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THE CHINESE TAKIN.

LAST year, Hon. Mason Mitchell, American Consul at Chung King, China, and now stationed at Apia, Samoa, presented to the Zoological Society, for the National Collection of Heads and Horns, the entire skin, skull and horns of the very rare and little known Takin which inhabits southwestern China. The specimen proved to represent the Chinese Takin, (*Budorcas tibetanus*, Lydekker), of which there are probably fewer than half a dozen specimens available for study.

For several months, the founders of the National Collection were in doubt regarding their duty to science respecting the zoological rarity so unexpectedly placed in their possession. To

mount a specimen entire and place it in the Collection, seemed like establishing an embarrassing precedent; but on the other hand, it seemed impossible to do otherwise. At last it was agreed that "the promotion of zoology" demanded the utilization of the entire animal. The specimen was placed in the hands of Mr. Wilson Potter, of Philadelphia, and forthwith he and his taxidermists began a careful study of the Takins.

The finished specimen reached the Collection last week, and the work bestowed upon it reflects great credit upon Mr. Potter. Judging from photographs of the living Takin in the London Zoo, the form of the animal has been



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National Museum

CHINESE TAKIN.



ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN, CALCUTTA.
Breeding colony of wild night herons, egrets and snakebirds.

THE CALCUTTA ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN.

By C. WILLIAM BEEBE.

THE Zoological Garden of Calcutta is situated in one of the suburbs of the city Alipur, three or four miles from the main thoroughfares. It is a Zoological Garden seen through the small end of the field glass—complete, but everything in miniature. As an example of landscape gardening it probably has few equals in the world.

It dates from the year 1875, when the Government of Bengal granted about thirty-three acres for this purpose. At present, although under the nominal control of a Committee, consisting of doctors and civilians, it is practically a government institution.

From the Bengal Government it receives an annual maintenance grant of 20,000 rupees, while the gate receipts furnish an additional 36,000 rupees. In American coinage these sums represent about \$6,800 and \$12,000, respectively. The amount of the gate receipts seems all the more remarkable when we learn that the ordinary admission charge is one anna, about ten cents.

There are about thirty-four installations, houses most of them are called, although many are hardly deserving of more than the title of sheds, kennels

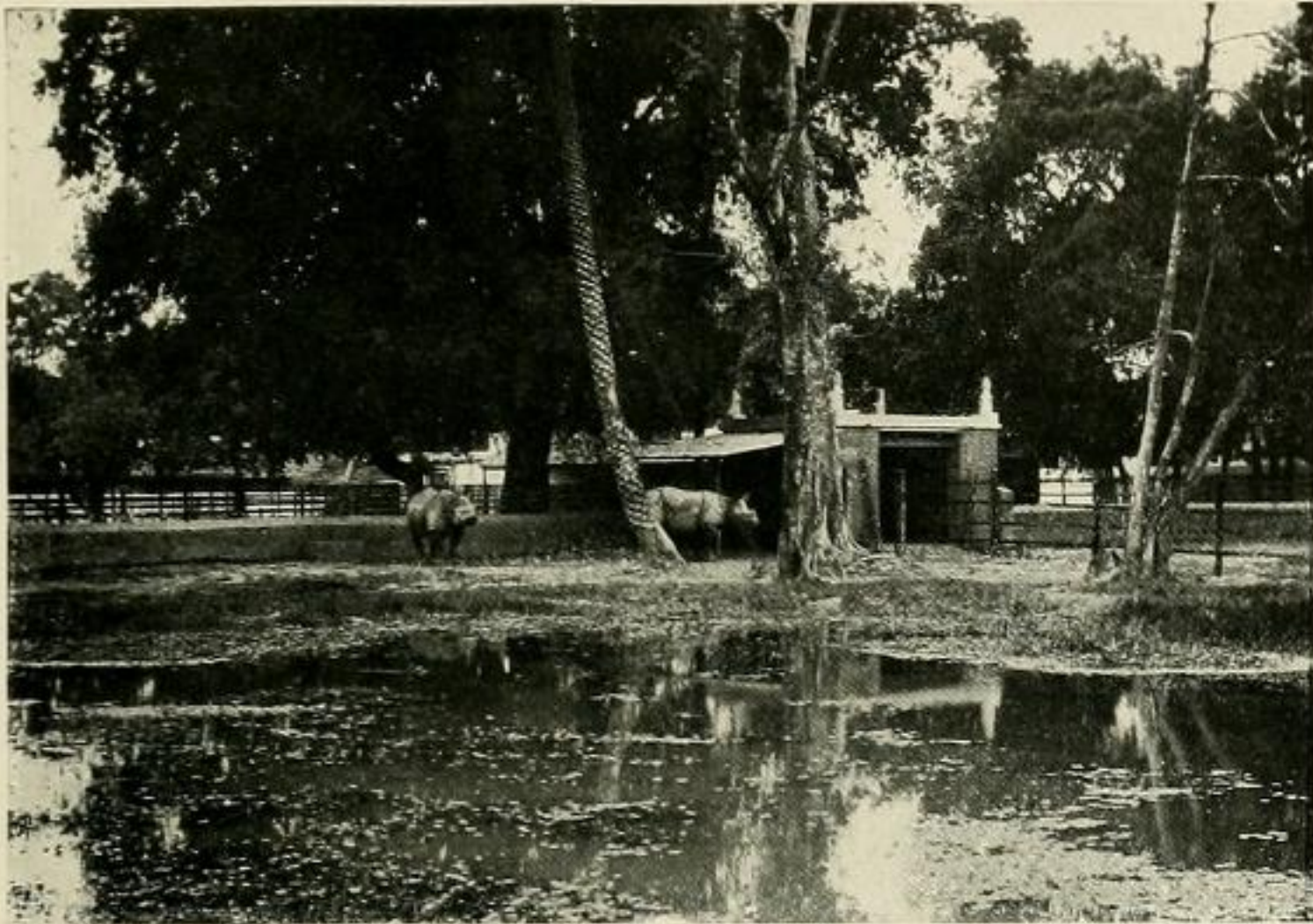
or shelters. But in this climate of perpetual summer, no more is required. The more pretentious installations have each been presented by some person interested in the Garden, and each of these bears the donor's name. For example, we have the Abdul Ghuni House for bears, the Murihidabad House for birds of paradise, and the Burdwan Raj House for the larger carnivores.

During the few brief visits to this interesting little Zoological Garden, which my pheasant studies at the Museum allowed me to make, I was able to note the more striking exhibits.

The Calcutta climate is such that few creatures hailing from cold or desert regions will long survive. If Himalayan pheasants are brought down at the beginning of November they will live for a few months and then succumb to the increasing heat. Although numerous orangutans, old and young, have been procured from Singapore, all die from tuberculosis within a short time, having contracted the disease before they reach the country. The hoolock gibbon is one of the prominent features of the Garden, both from its strange "travelling ring" method of progression back and forth across the roof of its large cage, and its human hoots and howls



LAKE IN ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN, CALCUTTA.



ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN, CALCUTTA.
Enclosure for the Indian Rhinoceros.

which it sends to the farthest boundary of the Garden. These have a remarkable echo quality as when one calls in a great empty stone hall. These animals live well and are easily procured.

A small but attractive exhibit is the Peafowl Pavilion, consisting of a large wire-covered oval, with a slighter shelter in the center. In the four divisions into which this is divided are magnificent specimens of the Indian, Javan, black-winged and white peafowl, and when the males of all four are simultaneously spreading their trains it forms a beautiful sight.

Judging from the number of porcupines on exhibition, death must be unknown to them. Thanks to a regular system of exchange with Australian Zoological Gardens, marsupials are well represented, especially tree wallabies and kangaroos, which breed freely. To see kangaroos placidly perched on the topmost branches of tall trees is a shock to one's ideas of the life of these saltatores.

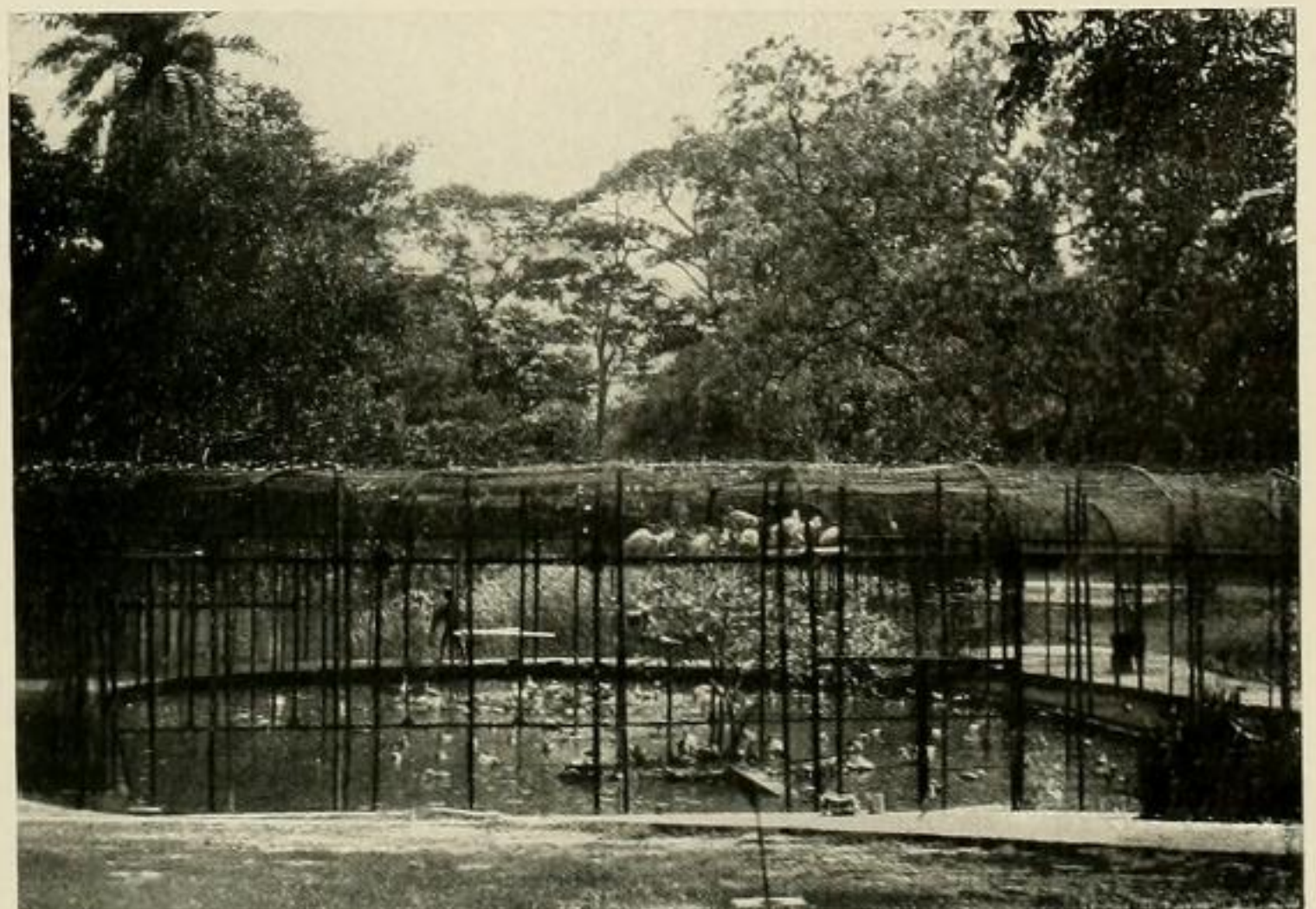
The exhibition of ruminants is unusually full and complete, especially as regards Indian and Chinese species. The most unusual is the Formosan deer, (*Cervus taevanus*), a pale grayish-brown animal of the axis type, with extremely faint spots. Small herds of the mithan, or gayal, (*Bos frontalis*), and banting, (*Bos sondaicus*), in-

cluded magnificent males, as full of fire and spirit as the most high-bred bull. An interesting, although un-geographical association is that of a herd of Indian gazelles and a number of emeus peacefully feeding together in a large paddock. All the deer and cattle breed freely.

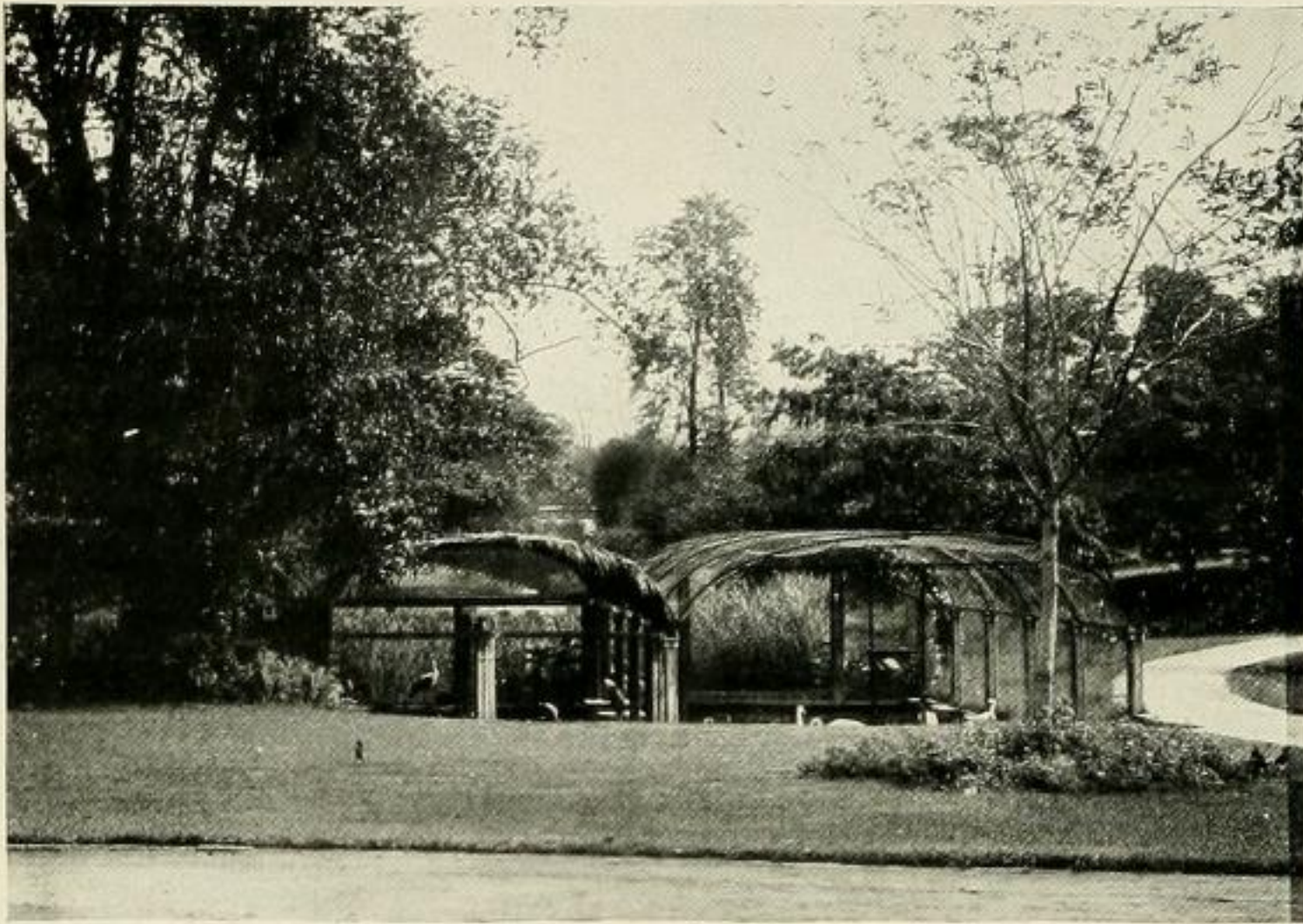
The Indian rhinoceros installation is a perfect one. Two acres of low ground, partly shaded by palm trees and bamboos, is bounded by a low cement wall, on which one can easily rest one's elbows. In the center is a large natural morass and lily-covered lagoon, and here a splendid pair of rhinos enjoy themselves. A few years

ago a hybrid rhinoceros was born in the Garden. A single young elephant is exhibited, this animal being common in the country as a domestic beast of burden.

Of all the mammals in the Garden none delighted me more than the cat bear, or panda, (*Aelurus fulgens*). In color it was beautiful; in form and gait most comic. Bright golden yellow, with dark chocolate legs and underparts, the quaint, absurdly small, round face and lower lip were a conspicuous white, while the tail was very long, fluffy and ringed like a coon's. The gait was a rolling one, and a favorite sleeping posture was to lie at full length on a perch



ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN, CALCUTTA.
Flying aviary for large water-fowl.



ZOOLOGICAL GARDEN, CALCUTTA.
Small double aviary, Mynah in foreground.

or beam with all four legs dangling. These strange Himalayan forms are gentle and affectionate, and are now breeding regularly in the Garden.

The reptile exhibit is uninteresting. Cobras alternating with king cobras and Russel vipers in cage after cage.

Fine specimens of black and clouded leopards are the only carnivores worthy of mention, but the collection of foxes, jackals and smaller cats, as well as of squirrels, contains many rare species. The great wolf-like wild red dog, (*Cyon dukhunensis*), is one of the most dangerous animals in India. The tapirs breed freely here, as do the kiangs and wild asses.

To an ornithologist from the western world, the wild birds of the Calcutta Zoological Garden vie in interest with those confined in the aviaries. The shortest walk through the Garden will reveal a score of species—drongos, wandering tree-pies, golden-backed woodpeckers, mynahs and bulbuls, in the trees; egrets and house crows perched on the backs of the ruminants; griffon vultures and kites soaring in mid-air. In a clump of trees and bushes on the shore of one of the tiny lakes is a large breeding colony of wild night-herons, egrets and snakebirds, a most enviable possession for any zoological garden.

The captive birds are scattered about in small, isolated aviaries, half hidden among luxuriant trees, flowering vines and shrubs, all of course unheated and exposed to the open air.

One circular aviary has an artistic winding cement rivulet, along whose gradually descend-

ing course are perched silver pheasants, Mandarin ducks and beautiful lorries and parakeets.

A well-planned water-fowl flying-cage fifty by seventy-five, by twelve feet high, contains a large flock of sacred and scarlet ibis—the latter breeding regularly and never losing their brilliant color. Great comb ducks, Asiatic spoonbills with fluted mandibles and scarlet eyes; big galinules sitting on their eggs, and most remarkable of all, an Indian pink-headed duck—a dull, blackish bird with bill, eyes, head and neck of intense pink. A weird little stone plover trots along the wire

netting, keeping pace with you as you walk around the cage, hoping for food or attention.

Loud cries attract our attention, Wok! Wok! Wok! Wok! and in an octagonal aviary, amid orchids and other flowers we find five species of birds of paradise, which for years have lived in perfect health. The lesser, the greater, the red, the twelve-wired, and, clad like the impeyan pheasant in pliant metal, the magnificent rifle bird. All defy description, putting to shame our mounted museum specimens.

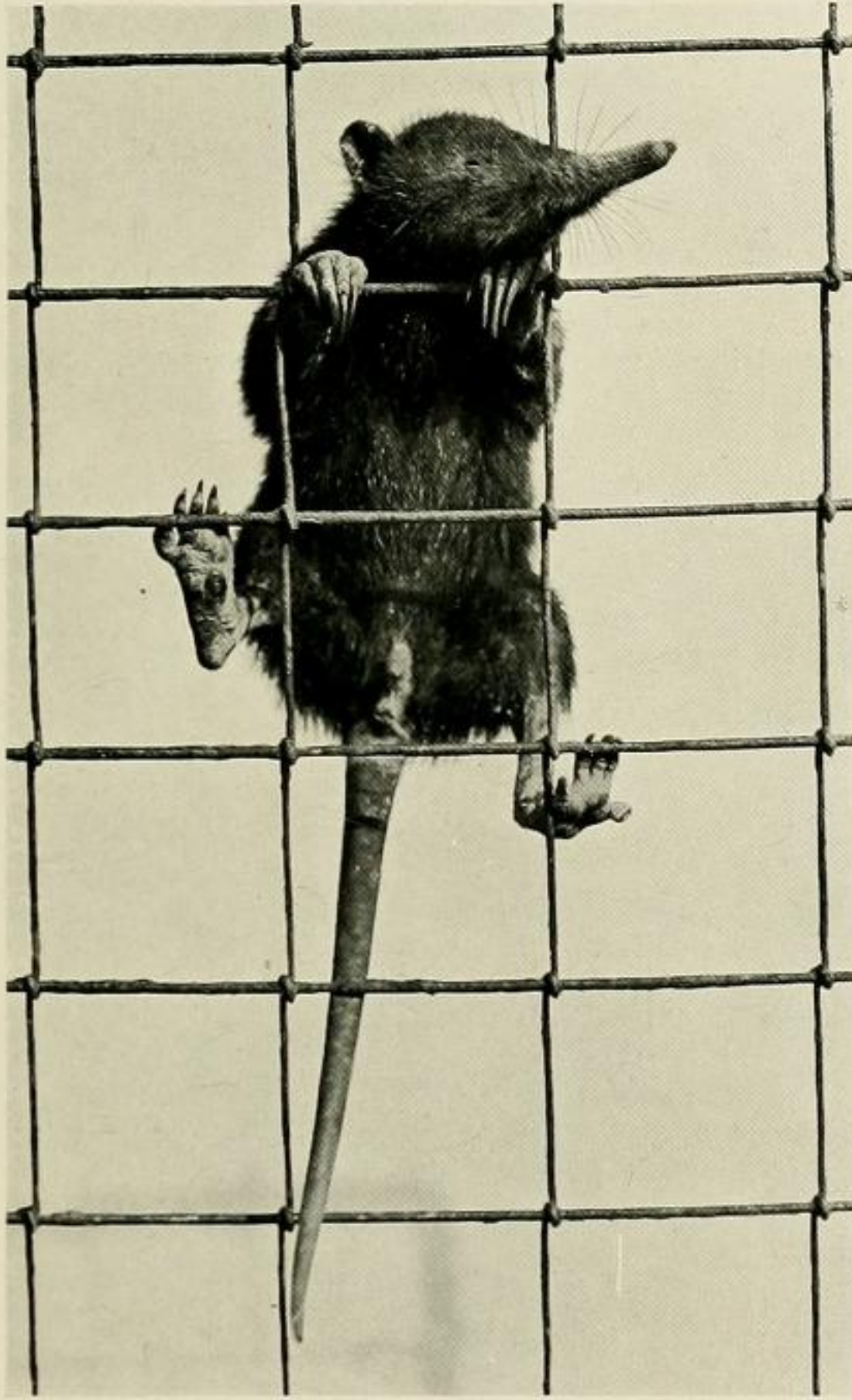
The most pretentious building for birds is known as the Sarnomovi House. In characteristically native Indian style, we read that "this house has been erected at the cost of Maharaja Manindra Chandra Nandy, the worthy nephew and successor of the late Maharani Sarnomoyi of Cossimbazar."

On three sides of the building are as many lofty wire-covered outdoor cages, containing bamboos and banana trees. Here, or in the indoor cages, are quartered the parrots and cockatoos, the crowned pigeons, pheasants, francolins and hornbills, besides numerous smaller birds. The smaller hornbills fly about freely and do not disturb birds of the size of a jay or roller. The crowned pigeons breed every year.

A Javan jungle fowl quartered here was as brilliant as any kind I have ever seen, with an enormous drooping comb, rainbow-hued,—yellow, violet, green and blue, in close and startling combination.

In the cool of the morning, or of late afternoon, a drive out to and through the Calcutta

Zoological Garden will be one of the most delightful memories of India. The splendid Indian Museum, and the tablet marking the historic Black Hole, together with the Zoological Garden, completes the list of definite "sights" which Calcutta has to offer to the visitor, although to western eyes, every street is an absorbing spectacle, every native shop a treasured memory.



SOLENODON.
Scale $\frac{1}{4}$ "=1 inch.

THE SOLENODON.

FOR the past three years we have watched with keen interest and sympathy the scientific chase of the elusive Solenodon. For a brief period the standing-offer price for living specimens was \$50 each; and for a period, the price asked in this country was cheerfully prohibitive.

But a change has come over the Solenodon market. Quite recently Mr. Franklin Adams, Secretary of the Bureau of American Republics, and his wife, Mrs. Harriet Chalmers Adams, the well-known traveller, author and lecturer, captured six specimens in Hayti, and brought

five of them to New York, alive. Three of them were generously presented to the New York Zoological Park, and two to the Washington Zoological Park. The finest specimen that came to us is shown herewith. Since the arrival of these specimens we have received news of the great success last year of Mr. Thomas Barbour in his efforts to secure Solenodons for the Museum of Comparative Zoology, at Cambridge. The scientific results secured by him are now available to the world in the form of an elaborate memoir on the Solenodon genus, by Dr. Glover M. Allen.

The Solenodon is an animal about two sizes smaller than a Virginia opossum, belonging to the Order *Insectivora*, which contains the moles and shrews. Its nearest relatives are the shrews. At present only two species are known, one of which is found in Hayti and the other in Cuba. In appearance the Haytian animal is very odd. It has a very long, slender, conical snout; thick legs, and powerful, naked feet and claws for digging; a body like an ant-eater, and a long, naked, opossum-like tail. Its dentition is clearly insectivorian, but its strong teeth and really powerful jaws go far beyond the demands of an insect bill of fare. The Solenodon does not hesitate to crunch and devour a whole English sparrow, and its best food in captivity is said to be the heads of freshly-killed chickens. This strange creature is nominally a burrowing animal, but it is quite at home in a hollow log, or a standing tree with an interior apartment to let.

In captivity, thus far it appears that the life of the Solenodon is usually very brief; though one specimen has been known to live as long as a year. Our experience with our three specimens has been very tantalizing. All three of them died during the first week following their arrival, despite the elaborate attention that was given them by men skilled in the care of difficult animals. Dr. Blair's autopsy revealed, as the cause of death, a large stock of internal parasites of a kind new to him, which had invaded the peritoneum, and even the stomach itself, and produced acute peritonitis, which was the cause of death.

Of course the time will come when Solenodons will be obtained in goodly numbers, and settled down in captivity for exhibition. In such cases as the present, a thorough breaking of the spell that originally binds every new species soon leads to more specimens, and better knowledge regarding their care. Five years hence Solenodons should be as plentiful in zoological gardens as sloths now are.

W. T. H.