mourning, drinking black coffee, smoking their pipes, and paying little attention to the cause of their being there, only too happy to have an official occasion to show off their finest sticks. The men had assembled around the other table, which had been cleared in the meantime, and they soon sent the boy out for whisky and beer, passing away the time playing cards.

"There was nothing for me to do but submit and make the best of it. All night the mourners went on, the women drinking black coffee, while the men gambled and drank whisky in great quantities, the empty bottles being employed immediately as additional candlesticks. Towards morning, due to their heroic efforts, a multitude of bottles totally obliterated the "lit de parade" from view. I managed to fall asleep completely exhausted when the guests finally went off at nine o'clock. The doctor diagnosed the case of the dead child as chronic indigestion, the result of the mother's feeding a three-month-old infant on jerked beef and black beans."

While among these strange people Mr. Lange was forced to witness their horrible cannibalistic orgies, following the capturing and slaying of unarming Peruvians, though no endeavor was made to induce him to participate in the feasting. When a small army of the Peruvians came against the Mangeroimas the writer marched to the front with his hosts, and only his good weapon and sure aim saved his life.

"Now, however, a cachaço, with a large bloody machete in his hand, sprang from behind a tree and made straight for me. I dodged behind another tree and saw how the branches were swept aside as he rushed towards me.

"Then I fired point-blank, sending three bullets into his head. He fell on his face at my feet. As I bent over him I saw that he had a blow-gun arrow in his left thigh; he was therefore a doomed man before he attacked me. This was my first and only victim during this brief but horrible slaughter. As I was already thoroughly sick from the noise of cracking rifles and the thumping of clubs smashing their way into the brains of the Peruvians, I rushed toward the centre of the valley where the first attack on the advance guard of the enemy had taken place, but even more revolting was the sight that revealed itself. Here and there bushes were gnawing as some cacacha crawled along on all fours in his death agony. Those who were struck by the blow-gun arrows seemed simply to fall asleep without much pain of struggle, but the victims of the clubmen and the bow-and-arrow men had a terrible death. They could not die by the merciful wound-in-poison, like those shot by the blow-gun, but expired from hemorrhages caused by the injuries of the ruler weapons." "In the Amazon Jungle," by Algot Lange, New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons.



Boarder: This egg doesn't smell very nice.
Landlady: You'll be expecting a bottle of Cologne soon with each egg!

from the bowl containing the sublimate and handed it to me with a bow. With a piece of cotton I washed the intended spot of operation and traced a line with a pencil on the arm.

"Imagine with what emotions I worked! After we had once started, however, we forgot everything except the success of our operation. I omit a description of the details, as they might prove too gruesome. The woman fainted from shock just before we touched the bone—nature thus supplying an effective, if rude, anaesthetic. We had forgotten about sewing together the flesh, and when we came to this a boy was dispatched to the owner's house for a package of stout needles. These were held in the fire for a few seconds, and then immersed when cold in the sublimate before they were used to join the flesh. By the time it was done, I was, myself, feeling very sick. Finally I could stand the little room of torture no longer, and left the secretary dressing the wound."

Every foot of the way was fraught with danger, but nowhere do we find a more shivery, thrilling adventure than befell the party one night, while paddling close inshore, when a fifty-six-foot box constrictor was discovered:

"On a soft, muddy sand-bar, half hidden by dead branches, I beheld a somewhat cone-shaped mass about seven feet in height. From the base of this came the neck and head of the snake, flat on the ground, with beady eyes staring at us as we slowly advanced and stopped. The snake was coiled, forming an enormous pile of roundly scaly monstrosity, large enough to crush us all to death at once. We had stopped at a distance of about fifteen feet from him, and looked at each other. I felt as if I

as I was very anxious to skin the snake and take the trophy home to the States as a souvenir of a night's adventure in this far off jungle of the Amazon. We went up in the bushes and lit a fire, suspended our hammocks to some tree trunks, and slept soundly not more than ten yards from the dying leviathan."

"Death lurks in the most unexpected shapes in the jungle country, for even the water is thoughtfully poisoned by the Mangeroimas, that they may with the least possible inconvenience to themselves, hasten the departure from the world of their enemies. Ignorance of this fact nearly cost the author his life.

"One morning I had been tramping through the jungle with two companions who were in search of game, and I was very tired and hot when we came to a little stream which I took to be the same that ran past the maloca. My friends were at a short distance from me, beating their way through the underbrush, when I stooped to quench my thirst. The cool water looked to me like the very Elixir of Life. At that moment, literally speaking, I was only two inches from death. Hearing a sharp cry behind me I turned slightly to feel a rough hand upon my shoulders and found myself flung backwards on the ground.

"Poison" was the reply to my angry question. Then my friend explained, and as he talked my knees wobbled, and I turned pale. It seems that the Mangeroimas often poison the streams below the drinking places in order to get rid of their enemies. In the present case there had been a rumour that a party of Peruvian rubber-workers might be coming up the creek, and this is always