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## The Menagerie at the Botanic Gardens.

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The collection of living animals in the Botanic Gardens in Singapore dates from the days when the gardens were the property of the Agri-Horticultural Society. This society was founded in 1859, but not finding sufficient support from the general public to develop and maintain the grounds adequately, eventually made over its property to the Government in 1874, and in 1875 Mr. J. Murton was appointed Superintendent. The Zoological part of the garden seems however to have been at first under the control of Mr. Krohn, who publishes in 1876 a report on the Zoological collections. That year Mr. Cheang Hong Sin presented a monkey house to the gardens, which still exists, and a list of the animals in the gardens was published. It included a rhinoceros, sloth-bear, kangaroos, and other animals, and a number of birds. In 1878 it was decided to dispose of the larger animals and most were sent to the Calcutta Zoological Gardens. Birds, monkeys and small animals were however kept. From 1888 the aviaries and enclosures were increased, and till 1902 the collection became very representative of the fauna of the Malay peninsula and islands. No funds were granted by the Government for its up-keep after 1881, but its expenses were paid out of what could be spared from the Gardens Vote. Many of the animals and birds were presented by various donors, so that the expenses were merely feeding, and housing. The cost being from about £100 to £150 per year when the collection was at its largest. In 1902, an admirer of Zoological Gardens urged that the collection was worthy of a better class of houses than could be afforded from the Gardens Vote, and an estimate for improved and more ornamental houses was prepared, but it was considered too expensive by the Government, and an

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order was received to abolish the menagerie in 1903, which had to be gradually carried into effect.

Perhaps there are few places in the world more suited for a Zoological Garden than Singapore. The climate is well suited for all the tropical animals, the cost of keeping them is much lower than in most parts of the world, for firing, an important and expensive item in many gardens, is unnecessary; forage for the deer and other herbivorous animals, costs little or nothing, and fish for the piscivorous birds is readily procured. Animals of great interest can be procured for a small cost, and indeed a great number have been presented and offered to the gardens. The neighbouring islands and mainlands produce many animals which cannot be kept in any of the European or American Menageries, but which thrive well in Singapore, and even breed in captivity. Notable successes in this way in the Singapore Gardens are the successful breeding of the Jackal, the Kijang, (*cervulus muntjac*) the Napu (*Tragulus Napu*) and the hybrid monkeys and the green viper none of which, as far as I know, have previously bred in captivity elsewhere.

To the large number of passengers who visit Singapore on their way eastwards or westwards a Zoological collection is very attractive, and the menagerie in its best days was known all over the world, and was the first thing asked for by the visitor. There seems also something eminently suitable in having a menagerie in the colony founded by Sir Stamford Raffles who was also one of the founders of the finest Zoological Gardens in the world,—that of London.

*Animals in captivity.* There are a certain number of people in the world who assume that an animal must be very unhappy in captivity, and especially if their ideas of what any given animal should enjoy do not concur with those of the animal itself. I suppose all keepers of menageries have received from time to time the most ridiculous letters with suggestions as to how to treat animals, of which the writers often know not even the name still less the habits. The descendants of the man who buttered the hay for his horse are by no means extinct.

When the Gibbon (*Hylobates*) was proudly giving its well-known solo in its best style to an audience of globe trotter's, one mistaken individual rushed wildly into the office to say that the monkey was in great pain and making a great crying. On another occasion a lady wanted someone to be prosecuted because a fine tigress called regularly at sundown, and she thought it must be ill. Others whose idea of the shape of a living tiger was based on a badly stuffed Museum specimen think that a tiger whose body is not like a bolster must be starved, whereas a tiger is almost a greyhound among cats when in good condition.

As a matter of fact animals as a rule not only become quite accustomed to captivity in a very short time, but usually prefer it to a wild life. They get their food regularly and without having to hunt for it and can spend the rest of their day playing about or sleeping. Animals which have been in cages for quite a short time are helpless when they are turned loose or escape. People who have kept pet monkeys and on going home wish to get rid of them sometimes turn them loose in the Garden Jungle to join the other wild ones, which is as considerate as to send a child away to find and make friends with a tribe of savages. The monkeys thus released dare not go near the wild ones, do not know how to get food, otherwise than by going to the nearest house where they sometimes arrive in a starving condition. Some pelicans presented to the Gardens after remaining in an enclosure for less than a day, were put on the Garden Lake, where were plenty of fish. They got off the Lake at once and stood on one of the roads flapping their wings and opening their beaks at any carriage which came by to the alarm of the horses. Then they walked straight back to the enclosure and waited outside the door all night till the keeper returned and let them in. Some phalangiers which escaped one night were very puzzled what to do. All but one sat on the top of the cage all night. The remaining one rambled aimlessly along the path where it was found next morning. Squirrels, musangs, and such small animals if they escape usually take to the woods naturally, but often remain near the cages for a long time before they disappear. If an

animal dislikes captivity at all, it is easily seen. It mopes, or is restless, feeds only when no one is by, and is certain to pine away soon. The big civets *Viverra zangalunga* and *Pagurus leucomystax* particularly dislike a bright cage. Being nocturnal animals, only coming out after dusk, the light annoys them very much and the *Viverras* dislike being looked at by a crowd of people and become very nervous. To put these animals in a fine open cage that looks nice from a popular point of view is cruel. The cages should be half dark, when the animals do very well and live for many years. Curiously some animals and birds much prefer small cages to large ones. Some love birds (*Loricula galgulus*) were put in an ornamental canary-cage, which one would have thought they preferred to the round rattan cages in which the Malays keep them and in which their heads nearly touch the top. This did not suit them at all, and nearly all died in a few days. The remaining two were put back in the Bamboo cage and lived quite well and happy.

The only way of knowing what an animal thinks is comfortable and snug is to keep it and observe its ways. It will soon let you know what it likes, which probably does not at all fall in with your ideas of what it ought to like.

#### AN ACCOUNT OF ANIMALS KEPT.

##### *Quadrumana.*

*Simia satyrus, L.* The Mias. Orangoutan.

This has often been on view. The animals are obtained from Sumatra and Borneo and are usually young, but very large adults have not seldom been brought to Singapore. Young Mias are very quiet and tame, but full grown adults are dangerous and require a very strong iron cage. The animal is very delicate and liable to a disease resembling cholera which seems almost invariably fatal. A good deal of the art of keeping one healthy consists in giving it a varied diet. Bread, boiled rice, pineapple, plantains, eggs occasionally, sugarcane, kangkong (*Ipomea aquatica*) or some such green stuff suits it well. When young and not

dangerous it is allowed to go out for walks by itself every day, to climb on the trees, and amuse itself. It requires a box or basket to sleep in with a rug, or bit of sacking to wrap itself with. It appreciates alcoholic liquors especially if sweet, such as port but it will often take whisky or beer. One which is now in the London Zoological Gardens smoked cigarettes or cigars, lighting one from the other, knocking off the ash, and puffing the smoke through its nose.

The Mias is always a quiet slow moving beast, and being constructed for arboreal life is not in its element on the ground. It is very human in the way it uses a blanket and pillow, carefully arranging the pillow under its head, and drawing the blanket over itself, and when it has arranged this to its satisfaction and lies on its back peacefully smoking a cigarette, it looks more than ever like an indolent man. Young ones rarely make any sounds with the mouth, but when quite young if annoyed it cries like a child, stamping its feet on the ground. When older, about 4 or 5 years old the Mias does not cry, and seems to be almost dumb, occasionally grunting, and blowing with its lips when vexed. They laugh however when tickled, and often, at about seven years old quite loud. The last one kept in the Gardens, was very fond of swinging on a door, sitting on the top and pushing itself backwards and forwards like a child on a gate. When young they are very docile and obedient and very much attached to anyone who is kind to them. Many are fond of having a common monkey to pet and play with, others seem to find the small monkey a bore, and a nuisance.

When pleased with anyone they protrude their lips to kiss them, and they often kiss each other.

The youngest I have seen were a pair brought for sale, undoubtedly twins as they were exactly the same size, and age. They were very scantily provided with hair. The male was very active, moving about briskly like one of the common monkeys. This baby-activity soon goes off and as they become older they seem to become more indolent.

As they grow the hair becomes longer and denser especially apparently in the male, but later in life they often

live very happily together in one cage, so that they have a box nest for each one to sleep in. These squirrels make large nests of bastfibre, palmfibre etc., in the trees and are often troublesome in pulling off the cocoanut husk used in fixing orchids on the trees and throwing the orchid down on the ground. These nests are usually placed in the boughs of a tree or among the leaves of a pandanus, or sometimes low down among the thorny leaves of a Bromelia. One nest was made on the leaves beneath the office, and attention was called to it, by the cries of the young squirrels which had been attacked by an army of ants and had fallen from the nest. One had died, the other was put into a cigar-box up in a tree, where the mother squirrel had been heard calling. She quickly came and got into the box, but went away again. When however every one was gone from the building and all was quiet she returned and carried off the young one.

*Rhizomys sumatrensis.*

The Bamboo rat has often been kept, and lives well, but as it can bite its way through most things requires an iron cage. Two lived for a long time in a wooden box lined with tin but eventually bit their way through the bottom, and nearly through the wooden floor before they were found out. One or two escaped and lived in clumps of bamboo for some time. They eat rice, nuts and such food, and also are fond of bamboo shoots to gnaw. The bamboo rat has a curious way of sleeping on its back which gives it the appearance of being dead.

*Hystrix longicauda.*

The Porcupine, is still common in Singapore, and is very easily kept as a pet, eating sweet potatoes, tapioca etc., and some I have seen had a great liking for bones which they nibbled up. It is readily tamed and lives well in captivity. An albino, quite white with pink eyes was purchased some years ago, with it was a young one, normally colored. The young one was still sucking the mother though quite a large

sized animal, and finally took to nibbling off its mother's quills so that it had to be separated. The white one was sent home in 1905 but died on the way.

The animal occurs occasionally still in a wild state in the gardens.

*Atherura macrura.*

The Brush tailed porcupine has been on view in the menagerie twice, one was a very young one and soon contrived to escape. The other was an adult. I obtained it on the Siak river in Sumatra, and during the voyage down the river at night it contrived to escape from its cage and ran up and down the boat. It was easily detected in its attempt to hide, from the powerful muskey scent it exhaled which lasted for some time wherever it had run. It was soon recaptured and lived for some time in the gardens. I have several times come across the animal or its tracks, in limestone caves but it also occurs in open country.

*Mus decumanus varalbus.*

White rats were kept on view for some time, and bred easily. They gradually however died out.

*Cavia porcella.*

Guinea pigs, were also kept, but suffer much during the wet season.

UNGULATES.

The elephant has never been kept in the menagerie on account of expense.

*Rhinoceros sumatrensis.*

Three of these were kept temporarily before shipping to the Vienna Zoological Gardens in 1901 and there was one in the gardens as early as 1875. An account of one has been already published in the Journal.

*Tapirus indicus.*

The Malay tapir. A young tapir, the property of the Director lived for many years in the gardens. When bought it had the R. A. Soc., No. 46, 1906.