

**MALAYAN  
MONOCHROMES.  
[NEW YORK-1913]**

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Malayan Monochromes. [New York-1913] by Sir Hugh Clifford

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**SIR HUGH CLIFFORD**

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# MALAYAN MONOCHROMES

BY SIR HUGH CLIFFORD, K.C.M.G.

AUTHOR OF "STUDIES IN BROWN HUMANITY" "FURTHER INDIA"  
"THE DOWNFALL OF THE GODS" ETC.

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NEW YORK  
E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY

1913

TO  
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
SIR CECIL CLEMENTI SMITH, G.C.M.G., P.C.  
SOMETIME GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE  
STRAITS SETTLEMENTS,  
A CHIEF UNDER WHOM IT WAS AT ONCE  
AN EDUCATION  
AND A DELIGHT TO SERVE,  
THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR

271914

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## NOTE

Most of the stories contained in this book have already been published in various Magazines and Periodicals. I must record my thanks to the Proprietors of *Blackwood's Magazine*, *Temple Bar*, *Macmillan's Magazine*, and the *Graphic* for permission to reprint them.

H. C.

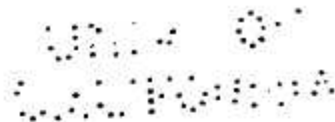


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# MALAYAN MONOCHROMES

## I

### MAT ARIF THE ELEMENTAL

THIS is the tale Mat Arif, the outlaw, told to me the night before he died. I sat with him in the condemned cell, for I had brought him comfort in the shape of tobacco and betel-quids, things for which his soul longed; and since, with Oriental philosophy, he bore no ill-will to the men who had doomed him to death, he was good enough to invite me to share these luxuries, and to bear him company for an hour or two. The little bare, boarded room, with the barred window high up in the wall running round two sides of it, was very quiet—so quiet that it gave one a feeling of isolation from the rest of humanity; and the soft tones of the outlaw, as he sat enjoying his smoke and chew with complete calm and obvious content, seemed to emphasise rather than to break upon the stillness. He was a big, sturdy fellow for a Malay, his beautifully built frame denoting both strength and activity. His strong, hard

face was deeply lined ; his eyes were bright and full of life, yet there was in them that look of settled, self-contained patience which is so characteristic of the Asiatic in the hour of adversity : they were the eyes of one who was staring inevitable death in the face very steadily, without fear, without curiosity, without even any great measure of reluctance. To me this man had about him something that was mysterious, terrible, haunting ; for though his figure was so instinct with force and with vitality, he sat there on the very brink of a gaping grave, and he knew it. Involuntarily my imagination conjured up hideous pictures of that which must befall him ere a dozen hours had sped : I saw him led forth ; I saw him blindfolded and pinioned ; I saw the executioner's hand grip the lever of the drop ; I saw my companion fall through the trap-door, straight as a plummet . . . *ugh!* Strive as I would, I was powerless to keep my mind from dwelling upon that ghastly sight ; and ever as Mat Arif spoke to me, the wraith of that awful Thing that was, yet was not, Mat Arif, came between me and his living face.

"It is like the chequer-game," he said, "and behold I am *mat*—check-mated. It hath been a good game and well-contested ; and though the end hath come, and I at last am worsted, I have had my share of play—ay, and of plunder too, for I have taken of the white men's pieces more than a pawn or two.