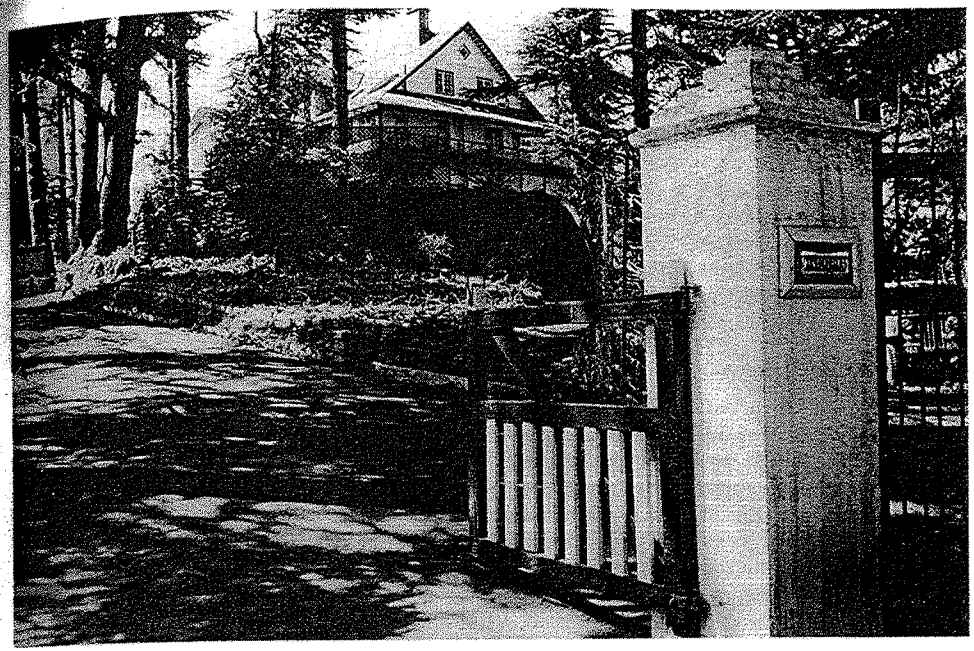
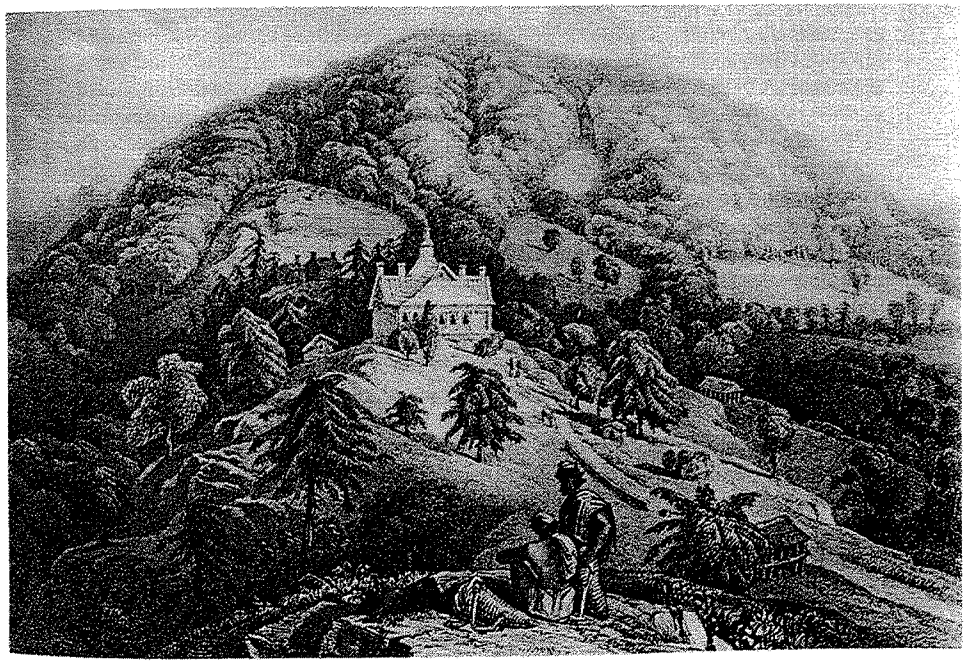
widows, all the officers on local leave, all the wandering globe-trotters and investigative Members of Parliament from London, giving rise to a unique pattern of resort.

The hill-stations were mostly, like Bath or Cheltenham at home, developed by speculative builders. Few Anglo-Indians actually built homes up there (Mr John Sullivan, who did, was repeatedly reprimanded in the 1820s for neglecting his duties as Collector in the awful lowland town of Coimbatore in favour of his garden high in the hills above). Some got houses ex officio, like the Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, say, or the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, while others rented them for the season, generally from Indian landlords. Nevertheless it was in the hill-stations that the British in India achieved the most distinctive of their vernacular styles, and places like Simla, Darjeeling, Naini Tal or Ootacamund remain the most evocative concentrations of Anglo-Indian domestic architecture.

The hill-stations first came into their own in the middle of the nineteenth century, and the influences behind their architectural manners were distinctly varied. First there was the Gothic pleasure-villa, derived from the exuberances of Strawberry Hill Gothic, and given a more general lease of life by John Loudon's textbook. Horace Walpole, Pope, Beckford and Nash were all present in spirit at the building of the hill-stations, and so perhaps was Marie-Antoinette, for the cottage *orné* was everywhere. Then there were the festive terraces of the Georgian spas and resorts: Bath with its happy blend of the rural and the urban, the simple and the fashionable, or Brighton crowned by the supreme Anglo-Indian folly of them all, Nash's Brighton Pavilion. And finally there was the influence of the Grand Tour, which had accustomed Englishmen to the chalet styles of the Swiss and German Alps, and made them think that wherever there were mountains, there ought to be half-timbering. Add to this a contemporary taste for ornamental woodwork, elaborate it with the porches and verandahs engrained by then in Anglo-Indian design, festoon everything with guttering and down-pipes, cap it with a marvellous variety of convoluted chimney-pots, essential to the tone of the thing as to the brisk mountain climate, wrap it all up in the familiar imperial bungalow, and you have the fundamentals of the hill-station style.

Most of the hill-stations were remote – generally only primitive tribal people lived in those high places before the arrival of the British – and their first houses were nothing if not defiant. The first house at Simla, built by Captain Charles Kennedy in 1822, looks in old pictures rather like some sort of forest temple, Incan perhaps, with very high-pitched roofs and a central chimney apparently built upon a kind of pyramid – the wood for it was felled on the spot, and the house was put up by local hill-men: yet in it, so a French traveller reported in 1830, Kennedy gave his infrequent guests splendid dinners, with hock, champagne, and excellent coffee (being as the Frenchman admirably put it 'the first of all artillery





Houses in the hills: 'Knockdrin', a typical large Simla bungalow (*top*), is now used as residence of the Commanding Officer of one of the many units based in this vital military region; Kennedy's Cottage (*bottom*) was built in 1822 as the Simla hot-weather residence of the Commander-in-Chief, India.

captains in the world'). The first house at Ootacamund, Mr Sullivan's, was built entirely of stone, hitherto unknown as a building material in those parts, and nearby another stone house soon arose that might have been brought to that high tropic moorland, roamed by tigers, wild elephants and aboriginals, direct from some granite coast of Ayr or Cornwall. A few early houses were built in the classical mode, too, to demonstrate the sang-froid of the imperialists in all circumstances: but by the later decades of the nineteenth century, when the hill-stations had become tamer and more accessible, from the Himalaya in the north to the Nilgiris in the south villas sprouted everywhere in what might best be called Himalayan Swiss-Gothic.

When in 1888 Lady Lytton moved into the Simla house called Peterhof, then the summer residence of the Viceroy, she said it was the smallest house she had ever lived in, while her husband called it a pig-sty; but what seemed poky to the Lyttons then would seem to most people wonderfully spacious nowadays, and some of the hill-station houses were far more than mere pleasure-cottages. Take for example Barnes Court at Simla. This was remarkably like a curiously reconstructed kind of English manor-house. Its gardens were landscaped in the English style, its trees were cunningly disposed, and the whole house was built in nostalgic half-timbering. Patterned dark woodwork beneath its projecting eaves gave it, it is true, something of the air of a Swiss hotel; a gabled verandah acknowledged that this in fact was India; but by a cunning sleight of hand or *trompe l'oeil*, from some angles the octagonal steeple which stood at one corner of the house looked tantalizingly like an English church steeple, and made one think that the squire might easily emerge from Barnes Court on Sunday morning, to a chime of bells across the meadows, to walk through his private wicket-gate to morning service.

Other Simla houses were grander still – Snowdon, for instance, for many years the summer residence of the Commander-in-Chief, which had a façade of six half-timbered gables, and looked like a rather expensive spa. More characteristic of the genre, though, were the middle-sized villas, surrounded by modest lawns and shrubberies and often called My Abode, or Fair Lawns, which speckled every hillock of the hill-stations, and were to give many Anglo-Indian families the happiest weeks of their careers. 'It is impossible to describe the delicious feeling of awakening at Simla for the first time', wrote a visitor in 1846. 'The intensity of such a moment can neither be described or forgotten'.

There were thousands of such houses, and like the bungalow of the plains, they adapted readily to circumstance. At one extreme they suffered a lake change, and became Kashmiri houseboats – first built in about 1875, because the Maharajah of Kashmir allowed no European buildings on his land, and evidently derived too, with their shingle roofs, dormer windows and flag-poles, from Oxford college barges, or the boats of the City livery companies. At the other extreme the hill

villas became even more English than English holiday houses, and remain to this day virtually untouched by time and history, preserved in architectural amber.

The best selection of all is at Ootacamund (which they used to call Ooty) in the Nilgiri Hills of the south (which they used to call the Neilgherries). Most of the Ooty houses are built of mud-brick, timber being short in the district, but they are nicely dressed up in scalloping and merry chimney-pots, and set in genteel gardens rather like so many small vicarages, this way and that on the slopes of the gentle wooded hills. They are mostly roofed in rustic tiles of a mild red colour, and with their drawing-rooms opening on to wide verandahs, their little bedroom balconies, their neat paths and trim wooden gates, they seem just made for the gentle English flowers which bower them still.

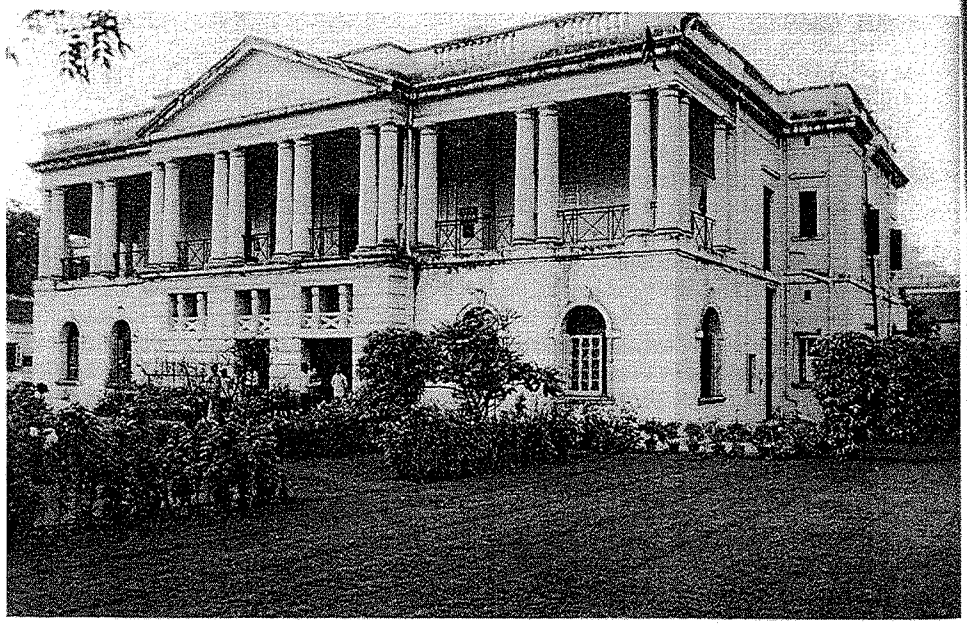
They hardly seem like India at all. So heartfelt was the emotion that built them there, so potent was the culture behind it, that even now one is surprised to find Indian families living in them, the music of the sitar sounds strangely from their mullioned drawing-rooms, and one listens in vain for the knock of croquet balls beyond the herbaceous border, or *Come Into the Garden, Maud* from the upright pianoforte.

The Club

Most Anglo-Indians had another home, separate from the bungalow or the hill-station villa: the Club. This resilient Anglo-Indian institution came in all kinds – social clubs, sporting clubs, yacht clubs, elegant institutions of the Presidency towns or ramshackle affairs of corrugated iron and beer-ringed bars, droned about by flies in up-country stations.

Calcutta, for instance, in 1913, had the Bengal Club for Government civilians (which carried associate membership of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Clubs), the United Service Club for military officers, the Turf Club, the India Club, the Calcutta Club, the Tollygunge Club, the New Club and the Saturday Club, a sort of beginners' club, open to men and to women, which specialized, says a handbook of the day, in 'games and amusements'. Bombay and Madras were just as well-supplied, there were fine clubs in the larger inland stations like Lahore or Allahabad, and they went on building new ones well into the twentieth century: Willingdon Sports Club in Bombay was founded in the 1920s, and long after the end of the Empire, I am told, if a gentleman stood impassive for long enough beside its changing-room showers, sooner or later a servant would appear and remove his trousers for him.

The Willingdon was a rarity in that it admitted both Britons and Indians from the start. Generally speaking all but the least pretentious of the clubs excluded Indians until the Second World War – in the case of a few of the most ludicrously



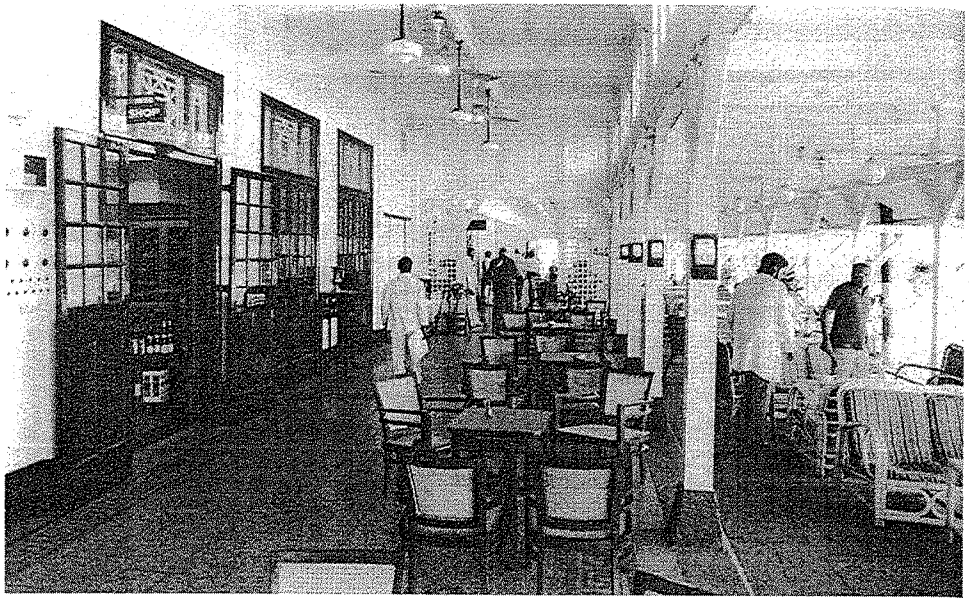
Calcutta's Clubs were the most exalted. The Tollygunge (*top*), to the south of the city, offered hundreds of acres of lush parkland: today, the new underground railway has consumed much of it, and the Members' tennis-courts have had to be sited elsewhere. The Royal Calcutta Turf Club (*bottom*), from its headquarters at 11 Russell Street, organized all the major racing events on the banks of the Hooghly River, besides offering its members the finest of European cuisine.

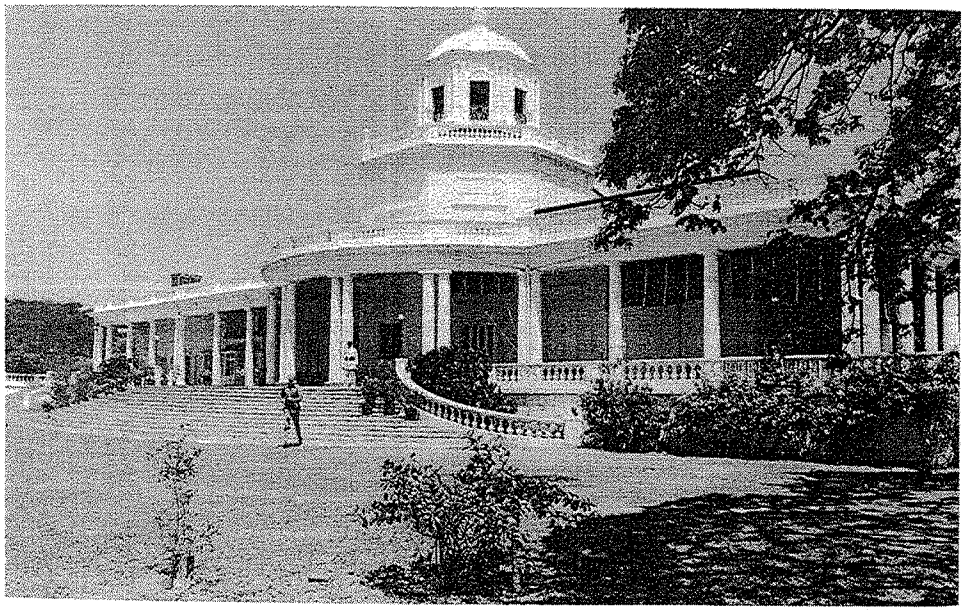
exclusive, actually until the end of the Empire. The Indians sometimes responded by building clubs of their own on the British model – at Bombay the British Gymkhana Club was followed by Hindu, Parsee and Muslim Gymkhanas, side by side along the waterfront. The Club, though, with a capital C, remained pre-eminently an Anglo-Indian symbol, and when you spoke of it everyone knew what you meant, whether you were a Chief Secretary discussing the Bengal Club burgundy, or an Assistant Traffic Superintendent on your way to tiffin at the Railway Institute. The clubs were islands of Britishness in the great Indian sea, to which the imperialists might withdraw whenever they felt a personal, social or ritual need: for a drink at the bar, that is, for a stag dinner, for a dance, a horse show, a wedding reception or a game of bridge.

Though they were seldom distinguished buildings, the architectural symbolism of the grander clubs was at least frank – Come In! it cried to suitable sorts of Briton, Keep Out! it hissed to everyone else. Visually their tone was generally dictated by their setting, which was above all prohibitive – daunting gateways, stern name-plates, sentry-boxes for deterrent watchmen, long drives to make the intruder feel uncomfortable, terraces from which he might feel he was being stared at by superior officers. It took nerve to gatecrash a really upstage Anglo-Indian club, and this sense of impeccable exclusivity impressed itself upon everyone. It helped to give many of the imperialists a spurious sense of aristocracy, so that when they went home to England in retirement they sometimes felt vulnerable and betrayed: but it also gave rise to much of the best writing about British imperial manners – Kipling, Forster, Orwell were all fascinated by the deliberate insularity of the club.

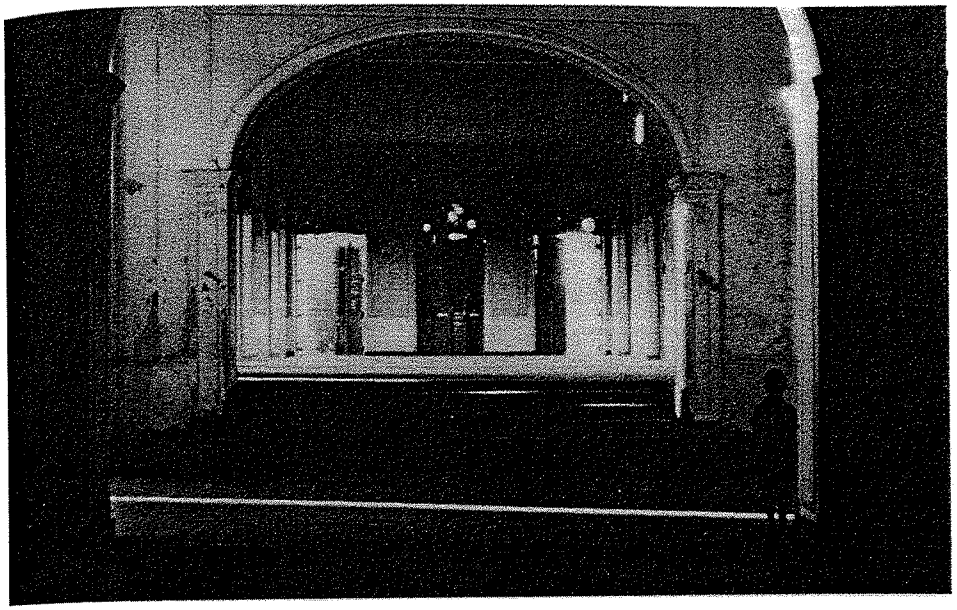
In its most ostentatious kinds the club could be very splendid. The Old Madras Club for instance, which now houses the local offices of the *Indian Express* newspaper, was described by Ivey's Club Directory at the end of the nineteenth century as 'one of the most magnificent clubs in the world', and was built to a princely scale. It was a heavy assemblage of several classical blocks, all columned and pedimented, with a monumental staircase leading up to its formal entrance in the middle. The central block housed the longest bar in India, with a dining-room and reading-room above it: the flanking buildings contained rooms for single men and married couples, with an excellent library, a billiard-room, a bridge-room, and sundry verandahs everywhere for drinks and gossip in the evening cool. In old photographs it all looks less like a place of pleasure than some great institution of authority: its servants are posed stiffly here and there, one or two gentlemen are grouped commandingly about the lawn, and in the background the great white buildings stand severe and imposing in the sunshine.

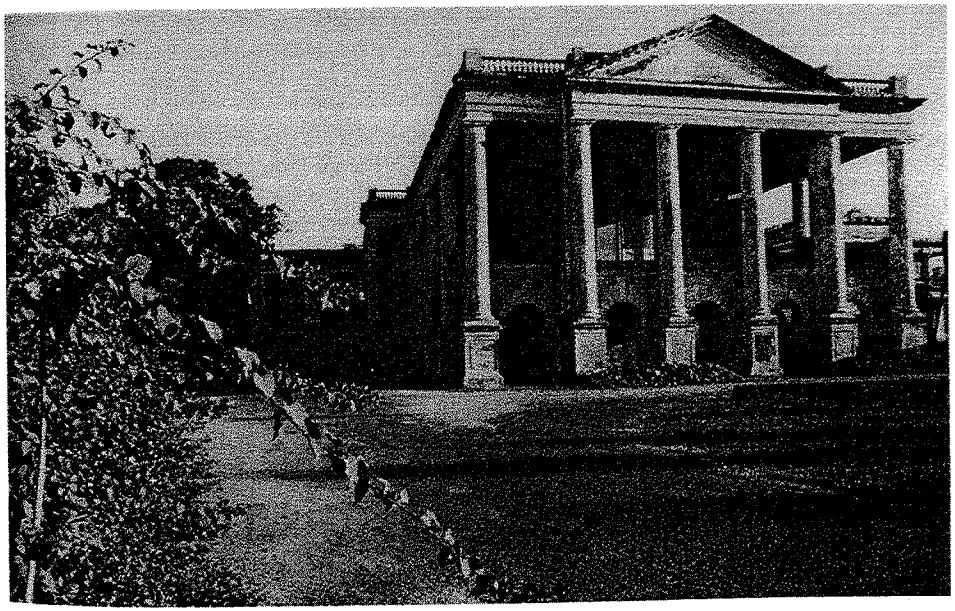
The Bengal Club in Calcutta was hardly less impressive. Founded in 1827, in 1845 it took over two of the big houses on Chowringhee, one of them the former home of Lord Macaulay. Several lesser houses round about were also acquired



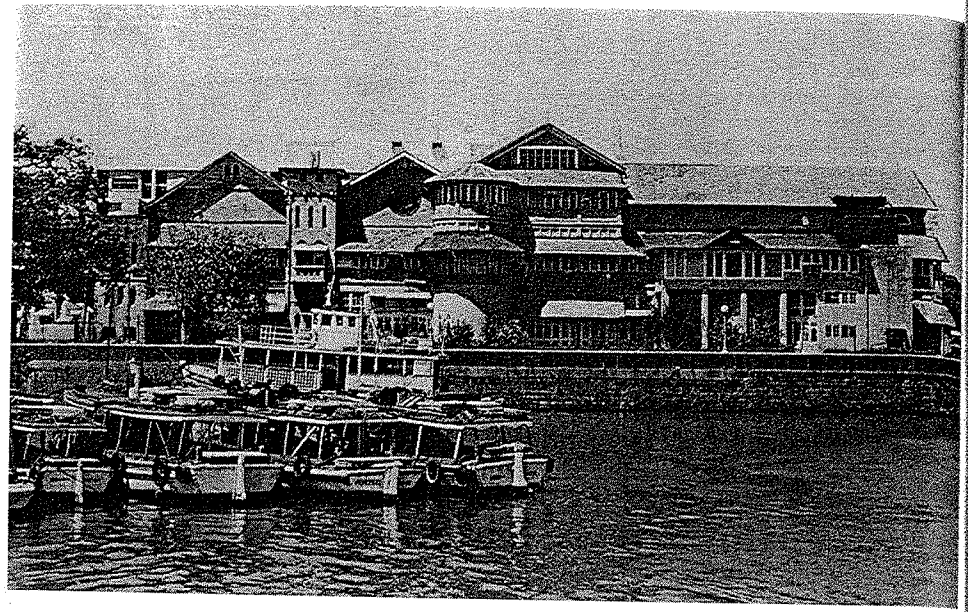


Clubland. After tiffin in the Gymkhana Club, Bombay (*top*); and the Madras Club (*bottom*), once the private home of one George Moubray, who built it in the 1770s. The gardens running down to the River Adyar are still very fine, with scores of magnificent casuarina trees.





The Old Madras Club, said to be 'the finest Club in all India – the Ace of Clubs'. The ballroom, now unused and decaying, was reckoned by dancers to be the best in Asia.



The Royal Bombay Yacht Club, a curious mixture of Swiss and Hindu styles. It is now off limits to yachtsmen, who make do with a rather less handsome structure tucked in behind the Taj Mahal Hotel.

over the years, until in the end the club formed almost a little village of its own, its gleaming white buildings separated by yards and gardens, guarded by spectacular doormen, and criss-crossed perpetually by hurrying domestics. With its balustrades and window-shades, its ornamental gaslamps, its beautifully tended gravel paths and this inescapable profusion of minions, the Bengal Club in its prime really did feel rather like some royal compound, the sort of place that revolutionaries eventually storm, and turn into museums.

Or there was the astonishing Yacht Club at Bombay, built in 1880. This was one of the very first buildings the newcomer saw upon his arrival in India, and with its long lines of al fresco tables beside the water, at which parasol'd ladies and topi'd gentlemen sat taking their tea in the afternoon sun, it must have made an encouraging if misleading first impression. A peculiar impression, too, for it was a building that defied architectural analysis. It looked partly like a railway station, and partly like a Chinese castle, and partly like an Alpine hostelry, and party like something in Port Said, and a bit like a prison, with tall watch-towers, and a bit like a covered market; and outside it, beside the sea, above the tea-tables, an immense white flag-pole capped the whole baffling gallimaufry with a small

but distinctly bossy club flag. Suitable new arrivals soon found themselves at home there: 'tone it all down', wrote J. A. Spender bravely in 1912, looking out across the harbour from the Yacht Club terrace – 'tone it all down and in the dim light the view might be that from Plymouth Hoe'.

Light relief

For lighter relief the Anglo-Indians resorted to the gymkhana clubs, which were ubiquitous, and were devoted to the outdoor sports that lay so close to the heart of the imperial ethos. So important was the gymkhana club to the imperial way of life that its very name was to pass into the English language, to be used in very different contexts far away for ever after. Your gymkhana was an easier-going sort of place, where women and families were welcome, and it had tennis, badminton and racquets courts, skating-rinks sometimes, cricket-pitches, golf-links in later years, and a generally cheerful ambience.

We perhaps see its prototype in the eighteenth-century Assembly Rooms at Madras. This charming building, conveniently close to the racecourse, was clearly made for pleasure. Built on two floors, arcaded on the ground floor, balustraded around its flat roof, it had two three-sided protruding fronts with a steep staircase between, leading to a first-floor terrace. An enormous Union Jack flies from its roof, in an eighteenth-century picture of it, and people seem to be enjoying themselves all over it, on the roof, on the terraces, under the arcades, and all around the entrance, which is a lively jumble of palanquins, carriages, horses and sightseers.

The gymkhana clubs generally perpetuated this festive tradition. A good example was the Bombay Gymkhana Club, which thrives still. The British built Bombay, by and large, in heavy styles and ponderous materials, and the downtown city gave most visitors an impression of solemn zeal and opulence. Contrast was supplied by the Gymkhana Club, for this was built in a rural mock Tudor, all black and white, surrounded by acres of green. Its buildings seemed to consist mostly of verandahs, with views over various kinds of playing-fields. Everything was space, shade, and canvas, and one entered the club through a scalloped canopy which conveyed a permanent suggestion of the celebratory, or even the matrimonial.

There were little cousins of it wherever the British settled, and it is noteworthy that their constructors, encouraged no doubt by club committees, generally chose some sort of Tudor adaptation for their various pavilions: for in the exiled British mind the Elizabethan style seemed to represent gentle, pastoral, particularly English values – like the cricket pavilions of school, maybe, country pubs or sentimental cottages, where butterflies of softer colour fluttered among

homelier blossoms, and tennis was played more or less perpetually through summer evenings under elms.

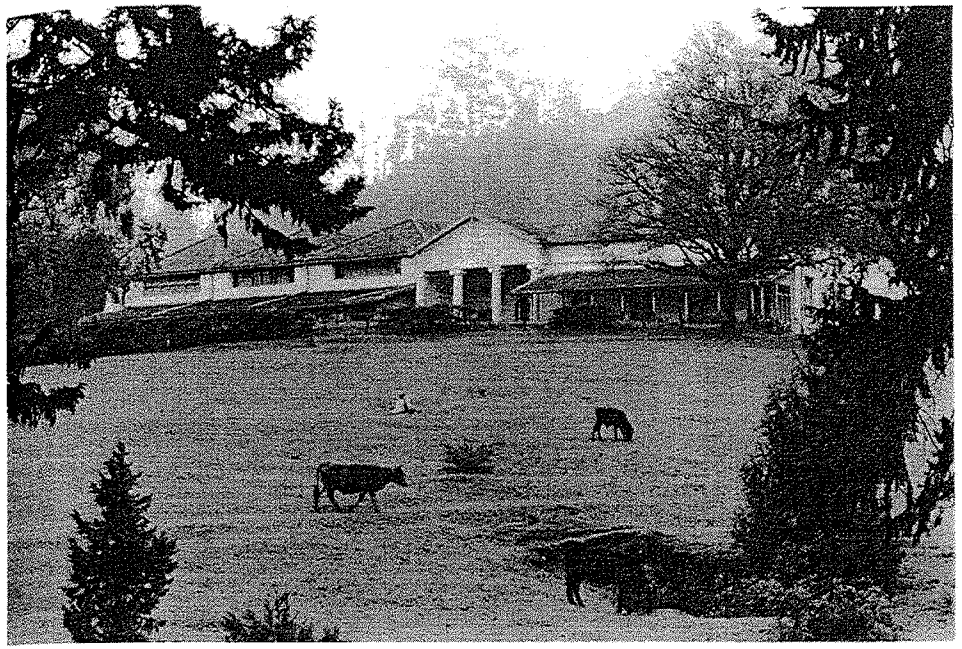
Up-country pleasures

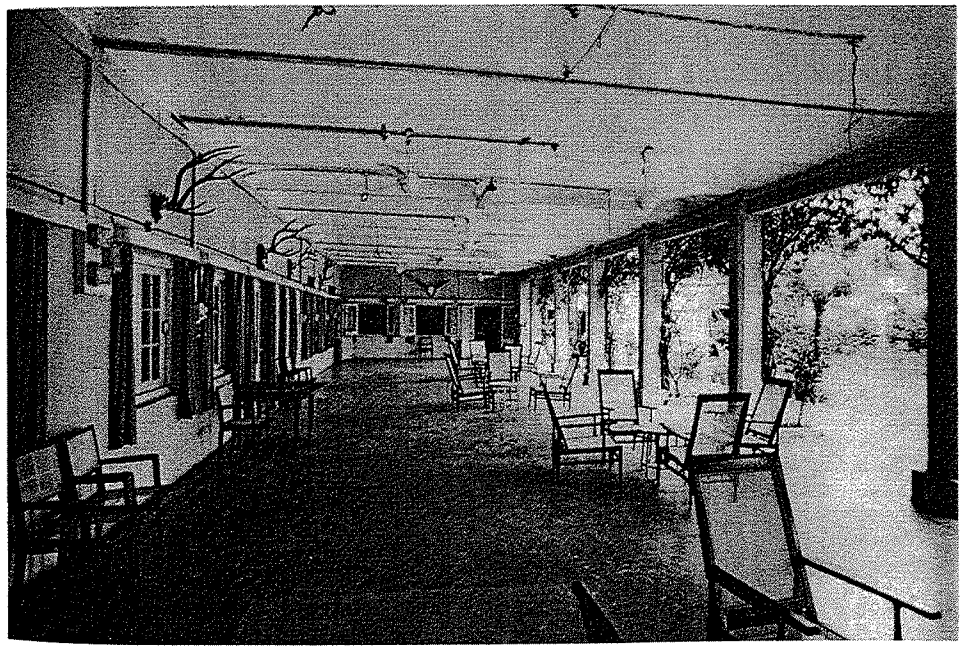
The nicest clubs of all were the bigger up-country kinds, and of these we may choose as representative the Ootacamund Club. It had started life in 1831 as the residence of Sir William Rumbold, Bt., a well-known usurer of Hyderabad, but was adapted in mid-century to provide a social centre for Ooty itself, and for the tea-plantations and military stations nearby. A long, low, classical building, it stood at the top of a steeply descending lawn, more like a meadow than a garden, and was approached by a sweeping drive past a gulley full of reeds and water-flowers. There was no *porte-cochère*, showery though Ootacamund could be: instead your carriage, crunching on to a gravel esplanade, debouched you directly on to the wide steps of the verandah, and you were enveloped at once within the authentic ambience of The Club.

Sofas, magazine tables, pictures of monarchs, Viceroys, club presidents, lists of Masters of the Ootacamund Hunt (founded 1847), sporting prints, old photographs of Ooty As It Was, slightly mangy heads of hunted jackals, pale water-colours, a notice-board full of pinned notes, cane chairs, polished parquet floors, *The Times*, *The Field*, the *Army List*, the *India Office List*, vases of fairly stolidly arranged flowers – shuffle of servants' sandals, laughter from the bar, sibilance from a corner of the lounge, pervasive smells of cigars, vegetables and furniture polish – somebody's little dog yapping, somebody's anecdote rising and falling out of sight but never out of hearing – these were the signs and sensations of The Club, nowhere embodied more pleasantly than in the fine public rooms of Ooty, where the planters whooped it up at their annual dinners, the Hunt met in high spirits to elect its Master, and a subaltern named Neville Chamberlain, in 1875, invented the game of snooker.

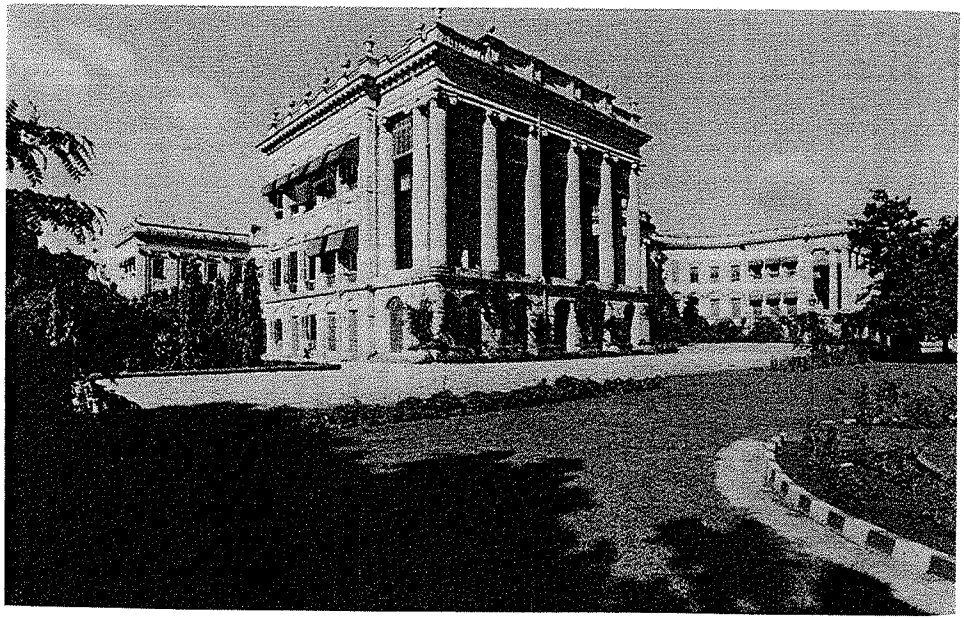
Palatialism

The ultimate domestic buildings of Anglo-India were the palaces of the proconsuls – the Viceroy himself, the Governors of the several provinces, the Residents in the theoretically independent Native States. They form a category of their own, more social or anthropological perhaps than architectural, for while they were political statements in their size and grandeur, they were family homes as well, domestic in manner if not in scale, with a character very different from the palaces of most conquering élites.

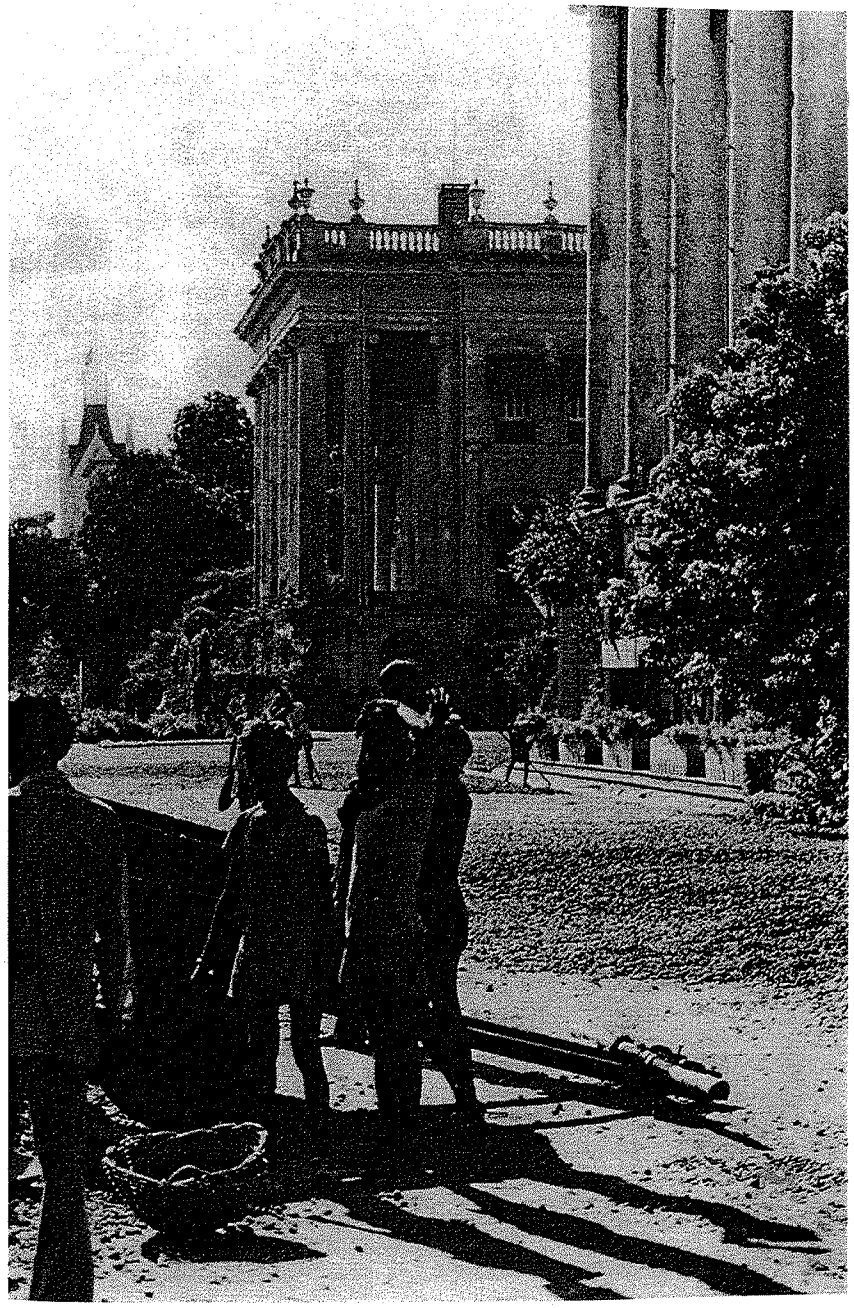


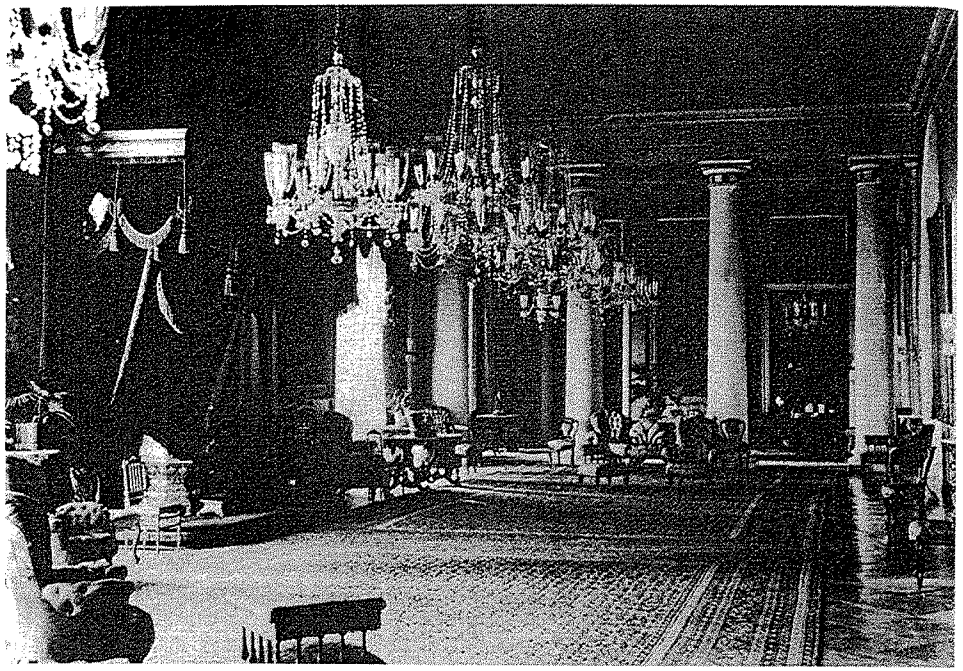


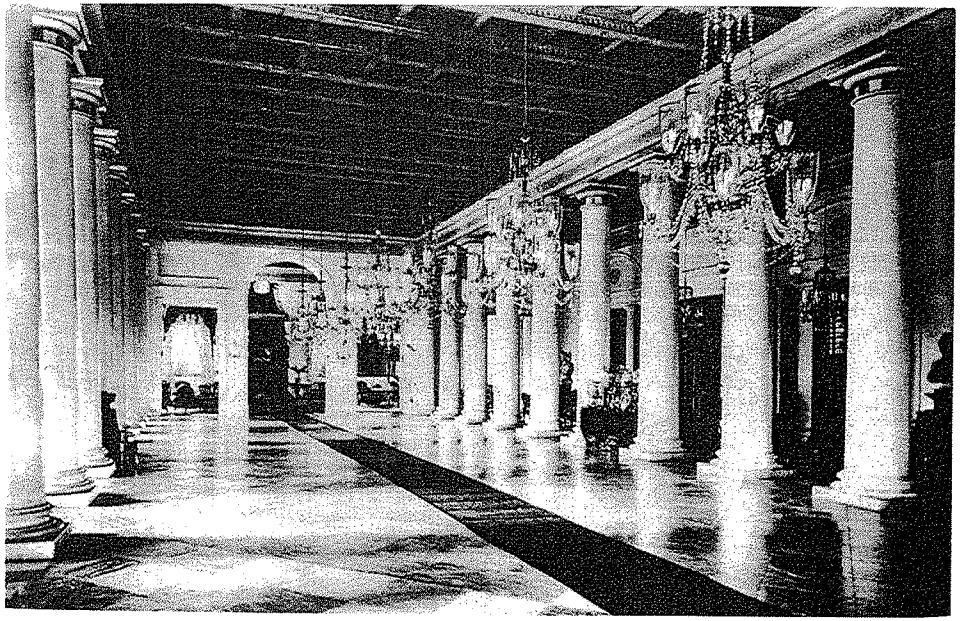
Clubs in the out-stations, up-country, were essential rather than merely celebrated. The Ootacamund Club (*top*) was built as the private home of Sir William Rumbold in 1831: the game of snooker was invented there, in a billiard-room unchanged to this day. The rather more forlorn verandah of the old Central Provinces Club, Nagpur (*bottom*), suggests a less fashionable part of India. Near here is the grave of a young soldier 'whose heart burst after he was chased by a tiger'.



(*Above and facing.*) Government House, Calcutta, home of the Governor of Bengal; later, until the capital was shifted to New Delhi, the home of the Viceroy. The house, modelled on Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire, was built in 1799 and formally opened in 1803 with a ball to commemorate the Treaty of Amiens.







Palaces they were, nevertheless, and they were very numerous, for often the principal residences were supplemented by lesser houses in the hill-stations, or seaside villas, or hot-weather retreats up the road. The Governor of Madras had three to choose from, his country residence being just five miles from his town house, his hill-station house 250 miles away. The Governor of Bombay had one palace in town, another a mile or two away, a third in the hills at Poona and a seaside villa along the coast. (When, though, in the last years of the Raj the British built a new home for the Viceroy bigger than Versailles, it was officially called, by decision of the King-Emperor George V, simply the Viceroy's House.)

The ideas of a prince

The original great palace of British India was the Company Governor-General's residence in Calcutta, completed in 1803. It stood in a dominating position in the burgeoning city, overlooking the great open space called the *maidan*, and it was a deliberate declaration of power and success. Until then Governors-General had lived in undistinguished rented quarters: when Richard Wellesley, brother of the future Duke of Wellington, arrived to take office in 1798, it took him only a month to decide that he needed something more fitting to his status. As his admirer the young Lord Valentia wrote, during a visit to Calcutta, India should be ruled from a palace, not a counting-house – 'with the ideas of a Prince, not those of a retail-trader in muslins and indigo'.

There was no dispute about the style to be employed. British Calcutta was a classical city through and through, and the prototype of Kedleston Hall, generally considered one of the noblest English country houses, was chosen by the young architect, Lieutenant Wyatt of the Bengal Engineers, as being perfectly suited to site as to purpose. Built like most Calcutta mansions of brick covered with white plaster, Government House consisted essentially of a large, central block on three floors, connected spider-like by long curving corridors with four symmetrical wings, each virtually a separate house. An Ionic portico, approached by a huge processional staircase, faced the official centre of the city, to the north: on the other side, looking over gardens, was a softer, domed and apsidal front, topped by a large figure of Britannia. The palace was approached through splendid arched gateways, based on those built by Robert Adam at Sion House in Middlesex and surmounted by lions and sphinxes: since the grounds around it were, at first, absolutely treeless, it stood in tremendous dominance over everything in sight.

Quite right too, Valentia said. India was a country of splendour, and 'the Head of a mighty Empire ought to conform himself to the prejudices of the country he rules over'. Lordly the palace certainly was: its kitchens were not in the house at all, but outside the grounds altogether in one of the city side-streets – 'somewhere

The Throne Room and the Grand Marble Hall in Government House, Calcutta. Tipu Sultan's throne was one of the best-known treasures kept in the house; guests were also keen to see the ornate, steam-operated lift – supposedly the first installed in the country.

in Calcutta', the Vicereine Lady Dufferin vaguely thought. Six great State apartments filled the central block: a throne room; an Ionically columned ballroom; a Dorically columned Marble Hall; a drawing-room, a breakfast-room and a supper-room, each more than 100 feet long. The shape of the building caught whatever breeze there was, and the house was full of spacious vistas, huge floors of marble, high ceilings of polished oak. It had great dignity from the start, and as age mellowed its details and matured its gardens, over the generations it acquired an unexpected charm as well (though the East India Company was not overjoyed to be presented with a bill for its costs, £167,359, while Edward Lear, staying in the house in 1873 and unsympathetic to its protocol, called it Hustle-fussabad).

Wellesley had still greater ideas for gubernatorial Calcutta. He is said to have planned to connect this palace by an avenue fourteen miles long, straight as a die, with a country house at Barrackpore, a military station up the Hooghly River, making of the two a magnificent complex: 'in the approved manner', Lord Curzon dryly remarked a century later, 'of the railway line from St. Petersburg to Moscow'. The avenue was never made, Wellesley being recalled home for his extravagance, but the Barrackpore house was built after his departure to the designs of Captain Thomas Anbury, Bengal Engineers, and for later incumbents the place did much, so the first Lord Minto said, 'to take the sting out of India'.

Really a very large bungalow, with an eight-columned portico and arcades all around, it stood easily in the centre of its own official hamlet – lesser thatched bungalows for staff and guests, guard-room for the military, kitchen quarters, and later all sorts of pleasant conceits, a Temple of Fame, a dainty bridge leading nowhere in particular, an artificial ruin, a monument to a well-known racehorse, a menagerie housed in airy Gothick cages. From the front of the house a wide straight walk ran down to the river; all around it there were gardens, walks and terraces, ponds with lotuses on them, tunnels of bamboo, palms and poinsettias: across the river at Serampore a church steeple rose above the trees in a startling and comforting illusion of Home.

Between them these two palaces made for magnificent living, and the Governors-General and their wives travelled frequently and comfortably between them, for among their official fleet of 200 vessels was the gubernatorial yacht. In later years this was an elegant steam-craft, but in earlier times it was the marvellous houseboat *Sonamukhi*, 'Golden Face', which was furnished in white, gold, and green morocco, which had marble baths on board, and which was rowed magnificently from one house to the other, up and down the muddy river, accompanied by a flotilla of barges carrying 400 servants: as Emily Eden, sister of the Governor-General Lord Auckland, observed in 1837, 'such a simple way of going to pass two nights in the country'.

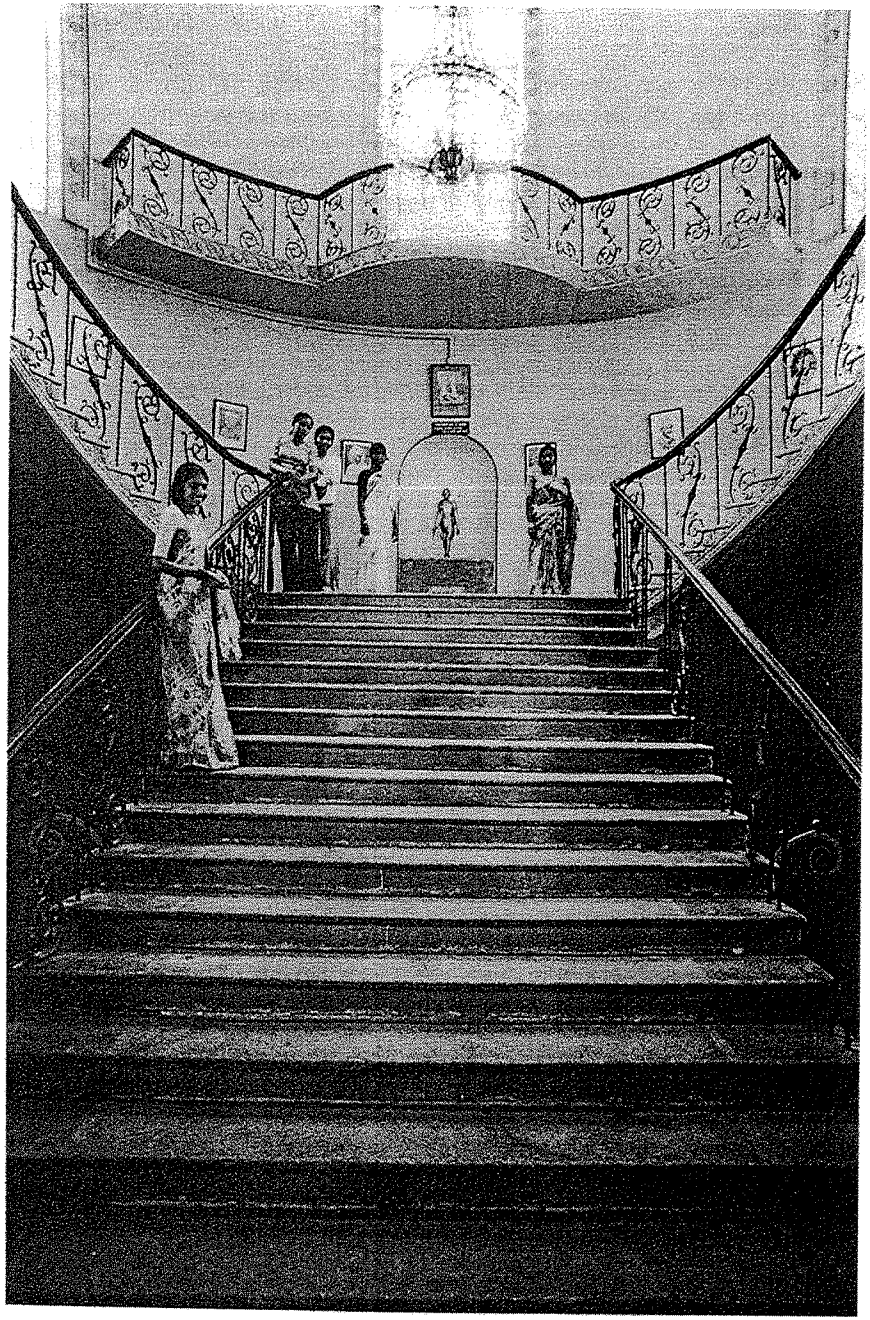
Gentlemen's residences

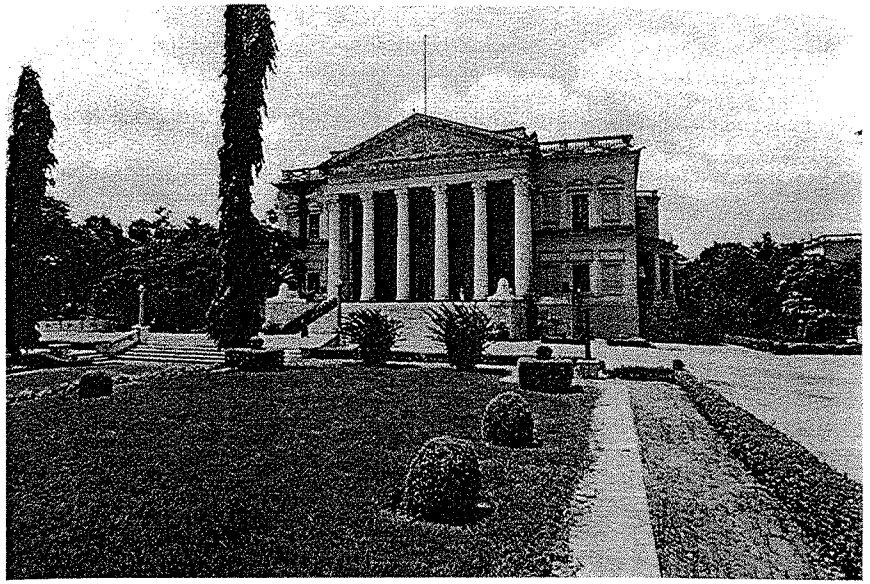
Though their settings were exotic and their arrangements somewhat fantastic, the Calcutta palaces were unmistakably English. Even the line of scarlet lancers welcoming the guests to dinner, even the dream-like progress of the Golden Face, did not disguise the fact that these were the domestic arrangements of English gentlefolk, temporarily transferred. Other early Government Houses were sometimes no more than enlargements of existing buildings, but even so the tradition of upper-class Englishness infused all the palaces of Anglo-India, whatever their styles or origins.

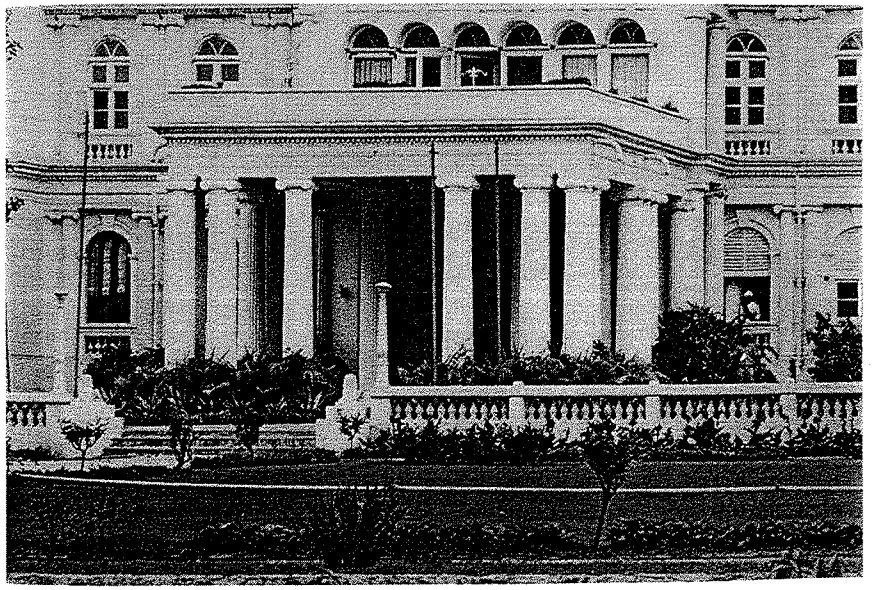
In Madras, for instance, in 1802, the second Lord Clive established a new palace outside the walls of the original British fortress by the sea – a token of growing confidence, no doubt, but also a return to more English ways of life. Actually the first thing one saw on entering its grounds was a free-standing banqueting-hall of tremendous pomp, replete with helmets, shields, and piled trophies, but a few yards away across the drive the house itself was of very different style. It was a wide, low house beside a lake, developed from an earlier building by a local mathematician, John Goldingham, and its broad two-storeyed verandahs and balustraded terraces made it seem above all comfortable and leisurely, just the sort of house a rich English gentleman might have built for his own retirement. It was later Victorianized, and began to look, with its verandahs piled one on top of the other, and its heavy nineteenth-century *porte-cochère*, rather like a grounded steamship; but it always remained a genial kind of place, and in later years even the banqueting-hall was slightly domesticated by the addition of an arcaded verandah, which made it look less like a Temple of the Martial Arts and more like a particularly well-endowed village hall.

Away in the city of Hyderabad, seat of the Nizam's power in central India, the British built the most monumental of their Residences in the territories of the native princes, but though this was pointedly the home of an overlord it too had its homely connotations. It was begun in 1803, and its begetter was J. A. Kirkpatrick, the Resident of the day, a soldier of eccentric habits who was known to the Indians as Hushmat Jung, 'Glorious in Battle', and who had married a Muslim girl named Khair-un-Nissa, 'Excellent among Women'. Kirkpatrick commissioned an officer of the Madras Engineers, Lieutenant Samuel Russell, to design the house, and he produced a building more terrific, if anything, than the palace in Calcutta – and paid for, as it happens, by the compliant Nizam.

Its main block, of two storeys above a basement, was flanked by latticed galleries leading to twin wings one the kitchens, the other staff quarters. It was entered through a great Corinthian portico, forty feet high, guarded by two lions, approached by a flight of twenty-one steps, and capped by an entablature with the royal crest. This led into a galleried hall, rising the full height of the house, with a







Classical magnificence. The young women – students of English – stand on the staircase of the British Residency in Hyderabad, which is now a college. The building (*top*), designed by Russell in Corinthian style, was clearly intended to impress the Nizam. A scale model, built to gauge reaction, stands in the vegetable gardens: it was severely damaged recently when a tree fell on it. The Doric front of the Residency, Bangalore (*bottom*), is still well preserved: the house is now the seat of the Governor of the State of Karnataka.

floor of inlaid wood: tall mirrors, each surmounted by a lion, surrounded this great chamber, and around it lay a series of oval drawing-rooms, while in an apse at the back rose a fine double staircase in the Adam style.

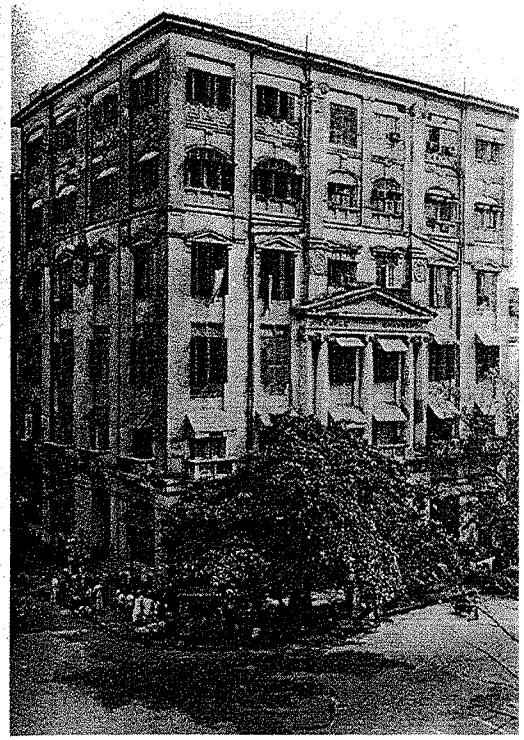
A stately garden lay in front of the house; behind, a formal drive ran through an avenue of outbuildings towards the Nizam's city, and the compound was closed by three arched gates, named in later years after Lord Roberts the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Lansdowne the Viceroy and Queen Victoria herself. The Residency was successfully defended in the Indian Mutiny, but in 1892, as a local guidebook tells us, 'after the Manipuris had murdered Mr Quinton, Chief Commissioner of Assam, the Residents became thoughtful', and the whole complex was fortified with outer walls, gunposts, and a look-out on the roof.

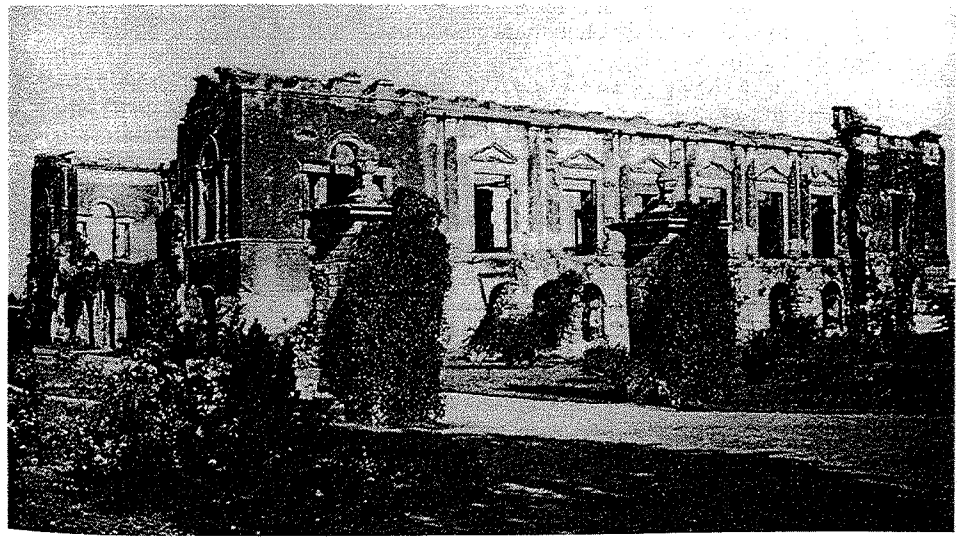
Yet tremendous though it was, the Hyderabad Residency was always more a house than an institution. The Residency billiard-room was so popular with local Britons that according to Sir Charles Metcalfe, Resident in the 1820s, the house was used as a kind of tavern. And in a little secluded garden behind the building, on the city side, there stood a handsome white model of the Residency itself, like a magnificent doll's house, except that it was frequented by snakes and scorpions. This Kirkpatrick had built for his Indian wife. She remained strictly in purdah to the end of her days, living in her own *zenana* beside the stables; and because she could not even walk around the side of her husband's great creation to admire its portico, where the lions stood, and the bees swarmed, and the sentries stamped up and down, Kirkpatrick had built for her this touching plaster substitute.

A variety of houses

Later Government Houses and Residencies were nothing if not varied in style. Government House, Ootacamund, built in 1877 when the Duke of Buckingham was Governor of Madras, had a pillared portico copied from His Grace's seat at Stowe, in Buckinghamshire, but managed to look all the same much like a plush hotel in the Lake District. The Residency at Cochin, which had begun life as a Dutch colonial house, had a high-pitched roof with wide curved eaves, heavy teak doors and shutters in the Arab or perhaps Indonesian manner, and a lamp-lit walk, shaded by magnolia trees, through the gardens to the Residential jetty, where the canoes of the Cochin fishermen drifted by with tattered sails and flashing smiles.

Government House at Lahore was built around the tomb of Mohammed Kasim Khan, who died in 1635. Its centre was the domed dining-room, which was the upper part of the tomb itself: below it was the kitchen, in which the sarcophagus of the late Khan, a cousin of Akbar the Great and a celebrated patron of wrestlers, served as a chopping-board. An octagonal tower hid the dome of the tomb from sight, allowing for a series of triangular rooms around it, and veran-





The remnants of the old banqueting hall of the Residency, Lucknow (*below*), after its eighty-seven-day siege during the height of the Mutiny. The tower was the only place in the British Empire from which a flag flew, day and night, in commemoration from 1857 until Independence nearly a century later. 'Nunc fortunatus sum' – 'I am in Luck Now' – was how General Sir Henry Havelock cabled his Commander-in-Chief, when, after four attempts, he managed to lift the siege. The undistinguished block of flats (*left*) houses lawyers, on the Esplanade in Calcutta – very convenient for the High Court next door.

dahs around them, and over the years the house was embellished with Gothic arches, Moorish windows, classical columns, and Arabesque frescoes executed by Rudyard Kipling's father Lockwood. In the garden, on top of a hump, was a pleasure-pavilion in the Mogul manner, built in 1908, with an indoor swimming-pool columned in the Doric mode.

Another oddity was Ganesh Khind at Poona, the summer palace of the Governors of Bombay – only 2,000 feet about sea-level but still far more comfortable than the blistering city eighty miles away (as the vulture flew) on the Maharashtra coast. This was built by Sir Bartle Frere, Governor from 1862 to 1876, and was at once flamboyant and peculiar, partly because money ran out halfway through and the building was left unfinished. Confusedly Italianate in style, it was inspired no doubt partly by the Queen's contemporary house at Osborne, begun in 1845. Its terraces were regally wide and hugely canopied, and from its eighty-foot tower, iron-decorated at the top, there habitually flew a truly enormous ensign. Ganesh Khind had Romanesque arches here and there, and classical statuary, and stepped lawns like Tuscany, and a winter garden like Scarborough, but it would really have been a splendid ambivalence anywhere on earth.

The first truly modern Government House, the first to have electric light and European kitchens, was the Lodge built at Simla in the 1880s under the auspices of Lord Dufferin the Viceroy, who had long cherished the dream of building a romantic country house somewhere. Where better than Simla, that paradise of aromatic forests and Himalayan vistas, where the Viceregal families were still slumming it at Peterhof? Enthusiastic architects were to hand in the persons of Henry Irwin, Public Works Department, and Captain H. H. Cole, Royal Engineers, and the style was to be exuberantly Tudor. No expense was begrudged, all the furnishings being supplied by Maples of London, and it was popularly suggested at the time that Indian income-tax was introduced specifically to pay for it all.

It was a showy sort of place – 'a Minneapolis millionaire', sneered the American Lady Curzon when she moved in in 1899, 'would revel in it . . . it looks at you with pomegranate and pineapple eyes from every wall'. The dining-room was hung with Spanish leather, the drawing-room with gold and brown silk. Heraldic beasts supported the chimney-piece of the immense hall, which was as tall as the house itself, and everywhere there were elaborate carved details of teak, deodar, and walnut. There was an indoor tennis-court, a tiled laundry, a Council Chamber, the inevitable ballroom and a half-timbered guardhouse at the gate.

The house was built of grey limestone, quarried five miles away and brought to the site on mules, and from a distance it did look rather faery-like on its high ridge, with its bauble-towers above the deodars, and the glint of the sun on its multitudinous windows. The romance of it was true, too. It was the palace of a satrap, sent from a misty Northern isle to govern the inconceivable millions of

In the hills of Simla, the Scottish baronial style of the Viceregal Summer Palace (*left*) marches with the Tudor of Barnes Court (*below*), since 1879 the Residence of the Governors of the Punjab. Now that Punjab is divided between India and Pakistan, there are four Governors' Mansions, one on each plain, one in each set of hills.

that oriental country: the anomaly of its architecture there, a great mock-Tudor English country house encouched in exotic trees and set against the background of the Tibetan Himalaya, only suited the grand anomaly of its meaning, and gave susceptible Britons, as they rode past its guardhouse to the salute of the turbanned sentries, perceptible frissons of satisfaction.

For modern tastes probably the most desirable Government House of them all was the Governor of Bombay's seaside residence at Malabar Point, on the edge of Bombay City. This was hardly a palace in any conventional sense, but rather a cluster of white bungalows, mostly in traditional Anglo-Indian style, grouped on a rocky promontory above the sea, and surrounded by lawns, gardens and wooded walks along the sea-shore, where cuckoos sang, pet dogs were tearfully buried, and Hindu fishermen habitually came ashore to worship at a waterside temple. The bungalows were at once shady and breezy, being surrounded by wide verandahs and having very tall rooms, and the sense of fastidious retreat was heightened by the careful detailing of the woodwork, neat shutters and complicated fretwork screens, which divided one room from another.

The most interesting building in the group was the big ballroom which formed the heart of it. This was a large wooden structure less like British India than imperial Malaya or Borneo – rather a Conradian thing, except that its paintwork was always impeccable, and its denizens allegedly respectable. In this long clapboard hall, with two drawing-rooms and an al fresco dining gallery, the Governor would receive his guests at fêtes, balls and soirées, while the band stringed away in its trim little stand off the verandah, the crickets hummed in the shrubbery outside, the fireflies hovered here and there, and on the rocks below the waves of the Indian Ocean gently slapped.

Empire was not all hospitable idyll, though, and in later years the life of a Governor of Bombay was frequently at risk. In the last decades of British rule in India, when this city seethed with patriotic unrest, they built an underground bunker beneath the happy bungalows of Malabar, equipped with bedrooms and kitchens for a long stay: a motor-road led into it, big enough to accommodate the Governor's Daimler, and a water-gate in the rock-face gave access to a jetty, in case His Excellency needed to make a hasty get-away when the ball was over.

The last palace

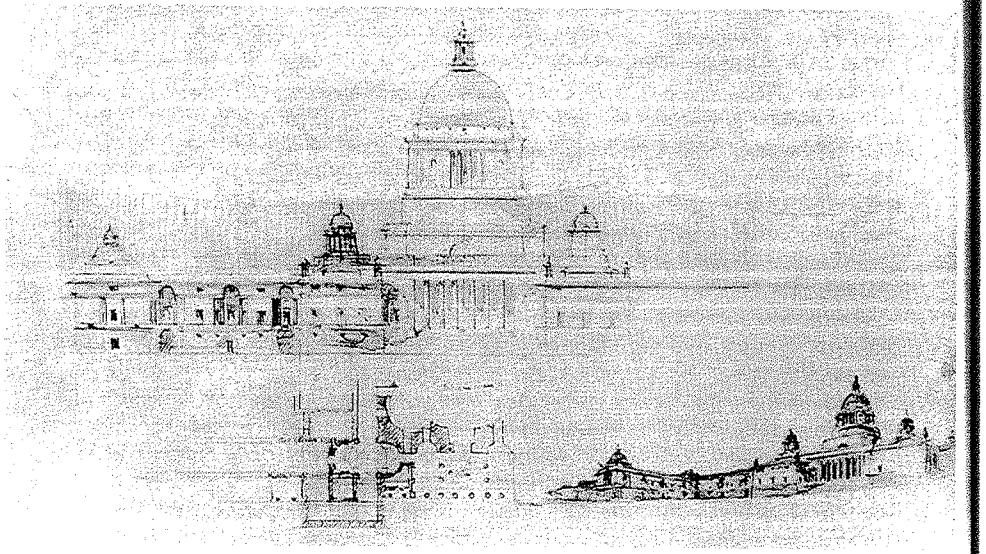
Retreats were not immediately contemplated when in 1912 Edwin Lutyens set about designing a Viceroy's palace for the new capital of the Indian Empire, to be built on Raisina Hill on the southern outskirts of Delhi. Come with me now to visit this palace along the wide avenue called Kingsway, on an elephant if you like, as in some ceremonial parade, in the Packard again, or best of all (if we have the time, for it is a long, long way) directly after breakfast on foot.

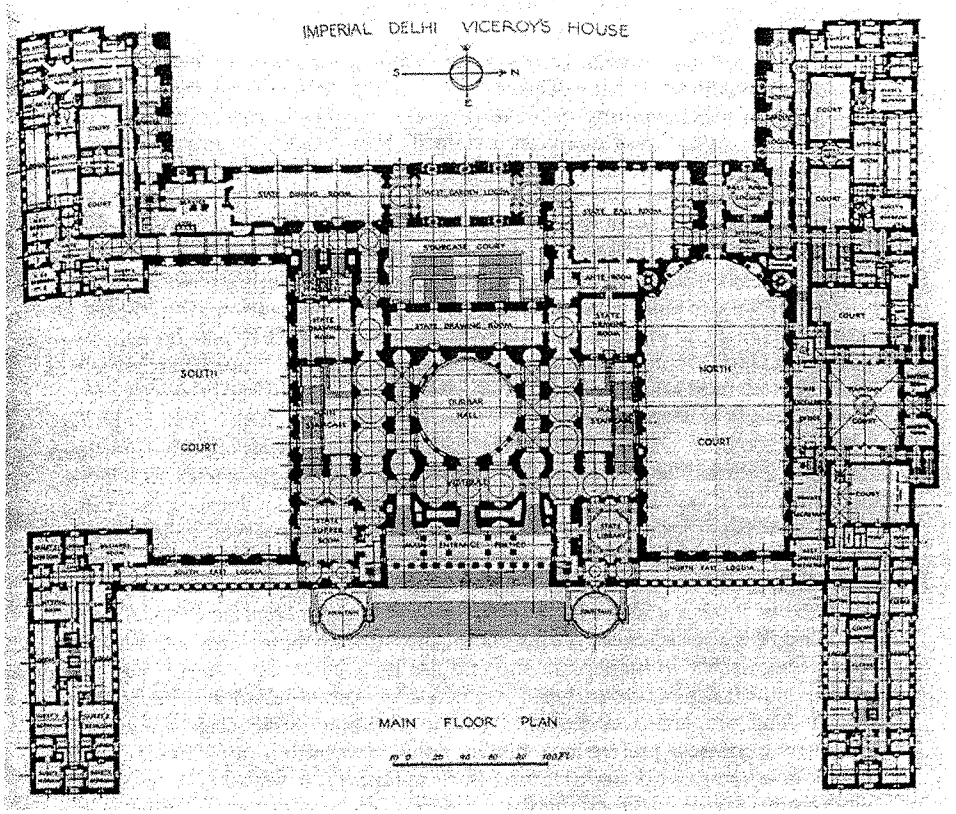
We start at the elongated figure of George V, King-Emperor and founder of this new metropolis, crowned and skinny beneath his stone canopy; we pass beneath the tall Arch of India, inscribed all over with the names of the war dead; and so we set off up the exact straight axis of the ceremonial way, flanked by ornamental pools, brownish lawns, and flowering trees. On and on we go, never deviating a foot from the geometric line of the approach, over one intersection, over another, on and on in the gathering heat of the morning as though we are never going to get there. The great clumped buildings at the far end of the avenue, reddish and brownish in the developing heat-haze, never seem to get any closer, but stand there shimmering on their hillock indistinctly, more like a geological outcrop than any work of masonry.

Gradually, though, they do clarify themselves, and emerge from the misty mass, and presently we reach a plaza with fountains spouting, and pass up an unexpected bump in the road between tall red buildings of absolute symmetry, like huge gatehouses on either side. On we go, though, straight as a die, through splendid iron gates into a courtyard, past an honorific column with a lion on top, between sculpted elephants and living sentries, across the gravel yard, up a huge flight of steps, never swerving, never wavering, through a gigantic open door, into a dark domed chamber all of porphyry and marble, where aides bow and ladies curtsey – and there, mysteriously beneath a crimson canopy in the very centre of the room, facing the open door and the long line of Kingsway, there stands a gilded throne.

On the throne there sits an Englishman: and so, bowing and curtseying ourselves a little stiffly perhaps after so demanding an approach, we find ourselves in the presence of the Crown's surrogate, the despot of this vast domain, His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India. 'Frank, my dear fellow', he says *sotto voce* as he accepts our obeisances (for we were probably at school with him) – 'my dear Madge' (for we are very likely cousins on his mother's side) – 'you look quite done in. Come round the back when all this hoo-ha is over, and have a drink with Mary in the garden . . .'.

The house that Lutyens built for this satrap was the largest of all modern palaces, 600 feet long from end to end, 180 feet to the top of its central dome. Lutyens was known then chiefly as a designer of exceptionally comfortable English country houses, built in a distinctive combination of classical and vernacular styles. He knew nothing about India, and had never been there: it happened though that his wife Emily was not only the daughter of a former Viceroy, Lord Lytton, but was also a devotee of the Theosophist sect, which had its headquarters in Madras, and an irrepressible supporter of Indian independence – India was the last place in the world, she thought, where 'little nobodies can come and play at being kings and queens'. This ironic provenance gave birth, in the Viceroy's House on Raisina Hill, to the most interesting of all the domestic





The Viceroy's Palace, New Delhi. Sir Kenneth Clark says of Lutyens's gigantic structure, the centre-piece of the great Imperial capital, that it bore as little relation to India as L'Enfant's Washington did to the southern United States. That it was a work of great genius and beauty, however, is beyond dispute. The architecture is not without its technical flaws: one of the huge fountains ornamenting the approach to the mansion collapsed in 1977 after its iron girdle rusted away. The rest of the buildings, though, are in good condition – particularly the mansion, now used as the official residence of the President of the Indian Republic. Many of the scores of rooms which Viceroys and their huge staffs would have occupied are empty today.

buildings, big or small, that the British erected during the 350 years of their presence in India.

The house was only the centre-piece of a plan for a whole new capital city, New Delhi, which had been decided upon in 1911. At that time, though the new modernism was beginning to make itself felt on the continent of Europe, and neo-classicism too was enjoying a revival, British architecture in India was pre-eminently still in its mongrel phase – Saracenic Gothic, High Victorian Pathan. Also, though there seemed no doubt in most British minds that the empire in India was more or less eternal, Indian nationalism was already stirring, and there were signs of some relaxation in the imperial despotism. The style of the new palace was therefore of double importance, aesthetic and political.

There were of course many advocates of the by now traditional syntheses. Sir Swinton Jacob, 'a walking dictionary of Indo-Saracenic art', was brought in to advise, and the Viceroy of the day, Lord Hardinge, declared himself particularly in favour of pointed arches for doors and windows – 'I should personally like to see buildings of a bold and plain character with oriental adaptation . . . call it bastard or what you like.' Others thought that in this ancient capital of native dynasties the house should be entirely Indian in form – 'for high considerations of State', Lady Hardinge said. Lutyens resisted these suggestions. He loathed the pointed arch, he thought Indian effects tacked on to Western shapes were generally mere 'pictures on a wall', and he dismissed most purely indigenous architecture as 'childish'.

And in the event he built the palace in a style that defied easy classification, either political or aesthetic, being classical in form, country English in manner, and recognizably influenced in the end not only by Muslim forms, but by an Indian cultural heritage hitherto neglected by Anglo-Indian architects, Buddhism. The proportion and stance of the building spoke clearly enough of Lutyens's classical preferences, his boundless admiration in particular for the mathematics of Greek architecture. But the house was sealed, as it were, with indigenous features like sharp Mogul cornices, and sturdy roof pavilions, and in the centre of it all was placed a copper dome which looked at first sight rather Byzantine, but was more probably derived from the great Buddhist *stupa* at Sanchi near Bhopal. All around the house, and even on its roofs, fountains played in the Mogul manner and pools reflected the red and cream sandstone of the construction; behind it there was a great formal garden, direct from Kashmir, deliberately contrasted with a circular rose-garden straight from Sussex.

This house was probably the last of the great royal palaces of history. Its dome rose above the new city, so Robert Byron wrote in 1931, like 'the shout of the imperial suggestion – a slap in the face of the moderate average-man, with his second-hand ideals'. It covered four and a half acres and included within its walls twelve separate courtyards. Three million cubic feet of stone, worked in the

world's largest stoneyard, were needed to build it. It was equipped with every kind of domestic office: a printing-room for the Viceroy's private press, a tent-room for his baggage, a bakery, a tailor's shop, linen-rooms like those of a great hotel, sculleries and larders of diverse sorts, places to hang game, and make cakes, and scour pans, and store the vast quantities of coal needed to heat the place in winter.

Besides the circular Durbar Room with the throne in it, the house contained a State dining-room 100 feet long, a huge ballroom, three State drawing-rooms and vast numbers of State suites and guest bedrooms. Everything in them was designed by Lutyens, down to the chairs, and the stamp of his taste was everywhere: in the endless arched corridors, for instance, which seemed to run through the house like sumptuous warrens, in the panelled walls and coffered ceilings, in the whimsical nursery furniture, in the elaborate chimney-pieces and the cool white woodwork, which made the rooms overlooking the garden, with their nice squashy sofas and their country-house selection of books, feel uncannily like cultivated drawing-rooms at home in England.

And in a certain puckish fondness for the unexpected, the pun and the illusion, Lutyens designed his own order for the columns of this house: they were decorated with stone bells, honouring in a back-handed way an old saw which claimed that so long as the bells of Delhi were silent, the reigning dynasty would survive. He ornamented it everywhere with upturned domes, like saucers. And he devised the most delightful of the few architectural surprises that the British bestowed upon India (for by and large, it has to be admitted, the Anglo-Indian architectural imagination was short on fantasy). If you walked out of the ballroom to go to the State drawing-room, during an intermission perhaps in the dancing, you would find yourself in a wide vestibule with staircases on each side. It had a ceiling, you would perceive, of deepest blue, surrounded by mouldings and only dimly to be glimpsed above the bright lights below, against which the dresses of the ladies passing up and down the stairs, the brilliant uniforms of the officers and functionaries, the scarlet turbans of the servants, stood out in theatrical contrast.

A choice of genius, you might think, that deep seductive blue: but as you mounted the stairway, and the ceiling became clearer, you found that it was not a ceiling at all. Lutyens had called the Indian sky itself into his design, and had left his staircase court roofless to the stars.

In exile

Deep Asian skies, cummerbunds, handsome young aides and sunburnt girls, gleam of lance, glitter of lanterns in the Mogul gardens – yet despite the glamour of it all, even at the top of the hierarchy there nagged at the imperialist mind the insidious curse of homesickness. Viceroy or Company clerk, general's lady or corporal's wife, they dreamed of Britain far away. The pull of home remained

poignant and powerful, even among people who had spent most of their lives in India, or families who had served this empire for generations – even sometimes, indeed, among Eurasians, half British, half Indian, who had never set foot in Britain at all.

The memsahib suffered most. She was the most exiled of the exiles, and she palliated the old longing in the only way she could, by making her house, be it never so palatial, as much like home as possible. In the earlier years of imperial rule, when there were few British women about, the interiors of Anglo-Indian houses often looked as much Indian as Anglo. They were generally sparsely equipped. In 1823 Bishop Heber the hymn-writer, found most of the great houses of Chowringhee only half-furnished; another visitor reported of his lodgings in Madras that there were no pictures on the walls, no curtains on the windows and no cushions on the chairs; William Hickey, in the same city, was put up in 'a large hall, without a single article in it except a crazy old couch'. And this is how Honoria Lawrence described her bedroom at Lahore in 1851: 'A naked, comfortless look in the room . . . ceiling bare beams and rafters; walls bare lime, coloured grey; floor covered with chintz; bed without curtains or posts'.

Later, as Gothic changed the outsides of Anglo-Indian buildings, Victorian taste changed the insides. By the 1860s the Vicereine Lady Canning was defining Anglo-Indian decor as consisting of 'round tables in the middle, chairs all around, and an ottoman on each side', and a photograph of a Madras drawing-room then shows it rather attractively hybridized. The floor is covered only with rattan matting, somewhat frayed at that, much of the furniture is local cane and straw, the long room is brilliantly light and airy: but the trimmings are already conventionally Victorian – whatnots, cowrie shells, jingle-jangle glass vases, one or two lugubrious sporting trophies, a spinet in one corner and lotus-shaped oil-lamps affixed to all the walls.

Later still the memsahib often succeeded in making her rooms almost entirely British. She did not generally have much furniture, and what she had was still locally made, but she made up for it with ornaments and incidentals. At one end was Lady Canning, in her Government Houses, using chintzes and pictures of the royal family to make her sitting-room 'pretty cool and English'. At the other end was your run of the mill Anglo-Indian housewife, whose aim it was to reproduce the more bourgeois consolations of Guildford, Stowe or Aberdeen in these exotic climes: with pictures jammed together on every wall, water-colours of the Highlands or portraits of Mother and Father in Oxford frames – with flowered wallpapers and looped curtains – with innumerable pots of posies, and ashtrays mounted in chair-arm saddles with dangling spurs, and big brass trays on mahogany legs one day to be reborn in distant retirement cottages – with arrangements of bamboos and grasses in polished brass shell-cases in the corner – with Calcutta-made pianos brightly polished, Mendelssohn or Sullivan on the

music-stands – the whole ensemble only faintly stirring in the breeze of the *punkahs*, or the creaking electric fans in the ceiling.

It was the décor of exile: and outside in the garden, potted or bedded lovingly in the shade, phlox, rose, geranium and antirrhinum loyally ignored geography, history and architecture alike ('My violets are in bloom', wrote one poor homesick memsahib in 1906, 'dear little English flowers . . . carefully, one by one, have I gathered enough to make me a buttonhole').