

It is said to be an "oriental custom" to keep animals with plants in a garden and several are recorded in India and Southeast Asia. Fanny Parks writes of visiting Saharapur Botanical Garden which exhibited animals and studied them as well. While there are several zoos and botanic garden combinations today, few people in India are aware of the zoological history of Lalbaug in the heart of Bangalore, one of their most famous botanic gardens. The Lalbaug Botanical Gardens held an impressive variety of wild animals, including tigers, lions, monkeys, kangaroos, even an orangutan and a rhinoceros, which were the great attraction for visitors to the garden.

According to official sources in the Centenary Volume of the Glass House, the Lalbaug Gardens were set up in the very early years of the 19th century. Col. Flower writing in 1913, however, was informed that Hyder Ali "caused the garden to be made ... sometime before his death in 1782 ... and planted with mango trees, less than a mile east of Bangalore Fort." The earliest mention of an animal secured by the Lalbaug Menagerie was in 1802, when a black panther was purchased.

A special feature of the Lalbaug according to Flower was the "Great Paddock, which was "so large that field glasses were necessary to see the animals in it. At the time of his visit there were blackbuck, gazelles, chital, sambur, barking deer, kakar and emu (in a separate enclosure within the paddock).

The Lalbaug Gardens as we know them today were set up in the very early years of the 19th century. Major Waugh, a British officer and reputed botanist was in charge and the garden was his "almost personal property." In 1819 he gifted the garden to Governor-General Marquis Hastings, who brought it under the control of the botanical Garden of Calcutta. One Mr. William New was the first superintendent of the Gardens from 1859 to 1874. Upon the retirement of Mr. New, Mr. Charles Cameron took charge and ran the "menagerie and aviary" for 34 years. He brought a great interest in animals to the garden and enhanced the collection considerably while, at the same time, agonising over the fact that the expense of maintaining fauna might cause loss to the flora.

He was "the life and soul" of the Government Botanical Gardens at Bangalore from 1874 to 1908, till retired and returned to England. His main orientation was horticulture and his contributions to the state in this field were so much that a major road in Bangalore is named after him.

Cameron kept copious notes on his management of the Gardens. These notes, along with the various Annual Reports and his Report on his trip to various zoological gardens in the North some years after taking over as Garden Superintendent, form the tattered document in the M. H. Marigowda Library entitled the "Cameron Report". This covers the period from 1884 - 1904 although not all of the records could be located in the library. It may be appropriate to note that if the Library authorities do not do something to protect the only copy of the Cameron Report from the

vageries of weather, insects and the occasional researcher, such as this writer, even, there will be nothing left of this valuable document in a very few years.

In 1888 Cameron commented on the large number of visitors who come and enjoy looking at the animals and birds in the menagerie and aviary. He relates an "unpleasant incident", the escape of tigress due to a keeper failing to close the doors of her den. The tigress evinced no desire to stray far or hurt her keeper and confined her walk to the enclosure within the railings. After being at liberty for "three anxious hours, she returned, and as she entered her den, the keeper dropped from a tree and secured the door." This is one of many escapes of dangerous animals during the period of the report.

Cameron mourns the difficulty in procuring a lion or tiger for the menagerie stating that despite having applied in the most likely places in the country, no cubs were forthcoming. The existing lioness died of dropsy that year which must have left the menagerie without a lion or sufficient carnivorous animals for the interest of the public. The problem was solved in part in 1890, however, when a tiger was donated by the Maharaja of Mysore. Other animals donated in the year by different individuals, some European and some Indian, were loris, peacock, spotted deer, sambar deer, fox, hyaena cub, sloth, antelope and water birds.

The presentation of the tiger inspired a flurry of alterations to the house occupied by the lioness so that the tiger had a suite of "well-ventilated compartments to himself." Apparently the tiger shortage was over as three tiger cubs 1:2 were purchased that year for Rs. 40/-. Cameron comments that the collection now contained 6 of those "noble animals" which were in excellent condition as a result of special feeding. Cameron also remarks that it is "a pity that larger cages are not provided for them."

An application was made to the District Collectors of the state to advise persons in their districts to bring birds or snakes to enlarge those sections of the menagerie, but not much was forthcoming.

In the same year, Cameron reported that the menagerie and aviary continued to attract large crowds. In the Report, however, he questioned the wisdom of enlarging the menagerie as it means a much larger expenditure for importation of rare animals from abroad. Apparently, Cameron hesitated to promote the menagerie and aviary much as he feared the garden "should lose to botany and horticulture what it might gain in zoology." Apparently the expansion of the animal section was warmly advocated by then British Resident, Col. Sir Oliver St. John, K.C.S.I. who took great personal interest in the welfare of the animals. Cameron continued to fret however, that while the zoological department should be placed on a better footing, it should not do so at the expense of horticulture and botany which are of "more value to the country than a fine collection of animals."

The Government, however, replied that it will be glad to

place the zoological department on a better footing as the additional expenditure involved is not prohibitive and any definite proposals which Mr. Cameron may make on this subject would receive due consideration.

In 1891 Cameron reported that the government orders to improve the zoological department were receiving his "careful attention" and plans were being drawn up for accommodation for bears, monkeys and pigeons if funds permit. A Madras Langur (*Semnopithecus priamus*), a most valuable grant for the menagerie, was added as well as 18 other donations for the year. Interestingly, more and more Indians are recorded to donate animals for the zoo as the years go by. Of the 18 donations of 1891 (which included Indian ant eaters, tree cat, jungle cats, monkeys, owls, deer and the madras langur) all but three were donated by Indians.

In 1892 visitation was particular large during the year of 1892, particularly the "native public". Cameron attributed this in part to the increasing popularity of the garden as a place of rest and recreation but more to the fame of a new building and acquisition of an orangutan! This orangutan was purchased for the collection in October 1891. In their enthusiasm to see the animal the crowd became "a little unmanageable at times" until a small posse of policemen was employed to regulate the crowds and maintain order. The orang was a male, nearly full grown, which had been imported from Sumatra by late Mr. Sanderson who paid Rs.1000 for the animal.

In 1893, a new building to accommodate the bears or other strong animals was constructed near the lotus pond, consisting of "four retiring dens and an open circular verandha of ample dimensions where animals fully exposed to sightseers while enjoying a good deal of freedom." This construction was wholly of stone and iron which, Cameron commented "if left intact will probably last several centuries".

Also in 1893, the Menagerie tragically lost their male rhino (*Rhinoceros indicus*). This was a female of a pair originally received from the palace at Mysore. The male became aggressive and was sent to Travancore Gardens in exchange for a lioness and tiger, and was believed to be alive there. The rhino which expired had been sick for two weeks with symptoms being collapse of the hind limbs with redish eruptions over the whole body. Cameron commented that the genus "is supposed to live for 100 years" however he did not know the age of this particular animal. He laments that "the species will be difficult to replace as even young specimens are rare and very highly priced".

Cameron relates that some animal donations had been received and some interesting monkeys were purchased from the Mysore Zoological collection for a sum of Rs. 82. The Mysore Zoo officially did not begin until 1892 but obviously there was a substantial collection which already belonged to the Mysore Maharaja.

By 1894, the young tigress acquired earlier had given birth to three litters of cubs with a period of 8 or 9 months elapsing between each litter. The first two litters were not attended by the mother and died so the third was removed for handrearing. A "healthy village dog" supplemented by a feeding bottle sustained the cubs until they could take meat, however only one survived ultimately. An interesting

donation during this time was a chameleon. Cameron complains that "packs of half-famished dogs have broken into deer paddocks on several occasions and killed as many as four deer. He cites shooting as the only solution. A couple of years later Cameron reported that a Kangaroo was attacked and killed by village dogs. He remarked that occasional visitors did not leave their dogs with the gatekeeper as required by the rules. Even today there is no dog-proof wall around the Lalbaug Botanical Garden and deer are still maintained there with the same result on occasion.

Among donations received during this year, the now ubiquitous white rats and rabbits were included among more interesting specimens such as horned owls, antelopes and others. Among donated animals are two brown bears that formerly belonged to the 43rd regiment of Oxfordshire, Light Infantry. The Military stationed in India was fond of keeping all manner of wildlife as their pets as mascots. Cameron laments that "the latter (bears) are badly in want of a proper enclosure and indeed, all the bears require more liberty than their present quarters afford". Cameron, like R. B. Sanyal of Calcutta Zoo, was also very concerned about the welfare of his charges.

In 1896, donations of a nilgai, a loris, a "brown monkey", a brown bear and 3 Afghan hill partridges were received at the Lalbaug, all donated by English persons. Also, in response to Cameron's concern about the bears, a new house of 3 compartments was erected for them. Also repairs to other buildings and draining and painting the rhinoceros pit were done in this year, all by the Public Works Department.

Another escape occurred during this period. A brown bear escaped and attacked and mauled an Indian woman visitor. She recovered and received monetary compensation for the accident. The Report further comments that bears are now securely housed and no further danger of them breaking loose and that the animals are all in good condition.

In the Annual Report on the Government Gardens and Parks in Mysore State for 1895-96 Cameron discusses the future of the Lalbaug animal collection. "Animals and birds fluctuate but are little in number and kind, owing to money allotment for collection and maintenance being small". For many years public opinion had been equally divided as to whether the Lalbaug should provide a zoological department and if so, its extent. As his discussion reflects the current thinking of the day it is quoted in full :

"While young people and villagers are strongly in favour of such a development the more advanced members of the local community are mostly against it. Of course, no one doubts the utility of a first class zoological garden when conducted on scientific principles but it may well be open to question if the Lalbaug could bear the strain of such a department, or if the latter would prove more useful to the state, at a moderate outlay, than the existing institution does in its popular capacity of an important horticultural centre. In a purely botanical garden, caged animals and birds are entirely eliminated, and rightly so. But the Lalbaug is not purely botanical, therefore it has been customary to include a small collection of animals as an addition attraction to the public. Such a collection should consist of only rare animals [not the indigenous ones]; but with a very limited money grant it is found impossible to do even this. A small collection of rare

animals is difficult to maintain for several reasons: a. such exhibits are expensive, coming from different climates, they may succumb before they are acclimatized and the local keepers being ignorant of the usages and habits of foreign animals often treat them with much cruelty. It is for these reasons that the Superintendent has hitherto refrained from recommending a Menagerie on an extended scale."

In 1897 the menagerie lost their prized orangutan which had been a popular exhibit for seven years. The animal died of acute diarrhoea during hot season. Interesting additions made during the year by purchase and gift were kangaroo, cassowary, a pair of lynx, pair of barking deer, and three crowned pigeons.

In 1898 there was a plague which made a large dent in the collection. Cameron attributes it to the grain and other foods given to smaller animals and birds, the store room was much infested with rats, mice and squirrels which are suspected to have brought the scourge. "Rats and squirrels died first then the disease spread to other animals such as guinea pigs, rabbits, monkeys and a wallaby. The latter animal had all the symptoms of the plague, although the kangaroo in the adjoining room was not affected. Several antelopes also died suspiciously."

In an Appendix to his Annual report for 1900 - 1901 Cameron reported on his tour to north and northeastern India which included the zoos at Calcutta, Gwalior, Jaipur, Udaipur, and Bombay.

Until 1919, the Lalbaug Botanical Gardens maintained a good animal collection but in 1920 many of the large animals were transferred to the Mysore Zoo which had been founded in 1892. The policy of the Mysore Government changed to concentrate more on the Mysore Zoo and only a few deer, birds, rabbits, and pigeons were left in Lalbaug. Even today, a deer paddock is maintained at Lalbaug, albeit poorly, and is one of the main attractions of visitors.

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