

EARLY DAYS IN PERAK.

More Memories.

A DOCTOR AND CASTOR OIL.

(By Sagittarius.)

IN my previous article, I inadvertently omitted the name of the late Capt. J. A. Legge, the first Medical Officer of the Malay States Guides, an outstanding personality in Perak especially Taiping, where he served throughout his term of office, and I am grateful to his son, Mr. L. D. Legge, for drawing my attention to this omission through his letter in the Sunday Times.

John Arthur Legge first came to Perak in the late seventies from the Indian Medical Department, and if I am not mistaken, served in the colony prior to taking up his appointment in Perak. Capt. Legge saw active service in the Perak war and the Pahang disturbances, was Colonel Walker's right hand man, being held in high esteem by the latter, though they clashed at times. Capt. Legge retired in 1905, and died a few years ago, at a great age. One of his sons, Mr. R. H. Legge, is a solicitor practising at Kuala Lumpur, and was formerly and inspector of police.

Capt. Legge, a doctor of the old school, was one of nature's gentlemen and lacked that serious bedside manner which puts fear into a nervous patient. He inspired confidence on entering a sick room, and his cheery laugh, coupled with the cracking of a few jokes, and his usual remarks, "Ah, tongue furred," and "a dose of castor oil will put you right," invariably left his patient well on the road to recovery.

Implicit Faith.

Now, the latter remark of the doctor's calls for some explanation; he was jokingly known as the "castor oil doctor," for he had implicit faith in that "delectable" medicine, and always prescribed it with remarkable results.

I regret not being able to furnish statistics as to the quantity of castor oil indented on the Crown Agents yearly for the regiment, but I do know, that every one of the rank and file of the Malay States Guides at some time or other, "necked" a bottle, or so, of this rather drastic medicine, and there are to my knowledge, still living in Taiping, many retired members of that regiment who must remember their "castor oil" days during Capt. Legge's regime.

Colonel Walker had a horror of castor oil, the very sight of it bringing forth from him a torrent of fiery language, and the story I am about to tell is really amusing. Feeling "off colour" one day, he sent for Capt. Legge who, after diagnosing his complaint (a billious headache I think it was), prescribed a dose of castor oil. The colonel point blank refused to touch the hateful stuff as he termed it, and added that he would not even give it to "Val," his favourite fox terrier, but the Doctor stuck to his guns and in the end, the colonel capitulated. A cup of steaming black coffee was brought by the Chinese boy, followed by the colonel's Pathan orderly; with this coffee—the doctor mixed a dose of castor oil.

During the mixing process, the colonel paced his bedroom muttering, "I will not drink it doctor, throw the 'd---d stuff away, it is making me sick," but Legge had developed deafness.

Colonel Capitulates.

When all was ready, the orderly held the colonel's nose, whilst the Chinese servant stood by with a bottle of Eau de Cologne, and Legge, tilting back the colonel's head poured the contents of the cup down his throat, stifling a few "D---ns" and other expletives on their way out.

Capt. Legge told this story well, concluding with, "then there was a gurgling sound, a strangled D---n, and the Colonel had taken his medicine."

Before I close the castor oil episode, I should mention the old Indian dresser under Capt. Legge, named Verdarrajulu. Colonel Walker could never pronounce this man's name correctly, and after every weekly inspection of the regimental hospital by him, the dresser's name had a totally different pronunciation, until it was finally decided to call him "Verda" for short, much to the satisfaction of all concerned, particularly the dresser.

Capt. Legge had several hobbies, rowing and swimming being his favourites and went in for quite a lot of the former

BETTER MILK.

Manufacturers' Novel Bonus Scheme For Farmers.

A scheme to encourage care in the handling of the milk at their West Country farms has recently been put into operation by the manufacturers of infants' food, Cow and Gate, Ltd., of Guildford, Surrey, whose operations cover a wide radius in the West of England.

Each supplier's milk is now graded by a system of marks, and every month 10 per cent. of the farmers gaining the highest number of marks are paid 1d. extra per gallon for the month's supply; the 20 per cent. of farmers gaining the next highest marks are paid ½d. per gallon extra.

As an example of the benefit, a supplier sending 100 gallons of milk per day and obtaining 1d. bonus for quality will receive £12 10s. above the standard prices for his month's supply. The marks are awarded for butter-fat, other solids, bacterial count and absence of visible sediment.

The idea of course is to encourage the farmers to bring their methods of milk production up to a very high standard. Although the special processes of the Company render all milk safe, and the milk as graded for manufacture of infants' foods is entirely uniform, it is obviously an advantage to have the highest quality available in the basic product before operations are commenced, and this ideal is rapidly being achieved by this progressive company.

on the Taiping lake. He had a country residence called the "Glen" situated amid beautiful surroundings with a great swimming pool, and this place will long be remembered by old Taiping residents as the scene of many picnics. The "Glen" has since passed into other hands.

Never Seen Swing Doors.

Another amusing incident that occurred is worth recounting. Colonel Walker's room in the Malay States Guides office was a separate from the main office, and one entered it by swing doors.

The clerks dreaded this "Sanctum Sanctorum," gave it a wide berth and only crossed its threshold when sent for by the colonel. It happened one day that the office assistant the late Mr. W. E. Siddens, had some minute papers for Colonel Walker's signature, and no pen being available at the moment, deputed a young Sikh recruit who had come into office for something, to take the papers to the colonel and pointed to his room.

The lad, fresh from the Punjab, had never before, seen swing doors, far less knew how to open them, and was rather in a quandary: enter he must, or the Colonel Sahib would give him three days bread and water for disobedience of orders; suddenly a brilliant idea struck him, approaching the doors, he went on all fours and crawled under them. The colonel looked up and seeing this strange sight, seized a ruler, a heavy glass ink well, and shouted for his orderly, at the same time jumping from his chair.

Fandemonium reigned for a few minutes, the office staff rushed into the room, and in the excitement and general mixup the culprit fled, leaving the room littered with minute papers. I do not know what punishment was meted out to the unfortunate youth, but the office staff reaped the benefit of the colonel's tongue that morning.

Perak's First Newspaper.

Indirectly, the 1st Perak Sikhs were responsible for the first newspaper to be published in Perak, and it came about in this manner. Syed Abu Hassan Burhan, a young Indian Mohammedan, joined the Perak Sikhs as a clerk and "munshi," and after some years of service resigned. About 1896 he embarked upon journalism and started a newspaper in Taiping called the "Perak Pioneer" nicknamed the "Taiping Pink Un" on account of its pink tint. It was for many years a popular journal and closed about 1911 or thereabouts.

This enterprising gentleman in addition, ran a bakery and an acrated water factory which are still in existence, invested in landed and rubber property, and amassed a fortune during the 1910 boom. Syed Abu Hassan was well-known all over Perak and died about 13 years ago.

The late Colonel Walker, in spite of his fiery temper, was a man with a large heart, and quick to forgive. Highly emotional, he was soon touched at any little act of kindness towards him. He was very fond of children and never failed to give a kiddies party at Christmas. Colonel Walker had a superb collection of old China, and other works of art, while the silhouettes of his numerous friends, that adorned his house in Taiping, were worth going a long way to see.

(Continued in next column)