



Hikayat Abdullah
National Library, Singapore

Frontispiece of the Hikayat Abdullah
Ilustrasi depan Hikayat Abdullah

Abdullah, there were few animals in Singapore but there were thousands of rats all over and some were almost as large as cats. Many people were attacked by the rats when walking out at night. The rat situation grew so bad that Farquhar had to offer a reward for the killing of a rat. This initiative turned out to be very effective:

Maka pada tiap-tiap kali berkerumunlah orang membawa bangkai tikus ke rumah Tuan Farquhar. Pada seorang lima enam puluh dan yang ada enam tujuh ekor. Maka pada mula-mulanya hampir-hampir beribu tikus dibawa orang pada sepagi, sampai bertimbunlah bangkai itu, dibayar oleh Tuan Farquhar seperti perjanjiannya itu. Maka adalah enam tujuh hari demikianlah. Dilihatnya terlalu banyak juga. Maka ditawarnya seekor lima duit. Maka itu pun dibawa orang juga, beribu-ribu, lalu disuruhnya gali tanah dalam-dalam, ditanamkan segala bangkai-bangkai. Maka dengan hal yang demikian reda[h]lah sedikit tikus itu, sampai dibawa orang pada sehari sepuluh dua puluh sahaja. Lalu berhentilah

*peperangan dan pergaduhan tikus itu dalam Singapura, sekalianya habislah lesap sekali, adanya.*⁶

Every day, crowds of people brought the carcasses to Colonel Farquhar's place. Some had 50 or 60, while others only six or seven. At first, the rats brought in every morning were counted almost in thousands, and Colonel Farquhar paid out according to his promise. After six or seven days a multitude of rats were still to be seen, and he promised five *duit* for each rat caught. They were still brought in in thousands and Colonel Farquhar ordered a very deep trench to be dug and the carcasses to be buried. Soon, the numbers began to dwindle, until people were bringing in only ten or twenty a day. Finally, the uproar and the campaign against the rats in Singapore came to an end, and the infestation completely subsided.⁷

There was a similar problem with centipedes infesting people's homes, biting the people and causing them much annoyance. Farquhar took the same approach of offering a reward for the killing of a centipede. The campaign against the centipedes was equally successful.

There was also an incident of Farquhar's dog being attacked and eaten by a crocodile, while walking along Sungai Rocah (Rochor River). The crocodile was subsequently captured and killed.

*Setelah sudah, maka buaya itu pun terkeponglah lalu ditikam orang sampai mati, ada tiga depa panjangnya. Maka baharulah diketahui orang ada buaya di Singapura. Maka oleh Tuan Farquhar disuruhnya ambli bangkai buaya itu digantungkannya di pohon jawi-jawi yang di tepi Sungai Beras Basah itu, adanya.*⁸

The crocodile was hemmed in by the obstruction and speared to death. It was 15 feet long. That was the first time that people realised there were crocodiles in Singapore. Colonel Farquhar ordered the crocodile's carcass to be taken, and hung on a fig tree by the side of the Beras Basah River.⁹

ENDNOTES

1. Hikayat Abdullah, Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan, 2004, p. 145.
2. A. H. Hill, *The Hikayat Abdullah: the autobiography of Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, 1797-1854*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, c1969, p. 144.
3. Hill, *The Hikayat Abdullah*, p. 159.
4. Hikayat Abdullah, p. 164.
5. Hill, *The Hikayat Abdullah*, p. 160.
6. Hikayat Abdullah, pp. 148-9.
7. Hill, *The Hikayat Abdullah*, p. 147.
8. Hikayat Abdullah, p. 173.
9. Hill, *The Hikayat Abdullah*, p. 168.

REFERENCES

1. Hassan Ahmad (Ed.). (2004). *Hikayat Abdullah*. Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Karyawan. Call no.: RSING 899.2809 ABD
2. Hill, A. H. (1969). *The Hikayat Abdullah: The autobiography of Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir, 1797-1854*. Singapore: Oxford University Press. Call no.: RSING 959.51032 ABD