

THE
EAST INDIES STATION;

OR

The Cruise of H. M. S. "Garnet"

1887-90.

AN EPITOME OF THE LIFE, MANNERS, AND CUSTOMS OF THE
RACES MET WITH IN INDIAN WATERS;
ALSO THEIR LEGENDARY AND HISTORICAL RECORDS.

BY THE

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"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee."

MALTA

*Muscat Printing Office,
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tolerable during the hot months by the prevailing south-west monsoon, while for about six weeks previous to the break the heat is almost intolerable, the thermo: not infrequently at 104° in the shade.

Sober island is mainly supported, the bungalows kept in repair etc., by the profits from billiards and weekly subscriptions of officers when in port.

JUNE, DIARY 1890.

The roads about Trinco: are well looked after and some very pleasant drives can be had: that, to the warm springs of Cannea being one of the most charming. I am indebted to E. A. de Ridder, esquire, Naval Storekeeper, Captain Lewis Jones R.E. for their kindness, in driving me through this pretty country: also to the Commandant and officers of the Fort for the ready information given on subjects of local interest and their hearty welcome whenever it was my good luck to meet them. The Wells are held sacred by the Tamils, being dedicated to Kannya, the mother of Rawana. The max: temperature is 105·5 Fah.

Sirr in his work on Ceylon and the 'Singalese', says of these wells:—

“Hot springs of Kanya: there are seven wells of various sizes containing pure water, the temp: of which is unequal, ranging in different wells from 100° to 112°. The enclosure, in which the springs are, is about forty feet long, and eighteen wide, being surrounded by a wall of kabook, each well likewise having a low embankment. The taste of the waters is not unpleasant, although they are not drunk, the natives believing only in their restorative qualities, when applied externally.

These waters are considered efficacious in cutaneous and rheumatic diseases, and some of our medical men recommend their application. The mode of using these waters is by affusion, the invalid standing upon a square stone tablet, whilst chatties of water are poured over his person. The springs are deemed sacred by the natives, and under the special protection of Ganeesa (the Hindu god of wisdom,) to whom there is a temple erected near the spot, and in

CHAPTER X.

MADRAS.—27th.-29th.

Madras is the capital of the southern province of India. It came into our possession in 1640, after a severe struggle with the French. It stands close to the sea on a low sandy coast swept by strong currents and exposed to a heavy surf. The city stretches along this shore and with its suburbs covers a distance of nearly eight miles and runs about four miles inland. It numbers about half a million people and is the seat of the Government of the Province. Madras is the centre on which all the military roads converge as well as the terminal station of two lines of railway. It is the third port of India. The Harbour constructed of late years, is formed by two breakwaters, enclosing 200 acres, and has a pier, T shaped head 1,350 feet long.

Those who wished took advantage of leave and strolled ashore. Madras was very uninviting. Clouds of dust swept the streets and gharrywallahs by their (and their pestiferous touts) persistency increased the discomfort. Guides abound. A large party dived into the labyrinths of Black Town, so named from the colour of the Tamil population. To attempt to give a faint notion of Madras is beyond the scope of the "Cruise." The residents were delighted to see a Man of War in their harbour. They promptly made the officers members of the charming club and the Port officer an ex-Lieut. R.N., Capt. H. A. Street, I.M. entertained at dinner, those not detained by duty on board.

Landing at the port is very unpleasant. After taking a rambling and wearying stock of the neighbourhood and a great expenditure of breath and energy, you naturally want to clear the dust out of your throat, and are driven to an hotel. After going up half a dozen flights of stairs in search of the bar, you are told there isn't one, and you can't get liquor there. Wondering what manner of men inhabit this irritating place of abode, you are driven to another hotel, and halfway up to heaven you find a billiard-room, a bar, and a barmaid. Now then at last. "Yes, that will do, open it sharp,

we're in a hurry." Sorry to hear it, they seem to say, for they're evidently in no hurry themselves, and at least dozen white-clad servants, and hangers-on gaze with apparent curiosity on the visitors, whilst somebody looks for a corkscrew, and somebody else is reminded that glasses will be wanted, and when at last the beer is out the whole assemblage seems astounded that you want some ice. "Some gentlemen don't want ice with beer, it must be sent for—will come in about a quarter of an hour;" and so it does when, patience exhausted, the first bottle has been got outside of, and another is in course of being opened. Taking it altogether, the first hour of Madras is more exasperating than any five hours at any other port in India.

Everybody has been told that Madras is a fearfully straggling place, the distances are great, and so on; but somehow or another no reason has been given for it; it is left to you to find out why for yourself, and you soon come to a conclusion. Fort St. George was constructed to defend the place, and what is now the maidan, a large open space all round it, had necessarily to be kept clear of houses and trees, which might serve as cover to an enemy; the Black Town and port are on one side of this great open space, Fort St. George in the middle, and the European town on the other, and the bungalows, hotels, &c., scattered all round this again. Then apparently, when Europeans began to find themselves free from fear of invasion, they built their houses in large compounds, the palatial residence in the middle, and, having planted up trees, each was surrounded with a miniature park. Then there is a canal, broad and pleasant, crossed by a great number of pukka bridges of a good form; while two lines of railway (of different gauges, by the way) cross the maidan and the environs of the town. There appears to be plenty of water about the place, but the stands from which water can be taken are few and far between.

Museum.—

Let us pay a visit to the Museum, which at first sight seems to merit the Tamil appellation of "Bone-house," the hall by which you enter being full of skeletons of animals of kinds. The good people in charge of the Museum want a little stirring up apparently; almost the whole place being in an awful mess, and one

large upper story being crammed with objects of all kinds from different countries, and "closed to inspection." Look at the birds, many of them tattered and torn and falling to pieces, eaten up with insects and looking very disrespectful indeed! There is hardly a really well set up and well preserved specimen in the whole room. A great number are merely specimens, laid on their backs and not set up at all. Others are all jammed together, the tail of one half down the throat of another. All the long-necked birds seem to be possessed of a mania for searching for something on the ground on which they stand. This is rather puzzling to the casual observer, until he discovers that there is no room in the cases for them to stand upright, and perforce they have to bend their heads, however stiffnecked they may be in their natural habits. In some cases one would think St. John's Ambulance classes had been practising "bandaging," as the specimens exhibit paper bands and collars in various parts of their persons, and are supported with wire and corks and such like artificial aids to correct deportment. The visitor has hardly room to move amongst the cases, and consequently the light is by no means sufficient for due inspection. As for bats and moths, especially those connected with the silk industry, they are many of them absolutely in pieces, a wing here, another there, and the remains of the body somewhere else. There are some fine specimens of monkeys, but most of the animals are crowded up in the way Noah's Ark is popularly supposed to have been.

The specimens of mineralogy are exhibited on white painted boards with little raised divisions each, but the larger specimens are laid so close together that they touch and overlay thus, the arrangement becomes very confusing.

One gallery has apparently been recently re-arranged with a number of cases containing sloping stands, on the sides of which are suspended native jewellery of kinds. Unfortunately, many of the stands are but scantily covered.

Of fishes:—

A number of fishes are exhibited in liquid: but the colour of the specimens is gone, and a ghastly, mouldy appearance is fast enveloping them, to be followed no doubt by rapid decay. There are a great

number of the larger fishes stuffed and varnished, with the usual result of preservation of the skin, and nothing more. Some of the sea shells, cut in sections, are very pretty, and pumice from Krakatoa encrusted with shells is interesting. The snakes and frogs in spirits are much in the same condition as the fish. There are a few nice corals, but on the whole the collection of marine objects is but a poor one. There are lots more things of interest to the visitor, notably carvings and archaeological specimens, collections of native arms, and miniature groups of figures of the different tribes and racks, models of pagodas, &c. If these were all nicely cleaned up and arranged, a much better show might be made than obtains at present especially if it is true that the State vote amounts to R20,000 per annum.

People's Park:—

The People's park is too large to keep in good order, and the miserable Zoo has only three specimens worth looking at—an ancient battered rhinoceros without a horn, and two fine otters. A couple of funny-looking badgers must not be overlooked, however, as such 'critturs' are not to be seen every day.

The Botanical Gardens constitute one of the lions of Madras, and are by no means to be despised. Small and well-kept, they form a nice promenade in the cool of the evening, and doubtless to a scientific visitor are very valuable, but do not leave much of an impression on the non-scientific mind.

Madras occasionally suffers from the cyclonic storms which sweep over the Coromandel coast. Its bad weather lasts as a rule from 15th April to 15th June, and from 1st October to 31st December. Both in May and October cyclones may be expected. We are indebted to Mr. A. R. Elson of Calcutta for the following account of one which brought H.M.S. *Pembroke* to grief 140 years ago.

"A terrible cyclone swept along the Coromandel coast in the year 1749, and a vivid account of it is given in the "Journal" kept by the Master of H. M. S. *Pembroke*, a vessel that was wrecked in St. David's Road during the tempest. The *Pembroke* was overwhelmed on the 13th of April, and the Master's story is, perhaps the most clear and circumstantial narrative ever put on paper in

Bright Hopes; Carikal.—But Providence was more favourable to us than we expected; for about ten o'clock we met a cooly, who told us he would show us to Carikal, which was a settlement belonging to the French. We thanked the Almighty for this joyful news, and gladly accepted the offer.

French Kindness and Humanity.—About noon we arrived there, and were received with great humanity and kindness, but my fever was not at all abated. The next morning the Governor sent to Mr. Boscawen, to let him know we were there, and by the return of the messenger the Admiral desired we might be furnished with what money we wanted.

Trinkabar.—In twelve days' time we found ourselves well recovered, and went to Trinkabar, a place belonging to the Danes, where we stayed three days.

June 23, 1749.—And then got a passage to Fort St. David's, where I arrived with my two shipmates (the deserter having left us at Carikal) the 23rd of June, and immediately waited on our Admiral.

Madras to Rangoon.—29th July to 5th August.

We left about noon on the 29th ult. for Rangoon. Seven days across the briny brought us to our destination, an average good passage, save that on the 2nd we encountered a squall of short duration from N.E. which took us aback.

