

**WE CARE FOR MADRAS THAT IS CHENNAI**

# MADRAS

## MUSINGS

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June 16-30, 2015

### INSIDE

- Short 'N' Snappy
- Saving our classical wealth
- Remembering Gopulu
- An affection for Chennai
- Life with the staff

## Global investors to light up heritage

### Some City showpieces

(By A Staff Reporter)

It is learnt that of Chennai's 1800 heritage buildings of Architectural, Historical, Cultural and Aesthetical interest. 36 Grade-I heritage buildings in the stretch from Chennai Airport to Secretariat Building, George Town, will be externally improved and floodlit to greet dignitaries visiting and attending the Investors' Meet scheduled to be held in the city in September. Government, it would appear, is at last waking up to the fact that heritage, particularly its buildings, can 'sell' a city to its visitors. The following are to benefit from this Government initiative.

- King Institute
- Raj Bhavan
- Madras Club
- College of Engineering
- Vasanta Vihar
- Brodie Castle
- Chettinad Palace
- Blavatsky Bungalow
- Theosophical Society
- Church of Holy Rosary
- Leith Castle
- Director General of Police Headquarters
- Ice House
- Bharathiyar House
- Hindu High School
- Victoria Students' Hostel
- Presidency College
- PWD Building
- Chempauk Palace
- Senate House
- Madras University
- Museum Theatre
- Connemara Library
- National Art Gallery
- Ophthalmic Hospital
- Higginbothams
- Bharath Insurance Building
- P.Orr & Sons
- Rajaji Hall
- Old Government House
- Ripon Building
- Victoria Public Hall
- Madras High Court
- General Post Office
- Maadi Poonga
- Secretariat

● by The Editor

It is not clear though it is hoped that our State will benefit economically from the Global Investors' Meet, but 36 heritage buildings of our city definitely will. As part of the drive to spruce up the city for the Meet, it has been decided that these structures will be "given a facelift and be floodlit". As to who will undertake this, the owners of the buildings or the Government, is as yet unclear, but what is certain is that this is a welcome move that will hopefully lead to bigger and better things as far as heritage is concerned.

The list as it has been released comprises a mix of public and private buildings. It is clear that whoever compiled it has done so with good intentions, but has not gone too much into detail. For instance, some are enormous precincts and it is not

clear as to how these can be floodlit. Take for instance the Madras Club and the Theosophical Society – which parts of these campuses are to be illuminated? There is also at least one building in the list, which is no longer standing – we allude to what is listed as Old Government House. Was this not the 250-year-old building on Government Estate that had to be imploded to make way for the new Assembly-cum-Secretariat (oops! We mean the Multi-Speciality Referral Hospital)?

And then there are some whose owners may not want any illumination at all. We refer to the Bharat Insurance Building. The LIC, which owns the structure, has made it clear that it does not want to restore the building. Given the ongoing litigation, they have made the

(Continued on page 3)

## Know your Fort better



The Cupola in the Fort, as seen today.

● If you are not a VIP, you enter the Fort through a small side entrance – not for you the joy of sweeping up the driveway in your car, which is perhaps a good thing as there is hardly any parking space in the Fort. You are better off leaving your vehicle in the vast car park opposite the Fort, crossing the road and then queuing up at the side gate. You will need to enter your name, address and phone number in a shabby register and subject yourself to the mandatory metal detector and baggage scanner. And then you are on your own, inside the Fort.

Almost the first thing that strikes your eye is a Greek-styled pavilion. In essence it is an Ionic-pillared rotunda surmounted by a cupola. This stands all by itself in a grassy plot that also has a shade-giving tree. The only thing missing is the centrepiece and that is a huge marble statue of Lord Cornwallis that is now within the Fort Museum, which is to your right as you gaze at the rotunda. Between the two of them, the statue and the pavilion have quite a bit of history, going back 200 years or so.

Cornwallis was Governor-General of India twice, the first tenure being from 1786 to 1793. During that period he achieved what was till then considered impossible – the subduing of Tippu Sultan. Assuming direct command over the operations in 1792, he defeated the Tiger of Mysore. Unlike Lord Wellesley in 1799, he

(Continued on page 8)

## Madras Week, August 16-23

● By A Staff Reporter

Madras Week will be celebrated between the 16th and 23rd of August. Last year saw the city complete 375 years and we had enthusiastic city-wide celebrations with excellent support from the media, old and new. We trust that the 376th year will be no different, especially as it is the 375th year of Fort St. George from where the city grew. The Week, which started off as Madras Day 12 years ago to celebrate the founding of the city on August 22, 1639, has become virtually a Madras Month judging by the programming last year.

The celebrations this year are, like last year, likely to be spread throughout August and will carry on till the first week of September. For the small band of volunteers who catalysed this celebration and now help coordinate the programmes, the response from corporates, educational institutions, citizens of the city, and even diplomatic missions, has given enormous satisfaction.

Participation is purely a VOLUNTARY effort by those

wanting to organise programmes during the Week. The role of the informal group of co-ordinators is only to encourage such participation, try to organise publicity for the events, offer advice and, where possible, arrange venues. This is a FIRST CALL for individuals/ groups / institutions who wish to join in VOLUNTARILY to celebrate the founding of our city.

This year, the hotels of the city will, once again, be enthusiastic participants. Some will

be venues for talks, while others will host art and photographic exhibitions besides organising food festivals with Madras cuisine as their theme. Art galleries have also taken to this event in a big way. And so have diplomatic missions and their cultural centres.

We are certain that the various organisations that are active participants, such as the Madras Naturalists' Society, Nizhal, the photography groups, the Observer Research Foundation, the Roja Muthiah

(Continued on page 2)



# MADRAS WEEK, AUGUST 16-23

(Continued from page 1)

Research Library, the C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar Centre, The Press Institute of India, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) Chennai Chapter, *Mylapore Times* and *Yocee*, amongst others, will be organising programmes. These will include walks, talks, quiz contests and other such events. As has been the practice in past years, Chennai Heritage, publishers of *Madras Musings*, will be hosting eight talks at various locations, on subjects related to the city. It will also lead several heritage walks in the city during the Week, as will several individuals.

The INTACH Chennai Chapter (e-mail: Padma Swaminathanpadmaathreya@yahoo.com), in particular, hopes schools and colleges wishing to organise celebratory activities will get in touch with it. The last one year has seen a considerable increase in the number of schools that have initiated heritage clubs thanks to INTACH's efforts. The current strength of as many as 43 schools and 16 colleges will definitely add volume and value to Madras Week.

Perhaps indicative of the success of Madras Week as a means of creating awareness about the City and its heritage is the number of institutions that have come forward each year to celebrate the city.

Several IT companies organised programmes last year and are planning to do more this year. So have several Social and Sports Clubs, Rotary Clubs, and cultural centres.

The celebrations have also spread to the suburbs such as Tiruvanmiyur, Nanganallur and Tambaram. Private apartment blocks and various societies are planning their own events. The Coordinators look forward to several more participants this year.

North Chennai, however, still appears to remain aloof from the celebrations. This is a cause for concern and it is to be hoped that the institutions in that area will come forward to showcase their heritage. The Armenian Church and Avvai Kalai Kazhagam have been two staunch supporters. But many more are needed. Efforts are on to rope them in and the assistance of volunteers in this cause would be greatly appreciated.

Those who are planning events are requested to send in details by email to the following Ids: editor@madrasmusings.com and themadrasday@gmail.com. Details so received will be put up on the web site www.themadrasday.in and also the mobile app Madras Week. In addition, a multi-page booklet with programmes will also be published and distributed closer to the date of the event by *Madras Musings*, whose website is www.madrasmusings.com

## OUR ADDRESSES

For matters regarding subscriptions, donations, non-receipt of receipts etc.: CHENNAI HERITAGE, 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, Westcott Road, Royapettah, Chennai 14.

*Madras Musings* now has its own email ID. Letters to the editor can be sent via email to editor@madrasmusings.com. Those who wish to intimate change of address can also do so provided the subscription number is quoted.

For non-receipt of copies, change of address, and all other circulation matters: Madras Musings, C/o Lokavani Southern Printers Pvt. Ltd., 122, Greames Road, Chennai 600 006. On editorial matters: The Editor, *Madras Musings*, No. 5, Bhattad Tower, 30, Westcott Road, Royapettah, Chennai 600 014.

No personal visits or telephone calls, please. Letters received will be sent from these addresses every couple of days to the persons concerned and you will get an answer from them to your queries reasonably quickly. Strange as it may seem, if you adopt the 'snail mail' approach, we will be able to help you faster and disappoint you less.

ñ THE EDITOR

## MADRAS MUSINGS ON THE WEB

To reach out to as many readers as possible who share our keen interest in Madras that is Chennai, and in response to requests from many well-wishers – especially from outside Chennai and abroad who receive their postal copies very late – for an online edition. *Madras Musings* is now on the web at www.madrasmusings.com

– THE EDITOR

# Demented over DeMonte Colony

'Tis the season when, to quote a former Viceroy of India, everyone's "brains are grilled before 2 pm and don't get ungrilled till 2 am." *The Man from Madras Musings* attributes this to be the sole reason for the spate of horror films that are being released. MMM uses the term 'horror' more for the way the movies are made than for the subject matter. Given that the central idea of locally made spooky films is for the hero/heroine to masquerade with an extra set of canine teeth, these could actually be classified under whimsical comedy.

But before you get the impression that you have wandered into a column by a celebrated Bald Reviewer (and here MMM must add that the BR in question, unlike MMM, goes around that way by choice, meaning he is not naturally endowed with bald-

ness like MMM), let MMM get on with the subject of this article and by now his pet peeve – the story that is doing the rounds that DeMonte Colony is haunted. Of course, in a city where every inch of land is looked at only for its real estate (aka BHK) possibilities, it must be a surprise for everyone that there is a colony of green trees, seemingly abandoned houses and deserted streets. And so the ghost story is one of three natural corollaries – if it has not been built over, it must be a star-crossed property or haunted or under litigation. In fact, on days when MMM is below the weather, he often thinks that the only protection that heritage buildings have is the above-mentioned trio of attributes. And he can list several structures and precincts that are standing only because of these.

The Chief has written reams on how this Demon's, sorry, DeMonte, Colony came about and what are the real reasons for it to remain unoccupied and (thankfully) undeveloped. But those are not the kind of reasons that interest most people. They imagine ghosts and, in the absence of any, have begun demanding them. This is probably the reason why one of the signboards to this road now reads as Demandi Colony. And the popular press has been going to town on the subject.

Several of what is known as the Fourth Estate have been haunting MMM's footsteps wanting to hear all about DeMonte Colony and its encounters with the Fifth Horseman. They lurk in his email, call him from unknown numbers usually in the dead of night, and one or two have also landed at his doorstep, thank-

fully not in winding sheets. MMM has been denying all theories of the area being a favourite destination for the spirits, his logic being that there is no bar anywhere in the vicinity. He has also been directing all callers to the Chief's columns only to have them call back stating that they have read it all, but could MMM please give them a sound byte on the subject, a request that makes MMM grind his teeth in despair. The only option now available to MMM is to sport a set of fangs, sharpen his ears till they stick out, don a bedsheet and dance around DeMonte Colony in the dead of night.

The residents of DeMonte Colony (the still living ones that is) have, thanks to all this attention, begun to have delusions of grandeur. Thinking that they needed to become Greta Garbo-like after this publicity, they have barricaded

when he was seated in a restaurant and, on handing over his card for payment, was told that it was not valid. Fortunately for MMM, he had the cash and that saved him from doing time washing dishes or grinding the batter in the restaurant's kitchen. Having reached home, MMM fished out the new card, duly memorised its four-digit number – ABCD – and placed it reverentially in his wallet.

Then came a day when MMM was once again at a restaurant (he does eat out rather too often, does he not?) and, on completion of the meal, airily handed over the card. Conversation continued at the table for quite a while before a man came rather deferentially and, having coughed, stood holding out MMM's card. A hush descended on the table. Had the card been rejected, wondered MMM. The man then asked MMM if he would kindly step

## SHORT 'N' SNAPPY

themselves, denying public access to what is, after all, a public road. This demented behaviour has since been knocked on the head by the police who have opened the place up once again. MMM recommends the strewing of garlic and the strategic placement of some crosses (this is, after all, church property) as better deterrents.

## Pain in numbers

Do you own a credit card? If so, have you received the latest variety that has a chip embedded in your card and which requires you to memorise a certain four digit number that you are required not to disclose to anyone even if you are tied, gagged and have lighted matches stuck between your toes? No, no, before you imagine that *The Man from Madras Musings* has turned a credit card salesman, let him assure you that he has not. All he wants to know is if you have received the latest in credit cards or, to tell you the truth, the not-so-recent but definitely the most painful complication to life in addition to passwords, PAN Number, PIN Number, DIN Number, UID Number, and 16 digit account numbers.

MMM received such a card several months ago and forgot all about it till there came a day

in to the manager's office.

MMM could have gladly sunk through the floor. He felt as though every eye in the restaurant was following his progress. And what of his guests? What would they think? In the manager's sanctum, however, MMM could detect an air of excessive fawning. The manager was most apologetic. The hotel, he said, did not have a portable card swiping machine and so they had to trouble MMM by getting him over. Could he please enter his four-digit number? It took quite a while for MMM to regain his composure and recollect the number. The transaction went through eventually.

The whole idea behind the P(A)IN number is apparently to reduce the incidence of credit card frauds. But it may in the process reduce the life of the cardholders. Next time you are at a restaurant and are asked to step into the manager's office, do not panic. It is your PIN number calling.

## Tailpiece

The intersection of Eldam's and Mount Roads is a particularly messy spot. Conceive of the joy of *The Man from Madras Musings* when he discovered this signboard with the Freudian slip right there.

– MMM





## OUR READERS WRITE



### 'Non-mixing' waste

The answer to your question "Can garbage problem be sorted out at home?" (MM, May 16th) is a resounding YES.

The widely used phrase "Segregation of waste" is a misnomer, because 99.9 per cent of the degradable waste in any house is generated in the kitchen and 90 per cent of the solid waste problem is solved if this is not mixed with the degradable waste generated, by keeping two containers in a house and putting all degradable waste generated in the house in one of them. "Non-mixing" is therefore the appropriate phrase to be used.

If the easily available small plastic dust bin, which is opened by pressing a pedal at the bottom with the toe or the thumb, is kept in the kitchen with a few holes in it made with a hot rod or screw-driver, degradable waste can be retained in it for four or five days without generating any smell because of the aeration provided and this can then be put into the composting drum.

Some years ago, Exnora introduced a plastic drum with holes in the sides and 80 per cent of the bottom cut off for composting. I have tried this method in my complex and found it to work with minimal effort and it yields fairly good manure. The composting drum can be kept in any corner of the garden and there will be no smell or flies generated by it. The only precaution is that garden waste should not be put into this, as it is voluminous unlike kitchen waste which is very compact.

In this context, the pioneering effort of the Pune Municipal Corporation deserves mention. They have made a rule that they will clear only the non-degradable waste from buildings constructed from 2007 onwards. The residents have to retain the degradable waste within the premises and compost it themselves. The All-India organisation called KKKPK (Kach Kaagaz Patra Kaashtakaar Panchayat) is made up of rag-pickers and has trained its members in composting and they do the job in the complexes involved. For this purpose, they have formed a specific joint venture called SWACH with the Corporation. They now cover 3,20,000 premises. The rag-pickers get regular employment and lead a healthier life! They have now started the effort in Bengaluru.

Indukanth Ragade  
isragade@yahoo.com

### Food for the poor

The Senior Citizens' Group of Besant Nagar (SCGOBN) plans to start a campaign against food waste in Chennai.

An enormous amount of food is wasted by hotels in Chennai, especially the star hotels. Enormous amounts of food are also wasted after marriages and other festive meals.

There is no organised means by which this food (which can be eaten) can reach the poor.

There are thousands of beggars and pavement dwellers who go without even one square meal a day in Chennai. They sleep on the pavements on a hungry stomach.

SCGOBN plans to create



The giant Banyan tree in Anantapur District today.

## Thimmamma Marrimanu

The review of Nizhal's splendid publication *Living Landmarks of Chennai* referred much to the banyan tree.

*Thimmamma Marrimanu* is the name of a banyan tree – *marri* means banyan and *manu* means tree in Telugu – in Anantapur District, about 25 km from Kadiri in Andhra Pradesh. Its branches spread over 5 acres, and has a canopy of 19,107 square metres. It is recorded as the biggest tree in the *Guinness Book of World Records*, 1989.

A small temple dedicated to Thimmamma is under the tree. A Telugu record in the shrine says that she was the daughter of a Setti Balija couple, Sennakka Venkatappa and Mangamma, and was born in 1394 CE. She was married to a Bala Veerayya who died in 1434 CE. Thimmamma committed *sati*. The banyan tree is believed to have sprouted at the place where she ascended the funeral pyre. The people of the area believe that if a childless couple worships Thimmamma they will have a child the very next year.

A big *jatara* is conducted here on Shivaratri and thousands of people flock here to worship Thimmamma.

– Ramineni Bhaskarendra Rao  
bhaskarrsd@gmail.com



The board that tells the Banyan's story.



A pathway through the heart of the Banyan.

awareness about this sorry state of affairs and plans to work closely with the big food-wasters like star hotels to ensure edible food reaches the poor.

Those who wish to be part of this campaign please contact Prof V. Chandrasekhar, Hony President, SCGOBN, at senior-citizensofbesantnagar@gmail.com or mobile 98842 24480.

Corporate houses interested in helping may also contact SCGOBN. We do not

accept any monetary donations.

Prof. V. Chandrasekhar  
President, SCGOBN  
B, 12/4, 25th Cross  
Besant Nagar, Chennai 600 090

### Corrections

I regret that the following errors (corrections indicated) occurred in my article 'The City's green landmarks' which appeared in MM, June 1st.

In the example of 'Arsikere', 'kere' refers to lake and not 'arsi'.

'North Canara' should be 'South Canara'.

*Ficus benhalensis* or. *krishnae* should be *Ficus benghalensis* var. *krishnae*.

Dr. A. Raman  
(Charles Sturt University)  
Orange, NSW  
Australia

### Dates for Your Diary

June: Photography/art exhibition by Gita (at DakshinaChitra).

Till June 29: Art exhibition by N.S. Manohar (at DakshinaChitra).

Till June 29: Art exhibition by N.S. Manohar, Kumbakonam (at DakshinaChitra).

Till June 30: *Baramasa*, an exhibition of contemporary artists' work exploring the moods inspired by different seasons (at Apparao Galleries, Nungambakkam, and The Leela Palace).

Till June 30: *The Art of Chess*, an exhibition of chess sets created by contemporary artists (at Apparao Galleries).

Till June 30: Paintings by Raja (at DakshinaChitra).



Raja's painting.

# LIGHTING UP HERITAGE

(Continued from page 1)

edifice over to the elements, thereby speeding up its eventual collapse. If this is to be illuminated, what will be seen will be a roofless shell, peeling ornamentation and plenty of vegetation on the building. We are glad, however, that the lighting up will bring to the open this precious piece of heritage. Hopefully someone in LIC will also feel the same after the floodlighting and will have a change of heart. The same goes for Victoria Students' Hostel which is in such a bad way that the students there have

been protesting against its condition.

The selection of the buildings has been done rather cleverly too. Most are on principal thoroughfares that the Global Investors will take during their stay here. Some, such as *Bharati Illam*, though not on this route, have been selected presumably to highlight our literary past. Now what if some of these investors wander off by themselves and see some neglected heritage structures? Will they not wonder as to why so progressive a State as ours does not have legislation to protect heritage? If you run your

eye over the list, another aspect may strike you – most of them are British era built structures. Now, was this not the heritage that most of those in power used to deride as remnants of a colonial past? Was it not why they did not want to participate in Madras Week celebrations or organise a suitable event to commemorate 375 years of the Fort? Global investors evidently make the powers-that-be think differently.

That said, the present move to illuminate and showcase our heritage is a commendable one. We also hope that the Government's heritage consciousness

will not cease with the Investors Meet and live on to generate more concrete results such as speeding up of conservation and restoration work in heritage buildings in its possession. The State should also think about making its Heritage Act a reality before the Investors Meet by forming the Heritage Conservation Committee that is now merely on paper. The Committee needs to have a broad-based membership that is not restricted to Government servants alone. Only if all this is done can we truly claim to the Global Investors that we seriously intend to protect our heritage.



# His aim: To save our classical wealth

The national conscience of our people, their love for their dear motherland and indeed their great veneration for their ancient heritages have never before manifested themselves in such a high degree as they are today. This noble spirit of national pride and love which is sweeping over the land at the present time is as deeply penetrated as it is widespread. There is not one branch of our activities – political, social, religious, artistic or literary – which it has not affected in some measure at least. While politically this national conscience has been roused to a remarkable high degree it is to be very much regretted that it has not shown itself to the same satisfactory extent in the preservation and spread of those priceless and revered heritage inheritances, those countless books and writings in Sanskrit and in other vernaculars by that noble band of sages, rishis, poets and kings whose footsteps we have the good fortune to follow today in this dear land of ours. These books which were written when other nations were either not dreamt of or were still barbarians are the wonder and amazement of the nations of the present day and have been the fountain, the perennial fountain, from which modern society and modern government have to drink deep. It is of the utmost importance and, indeed, it is the nation's duty that it should lose not a

moment's opportunity in making every effort to save this most valued of gifts which is sure to be lost and forgotten through the ravages of time.

The various other nations which have grown up since our time have developed their own institutions and their own literature, art and thought. A comparative study of these is essential to us today if we desire that our knowledge of the world and its peoples should be founded on a wider and more solid basis.

Lastly it is necessary that we may keep ourselves abreast of the times a great deal more of assimilating the thought and works of other nations. The achievements of the world's nations in science, technology, arts and philosophy have got to be familiarised to our countrymen by means of translations of books in foreign languages on these subjects.

The preservation of our national culture and heritages, the comparative study of international thought and literature and the assimilation of foreign achievements in the sciences and arts are thus the three very important duties which have fallen upon our countrymen at the present time and which offer a wide scope for that abundant national activity which is seeking newer and newer channels every day along which to flow. Except for the spasmodic and occasional attempts of this or that Indian State, of this or that provincial Government whose sympathies

often varied according as this or that man who was at the helm of affairs, there has been no organised and central body in this land of ours to do these, the most important, the most noble and the most patriotic of duties though organisations with far less noble and much less pretensions to a national cause have sprung up of late and have found ready support.

To meet this desideratum this limited liability Company is formed with a capital of three lacs of rupees divided into 4000 shares of Rs. 50 each and 10000 shares of Rs. 10 each with a view to start a big central All-India Printing and Publishing House whose sole concern will be to fulfil the above-mentioned three very important duties.

The promoters in their efforts to found such a central organisation have made their labours easy by resolving to purchase as a going concern the Sri Vani Vilas Press of Srirangam, that well-known firm of publishers and printes of ancient and national literature founded eighteen years ago, who have laid all Indians under a deep debt of gratitude by the zeal and enormous amount of work they have exhibited in bringing to light many hitherto unpublished classics in Sanskrit and Tamil which have won the approbation and even the admiration of eminent scholars throughout the world, a selection of whose opinions is appended hereto.

Issued on 1st AUGUST 1922

**PROSPECTUS.**

A Copy of this Prospectus has been filed with the Assistant Registrar of Joint Stock Companies, Trichinopoly.

**The Sri Vani Vilas Syndicate Limited.**

**Capital Rupees Three Lacs**

Divided into 4,000 ordinary shares of Rs. 50 each  
and 10,000 ordinary shares of Rs. 10 each.

Payable in 5 equal instalments—the first on application, the second on allotment and the remaining three at intervals of not less than 30 days as and when called for.

**Directors.**

1. Dewan Bahadur S. Rm. M. Ct. Pethachi Chettiar, Zamindar of Andipatti.
2. M. R. Seturatnam Aiyar, Member, Legislative Council, and Mirasdar Mananthattai, Kulitalai.
3. S. Sivaramakrishna Aiyar, B.A., B.L., Vakil, Trichinopoly.
4. N. D. Subbarama Aiyar, Mirasdar of Nangavaram, Trichinopoly.
5. T. K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar, B.A., Mirasdar, Srirangam.

**Bankers.**

The Imperial Bank of India  
and The Indian Bank Ltd. Madras and Branches.

**Auditor.**

T. C. Ranganatha Rao F. R. S. (London)  
F. C. I. (Birmingham) A. F. I. A. (Victoria)  
Holder of permanent unrestricted Auditor Certificate.

**Registered Office.**

552 South Chitra Street, Srirangam.

Page 1 of a 1922 prospectus.

The Press is fully equipped with the latest machinery in every department of the printing and publishing line and has got its own process, electro, stereotyping, gilding, dye-stamping and other allied departments.

It has till now published several rare and valuable books and the present stock of the published works on hand is about one and a quarter lacs of rupees while the value of the works in the Press and of those under

preparation will be about a quarter lac of rupees. The value of the plant together with all appurtenances is about Rs. 65,000 and the value of the stock of unprinted paper on hand is about Rs 20000. The goodwill, copyright etc. may safely be valued at Rs. 1 lac.

While thus the value of the Press, its publications, goodwill etc. is estimated at about Rs. 3,35,000, the proprietor, as a true nationalist and in consideration of the patriotic work undertaken by the Company, has agreed to part with the whole concern for just Rs. 1½ lacs which is exactly half the capital with which the present Company intends doing work and which barely covers the value of the printed books and the stock of unprinted paper on hand. The gain which thus accrues to the Company at the very outset is not one of any small measure as practically the whole plant is obtained without any cost especially during these days when machinery is very scarce and dear.

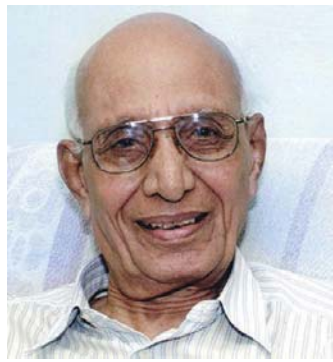
The Press at present is found to earn Rs. 1,500 a month and deducting the working expenses it is not too much to expect a dividend of at least 6 per cent from the very commencement on the capital of Rs. 1½ lacs invested on it. The Press is also running a weekly, the *Hindu Message*, an independent journal whose chief aim is to preserve the Indianness in the Indian. The Company is free to run the Journal on the same lines either as a weekly or as a daily.

An agreement will be entered into between Mr T K Balasubrahmanya Aiyar the proprietor of the Sri Vani Vilas Press and the *Hindu Message*, on the

# Memorable for cartoons – & his ads too

The veteran cartoonist, S. Gopalan, popularly known as Gopulu, who passed away recently at the age of 91, had a great sense of humour. When a friend came visiting him in hospital in 2002, to which he had been admitted after a paralytic stroke, he joked, “Maybe it was my obsession with strokes that led to my brush with a stroke.” The stroke left his right hand paralysed. But Gopulu was not the one to give up. He taught himself to draw with his left hand (he was 78 then) and became an ambidextrous artist.

Born in the temple town of Tanjore in 1924, he studied at the Kumbakonam School of Art. In 1941, He met the legendary artist Mali of *Ananda Vikatan*, who commissioned a number of



Gopulu.

paintings by Gopulu for the magazine's Deepavali specials. He also used him as a freelance artist. Gopulu formally joined *Ananda Vikatan* as a cartoonist in 1948. Gopulu's creativity encompassed jokes, cartoons and illustrations which were social, historical and mythological in nature. His series of silent jokes (cartoons without captions) appeared regularly in *Ananda Vikatan* from 1951 to 1968, delighting readers week after week.

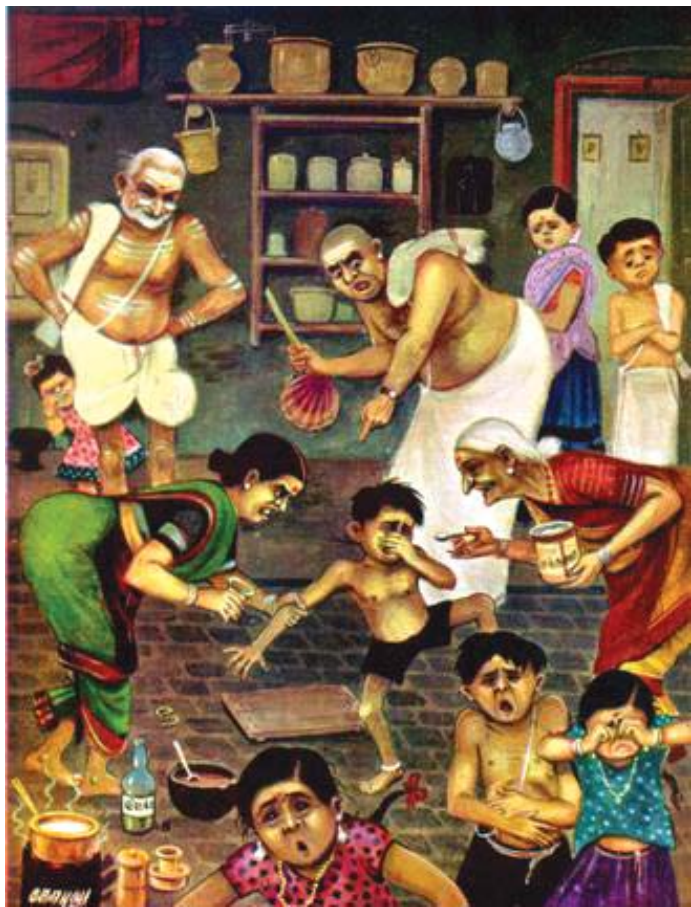
As a humorous illustrator Gopulu worked on several popular serials in *Ananda Vikatan*, including *Thillana Mohanambal* and *Washingtonil Thirumanam*. He teamed with the legendary editor Devan of *Ananda Vikatan* to create the famous caricature of Sambu in *Thuppariyum Sambu*, the story of a bumbling detective penned by Devan and serialised in the magazine. It was later performed on stage by Stage Creations with 'Kathadi' Ramamurthy playing the role of Sambu. And still later it was telecast as a serial in Doordarshan.

• by R.V. Rajan

As a humorous critic, Gopulu also did political cartoons. But some of his cartoons hurt politicians who started complaining to the editor of *Ananda Vikatan*, which eventually led to his quitting the magazine and seek greener pastures. He chose to move into Advertising.

After a brief stint with Madras-based advertising agencies like Efficient Publicities and F D Stewart's, he started his own advertising agency, Adwave Advertising P Ltd. in association with Mrs. Vimala, his erstwhile colleague at F D Stewart's. He was to be actively involved in Advertising for more than three decades. However, he continued to do freelance illustration work for magazines. His full page cartoons and paintings were a regular feature in the Deepavali specials of some Tamil magazines.

As an advertising man, he designed logos for Sun TV and *Kunkumam* magazine. And, of course, the emblem of the little



A Gopulu contribution to a Tamil journal on the tradition of the half-yearly castor oil dose.

man with a briefcase in one hand for the Madras-based Shriram Chits was his creation and is still being used by the Shriram Group. His association with Shriram Group continued for over three decades.

One of his most memorable campaigns was a corporate campaign he did for Lakshmi Mills of

hand to create his drawings till the end.

Among the many awards that Gopulu won during his long career was the Kalaimamani Award by the Government of Tamil Nadu in 1991 and the lifetime achievement award in 2001 from the Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Cartoonists.

But the one award he cherished the most was the Distinguished Service Award that Advertising Club, Madras, conferred on him during its Golden Jubilee celebrations in 2006. This I learnt when I met him at a function held last year to honour him.

He told me, while we chatted, “While I have got several awards for my drawing abilities I was touched by the gesture of the Advertising Club, Madras, to recognise me for my long association with the advertising business.” I was happy to hear this from Gopulu because, as the Chairman of the Golden Jubilee Celebrations Committee of the Club, I had a role to play in including his name in the list of awardees.

At the end of the meeting, he asked me to drop in his house for a chat sometime. My regret is that even before I could fulfil my promise to him, he passed away.

Gopulu for all his talent as a cartoonist, for all the name and fame he achieved, remained till the end a humble, jovial and friendly person. He was humility personified. The world of art and artists and advertising will surely miss him.

# Views on the Sri Vani Vilas Press

- **Sir Asutosh Mookerjee**, Judge, High Court, Calcutta: I have for many years past felt the deepest admiration for the excellence of the Work accomplished by the talented founder of the Sri Vani Vilas Press and I have felt it my duty to visit the institution during my brief stay at Trichinopoly. I feel convinced that all Indians may legitimately take pride in the manner the great task has been carried out and the self-sacrifice it has involved. The Memorial Edition of the works of Sankaracharya would, by itself, justify the highest approbation of all scholars.
- **Babu Bipin Chandra Pal**: Through the kind courtesy of Mr. Balasubrahmanyam the Proprietor of the Sri Vani Vilas Press, I was able to look over the numerous valuable works published by it. The selection, compilation, and arrangement of the publications speak highly of the education, culture, and critical discrimination of the Proprietor who is also the editor of most of the publications, while the get-up speaks very highly of the printer's art which the Press evidently commands.
- **Rao Bahadur V.T. Krishnamachariar**: I have this day renewed my acquaintance with this Press. For years Mr. Balasubramania Iyer has been, at great self-sacrifice, publishing our classics in a style which would do credit to the best publishing firms in the West.
- **Mrs. Annie Besant**: All lovers of Sanskrit know the exquisite printing of this press, and know also the devotion and the self-sacrifice which make sacred its work.
- **Dr. F. Otto Schrader, Ph.D**: Mr. T.K. Balasubrahmanyam, Proprietor of the Sri Vani Vilas Press at Srirangam, is one of the most prominent publishers of Sanskrit Works in Southern India. His Memorial Edition of Sri Sankara Acharya's Works (20 Vols) is really admirable.

His “Sastra Series” the latest volume of which is Venkatanatha's extensive and valuable commentary on the Bhagavadgita, contains only noteworthy and hitherto unpublished works and is edited very neatly and accurately.

• **Hon'ble Mr. P.S. Sivaswamy Aiyar**, C.S.I., C.I.E: Your edition of the Kutuhala Vritti is a scholarly work and the get-up is worthy of the reputation of your press. It goes without saying that your publications are excellently well got-up, quite unlike the coarse unattractive style of Sanskrit Publications generally.

• **Rao Bhadur M. Rangacharya**, M.A: I am glad that you are continuing the labour of love in bringing out worthy and valuable Sanskrit Publications. The accuracy and artistic get-up of the publications of the Srirangam Sri Vani Vilas Press are widely known and recognised; and the help you are rendering through them to the development of Sanskrit Scholarship and the unearthing of buried literary treasures of the past is indeed very considerable. The fact that unaided you have done so much so well, is convincing proof to me that your hands deserve to be strengthened by adequately bestowed aid. I think you ought to seek aid from all those who are interested in the cause of India's ancient learning and are in a position to give the needed aid.

• **Mr. S. Kuppuswami Sastrigal**, M.A.: I am glad to be able to bear testimony to the excellent work which the Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, has been doing for the past ten years. The Press has conferred on the world of Sanskrit scholars an inestimable boon by bringing out correct and critical editions to many rare and hitherto unpublished Sanskrit works, with the co-operation of many eminent Sanskrit scholars.

• **Hon'ble Mr. T.K. Seshagiri Aiyar**: You are doing excellent service to the cause of Sanskrit Literature. You are yourself a good scholar and you have resolved to devote your life to the work you have taken in hand. I know personally some of the men who assist you and the work of discriminative editing cannot be in safer hands. For neatness and typographical accuracy, there is none in the whole of India which can excel yours and I say this with complete knowledge of the various publications from all parts of India.

• **The Madras Mail**: The Sri Vani Vilas Press of Srirangam has been helping the cause of the advancement of Sanskrit Literature, and its admirable publications of valuable classical works have been the means by which Sanskrit knowledge has been more widely disseminated. Several ancient works, chiefly on Mimamsa and Vedanta, of great literary merit and value, which were hitherto supposed to have been lost, have been unearthed by the energy of Mr. T.K. Balasubrahmanya Aiyar and the Pandits associated with him and made available to the Public.

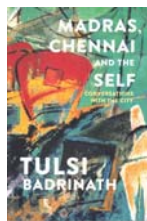
• **The Hindu**: That this extremely useful work (Kutuhala Vritti) is now brought to light for the first time is due to the untiring efforts of the Sri Vani Vilas Press at the resuscitation of all that is rare and precious in the field of Sanskrit literature.

The Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, have published this edition (Kavyalankarasutra Vritti) and their name is a guarantee for everything excellent in publications of this kind. The publications are no common literary critics.

• **Louis H. Gray, Esq.**, Newark, USA: I can very conscientiously say that it (Vasavadatta) is one of the most admirable editions I have ever seen from an Indian Press.

29.7.1922





# An affection for Chennai

Those of us who love Chennai know that it is unique. It is like no other Indian city in that, despite being a metropolis, it displays none of the extremes or eccentricities of the average metro. It is a level-headed space that allows you to grow (or regress or remain in one place) at your own pace. You can go pubbing, party, lead a frenetic social life. You can, on the other hand, be your conservative Madras self – drinking filter coffee, reading *The Hindu*, listening to cutcheries, or visiting temples. Nobody is judgemental about either lifestyle. It is a reasonably safe city, as many settlers from elsewhere will vouch. Its drawbacks are its humid weather, lack of civic aesthetics, and the increasing madness of its traffic. Despite that, ask any sweating, puffing, cursing Chennaiite whether he would like to live anywhere else in the world, and the answer would be an unequivocal 'no'.

There are many ways of describing a city. Tulsi Badrinath's *Madras, Chennai and the Self* describes the city through its people. A string of profiles of well-known, and not-so-well-known residents of the city

cleverly threads descriptions of Chennai through her own memories and experiences of the city and those of the people she has interviewed.

*Madras, Chennai...* is also about the changing face of this 375 year old city. Tulsi portrays this change by seeing the city through the eyes of the people she has interviewed and observing how they have coped with these changes. Take K. Seshadri, the amiable priest of the Ashtalakshmi temple in Besant Nagar. A small-town boy, he had been trained by his father from childhood to serve as a temple priest. Yet, after he moved to Chennai to serve in the Ashtalakshmi Temple, Seshadri, always fitness oriented, became curious about karate after watching a demonstration on TV. He found a teacher and practised with him in gruelling sessions that eventually paid off by getting him a Black Belt. His father was aghast, people around him were tickled by the idea of a vegetarian priest mastering the art of self-defence. The fisherfolk in Besant Nagar began affectionately addressing him as Japan Iyer, and he was

## EXCERPTS

'Once a stranger came to the door. He was lost,' recounted Indu. 'As he held out the paper with the address, I saw a scorpion near his foot. Had I warned him, he might have stepped back on it. So without saying a word, I held his hand and pulled him in. He was alarmed! Then I pointed to the scorpion and he got even more scared. When I called Krishnan, instead of shooing it away, he got out his camera while the great botanist Dr. Swamy, who was visiting, said it was so magnificent he would take it home. Mrs. Swamy said, "I am not coming home with you if you do that." Then I asked Krishnan, "Were you not surprised to find a trembling young man?" He replied, "It's hardly an unusual thing to find here!"'

suddenly the darling of the media. Seshadri continues to serve as a priest in the same temple and still practises his Karate. That makes sense in a city where, ever since the dawn of the rationalist movement, Brahmin priests have often

been the victims of casteist attacks.

There is also the story of Saravana Sakthivel, who struggles to run his family's snuff factory in an atmosphere that is distinctly hostile to tobacco use. Known as 'Patnam Podi', snuff was once the most popularly used form of tobacco in Chennai. Not that many use it any longer – it's pretty messy to begin with, and, with increasing governmental taxation on tobacco products, it is no longer profitable to manufacture it. From a remarkably lucrative business, snuff-making has shrunk to the level of a cottage industry and Sakthivel continues with it only to keep up the family tradition.

Integral to the history of Madras are the Nawabs of the Carnatic, who began ruling over much of this area when it was bestowed on them by Emperor Aurangzeb. Their present-day representative, the Nawab of Arcot, however, presides over a territory that has shrunk to the compound walls of the Arcot Palace, his elegant home in Chepauk. The British took away most of the land under the Arcot Nawabs' command. "Sab cheen liya. They looted us and left us with nothing," the present-day Nawab says sadly. A courteous and elegant man, he talks fondly of the excellent Hindu-Muslim harmony that existed and, to a great extent, still does in Chennai.

Everyone knows how cricket-crazy Chennai's residents are. In the profile on cricketer, writer and editor V. Ramnarayan, Tulsi acknowledges the city's passion for this sport in nostalgia-soaked reminiscences of cricket in the city before the advent of IPL and Twenty-Twenty matches.

In profiling the renowned late photographer, M. Krishnan and his wife, Indu, Tulsi recalls a Chennai that was slower of pace, more gracious and where people had time pause, observed Nature and chatted leisurely over cups of filter coffee.

Tulsi's affection for Chennai is obvious and so is a steady element in all her writing. Her language is simple and evocative and perfectly suits the personality of the city she describes – multi-layered and unadorned. In describing the personalities she has profiled, the author also brings in the history and topography of the places they inhabit so that the reader gets a complete package – environment and inhabitants.

If there is anything at all to complain about in this delightful book, it is the lack of material about North Madras, the bustling and dark underbelly of the city. But, then, that is a subject for a whole new book.

– J.V.

*Madras, Chennai and the Self* by Tulsi Badrinath (Pan Macmillan).

# THE MERCHANTS OF MADRAS

(Continued from last fortnight)

– As recorded in the Journal of the Belisarius, 1799-1800

The Europeans reside in the country, a few miles from the Fort, coming in daily to their business, about 9 a.m. and continuing till 5 p.m. They eat a tiffin or luncheon at twelve or one, dine usually by candle light and, after drinking wine till eight or nine, have tea. The rich live well and at great expense, have a great variety of dishes on table, and drink much wine. Wild fowl, poultry, beef, pork,

fish, etc. are found here, some of them very good. Of wines, English claret is most fashionable – it comes charged from England as high as sixty-three pounds sterling per dozen, and sells now twelve to fourteen pagodas\*. Much Madeira also is drunk. Of fruits, I saw pines (pineapple), oranges and

shattucks (large citrus fruit) – none of them equal to those I have seen brought from the West Indies – plantains and other fruits. There are very good grapes brought here from Pondicherry, but they are few in quantity and very dear.

Great numbers of servants are fashionable, a different person being kept for almost every different service. Every gentleman carries his servant, in going to dine. Men are employed entirely, except in fetching water, which is brought a considerable distance by the women. Some excellent servants are found here, but all much inclined to "cheat master".

There is no theatre, or other public amusement here. Sunday appears totally disregarded by the Europeans as well as natives. Business goes on as usual, and I saw nothing to distinguish this from any other day. The gentlemen who live out from the Fort have gardens, some of which are handsome and very expansive. They all have tanks

or ponds, from which to water their gardens in the dry season – without this, their produce would be entirely destroyed.

There are several taverns here, but their charges are enormously high, and it is less reputable to live at them, than to keep house. The Americans, whose business brings them to this place, take a house and furnish it and hire a sufficient number of servants. The expense for a residence of three or four weeks will be considerably less on this establishment, than at a public house.

The merchants of Madras are principally English in the Fort and Portuguese, Armenians and natives in the Black Town. Of the English Houses, Colt, Baker & Co. do the most business with Americans. Colt, from being a writer in the Company's service, has returned to Europe with a fortune of 200,000 pounds sterling. Baker has an office under the Company, whose legal emolument is 3000 pounds per an-

num. Mr. Hart, the junior partner, does most of the business of the house. This and indeed most of the English houses are very rich. The House of Harrington, Watts & Co. is considered the first here. Chase, Sewall & Co. are a considerable house. They have an insurance office, but its reputation for liberal and punctual payment in case of loss, is not very high.

In the Black Town, Satur & D'Monte are undoubtedly first. Satur is an Armenian; D'Monte a Portuguese. They are very fair, good men, and much and universally esteemed. They have a very large share of the piece goods business, supplying nearly all the demands of the European houses in the Fort and most of the Americans who stop here. D'Monte is secretary and almost entire director of an insurance company in which his house is interested. This company has a great reputation for liberality and punctual payment of losses, which gives it a preference in almost all the business of the place.

Paulem Yagapah Chitty (called by his second name) does

(Continued on page 7)

## CHENNAI HERITAGE

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## ● An occasional column by a British freelance writer on her eight years in Madras

The arrival of the Monsoon in mid-October fills Indians with a renewed enthusiasm for life. The weather in the streets is formidable. A river runs down the main highway and, while the odd person laboriously pokes at a drain with a stick, others plough through the torrents dressed in plastic bags, apparently impervious to the inconvenience.

I succumb to monsoon fever and lie in bed listening to the sounds of India. The shout of the vegetable vendor, the constant honk of cars, the drawn-out cry of the garbage collector, the twitter of a group of babblers flitting across the red roof like a group of gossiping old ladies, and the clunk and whirr of the airconditioning units leaking their icy breath, and what not! The jangle of Cook Rita's ankle bracelets reminds me of the daunting task ahead. Do I dare to go down and confront her over the evening dinner? Or will she as usual produce her famous chicken pie?

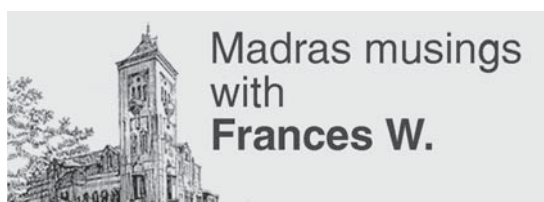
The first response from English people when I say I live in India is "you lucky thing, all those lovely staff to look after you". Both Indians and Europeans will tell you straightaway that this is not the case. Employing, trusting, and retaining a staff in India is one of life's biggest challenges.

I soon discovered that if you want anything done in India you have to go through someone else. It was our driver who proposed candidates for the interview process of Cook, Maid, Gardener, and Dhobi. In my naivety I employed the first people to come along.

Anyone who has read *Rebecca* by Daphne Du Maurier will be familiar with the wicked housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers. From the moment Rita presented her tattered references from "That Madam", she had the upper hand. She traded on my inexperience of Indian domestic staff and took advantage of my gullibility, but she made me laugh, and laughter is the best medicine for living in India.

For many hundreds of years, until the Great War, employing others to do your domestic duties was considered by the middle classes to be normal. In England, with the advent of World War II, all this changed and nowadays only 10 per cent, the elite, can afford to pay someone to clean their house. I was unfamiliar with a houseful of servants and it took me a month before I had the courage to leave the environs of my bedroom to confront the low level snipping and small but daily crisis that occurred between the different members of my household employees.

The Cook and the Dhobi were at war. The Dhobi was a cadaverous man, who biff, banged and walloped our clothes. During the monsoon season, the laundry was pale khaki, damp, limp and musty smelling. He had a huge charcoal iron, curved like the bow of a boat, the point of which could rip through my husband's shirts in a most alarming way. It was not long before both collars and tempers were too frayed and the maid took over the laundry duties. Victory to the Cook.



# Life with the staff

The Cook and the Gardener were at war. He was a Hindu and she was a Catholic. She was a snob and he was from a lower caste. The staff lunches I had so cleverly instigated to bring all the staff together proved to be a dietary and social minefield. So, it was the rolling pin versus the scythe. The Cook had to go! The Gardener stayed.

Ramsi (I think that is his name) arrives at six-thirty every morning and drifts around the garden like a spectre, hacking the heads off the Bougainvillea when it is in flower. I have long since given up trying to impose my wishes on him and now that he has finally mastered the lawn mower we have the shortest lawn in Madras. He speaks no English and my Tamil is limited to a few words, one of which sounds distinctly like "Sorry" in English. Confusion over language can lead to many misunderstandings. Recently, when I asked him to paint one garden pot blue he took up the baton and ran with it. Next time I looked he had painted two hundred pots blue and seemed very pleased with his ingenuity.

The security guards, although technically not employed by us, have remained the same during the last ten years. When caught asleep they spring to attention and rush to the gates. I rather doubt their efficacy should an intruder appear. They do however refuse to walk our dog 'Spicy'. This is pure snobbery because she is an Indian street dog. I receive stares of amazement as I walk her around the block, mainly from security guards dragging reluctant basset hounds or thick-coated retrievers and other pedigree pooches.

The staff regard us as their family and as such we provide for their families. We pay their children's school fees. Help with their daughters' dowries. (In an attempt to keep them out of the hands of rapacious moneylenders.) Assist with medical bills, and give time off for suspiciously numerous family fatalities.

The English have always been obsessed with class and taken a keen interest in the welfare of their staff.

The runaway success of *Downton Abbey* is an example of the snobbery that is inherent in both the English and Indian middle classes, but the most famous of all master-servant relationships is PG Wodehouse's Jeeves and Wooster. It is clear that Jeeves controls his master's life, despite Bertie's incompetent attempts to assert his independence. Most of us enjoy the interplay between the Toffs and the working classes, and in many cases the working classes are portrayed as having more brains and savvy than their aristocratic, vacuous employers.

Servant is an unpalatable word; it has too many connotations with slavery, but it is an old English word for domestic worker. Employment of servants reached its peak in the Victorian Era and by the Edwardian times of the Raj in India and Imperialist Africa the relationship between staff and employer had become complex.

At this peak of employment the English established an elaborate sense of the etiquette between servant and employer, providing ostentatious costumes for their staff to define their role in a household. We no longer impose any of these restrictions on our staff; we provide new clothes at Diwali and treat them with the respect that they deserve as invaluable members of a working household.

Of course, the object of staff is to leave you free to do something more valuable with your time, like make money, or develop intellectual and creative talents. For many of the wives of the civil servants during the time of the Raj in India running the staff proved to be an all-consuming mission, and to a degree it still is.

Having permanent help initially meant relinquishing my own high standards of cooking, gardening, and not least hygiene! Gradually I was able to incorporate my skills and their labour, and we both benefited from the experience.

When I arrived in India I was one of those foolish people who wanted to be liked (a very English trait), doing imaginary good deeds in a land of people, foreign in looks, language, religion, standards of living and ideals and customs. I am a guest in this 'Incredible India', but I will never understand its complexities.

My driver once said to me, "Mam, you and Sir are like my Gods." I was horrified, for although I respect his loyalty, we are as fallible as the next human being. On one occasion we were forced to suspend him. He ignored the suspension. He still turned up for work every day, and every day I sent him away, until after two weeks I relented. Sometimes dealing with the staff is like having children; you need to be cruel to be kind.

Living together in one house we all share the daily burden of life in Madras, with its many contradictions. The delights and the disasters, the tears, and the laughter, but whatever the future brings, these people will have a special place in my heart.

## THE MERCHANTS OF MADRAS

(Continued from page 6)

a considerable share of the business with Americans. He is a contractor with the East India Company for piece goods and is said to be rich, but we found him much in want of money. He is a Gentoo, and appears a fair man. He cannot give such dispatch, or be so much depended on as D'Monte's house. Paulem Mutiah Chitty, brother of Yagapah and compared with him, is not so good a man as the other.

"Shopkeepers" are considered of a very inferior grade to merchants, though more respectable in wealth and character than some of those who rank so much higher. Thus the Governor's public invitations to the principal inhabitants of the settlement include all the merchants but no shopkeepers.

Some of them are rich and do considerable business with Americans. Hope, Reynolds & Griffith (formerly Hope, Card & Co.) are the first, and are very good men. Their store is large and handsome, with commodious go-downs (warehouses) on the lower floor. They purchased several European investments while we remained here – one, extremely well assorted, of 12,000 pounds sterling cost, at sixty-five per cent advance. This was considered very high. Waddell, Rannie & Gibson (formerly Waddell, Stuart & Co.) are second.

The Europeans who come to India do it to make an immediate fortune, to be spent at home. They have, therefore, none of those feelings, which men have who are to close their lives and leave their families on

the spot (i.e. men who are making a home for themselves and their descendants). With an object in view, they pay little regard to the means of accomplishing it. The natives are consequently oppressed and defrauded. Their money is borrowed without probability or expectation of repaying it – and when the Company's servants are their creditors, they sometimes permit them to oppress in their turns those under them. There are some exceptions to these observations – and to those who form good connections here, it does not appear necessary to resort to fraudulent or improper measures to acquire a competency in a short time. The merchants and others think, however, a very large sum is necessary for a fortune.

Every mercantile house in

Madras employs a head dubash, or broker, who is a native and does most of the active business of the house. Some of them are very rich and faithful to their employers, even in joining in any fraud or oppression they may practise on the countrymen of the dubash. One Englishman, on quitting Madras, after adjusting all his business with his dubash, and settling all his concerns with him, gave him as a mark of his confidence and esteem a real estate renting at 600 pounds sterling per annum. The Americans who trade here find it necessary also to employ a dubash. There are two men who devote themselves to this business, Vincaty and Villapoy. Neither of them deserves high commendation. The former is more immediately in D'Monte's, the latter in Yagapah's interest. From employing the

former, I believe him at least as good as the latter. They require much looking after, and are not to be depended on, having the interest of the merchant from whom they expect future favours at least as much at heart, as that of their immediate employers. It is absolutely necessary to employ a dubash, whose clerks (or conicopolies) attend to receiving, weighing, and shipping goods, etc. which on the part of the merchant are also attended to by natives. The more the whole of them can be overseen, and the less depended on, the better. – (From *Yankee India – American Commercial and Cultural Encounters with India in the Age of Sail 1784-1860* by Susan & Bean)

– Dudley L. Pickman

\* 2.5 pagodas = one pound sterling

(Concluded)





Cornwallis in his cupola at Parade Square in the Fort.  
(Courtesy: Vintage Vignettes)

(Continued from page 1)

had always made it clear that his intention was never the elimination of Tippu and so imposed severe terms for peace. These included, among other things, an indemnity of Rs. 6 crore (later reduced to Rs. 3.3 crore), and the handing over of two of his three eldest sons as hostages for the due performance of the terms.

The princes were given two residences – Paul Benfield's house in the Fort and the other on the Great Choultry Plain – and remained in Madras till 1794 by when Tippu had paid up in full. In the meanwhile, given that he had achieved an impossible task, the official and unofficial European inhabitants of Madras, started a fund-raising drive to erect a suitable memorial for Cornwallis, to be housed in the Fort. By then he had returned to Calcutta. A year later he resigned from the post of Governor-General and sailed home.

The subscription for the memorial was remitted to England and, to quote from Sir Charles Lawson's *Memoirs of Madras* (1905), "someone there was authorised to negotiate with a sculptor for the production of a statue of his Lordship. Then it was that the services of Thomas Banks were enlisted... (He was) the first of his country to produce works of classic grace." Those who visited the studio when the statue was being sculpted were amazed at the resemblance to its original, to the smallest detail, including "the outward cast of one eye in such startling detail." To this Banks retorted that the "eyes looking to the right and left at the same moment would impart the idea of an enlarged and comprehensive mind." A few generations later, we would dismiss the Governor-General as being pop-eyed.

The pedestal of the statue, also sculpted by Banks, has the figures of Britannia and Victory flanking a bas-

## KNOW YOUR FORT BETTER

relief of the definitive moment when Cornwallis received the two boys as hostage. An inscription at the base reads that the statue was erected "by a General Vote at the Joint Expense Of the Principal Inhabitants of Madras, and of the Civil and Military Servants of the East India Company Belonging to the Presidency of Fort St George As a General Testimony Of the High Sense they entertain of the Conduct and Actions of the Most Noble The Marquis of Cornwallis During the Time he held the High Offices of Governor General and Commander In Chief of All the Forces in India."

The statue arrived in Madras in 1800. According to Mary Ann Steggles, in her book *Statues of the Raj* (2000), "The marble portrait statue of Cornwallis for Madras was the first publicly erected monument exported to India." Early in May that year, M. Turing, Aide-de-Camp to Governor Lord Clive, bade the principal inhabitants of Madras to be present at 5.45 am on the 15th for the unveiling of the statue. A breakfast was arranged at the *Exchange Building* for all the invitees. The statue was placed under this cupola, located then at the Parade Square of the Fort, and unveiled by the Governor, after which the assembled troops presented arms, the drums beat a march and a salute of honour was fired. "The attendance of ladies and gentlemen, as well on the parade as in the houses, balconies and terraces of the square was," according to the *Asiatic Register*, "unusually numerous and the concourse of natives was proportionally great." Parade Square was ceremonially renamed Cornwallis Square.

The statue remained within the cupola long enough to be seen by Cornwallis himself. This happened in 1805, when in an "unwise moment" having again accepted the offer of a Governor-Generalship, he embarked on the HMS *Medusa* and arrived in Madras en route to Calcutta. Here the Governor Lord William Bentinck received him on May 6. The troops formed a ceremonial carriageway from the Sea Gate to Parade Square where an address bearing the signatures of 214 principal residents of Madras was presented to him. In response, Cornwallis made a speech, according to Lawson, "probably in front of the statue of himself that then occupied as it still does, the most important place on the parade ground of Fort St George." This probably gave rise to a subsequent legend, quoted in full in Nirmala Lakshman's *Degree Coffee by the Yard*, that Cornwallis was present in Madras to welcome his statue in honour of which he organised a grand parade and during which he saluted his own image.

The ceremony over, Cornwallis departed for Bengal. He died on October 5th the following year of "Bengal liver" at Ghazipore and was buried there as per his



The Cenotaph opposite Bentinck's Building on North Beach Road (Rajaji Salai).

dictum, "Where the tree falls, let it lie." The news of his passing reached Madras on the 31st. On November 5th, at the instance of the Sheriff of Madras, John Oakes, a meeting was held at the *Exchange Building* of the Fort to consider "proper measures for erecting a Cenotaph" to commemorate Cornwallis. The resolution was adopted, a long list of subscribers gave in plenty and, shortly thereafter, a large rotunda topped by a Burmese pagoda-like super-structure was erected in Teynampet, then the city boundary. The road that led from it to Adyar became Cenotaph Road. Lawson does not, however, mention that the statue moved to the Cenotaph and when he wrote his book in 1905, it was still at Parade Square in the Fort.

The Cenotaph itself was, however, shifted. By the 1880s it had moved to First Line Beach, "opposite the Presidency Post Office" according to Lawson. This gives rise to some confusion as it is now located not opposite the post office but in the compound of what was *Bentinck's Building*, then the Supreme Court (and from 1862 till 1892 the High Court) of Madras, which was demolished in the 1980s to make way for the *Singaravelar Maligai*, the Chennai Collectorate. Did the harbour works of the 1880s necessitate one more shift of the Cenotaph within First Line Beach? Or was Lawson's memory playing tricks? Photographs from the 1880s show the Cenotaph as it stands today.

In 1925, the Cornwallis statue moved out of Parade Square to the Cenotaph. It stayed there for just three years, moving in 1928 to the Connemara Library as the salt and moisture-laden air of the sea at First Line Beach began attacking the marble. The statue remained in the library till 1950, when it made its last journey, this time to the Fort Museum. The cupola in Parade Square remained where it was till 1935 when, at the orders of the then Governor, Lord Erskine, it was shifted to where it stands now. The Cenotaph on First Line Beach remains where it was, an empty shell now doubling up as a convenient urinal.

– Sriram V.

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