

up. At last he was openly taunted by the man who headed the mutineers, with either being afraid of, or having sold his authority to, the soldiers. It was at this moment that the loud, angry words had reached our ears in the room at the end of the hall, where we sat pursuing our game of whist. The sound of our running feet down the hall had confirmed the lieutenant in his theory. Instantly he conceived the project of killing the captain, who had, as he at once decided, betrayed them. But the captain was as quick as his opponent, and dealt a blow with his knife which pierced the lieutenant's side just as a dagger was driven into his own heart, and he fell dead just as Archer entered the room. The light was put out by one man who had presence of mind

enough to do this, while another shot the bolt of the door.

The wounded man escaped with the help of his two companions in the skiff in which they had paddled up to the garden of La Casa de las Brujas. But his hurt was mortal. He lived only a few days. Before his death he told the story to the padre.

Our adventure and the consequent departure of the band made our presence no longer necessary, and after another month of inaction we were ordered home. We had effected our object, though not by the methods we had hoped would bring us military glory; and the birds of prey ceased their depredations on either side of the line for many a day. The master spirits had effected their own annihilation.

A TAPIR HUNT.

BY GUY E. MITCHELL.



SEVERAL years ago, when I was at San Juan, Nicaragua, making collections in natural history, I made the acquaintance of a German, named Boltzen, who owned a ranch some miles up the San Juan River; and upon learning that I was interested in natural history and very anxious to obtain specimens of birds from different sections of the country, he invited me to accompany him to his ranch and spend a week or more with him. As the bird life of Central America is very diversified, and a slight change of locality will bring the collector into contact with many entirely different species of both bird and animal life, I gladly accepted his offer and prepared for the trip.

He had come down the river in a large canoe, bringing with him some hundreds of pounds of rubber, and his return cargo was to consist almost entirely of Jamaica rum. He informed me, during the passage, how he managed in trading his rum for rubber. His ranch was on a tributary of the San Juan River. It consisted simply of a

small clearing where he had growing some plantains, sweet potatoes, and a few coconuts; and there he lived with his wife and a couple of native negroes in a palm-thatched house, built of logs and bamboo. The surrounding country was extremely wild, and far back of the stream grew many wild rubber trees. Small companies of native Spaniards were constantly searching these forests, making a business of tapping the rubber trees from which they procured the mercantile article, passing Boltzen's ranch in their canoes in ascending the stream, and again in returning, laden with their cargoes.

The Dutchman's life was an easy one, spent in hunting, fishing, and swinging lazily in his hammock during the heat of the day; but he always kept a sharp lookout for any canoes returning to the coast town with supplies of rubber.

I greatly enjoyed the trip up the river; the current ran strong and swift, and the muscles on the bare arms and shoulders of the natives who paddled our canoe, rolled up in bunches as they threw their weight against the broad blades of their light paddles. It may be thought that mahogany is rather a heavy wood with which to construct paddles for all-day use, but as a matter of fact mahogany taken from the body

of the trees is quite light, and has the advantage of never becoming water-logged. The canoe in which we traveled was a dug-out, also made from a mahogany log. Mahogany is susceptible of a very hard and high finish under treatment with oil, which results in the impression that it is both heavy and hard, whereas it is neither.

Four or five hours of stiff paddling brought us to a point some twelve miles above the coast, when we switched off into a deep, narrow stream, on which the German's ranch was located. The latter we reached a couple of hours later. The passage up the dark waters of the Juanatassa was exciting and interesting. The impenetrable forest lined the shores, the low-hanging boughs of some of the trees being swept by the current, and in many places where the stream was contracted, the great trees formed a complete arch overhead. High up in these branches gay-colored birds fluttered and called to one another, paying but slight attention to us so far below them. Several times whole troops of green and yellow paroquets alighted on the trees close at hand and raised a deafening racket. Pairs of long-tailed macaws occasionally flew across openings in the foliage, uttering their harsh cries. We saw numerous alligators lying on small sand-spits at angles in the creek, and one of these I shot with my Winchester, striking him just back of the foreleg, his most vulnerable spot. The shot seemed a fatal one, but he simply dumped himself into the water and we saw no more of him. As plentiful as alligators are, it is really difficult to procure a skin, as they always roll off into the water and sink, no matter how deadly their wound.

In rounding one of the bends we came onto a broad expanse of water, quite shallow in places, and a thoroughly tropical scene greeted our eyes. Probably a thousand water birds of different kinds were engaged in feeding and sporting in the water. A couple of long-necked snake birds immediately plunged in the creek from an old snag near at hand, and dove out of sight. Farther beyond was a small group of giant storks standing in the water and watching for their prey. Near them a pair of beautiful roseate spoonbills stood pluming each other's feathers. A little beyond, a great flock of white egrets

and white and blue herons disported themselves in the water and flew about, alighting on snags and low branches of trees. The egrets rose in flight as we came in view, which was the signal for all the others to follow. Naturally these birds would have been very tame, allowing one to approach within easy gunshot, but since the Florida swamps have been depopulated of egrets, the hunters have taken to shooting the birds in Central America, and they are becoming very shy. Their feathers are highly prized for ladies' hats, and tens of thousands of these innocent birds are slaughtered yearly for this purpose. I chanced a rifle shot at one of the great storks, but without effect, except to start the whole flock of birds screaming and crying.

We reached Boltzen's ranch in the cool of the afternoon, and I found the place picturesque enough. We landed at a rude floating wharf with hinged steps leading up to the bank. The rivers in these countries are liable to rise with great rapidity, and if boats are tied in the ordinary way, they are in danger of being swamped and carried away by the flood, which comes on in a night. A plot of three or four acres was cleared away, and in its center stood the house. All about was the high wall of dark, impenetrable-looking forest.

I found Mrs. Boltzen a fat little Dutch woman. She greeted me in broken English and appeared delighted to see an American in "this heathenish civilization." Boltzen transferred his cargo of rum to one end of the cabin, which was closely barricaded and under lock and key. Then, after a smoke and stroll about the place, with a cursory view of the products of the tropics growing in their unrivaled luxuriance, we returned to a supper of rice and beans and hot tortillas, prepared by the frau, and supplemented with some excellent chocolate from Boltzen's own trees, prepared with condensed cream. Boltzen said to his wife and turning to me, "No tiene carne, Señora?" which I shall translate into "You have no meat, Madam?"

"Well, Herr Mitchell, to-morrow we will go out with Pedro here, and hunt some wari or wild hogs. I promise you good sport and plenty of meat, and perhaps we may fall in with a jaguar. I see you are a fair shot, but we had

better take our shotguns, as the bush is too thick for any long shots and the shotgun is best at close range."

"Thank you," I said. "I shall enjoy nothing better, but I think I will stick to the rifle if we are going for big game. I shoot better with a rifle, and I will let Pedro use my shotgun, loaded with slugs."

"Me no want gun," said Pedro, who was waiting on the table; "me take machete; no miss fire."

In the morning, after a hasty bite, we were out at daybreak, armed with guns and pistols, and a knife apiece. Pedro led the way, carrying only his machete. We plunged into the thick forest, following generally a small watercourse running between high banks, evidently a raging torrent in time of flood. In some places this spread out into a low swamp, supporting hundreds of great silico palm trees with shaggy trunks and immense fronds or leaves, I "paced off" one of these fronds which had fallen to the ground and found the mid-rib over forty feet in length. The rib itself was as large as a man's leg. We found many tracks of the wari under these trees. The hogs had been eating the palm seeds, of which they are very fond, although how they crack these ivory-like nuts is inconceivable.

Suddenly the Spaniard uttered a cry and started off on the track of a tapir, broadly marked in the soft mud. The great tracks led in an entirely different direction from our course, but we eagerly followed, hoping to get a shot at this noble quarry. The Spaniard dashed ahead at a rapid pace, cutting his way here and there among the vines and thick growth, and we followed as best we could, often sinking up to our boot-tops in the soft mud. After ten or fifteen minutes of this fatiguing work, the Spaniard proceeded more cautiously, uttering the single word "Close."

The sun by this time was well up and it was very hot. The woods seemed deserted and not a breath of wind stirred the leaves. I was completely soaked through with perspiration and was getting very thirsty, and in addition the mosquitoes. Were nearly eating us up. I was looking about for a water vine with which to quench my thirst, when the Spaniard gripped my arm like a vice and pointed to a dark spot in the trees. "Mountain cow," he whispered.

At this moment we heard a deep sigh of content, such as an old sow might utter; and moving ahead a few steps, there, in full sight, with her back to us, was an old tapir, lying in the cool mud, with a little calf about a month old playing about her, and splashing the mud on her sides. Every moment or two the mother gave a grunt of content.

The tapir is usually timid and extremely difficult to approach, but our experience proved the cow to be as courageous and dangerous in defense of her young as many a more vicious animal.

Boltdden immediately rushed up and with a loud halloo discharged his gun at the old tapir as she lay in her wallow. The shot striking her in her broad back did apparently no damage, for she bounded to her feet in an instant and dashed off through the thick underbrush, making a swath like a mowing machine and bearing down small saplings like reeds, as she crashed ahead. This animal, when excited, will go through a dense, tropical forest at full speed, bursting through tangled masses of vines and brambles that seem impenetrable. The calf started to follow its mother, but a shot from my rifle brought it to its knees. It vainly attempted to rise and follow the old one, but finally rolled over on its side, uttering plaintive cries of distress. I was about to dispatch it with another bullet when a renewed crashing in the forest announced the mother returning to her little one's assistance, and the Spaniard cried out:

"Look out! Mountain cow come back. She mad now; tramp you down."

"Gott im Himmel!" yelled Boltdden, firing both barrels of his gun the instant the tapir came into view. But the shots took no effect, other than to further enrage the animal. She ran to her calf for an instant, nosing over it with her long snout, and grunted encouragingly; but it only moaned feebly, and then like a flash she bore down upon us, her small eyes gleaming wickedly.

I took a steady aim and planted a bullet between her eyes, but it never stopped her, merely leaving a red scratch. By this time she was within ten yards of me and coming down the line like mad. Boltdden was useless; he could not get the empty shells out of his gun. I threw up the lever of my Winchester and forced another cartridge into the chamber. The



Painted for *OUTRIGGER* by James L. Weston.

"LIKE A FLASH SHE BORE DOWN ON US." (p. 500.)

enraged animal was coming straight at me and presented a miserable chance for a shot, only the head and rounded curves of the heavy-set body showing; and I had just had evidence of the thickness of the creature's retreating skull from my previous shot, which had apparently glanced off without damage. So I took accurate aim at the upper part of her foreleg, hoping to break or shatter the bone and get a chance to leap out of the way of her rush, and then get a shot at her side and reach some vital point.

If this shot did not succeed in stopping the animal, I judged that I would be trampled in the mud and the life stamped out of me. The tapir is built something like a small rhinoceros and has more strength in a rush than any other animal of the South American

continent. As I fired, I jumped aside as far as I could, dropping my gun and grabbing for my six-shooter. My aim, though, was true, and the tapir came tumbling toward me with her right foreleg broken and useless. But just at this exciting moment the Spaniard's form flashed in front of me; his keen machete gleamed in a blue circle above his head and descended on the neck of the unfortunate tapir with terrific force. On the instant he had leaped back and the tapir lurched over, the red blood gushing out from the great cut which the machete had made. The end was near. A bullet from my six-shooter, just back of the foreleg, reached a vital part and the brave animal stretched out in the soft mud with an expiring groan, dead; none too soon.



SPORTS OF THE SAMOANS.

BY LLEWELLA PIERCE CHURCHILL.

TIME is plentiful in the South Seas, and cares are few. For the idle islander the day goes lightly by, and, as the day, so glides life itself. A very little delving just to encourage a most lavish nature to yield up its store of food, a little fighting to give life a zest, a great deal of making of speeches. Even on such a lazy

schedule as this, there are great slices of time for which there are no pressing engagements. Part of the spare time the Samoan spends in sleep, part in watching the girls of the village at the dance, part in eating. Even then there is time to spare. Entertainment need interfere with no weightier concerns. Life has no engagement so important