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A Drop of INK

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work in a place so long as it is congenial to them, whereas the Malays are always attached to their kampongs. They do not like to go too far away.

THE educated Malays go out of their kampongs to other parts of the country to find employment. In Singapore a good proportion of the members of the Police Force, Army personnel, taxi drivers and artisans hail from across the Causeway.

When they return to their kampongs on leave they always get a most touching send-off when their leave ends. One day when the Malacca-Singa-



pore bus stopped at a village about thirty Malay men and women plus a number of children surrounded it. Out of the crowd stepped a young Malay in shark-skin suit and deep blue tie. He helped his son into the bus. Behind him came his wife carrying a baby. Then relatives flooded in with bags and baskets to the consternation of the conductor. The leave taking was a noisy and jolly affair, and by the time their relatives had got off the bus the couple sank into their seats smothered with packages containing cakes and other toothsome items. As the bus started to move off the older women shouted last minute advice



to the young wife while the young men wise-cracked and waved to the husband. Such a send-off makes one feel warm inside. That is what the term "balek kampong" means to the Malay earning his living far from home.



THE Trengganu Government has given permission to six thousand Chinese to return to their old kampongs. This is a welcome move as they will be able to cultivate their own plots and tap their own rubber again. They need not have to live any more in settlements enclosed by barbed wire.



Thousands of acres of land in the Federation were abandoned to jungle when the squatters were removed as an emergency measure. That accounts for the high cost of produce upcountry. Even today chicken is cheaper in Singapore than in many parts of the Federation. If these wasted acres could come into production again they would help to reduce living costs.



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