

EPISODES IN THE LIFE OF AN INDIAN CHAPLAIN.

BY

A RETIRED CHAPLAIN.



KAMPTEE CEMETERY ENTRANCE.

[See page 127.]

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CHAPTER XIII.

The backwaters of Travancore—Quilon—Scenery—The boatmen—Travancore money—Method of counting—The museum—Appointment to curatorship—The gardens and menagerie—The lion-house—Curator's bungalow—Rabbit-warren—Deer park—Burmese way of catching deer—Tigers and their offspring—A tiger cat and his capture—A python fight—The aviary—The lakes—A half-shade garden—Nutmegs—Plantain and description—The ostrich—Owlery.

“Who created all things, is better than all things ;
Who beautified all things, is more beautiful than all things ;

Who made strength, is stronger than all things ;

Who made great things, is greater than all things.”

S. AUGUSTINE on Psalm xxxix.

I HAVE mentioned in a former chapter the out-station of Quilon, variously spelt Collam, Coulam, and Coilon. The name in Tamil signifies “a tank.”

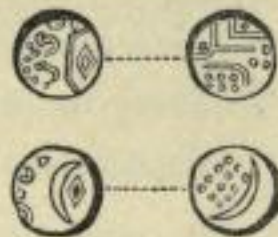
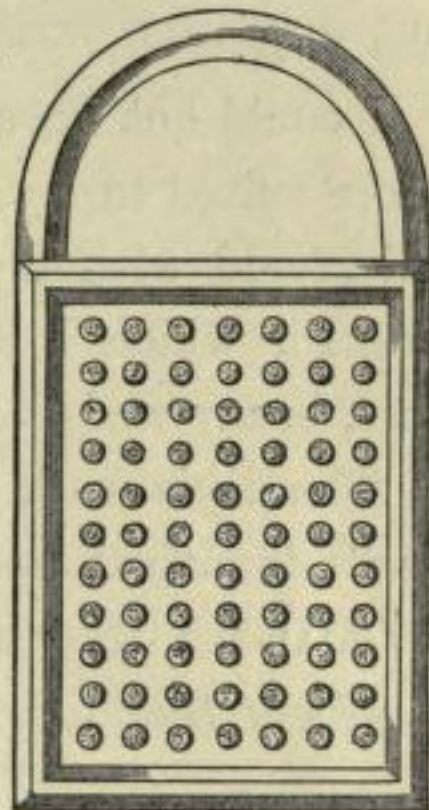
It was said to be built A.D. 825, and the

A handful of coins is strewn over the board; then it is gently shaken, so that the coins fill the spaces, the rest being swept off with the hand, and then you see at a glance the amount you have.

Each cash is said to purchase a certain amount of fruit, tobacco, vegetables, or other commodity which to the native is a necessary of life.

A great proportion of a chaplain's active duties are performed early in the morning and after sunset. In large stations, where there are many hospitals, dispensaries, and schools to visit, these are all inspected by mid-day.

The occasional duty in a small station like Trevandrum was very light, and left much time for other employments. I had not long been resident when the curatorship to his Highness the Maha-



CHUCKRUM BOARD AND
COINS.

rajah's museum, and secretaryship to his Highness's public gardens, became vacant.

The British Resident recommended me to his Highness, and, with the consent of the British Government, I was allowed to accept the post.

I could not have selected an appointment more suited to my inclinations. It in no way interfered with my pastoral duties, and was one for which I had been trained, more or less, in my early years.

The day's work now allotted to me may be well described to the reader in the words of MAISTER HERESBACH, the author of "*Four Books of Husbandrie.*"

"Fyrst served on knees the Majestie Divine ;
 My servantes next and ground I overlooke,
 To every man his taske I doe assigne ;
 When this is done I get me to my booke."

There was a small bungalow to reside in, well suited to a man living *en bachelor*, and an honorarium attached to the office. It had once been held by an eminent Indian botanist, Colonel Drury, who had done much to promote that science ; but hitherto the

museum itself had been very much in the background.

It was a chaotic mass of curios; these different collections were added to, classified, and made a means of education to the masses. The Maharajah, however, took more pleasure in the gardens than in the museum; but the First Prince of Travancore, now the Maharajah, evinced a most intelligent appreciation of the museum's needs and opportunities; and, I have no doubt, will strengthen greatly the hands of his Highness's present curator.

Some short time before my arrival, the Travancore Government had laid the foundation-stone of a museum, to commemorate the Governorship of Lord Napier.

The design was made and carried out under the supervision of the accomplished Government Architect, Mr. Chisholm. It was designed after the Travancore style of architecture, which closely resembled the Phöngyee House style of Burmah, and was well fitted for the purposes for which it was intended.

The public gardens, in which the museum

was itself situated, covered a space of about fourteen or fifteen acres, and were picturesque in the extreme, consisting of plain, hill, and dale.

They were adorned with the most beautiful flowering-trees and shrubs, of every variety. The leisure hours of an Indian Padre are most frequently employed in his garden, as mine for some years had been: I had now to carry this out on the landscape footing.

For several years the gardens had been uncared for, since Colonel Drury's departure; and the menagerie—which most native princes delight in—left to take care of itself. The gardens had become a jungle, and the menagerie an unsavoury thing, and inhumane withal.

There was a very fair reference library attached to the museum, wherein I found Hughes' "Landscape Gardening," a book dealing with principles, which greatly assisted me in my work.

The London Mission Missionary I also found an accomplished botanist, and always willing to assist me in a difficulty.

The animals were scattered here and there, all over the gardens, with and without shade from the pitiless rays of the sun.

There was a large tiger's den, divided into different compartments, with tigers and lions. It was close and ill-ventilated. The plan was a good one—one central compartment and eight radiating ones.

A handsome lion-house was in course of construction. This I had rapidly finished, and housed my lions in splendour and comfort.

It consisted of a huge square building, with sloping Travancore roof, containing a large dormer-like opening on each side. There was a large den for the male and female lion, and some small cubs—a good tank leading out of this for bathing; and two smaller dens. We had in all eight lions. In the larger den were two couches, made of black-wood, for their majesties, *père et mère*, to repose upon. And very grand they looked posing themselves unconsciously—a beautiful study for any artist. They were the ordinary Indian lion. When the progeny became too numerous—for they were very prolific—we

exchanged them for different animals, with other native princes.

In this way we obtained a rhinoceros. I now altered the ventilation of the tiger's den, and built a verandah round it, supported by



GARDEN LODGE.

pillars of the Indian black-wood, handsomely carved.

But I must locate myself in my small bungalow. I had all my windows wire-netted outside, which enabled me to sleep with them open at night time, protecting me, in case of any of the animals getting loose, from an invasion of territory. No animal would