

books that were chained down to the reading-desks. But the silence that the monks required in their writing-cells was so hard on the students that they preferred to have recourse to prayer and to sprinkling holy water over the bodies of the dead in the hope of attracting the attention of some wealthy passers-by.

Finally, students of the same country, after their hunger had overcome their natural feeling of humiliation, would send out two or three companions with

orders to go and beg their bread unashamed.

*Les bons enfants, orrez crier:  
Du pain! Mes veuil pas oublier!*

(Good people all, hark to my cry:  
Some bread, some bread! My wants supply!)

And so, wretched but proud, with a passion for learning that no disappointment could overcome, the students eked out a livelihood with their scant earnings, their economies, and what they could beg.

## A TRUE WAR-STORY

BY RENÉ BRANQUART

*[The author of the following incident is a Belgian physician, famous for his gigantic stature and his ready wit throughout his native province, and even in Paris.]*

From *Le Figaro*, December 26  
(PARIS RADICAL-PARTY DAILY)

« Ah, my dear fellow, that shell recalls the memory of the poor fellow who gave it to me after the Armistice, to thank me for my modest part in an adventure of which he had been one of the two heroes, in the opening days of the Great War. If you only knew what honest hands presented that to me.

Note the inscription on it: 'Souvenir of August 27, 1914.'

That day, when the streets of my little town were blocked with German soldiers, I received a visit from an individual 'dressed like four sous,' who timidly asked 'the favor of an audience,' which I naturally granted.

'Mossieu l' docteur,' he said with some hesitation, 'I am from Haine-Saint-Paul, where I was living with my wife, when I received orders to mobilize.

I have been a prisoner of the Germans for four days in the neighborhood of Dinant, and have just escaped.'

His sad and gentle gaze of a poor, hunted beast touched my heart.

'Can I talk with you safely?'

'Yes, indeed. Come in. You are at home here. You run no risks. So you say you were in the Belgian Army and were made prisoner by the Germans in the battle of Dinant?'

'Yes, with a Turco-Français that they caught at the same time. We were tied by the wrists, by a long strip of leather that cut into the flesh, to a piece of artillery that we had to follow, running when it ran, galloping when it galloped, stopping when it stopped. Both of us, the Turco and I, were often beaten with the flat sides of their

swords and the butts of their guns. They gave us a blow whenever they thought of it, Mossieu. And nothing to drink or to eat. That evening, the Boche column camped near Fosses, in the county of Namur. It drew its artillery up in a cut in a road that runs beside a cemetery. We were left tied to our gun, to pass the night standing.

'When the sentinel reached the end of his beat and turned his back on us for a moment, the Turco made a sign to me, and pointing to the pocket of his jacket whispered: 'Knife, here. Knife —' stopping abruptly when the sentinel turned, and swaying like a man who had fallen asleep standing. After great difficulty, I managed with my tied hands to get the little knife that the Germans had overlooked. Cautiously he cut the strips that held him. Then he stealthily grasped the brake handle of our gun. Holding it silently, he waited while the sentinel approached. As soon as the latter turned his back to us to repeat his beat, a frightful scene ensued.

'In the hands of the Turco the great steel bar made a quick half-turn, striking the sentinel on the helmet with such violence as to stun him. With the speed of lightning the Turco hurled himself at the throat of the unhappy soldier, and strangled him. With two quick slashes he then cut my bonds, and nimbly as an acrobat, without saying a word, leaped the wall and disappeared in the cemetery.

'I did the same. I jumped over, too. I could see him hopping from grave to grave. I followed and finally saw him climb the further wall. Then I heard him fall on the ground on the other side. I overtook him a little farther on, and we hastened on side by side for a time without saying a word. Then he whispered: "This goes better, old fellow. We can breathe now. But we must not let them pinch us again."

When the first flush of dawn appeared, we were crossing a turnip field. We pulled some and ate them, after washing them in a ditch, for we were ravenously hungry. It was the first bite of food either of us had had since the morning of the day before.

'Some fifty yards from us were two little huts. We waited. Finally the door opened and an old peasant came out, carrying two buckets. He passed without noticing us, and drew some water from a well a few yards from where we were lying. The Turco raised his head and said in a low voice: "Here, my good fellow."

'The man quickly turned, and his stolid, honest face reflected as much astonishment as it was capable of exhibiting.

"Have you some old duds?"

"What?"

"Yes, old chap, we are escaped prisoners. If they catch us they will give us something for our cold."

"Good, good. Just wait," said the old man, with an air of comprehension; and, by no means so calm as when he came out, he started away with his buckets. A few minutes later he returned with a bundle of mighty rough-looking garments, the kind of rags the poorest peasants wear; but I never saw clothes that looked better to me.

'We started off at a good rate toward Charleroi, when a man stopped us. "Hey, there, boys, I would advise you to stop right where you are."

"Why so, sir?"

"Because your boots give you away for soldiers. Come with me, and I will fix you up."

'We followed this good fellow, whose name I do not know, and whom I shall probably never see again. We left him our army boots, and started on shod in old but honest civilian shoes.

"Where are we?" asked the Turco.

"That is the town of Charleroi."

'He suddenly stopped, pricked up his ears, and seemed to be meditating for a second. Then he pointed his finger in the direction from which we could hear cannonading.

"French cannon, French cannon! Good-bye."

'And off he went, as fast as he could go, like a man who was afraid to get there too late, disappearing in the direction of the French cannon. Ah, but that was a man, *Mossieu l'docteur!*

'I stood undecided for a time as if I had lost something, and then decided to continue my route. Finally I got to the vicinity of Haine-Saint-Paul. It was a sore temptation. My wife and family were there. I was dying to tell them that I was alive and to give them my greetings. But it might be noticed, and if I should be captured again it would be all up with me. My heart was like lead. Then I happened to think that there was one man in the world who might prevent my being shot — you.'

'What is your name?'

'Eugène Motte, an ironworker.'

'Have you had anything to eat?'

'No, *Mossieu*. Except those turnips that I told you about, I have had nothing for four days.'

You can well imagine that I soon had food put before the poor fellow.

I hid him the best I could. He slept like a log, and the next day, rested and fed up, I took him with me. In fact, we treated ourselves to a glass of beer together in a café full of German officers, some of whom bowed to me because they knew me through my connection with the hospital. Then we left town, the German sentinel taking him for some poor, sick devil who had come to get some medicine.

So we walked down the road to a place where the enemy sentries could not see. Suddenly a thought came to me.

'Are you going to try to get to Antwerp and rejoin our army?'

'Yes, I hope to be there in two or three days.'

'If you are short, do not be bashful. I will do my best.'

'Thanks. It is unnecessary. I still have six or seven francs. That will be enough to get me back to my regiment.'

I watched him go down the road so self-reliant and undisturbed that I asked myself if this simple, modest, honest fellow really realized his own moral grandeur. When he was out of sight, I strolled back to the village, my mind busy with his future fortunes.

Some time after the Armistice, a man came into my office with a puzzling smile upon his face. He had a package wrapped in newspapers under his arm.

'*Bon jour, Mossieu l' docteur.*'

'Good morning, my friend. What good wind blows you here?'

'You do not recognize me. I am Eugène.'

'Ah, *sapristi!* Eugène Motte! Eh! What news?'

He related his experiences at the front. He had the same calm, untroubled voice that he had when he told me of his adventure with the Turco. He wound up his story thus:

'And to think that I came and hunted you up to escape being shot! What fools we were at the beginning of the war! Just the same, I have come to thank you, for you saved my life.'

When I tried to protest, and to say he exaggerated, he insisted with some show of emotion: 'Yes, *Mossieu*, I have said every week to M. le Docteur Stouffs at Nivelles, who was my military doctor and visited me every eight days: "If I live and can talk, I must thank Dr. Branquart." I beg you, *Mossieu*, do me the pleasure to accept this shell. I have decorated it especially for you and have engraved your initials on it.'

So you see, my lad, why I treasure the thing.

# CROCODILE HUNTING WITH THE MALAYS

BY R. G. B. FARRER

*From the National Review, January*  
(LONDON CONSERVATIVE MONTHLY)

ALONG the western coast of the Malay Peninsula stretches a belt of alluvial swamp, only broken here and there by occasional patches of sandy shore. The whole area is intersected by innumerable tidal creeks and channels, which run through the twisted tangle jungle and vast stretches of evil-smelling mud, so that there is little wonder that crocodiles abound in all sizes and in astonishing numbers.

Naturally some places are better than others for crocodile shooting, but usually, wherever it is, the tide has to be at about full ebb toward the middle of the day to get the best value from the expedition.

It was on a day such as this that I arranged with an old Malay to take his dugout, and to see what could be done. We started off at 7 A.M. and drifted down with the current and the tide, threading our way through countless channels, until the sun was well up and beginning to get uncomfortably warm. The mud flats had begun to show themselves. Still there were no crocodiles, as far as I could see, and yet I had a pair of field glasses, which were in continual use.

Suddenly, however, we rounded a sharp bend in a small creek, and I was assured that there was a croc lying under a tree not ten yards away. If I was urged to shoot once, I was urged twenty times, but as I failed to see anything I refused to shoot. Finally the noise of the admonitions grew to such an extent that the croc woke up, and lost no time in making for the water. I had just

time to fire. True the croc rolled over, but he also rolled into the water with a noisy splash and we never saw him again; so whether I hit him, or whether he lost his balance from excessive speed and fright, I shall never know.

It was no good waiting, so we went on, and shortly afterward came across a larger croc sleeping on a log. I did see this one and fired, catching him fairly in the head. All that happened was that the croc snapped once with his jaws, and toppling off the log slithered into the water.

After five hours' going we had met and severely tickled five crocodiles, the biggest of which must have been about nine feet. By this time it was remarkably hot, so we decided to pole our way up a diminutive creek to a place where from time to time crocodiles were in the habit of making their nests.

Presently we came to the place, and were lucky enough to find a nest in a clump of rank grass situated just above high-water mark. Mother Croc was n't there, but in the nest were thirteen whitish eggs, each rather bigger and longer than that of a hen. The place was well hidden and smeared with mud, which the mother crocodile is said to splash over the nest each day, in order to prevent damage on account of the excessive heat of the sun. We took the eggs; and as the spot was n't particularly pleasant in any way, we poled our way out and started for home, since we reckoned we could not now get back much before dusk. By this time the tide had turned and we saw no more