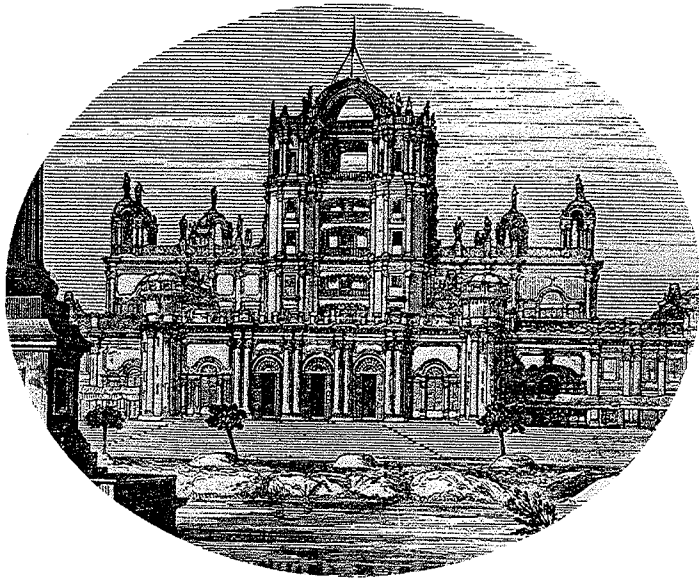


Davids. Splendours of the Raj.



Constantia, Lucknow

PROLOGUE

IMPERIAL MYTHS

They that dig foundations deep,
Fit for realms to rise upon,
Little honour do they reap
Of their generation,
Any more than mountains gain
Stature till we reach the plain.*

Historical objectivity is an elusive commodity. Post-imperial assumptions and prejudices have hindered the search for truth about the British Empire. For some its dissolution is the logical culmination of generations of effort; for many it has been equated with emasculation and a loss of British greatness. But for most the British Empire seems like some sort of dated music-hall joke, in which stereotyped Englishmen engage in embarrassing banter about fuzzy-wuzzies and trouble in the Khyber. To those who fought on the North-West Frontier, and their latter-day successors, the Khyber Pass is about as funny as the Berlin Wall, but in Britain the fictional images of Empire have long since superseded the cold truths of global *realpolitik*, and it is hard to see how a sense of historical balance can ever be fully achieved.

Other deeper cultural assumptions exacerbate the search for objectivity. The British have always had a sense of social and cultural superiority towards their colonies: the Mother of the Empire smiling benignly but condescendingly on her callow and gauche offspring, even such huge and gifted children as the United States. Underneath lie still deeper racial undertones which reflect older, atavistic instincts. Overlying both of these are more potent, post-imperial attitudes, coloured by false Marxist rhetoric, which have promoted the popular belief that the Empire was inherently wicked and malevolent, an insidious stage in the evolution of capitalist society arising from the need to invest surplus wealth overseas.

One of the most pervasive myths is that of imperial unity. It was a dream which obsessed many, but in truth the Empire was never more than a diverse collection of territories acquired for a multitude of different reasons and often against the better judgement of Whitehall. Climatic, political, economic, racial and regional differences fostered heterogeneity. In the gaudy tapestry of Empire some territories hung by slender threads, a few, in time, were severed altogether, whilst others like the great white dominions were woven close to the fabric of British national life. The search for a true imperial identity through the

*The sources of this and other quotations are listed on page 258.

medium of architecture and the fine arts never became a dominant concern, but it continued for generations.

The imperial impulse was chivalric yet bullying, self-seeking yet magnanimous, sometimes astonishingly insensitive, yet generally just and high-minded. These contrary but pervasive elements were expressed in the architecture of the Empire, and they achieved their most eloquent expression in the buildings of British India. India was an epitome of the Empire itself, where a multitude of different races, religions, languages and cultures mostly co-existed but sometimes murdered each other in erratic outbursts of communal violence. If imperial unity could be achieved in brick and stone here, then it might be attained globally.

In the historiography of the Empire architecture has remained a footnote. This can be attributed to withdrawal symptoms and to the complex prejudices of modern British society, but it has as much to do with the rigid anglocentric and modernist approach of architectural historians. In the past sixty years the ideals of the Modern Movement have been dominant, but the rise of a new generation of 'post-modernist' architects and architectural historians has now liberated the subject from this intellectual straitjacket. The rehabilitation of Lutyens, and the awareness of a continuing classical and vernacular tradition have meant a reappraisal of long-held prejudices. The historical method of avant-garde modernists relied for its credibility on disregarding whole areas of architectural endeavour. The architecture of the Empire was dismissed as second-rate, still-born, decadent and irrelevant. The fact that some of the great cities of India and therefore the world were the products of imperialism was ignored. Even that free-thinking champion of New Delhi, Robert Byron, could allow himself to refer to Bombay as 'an architectural Sodom'. Full-blown modernists regarded New Delhi as the institutional expression of an hierarchical society that was colonial and thoroughly evil, unrelated to the real needs of modern India, even though paradoxically it provided a focus for rising nationalism. When the modernists were given their head in the euphoric climate of post-Independence India, their contribution to India's 'real needs' was Le Corbusier's Chandigarh, a dismal piece of paternalistic architecture poorly related to the climate.

Contrary to popular belief, there was never a definitive Imperial style, but the search for one occupied the British for the duration of their stay in India. In the early years under the East India Company collective and individual aspirations fundamentally were commercial and this was reflected in the buildings. These were erected by amateur architects, dilettanti, or more usually, by military engineers using available pattern-books for prototypes, and they deployed considerable skill and ingenuity in their design. The work of British military engineers is one of the most enduring legacies of empire, and they were expected to undertake a wide variety of civil and military tasks. In the early years they were in great demand. In 1763 the Court of Directors of the Company wrote to Calcutta: 'We should very gladly comply with your request for sending you young Persons to be brought up as Assistants

in the Engineering Branch, but as we find it extremely difficult to procure such, you will do well to employ any who have a talent that way amongst the Cadets or others.'

From 1794 there was a surveying school in Madras. After 1809 Addiscombe College, and later the Royal Engineers' Institution at Chatham, provided a degree of professional education, but self-instruction was the most common form of practical knowledge using published reference books and architectural treatises. The works of Gibbs, Chambers, Stuart and Revett, and the Adam Brothers were available in Calcutta and Madras, together with French and Italian books. Others besides military engineers consulted them. Interested amateurs such as C. K. Robison, J. P. Parker, James Prinsep and Claude Martin were all self-taught enthusiasts with considerable personal skills.

In the late 18th century there was a major change in British perceptions. Only twenty years separate Writers' Buildings and Government House, Calcutta, yet one is a simple stucco barrack block relieved only by an Ionic centre-piece, and the other a magnificent Georgian palace of considerable sophistication. British aspirations had become overtly imperial and were expressed accordingly. Architecture was vested with immense symbolic significance. It could be used as an instrument of policy as well as an expression of paramountcy: at the Residency at Hyderabad grandiloquence was used as a substitute for actual military power. Architecture was cheaper than sepoy, particularly when the local Nizam paid for it. It was acknowledged at the time that in India power was judged by its outward expression and there were many who felt that the parsimonious attitude of the East India Company diminished both its political stature and commercial prospects.

The transformation of Calcutta and Madras from commercial trading enclaves into elegant imperial cities coincided with this changing view of British activity in India. Trade remained important, but the conscious reflection of the civilised values of ancient Greece and Rome in the buildings of the period demonstrates a growing awareness of this wider political and social role. It was believed that the greatness of a civilisation was expressed in its architecture. The legacy of Greece and Rome, the civilising influence of their cities, and the creation of a classical language of architecture of supreme simplicity and eloquence, set a precedent which the British strove to emulate. India could be transformed into a self-improving, civilised western nation, providing English education, justice and moral values prevailed. It was this interventionist, self-righteous idealism that fostered some of the greatest social and political reforms, but it also aroused the deeply conservative basis of Indian society in a primitive and violent reaction which burst out in the Great Mutiny of 1857. In its aftermath the Bengal, Madras and Bombay Engineers were amalgamated with the Royal Engineers in 1862 and, owing to the great expansion in civil engineering work, the Public Works Department (PWD) began to recruit largely civil engineers.

With the introduction of the Gothic Revival in India and its

widespread adoption in the years after the Mutiny a new series of architectural experiments began; to adapt the forms and styles of mediaeval Europe to the functional and climatic conditions of 19th-century India. In her recent book *Stones of Empire* Jan Morris alleged that 'actually Gothic was far less suitable to the environment than the classical styles.' This is quite untrue. In 1862 James Fergusson, the architectural expert on India, wrote: 'If used with freedom and taste, no style might be better adapted for Indian use than Gothic', and many agreed with him. Based on arcuated principles of construction, often it was far more flexible and capable of adaptation to local conditions than classical architecture. The most widely-used and adaptable form of Gothic was Venetian, a style which had its origins in the Levant, and which lent itself ideally to hot tropical locations. Indeed Gilbert Scott's design for the Convocation Hall and Library of Bombay University revels in the freedom given to design in an authentic Italian Gothic style unhindered by those concessions to the climate which were necessary in England. The result is one of his finest, but least known works with open spiral staircases, arcaded galleries and a careful balance of indoor and outdoor space; a building perfectly related to the climate: cool, efficient and highly functional.

For all its evocative and elegiac overtones of a lost civilisation *Stones of Empire* unfortunately does little to dispel many long-held myths about imperial architecture. The architectural history of British India is the story of constant experimentation with different styles of building and these experiments reflected the moral and ethical values of the period. The process began with the efforts of military engineers and amateur architects to adapt the classical language of architecture to a tropical context, adjusting proportions, intercolumniation and forms to local needs and circumstances. Great resource was displayed in the adaptation of the classical portico to climatic and functional requirements. Certainly mistakes were made and much of what was built was not strictly according to the rules of architectural grammar. The fudged abacus on the Calcutta Mint by Forbes is a good example, whilst contrary to Jan Morris's assertion that 'Sam Russell never put a foot wrong when he designed the Hyderabad Residency', its proportions do not bear scrutiny and it is riddled with architectural solecisms. However, much the same sort of criticism can be levelled against contemporary works in England. Houses on some of the great London estates such as Belgravia and Regent's Park, show much the same disregard for correct architectural grammar. Repeated experiments with different classical styles – Palladian, Neo-classical, Greek and Roman – and the serial construction of Anglo-Indian houses and public buildings over decades fostered greater sophistication and eloquence, even if structural failure remained a recurrent problem.

Similarly with the Gothic style, in Bombay in particular: the instruction of a native workforce in the skills of stone carving, and the availability of fine local building stones transformed the quality of architecture there. By the 1870s the architecture of Bombay was regarded generally as far superior to that of Calcutta. This was not only due to the excellence of the local materials, but also because the

Bombay Public Works Department employed professional officers educated and trained in civil architecture, whilst in Calcutta the amateur military engineer prevailed. The Bombay professionals seem to have maintained a closer interest in the latest Gothic styles than their Calcutta counterparts, and this probably accounts for their rapid mastery of the complex structural principles of Gothic architecture, which often failed when used elsewhere. The collapse of the gun carriage works at Allahabad in 1871 was a spectacular example, but the structural inadequacy of many arched buildings was a popular lament at the time.

In Bombay techniques and skills were learnt quickly. The Afghan Memorial Church of 1847 at Colaba was the great Gothic prototype in India, but it was marred by lack of local expertise in stone carving. In 1863 a scheme of Colonel St Clair Wilkins was regarded as 'out of the question' owing to the introduction of carved ornamental details and foliated capitals, but within two years the influence of John Lockwood Kipling and the Bombay School of Art transformed the position and whole new avenues of Indo-Gothic architecture were explored. These reached their culmination in the Gothic and the Indo-Saracenic buildings of the 80s and 90s, which display an extraordinary level of professional skill and represent a very sophisticated form of Victorian eclecticism. They are monumental statements of Victorian imperial and civic pride, in what for many was a genuine Indian Imperial style. Others considered the process of hybridisation to be a retrograde step, not just architecturally but politically. An article in *The Builder* of 1912 stated:

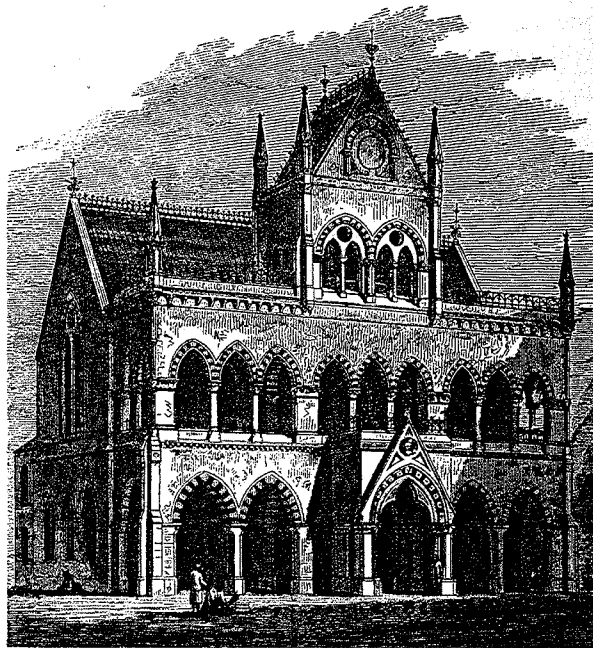
The confusion consequent on the attempt to combine the characteristics of a modern European and Indian building in one and the same structure, to erect for the native that which by tradition he alone is capable of erecting for himself, is to invite not only the scorn of the Imperialist, but also the ridicule of those whose own noble architecture has been so grossly caricatured. As a compliment in political diplomacy it is shallow, and from every point of view a grave error.

As a reaction against such criticism some, such as Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob, attempted a far more scholarly approach based on precise antiquarian observation of Indian precedents, and in turn, this fostered greater interest in the conservation of ancient monuments and temples.

It is at New Delhi that the architectural experiments of the previous generations find their resolution in a wholly original style of architecture that is neither Indian nor European, but a complete fusion of the two traditions. The work of Lutyens and his acolytes, Henry Medd and Arthur Shoomsmith, achieves the highest levels of sophistication, a genuine mutated style born of Anglo-Indian parenthood. To Jan Morris, 'once the Empire lost its assurance, it lost its virtue and so did its constructions.' To allege that 'British India bowed itself out in an unmemorable blandness of the neo-classical' and that it 'went out gently, even apologetically at the end' just cannot be sustained. The

monumental conception and scale of New Delhi is the crowning achievement of British architecture in India, and it is the supreme irony that it found greatest eloquence at the very moment that the imperial impulse was faltering. To Gavin Stamp, 'New Delhi is one of the greatest things the British have ever done and it seems little short of a miracle that an architect of towering genius was able to realise almost all of his conception.' To Robert Byron writing in *Country Life* in 1931 Lutyens 'accomplished a fusion of East and West and created a novel work of art. He took the best of both traditions, and made of them "a double magnificence".'

This extraordinary diversity of opinion reflects the difficulty of analysing objectively the architectural history of British India, for in Britain the subject is still fraught with prejudice, preconception and complex emotional responses. Ironically in India this is far less so. Sufficient time has elapsed for the buildings in this book to be taken seriously as works of architecture in their own right, as the particular expressions of a society which now may have vanished, but one which created the framework of the modern Indian state. The buildings are a heritage shared by two countries and it is a heritage which needs to be acknowledged and assessed as objectively as any other.

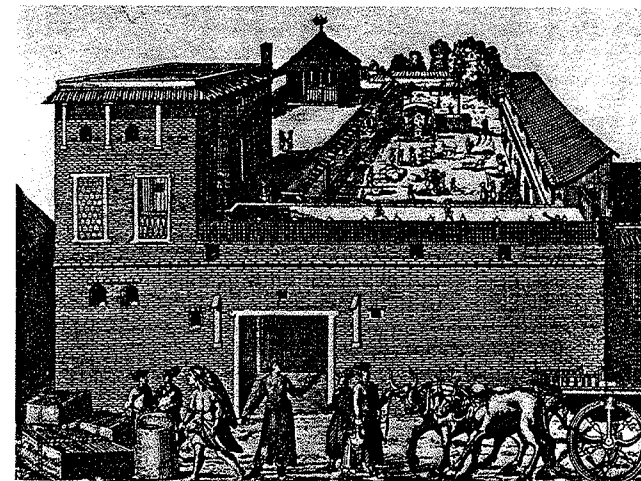


The Sassoon Institute, Bombay:
commissioned by a Baghdadi Jew in
Venetian Gothic.

TWO TOMBS

*Davies.
Splendours
of the
Raj.*

India always has exerted a strong allure for Europe. Alexander the Great reached the borders of India, leaving cultural and social traces in the Hunza Valley, on the far north-western fringes of the country, and the Romans certainly knew it, trading direct in jewels, ivory, perfumes and spices. Therefore when Vasco da Gama landed on the site of the Roman settlement at Calicut in 1498, it was not so much the discovery of a new alien culture, as the resumption of a pattern of social and economic intercourse which had been enjoyed by the Ancient World, but which had been severed by the fall of Rome and the rise of Islam. By the mid-16th century at least three Portuguese settlements – Daman, Diu and Bassein – were heavily protected along European lines with polygonal walls, embrasures and lunettes in the manner of Renaissance fortifications. The three town plans share a similarity of layout with grid-iron street patterns around a central fort or redoubt. At Daman the walls embraced all the principal buildings including the factory. By 1680 Bassein had many notable buildings, including a cathedral, five convents, thirteen churches and an asylum for orphans erected over a subterranean network of bomb-proof tunnels and caverns. Although the Portuguese impact on India was immediate, it was never extensive because in 1612 the English displaced the Portuguese as the naval auxiliaries of the Moghul Empire.



The first English factory at Surat
founded in 1613, was a simple but
robust building based on local
vernacular architecture. The terraces
referred to by John Fryer may be seen
clearly. Note the weather vane in the
form of an East Indiaman.

The English were late comers to India. On 31st December 1600 Elizabeth I granted the East India Company its charter 'as well for the honour of this our realm of England as for the increase of our navigation and advancement of trade'. Inspired by the same commercial dreams as the Dutch, they arrived in their wake and attempted to break the Dutch monopoly of the East Indies. At the Massacre of Amboyna in 1623 the Dutch seized the English factory and executed the occupants. Under-capitalised and rebuffed by their rivals, the English company turned its attentions to the less attractive consolation of India.

English influence spread steadily at the expense of their European rivals. The first English factory was established at Surat in 1613. Others followed rapidly at Broach, Agra, Ahmadabad, and at Armagaum on the Coromandel coast. These early factories were isolated introverted enclaves rigidly governed by a President and with a lifestyle more like the routine of an Oxford or Cambridge college than anything their Oriental milieu might lead one to expect.

John Fryer visited the factory at Surat in 1674-75 and left this description:

The House the English live in at Surat is partly the King's Gift, partly hired; Built of stone and excellent timber with good Carving without Representations; very strong, for that each Floor is Half a Yard thick at least, of the best plastered Cement, which is very weighty. It is contrived after the Moor's Buildings with upper and lower Galleries or Terras-walks. The President has spacious Lodgings, noble Rooms for Counsel and Entertainment, pleasant Tanks, Yards and an Hummum to wash in; but no Gardens in the city.

Architecturally the factory sounds much like the old traditional buildings of Gujarat with few European influences. The President cultivated extravagant Oriental ceremonial being 'carried in a Palki, emblazoned with the royal escutcheon and lined with red silks'. The factory at Agra was 'In the heart of the city where we live after this country in manner of meat, drink and apparel . . . for the most part after the Custom of this place, sitting on the ground at our meat or discourse. The rooms in general covered with carpets with great round high cushions to lean on.'

The first fortifications erected by the English were at Armagaum on the east coast. In 1628-29 the settlement was described as being defended by 'twelve pieces of cannon mounted around the factory and by a guard of twenty-three factors and soldiers'. The defences were more a protection against the marauding Dutch than from any local threat: 'the Dutch will never leave us in quiet; till they have by one means or other rooted us out.' Improved security also promoted local trade.

By 1647 there were twenty-three English factories, some shared with Dutch or French traders, but life expectancy was low. In 1668 the Company acquired Bombay. It had formed part of the marriage dowry of Catherine of Braganza to Charles II, and it was notorious for its bad



climate. Of eight hundred white inhabitants, only one hundred survived the seasonal rains of 1692. The two months which followed the monsoon, September and October, were usually fatal. Conditions were not improved by the insalubrious practice of putting dry fish around the roots of trees as a manure. A visitor noted 'in the Mornings there is generally seen a thick Fog among those Trees that affects both the Brains and Lungs of Europeans and breeds Consumptions, Fevers and Fluxes.'

It is no surprise to discover that one of the earliest surviving English monuments in India is the huge stone tomb of the Oxinden family at Surat. Sir George Oxinden was the Governor of Bombay when it was transferred to the Company in 1668. The family mausoleum, one of the largest in India, is a two-storeyed Oriental kiosk forty feet high and twenty-five feet wide with massive columns carrying two cupolas, which rise one above the other. Around the interior are galleries reached by flights of steps; on the lower level lies Christopher and on the upper George - 'Anglorum in India, Persia, Arabia, Praeses'. Architecturally it is a hybrid affair, but with a pronounced Indian character. Not for another century were purer forms of classical funerary architecture used.

The east coast enjoyed a much healthier reputation and in the early years it became the centre of English influence. A fine new station was

The curious Oxinden mausoleum at Surat crowned by an open-cross cupola denoting a Christian tomb. The graves in the foreground are of other English factors.

established at Madraspatam in 1639 by Francis Day, one of the consuls at Armagaum. He enthused: 'If you suffer this opportunity to pass over you shall perhaps in vain afterwards pursue the same when it is fled and gone.' Without waiting for clearance by the Court of Directors in London, work began on a new fort and factory on 1st March 1640. The factory was 'a plain box-like edifice, three storeys high without verandah or external ornament'. A parapet encircled the flat roof which was crowned by a quaint dome. The ground floor was given over to warehouses and above was the Consultation Room or Council Chamber. The agent's quarters were on the top floor and other facilities included a communal dining room and lodgings for merchants, writers and apprentices. The factory was placed diagonally in a paved courtyard and enclosed by battlemented walls. The fortifications were completed by 1653 and boasted eight guns. The foundation of Fort St George, as it was known, was influenced by considerations of economy and utility and the earliest structure built by Cogan and Day was little more than a common square measuring one hundred yards by eighty yards adjoining the Cooum river, yet for the next 130 years it remained the nerve-centre of English power in the East.

It was from Madras that early ventures were made to the north and Bengal. A tentative presence had been maintained at Hooghly at the mouth of the Ganges, but this was not consolidated until, on the strength of a few half-hearted promises, Job Charnock decided to try again. He landed at Sutanuti on 24th April 1690. The return was a bold venture. The Nawab had not given his authority and trade required an Imperial *firman* from the Great Moghul in Delhi. The Emperor, provoked already by the seizure of Imperial ships by the English, had besieged Bombay in 1689. If the timing was hardly auspicious, neither was the site: an unhealthy stretch of marshy ground close to the Hindu temple at Kalighat. Captain Alexander Hamilton travelled between the Cape and India regularly from 1688 to 1723. He described the site on which Charnock was to lay the foundations of Calcutta:

He could not have chosen a more unhealthful place on all the River; for three miles to the North Eastern is a salt-water lake that overflows in September and October, and then prodigious numbers of fish resort thither, but in November and December, when the floods are dissipated, these fishes are left dry, and with their putrefaction affect the air with thick stinking vapours, which the North-East Winds bring with them to Fort William, that they cause a yearly Mortality.

The earliest settlement was a miserable affair of 'cutcha' buildings made from local mud and thatch. The President of Fort St George was concerned enough at the perilous nature of the foothold to write to the Court of Directors: 'They live in a wild unsettled condition at Chuttanuttee, neither fortified houses nor godowns, only tents, huts and boats.'

It is a testimony to Charnock's character that he persisted in his determination to re-establish an English presence in Bengal. His

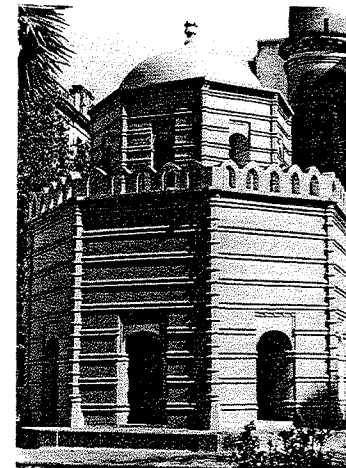
motive, like that of the Company, was trade not dominion, and his choice of site was shrewd. Legend has it that he chose the site because of the presence of a huge baobab tree beneath which he found a welcome respite from the intolerable heat. That the tree existed is beyond dispute, for ninety years later Warren Hastings attempted to prevent it being felled. But it is more realistic to assume that as an experienced merchant, with an eye for potential prospects, Charnock had noted that the east bank of the river had a better anchorage, and that the surrounding villages were developing cotton marts in their own right. In fact two English merchants had migrated to the east bank already, having recognised its better potential.

Charnock is a fascinating character. He was the son of a London solicitor and was born in the parish of St Katherine, Creechurch around 1630. He arrived in Bengal in 1656 and by 1664 had risen to be chief of the factory in Patna. By 1675 he was Fifth in the Council at Madras, having served at several ports, and when he returned to Sutanuti in 1690 he was Agent of the company in Bengal. Stubborn, determined and ruthless, he refused to admit defeat. Today his name is gilded with romance. It is reputed that one evening as he passed the burning ghat on the river frontage at Hooghly he saw that the pyre was ready to receive a young widow who was preparing herself for suttee. She was fifteen years old, tall, fair-skinned and exceptionally beautiful. Charnock instructed his guards to rescue her and they married. The incident is commemorated in the poetic epitaph of Joseph Townsend, the 'Pilot of the Ganges', whose tomb lies close to that of his friend Charnock:

Cries Charnock 'scatter the faggots! Double that
Brahmin in two!
The tall pale widow is mine Joe – the little brown
girl's for you.'

It was an unlikely liaison – he a fifty-year-old rough merchant adventurer and she a dutiful Brahmin widow, but 'they lived lovingly many years and had several children', Mary, Elizabeth and Katherine, whose baptisms are recorded in the parish annals of St Mary's, Madras, for 18th August 1689. When she died in Calcutta Charnock kept her memory alive by sacrificing a cock over her tomb on each anniversary in a bizarre misinterpretation of Bihari ritual. Charnock died thirty months after his return to Bengal in 1692, and his son-in-law, Charles Eyre, first President of Fort William, built a massive and curious mausoleum in his honour. It survives in a corner of St John's Churchyard, Calcutta, and it is of outstanding historical significance, for concentrated in and around that one mausoleum survive some of the earliest traces of English life in India. Unfortunately it is threatened with oblivion. Proposals are in hand to develop the churchyard.

Architecturally the mausoleum is Oriental in conception, an octagonal pavilion surmounted by a serrated parapet and a ponderous kiosk, which in turn is crowned with a shallow cupola and funeral urn. The faces are cut into horizontal stone ribs which give the appearance of



The distinctive Oriental tomb of Job Charnock, founder of Calcutta, in St John's Churchyard there.

iron strapwork, but the whole edifice is constructed of hard Pallavaram gneiss from quarries near Madras, and called 'charnockite', ever since. Now whitewashed, each face of the tomb is pierced by a low pointed arch, three of which are closed by four raised tombstones. The monument is surrounded by thirty gravestones relocated here at the time of the erection of the church in 1787. In 1983 more were concentrated here including Admiral Watson's pedimented sepulchre crowned by a spectacular obelisk. A number of the tombs are enriched with baroque devices such as coats of arms and skull and crossbones, but it is the four raised stones closing the arches which are of interest.

Originally Charnock's stone lay flat over the grave, which he was supposed to share with his wife. When repairs were carried out to the mausoleum in 1892 the opportunity was taken to inspect the foundations. No vault was found, but the grave and some bones were revealed, suggesting that the two do lie here together, united in death.

The third slab in the row is to Surgeon William Hamilton who died at Fort William in 1717, and it was to his medical expertise that the Company owed its successful subsequent expansion. Hamilton cured the Moghul Emperor Farrukhsiyar of what was described at the time as 'a malignant distemper and swelling of the groin' (a euphemism for rampant venereal disease), and in return the Company received permission to trade freely in Bengal at a fixed rate of 3,000 rupees a year plus the right to purchase and collect revenue from thirty-eight villages. Unfortunately the Moghul Empire itself could not be cured so easily and during the first half of the 18th century it was in terminal decline.

By the 1760s the British found themselves masters of Bengal and the Carnatic. Their small coastal settlements at Madras and Calcutta were poised to expand from defensive enclaves into vibrant cities where mercantile and later, imperial values were expressed in the elegant architectural forms of the 18th century.

CHAPTER 2

MADRAS :
VISIONS OF ANTIQUITY

The approach to Madras always impressed European arrivals. The journey along the Coromandel coast contrasted markedly with the privations of the ocean voyage around the Cape – distant views of palm-fringed beaches, rolling surf, tropical blue skies and fresh land breezes. In the early years Madras was the centre of English activity. In sharp comparison to both Bombay and Calcutta it was a healthy settlement with pleasant surrounding countryside which offered opportunities for country retreat during the hot weather.

Charles Lockyer arrived in 1710 and left an effusive description of the character and appearance of Madras at this time:

The prospect it gives is most delightful; nor appears it less magnificent by Land; the great variety of fine Buildings that gracefully overlook its Walls, affording an inexpressible Satisfaction to a curious Eye . . . The streets are straight and wide, pav'd with Brick on each Side, but the Middle is deep sand for carts to pass in; Where are no Houses are Causeways with trees on each side to supply the Defect . . . There are five Gates – the Sea, St Thomas, Water, Choultry and Middle Gate . . . The Publick Buildings are the Town Hall, St Mary's Church, The College, New House and Hospital, with the Governor's Lodgings in the inner Fort . . . The inhabitants enjoy perfect health . . .

Madras was not a natural harbour. Until the late 19th century ships anchored in the roads half a mile off the Fort. Disembarkation was a risky business with passengers and freight being unloaded into *Masula* boats. These distinctive local craft were made of mango wood, caulked with straw and sewn together with coconut fibre. The boats pulled alongside and then returned through the surf to strike the beach as close to the Fort as possible. It must have been an unnerving and dangerous experience. A swell of twenty-five feet or more was common. Ladies were tied into chairs and lowered into the boats from the ship's yard arm. In 1836 one visitor recalled: 'We landed in a great boat with twelve boatmen, all singing a queer kind of howl, and with very small matters of clothes on, but their black skins prevent them from looking so very uncomfortable as Europeans would in the same minus state.' In 1746, 1782 and 1811 frightful hurricanes occurred which devastated shipping anchored in the roads causing great loss of life. One of the reasons for the later success of Calcutta and Bombay was that both offered natural harbours. It was a problem which vexed most administrations. Warren Hastings noted that 'the surf at Margate was

iron strapwork, but the whole edifice is constructed of hard Pallavaram gneiss from quarries near Madras, and called 'charnockite', ever since. Now whitewashed, each face of the tomb is pierced by a low pointed arch, three of which are closed by four raised tombstones. The monument is surrounded by thirty gravestones relocated here at the time of the erection of the church in 1787. In 1983 more were concentrated here including Admiral Watson's pedimented sepulchre crowned by a spectacular obelisk. A number of the tombs are enriched with baroque devices such as coats of arms and skull and crossbones, but it is the four raised stones closing the arches which are of interest.

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of the
Raj.*

The approach to Madras always impressed European arrivals. The journey along the Coromandel coast contrasted markedly with the privations of the ocean voyage around the Cape – distant views of palm-fringed beaches, rolling surf, tropical blue skies and fresh land breezes. In the early years Madras was the centre of English activity. In sharp comparison to both Bombay and Calcutta it was a healthy settlement with pleasant surrounding countryside which offered opportunities for country retreat during the hot weather.

Charles Lockyer arrived in 1710 and left an effusive description of the character and appearance of Madras at this time:

The prospect it gives is most delightful; nor appears it less magnificent by Land; the great variety of fine Buildings that gracefully overlook its Walls, affording an inexpressible Satisfaction to a curious Eye . . . The streets are straight and wide, pav'd with Brick on each Side, but the Middle is deep sand for carts to pass in; Where are no Houses are Causeways with trees on each side to supply the Defect . . . There are five Gates – the Sea, St Thomas, Water, Choultry and Middle Gate . . . The Publick Buildings are the Town Hall, St Mary's Church, The College, New House and Hospital, with the Governor's Lodgings in the inner Fort . . . The inhabitants enjoy perfect health . . .

Madras was not a natural harbour. Until the late 19th century ships anchored in the roads half a mile off the Fort. Disembarkation was a risky business with passengers and freight being unloaded into *Masula* boats. These distinctive local craft were made of mango wood, caulked with straw and sewn together with coconut fibre. The boats pulled alongside and then returned through the surf to strike the beach as close to the Fort as possible. It must have been an unnerving and dangerous experience. A swell of twenty-five feet or more was common. Ladies were tied into chairs and lowered into the boats from the ship's yard arm. In 1836 one visitor recalled: 'We landed in a great boat with twelve boatmen, all singing a queer kind of howl, and with very small matters of clothes on, but their black skins prevent them from looking so very uncomfortable as Europeans would in the same minus state.' In 1746, 1782 and 1811 frightful hurricanes occurred which devastated shipping anchored in the roads causing great loss of life. One of the reasons for the later success of Calcutta and Bombay was that both offered natural harbours. It was a problem which vexed most administrations. Warren Hastings noted that 'the surf at Margate was

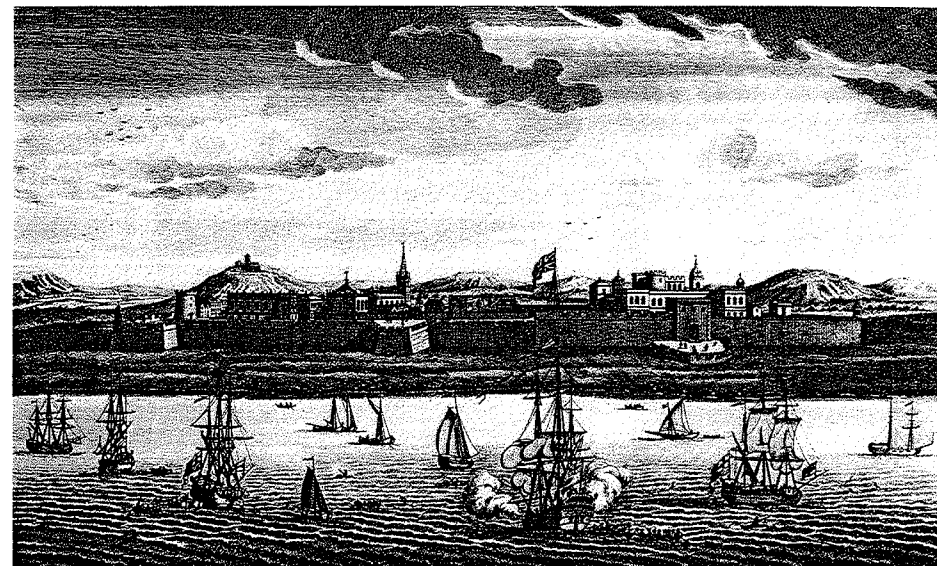
as great as Madras and the Margate pier might well be adopted for this city.' Not until 1858 when an iron pier was erected to the designs of Frederick Johnson was disembarkation improved, and only in 1879, when two breakwaters were formed to the north and south of the Custom House, was reasonable provision made.

Early European settlement was concentrated in the Fort which came to be called Christian or White Town, in contrast to Black Town which lay outside. This was not a segregation based on concepts of racial superiority, but for reasons of defence and one which had been an inherent feature of foreign coastal settlements in India since Roman times. Interestingly even within the Fort there was a distinct separation between the military garrison, which was quartered beneath the walls, and the civil establishment which resided in the factory. In later years this separation was commonplace throughout India. Civil and military lines were nearly always discrete areas within the European cantonments.

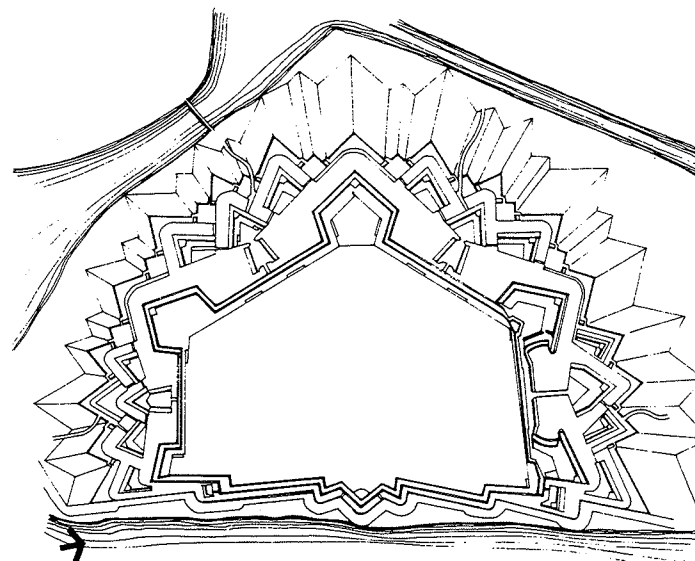
The story of Fort St George in the late 17th and early 18th centuries is one of continuous expansion. By 1659 White Town was enclosed and fortified, and by 1682 a masonry wall had replaced the mud ramparts around Black Town. Fryer describes White Town in 1673 as 'sweet and clean', the houses two storeys in height with 'beautiful porticoes and terraced walks with shade trees planted before the doors'. In sharp contrast Black Town was filthy and an order was issued that 'any person killing hogs in the street may have them for their pains.' However, considering that similar edicts were common in London at this time, White Town must have been exceptionally salubrious. Social contact between the two towns was extensive. Often the white community was reproached for frequenting the taverns of Black Town. Men drank hard and gambling with cards and dice was popular. The Agent and Council had no qualms about inter-marriage and actually recommended that liaisons between English soldiers and local women should be encouraged to promote social and political harmony. Praises and gifts were given at the baptism of children of mixed marriages.

Within the space of sixty years Cogan and Day's early fort had grown into a major city of over 300,000 people, compared with a population of 674,000 in London in 1700. The arrangement of White Town, and the large area of Black Town outside the main walls, was distinctive with a planned grid-iron pattern of streets, which marks a substantial departure from the organic growth which characterised contemporaneous native towns. It is the earliest example of English town planning on a large scale in India.

Within the Fort a number of early buildings remain. St Mary's Church is of exceptional interest as it is the earliest surviving English building of any coherence in India. Vestiges of earlier fabric survive elsewhere, but St Mary's is also the oldest building associated with the Anglican Church in the East. Its inception was due to the zeal of the Governor, Streyntsham Master, who set up a fund for the building of a church. Whether he was inspired by the church-building activities of Wren and the reconstruction of London after the Great Fire is unclear, but over thirty years later he was also responsible for the founding of St



Fort St George by Jan van Ryne in 1754, depicting public buildings including St Mary's Church.



Plan of Fort St George, as remodelled by Colonel Patrick Ross in the 1770s, showing the inner bastions and outer redans.

St Mary's Church, Fort St George: the earliest complete English building surviving in India and the oldest Anglican church in the East. Consecrated in 1680, the distinctive obelisk spire was added in 1795 after the original was destroyed by French artillery in 1759.



George's, Queen Square in London. It is more likely that the existing Capuchin Church of St Andrew, built by the Portuguese merchants, who outnumbered the English at this time, was a challenge to Anglican self-respect and the moral authority of the Company. The Company was not interested in unprofitable expenditure and thus a private appeal was launched. Thirty-eight donors subscribed over 805 pagodas (£362). Excavations began on Lady Day 1678, hence the dedication to St Mary.

The church is eighty feet long and fifty-six feet broad. It took two and a half years to build. The architect was probably William Dixon, the Master Gunner of Fort St George at that time. It has been attributed

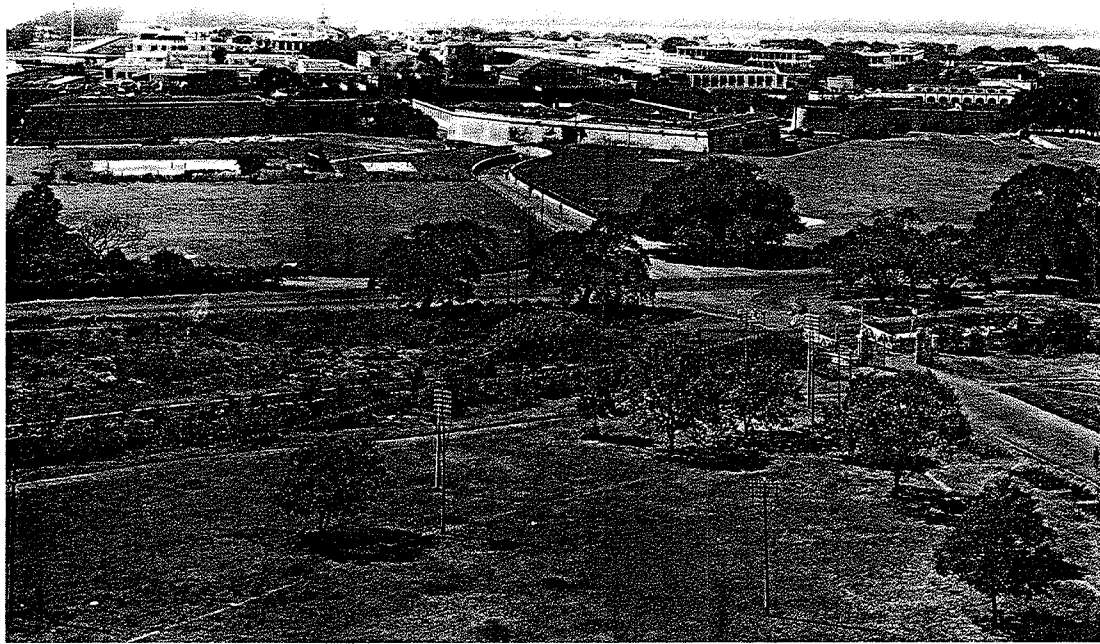
to his successor Edward Fowle, but evidence suggests that he did not arrive in Madras until 1684. The plan is simple: three aisles with semi-circular roofs built entirely of solid masonry, two feet in thickness to withstand bombing, siege and cyclone. The outside walls are four feet thick and carried on a firm laterite foundation. No wood was used in the structure to prevent failure through the depredations of white ants. The church was consecrated in 1680, and the tower was completed in 1701. A steeple was added in 1710. The tower and belfry were detached from the body of the church until 1760 when a link was made.

The building bears witness to the vicissitudes of fortune which Madras endured during the war with the French in the mid-18th century. In 1746 when the French took the Fort, it served as a water store. After restoration to the English under the Treaty of Aix-La-Chapelle of 1748 it resumed as a place of worship, but during Lally's siege ten years later the steeple served as a look-out post and cotton bales were stored in the nave. This attracted the unwelcome attentions of the French artillery and it sustained such damage that the original steeple and tower had to be demolished. As late as 1782 when war with Hyder Ali threatened the security of Madras, it was used as a granary. The distinctive fluted obelisk spire was added in 1795 to the design of Colonel Gent, after proposals for its joint use as lighthouse were rejected on the grounds of ecclesiastical integrity.

St Mary's is of outstanding importance in the history of the British Empire, and it is a repository of evocative monuments of uncommon interest. The churchyard contains a wealth of early tombstones, many of which were moved here in 1760 after the huge mausolea in the old English cemetery had offered valuable cover for French snipers during the siege a year earlier. The churchyard is enclosed by simple 19th-century iron railings, but the graves bear the elaborate Baroque devices of the later 17th century executed in granite from the nearby Pallavaram quarries.

The interior of the church is whitewashed. Raised rose ornaments stand out in white relief on the grey vaulted ceiling. Near the entrance is the small black Pallavaram granite font in which Job Charnock's daughters were baptised in 1689, although the elaborate wooden cover is Victorian. In a recess on the end wall is the Governor's gallery which is approached by means of the external staircases which were added in 1760 to link the detached belfry to the body of the church. The gallery is enclosed by an original teak screen carved by local native craftsmen depicting elephants, parrots and the faces of bewigged men. The altarpiece is a painting of the Lord's Supper by a pupil of Raphael, who himself is reputed to have painted the chalice. It was taken from the French as part of the British spoils after the capture of Pondicherry in 1761. It was on this spot that Robert Clive married Margaret Maskelyne on 18th February 1753.

One of the most important historical associations of the church is with Elihu Yale. Born in Boston, Massachusetts in 1648 he had returned to England as a boy and arrived at Madras in 1672. By judicious dealings he made a fortune from private trading ventures and he was one of the original benefactors of the church, giving 15 pagodas. By



The formidable bastions of Fort St George with the river Cooum beyond. The spire of St Mary's Church in the middle distance and the flagstaff on the foreshore are notable landmarks.

1687 he was Governor, and when eventually he returned to London it was as a wealthy parvenu. His financial assistance was requested by the collegiate school at Saybrook in America and his gift of forty volumes raised sufficient capital to fund the foundation of a new university which was named after its benefactor. 'He was very popular with the Europeans and Indians, kept up his dignity and maintained a brave front towards the Indian powers.' His marriage to Catherine Hymers was the first in the church and his son's pyramidal tomb lies isolated but intact in the courtyard of the nearby Indo-Saracenic Law Courts.

India has a fine heritage of funerary sculpture, and the best examples belong to the late 18th century when English sculpture reached new heights of composition and form. The revival of active piety combined with the popular vogue for austere elegance and sentimental simplicity to supersede the allegorical depiction of death and mortality associated with the funerary imagery of the Baroque and Rococo. Most sculptors, including John Flaxman and John Bacon, resorted to a few standard designs which were readily adapted to suit most situations, and which could be varied in price depending on the quality of the marble used or the degree of detail required. Common repetitive themes recur throughout India and England – the pedimented tablet surmounted by an urn flanked by the Christian virtues in high relief; the pedimented stele with draped figures in low relief mourning beside a broken pedestal or urn representing 'Resignation', or draped female figures contemplating the Bible or the heavens. Although these common

themes are repeated, the monuments, crisply executed in neo-classical, Greek or even whimsical Gothic styles, express a sincerity of feeling and elegiac charm, which recalls personal grief in a far more poignant fashion than the cloying sentimentality of many later Victorian tombs.

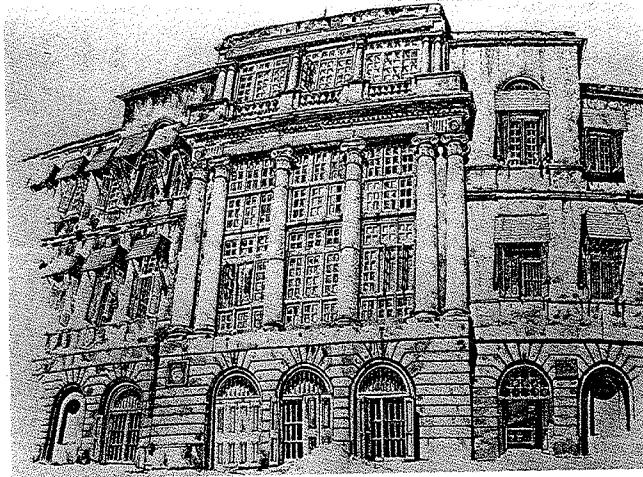
St Mary's has a large number of notable monuments including examples by Flaxman, Bacon and Chantrey. Here lies Sir Thomas Munro, probably the ablest of all English administrators in India, who died of cholera at Patticondah on 6th July 1827. He was a liberal-minded man with a passionate belief in the concept of trusteeship and eventual self-government for India – 'With what grace can we talk of paternal government if we exclude the natives from every important office?' His memory is respected in India today and a monumental equestrian statue by Chantrey is one of the few which have been retained within the City since Independence, a testimony to his own ideals and to the sensible attitude adopted by the State government to its Imperial past.

Other notable monuments are to Admiral Sir Samuel Hood, Lord Hobart and Sir John Burgoyne, but the most remarkable of all is an enormous marble tomb by John Bacon Jr for Frederick Christian Swartz. He was an outstanding missionary, and the only European to be trusted by Hyder Ali of Mysore – 'Send me the missionary whose character I hear so much from everyone. Him I will receive and trust.'

Of the secular buildings in the Fort, the oldest is the Secretariat which incorporates the nucleus of the second Fort house erected in 1694. The original dimensions of the building were preserved until 1825 when wings were added and the interior was converted into government offices, but the earlier form can still be discerned internally.

The office of the Accountant-General lies to the south of St Mary's Church and was used as the Government House until 1799. Originally the property belonged to an Armenian, but it was purchased by the Company in 1749 as a residence for the Deputy Governor. The building was extended in 1762, and again in 1778–80, and much of the fabric dates from this period. Clive knew it well and leased the building for a period. The reception hall is the largest internal space, but it was never entirely satisfactory.

Adjacent to the Accountant-General's office stands the Grand Arsenal, a long parallelogram. It was built in 1772 to the designs of Colonel Patrick Ross of the Madras Engineers, who was in charge of construction at the Fort during this period. His predecessor as Chief Engineer, Colonel Call, had been responsible for rebuilding large areas of the fort, after it had been reduced to a sad wreck during Lally's siege of 1758–59. The design of the Arsenal is curious with inverted arches forming a bomb-proof first storey. The courtyard is overlooked by an imposing portico surmounted by two large lions in *alto rilievo* carrying the Company's coat of arms, whilst the roof bristles with weapons, helmets and armour modelled in plaster. Its florid architectural style is redolent of the hybrid Indo-European palaces of Oudh. A plaque claims to mark the house where Clive pressed a pistol to his head and attempted suicide in his early days as a despairing 'writer' or company



Robert Clive's house, Fort St George, now used by the Indian Navy, and embedded in later extensions. A recent drawing by John Nankivell.

clerk. Nearby stands the house once occupied by the Duke of Wellington.

The architectural focus of the entire complex is Fort Square. In 1735 Governor Pitt constructed a handsome colonnade linking the square with the Sea Gate. This was roofed over and lined with thirty-two pillars of black Pallavaram gneiss ranged in four rows. When the French captured Madras in 1746, the columns were removed as booty to Pondicherry, where they remained until 1761 when the British stormed the place and restored the columns to Pitt's arcade. Later it became the Exchange and was walled in, but in 1910 when the new Council chamber was built in classical style, the exterior was embellished with twenty of the best-preserved columns, and they stand to this day, an architectural idiosyncrasy vested with something of the totemic power of the bronze horses of St Mark's, Venice.

All the buildings in the Fort area were faced in Madras *chunam*, a form of stucco made from burnt sea shells which could be polished to a dazzling white sheen. The architectural impact of a city thus arrayed, offset by strong tropical sunlight and deep blue skies, mesmerised even the most philistine visitor. William Hodges arriving in 1781 commented:

The stile of the buildings is in general handsome. They consist of long colonades, with open porticoes, and flat roofs and offer the eye an appearance similar to what we may conceive of a Grecian city in the age of Alexander. The clear, blue and cloudless sky, the polished white buildings, the bright sandy beach and the dark green sea present a combination totally new to the eye of an Englishman.

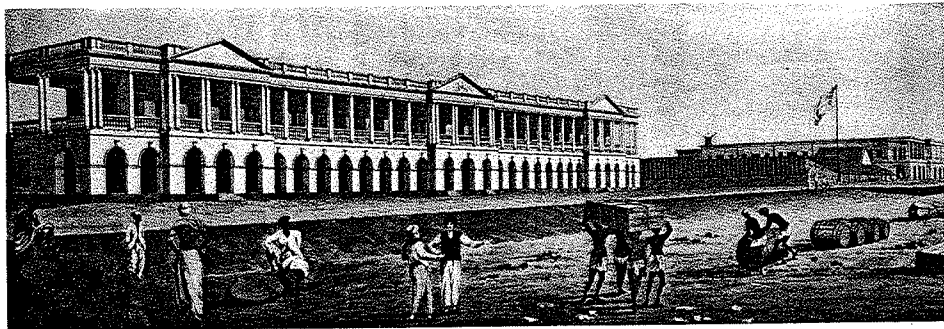
The transformation of Madras from an Oriental milieu into a classical

vision was no fortuitous transposition of contemporary European taste, but a conscious attempt to identify the expanding British Empire in India with the civilising influence and moral values associated with classical architecture. One of the more obvious demonstrations was the provision of statuary to prominent public figures. On the northern side of Fort Square there is a large canopied pavilion which is now deprived of a centrepiece. This elegant Ionic rotunda contained a statue of Cornwallis, and was raised by public subscription to commemorate his defeat of Tipu, the Tiger of Mysore, at the siege of Seringapatam in 1799. Brass cannon enriched with tiger emblems once surrounded the memorial. The statue survives in the Connemara Library. Although it has been attributed to Chantrey, in fact it is by Thomas Banks. When Banks was preparing the model he was visited by a fellow sculptor who expressed astonishment that he had thought fit to commemorate Cornwallis's outward cast of one eye in such startling detail. Banks retorted:

If the cast had been inward it would, I conceive, have conveyed the impression of a contracted character, and I would have corrected it, but as the eyes looking to the right and left at the same moment would impart the idea of an enlarged and comprehensive mind, I have thought it due to the illustrious Governor-General to convey to posterity this natural indication of mental greatness.

The famous black Doric columns of Pallavaram gneiss once linked Pitt's colonnade with the Sea Gate. In 1910 they were incorporated into the new Council Chamber.





First Line Beach, Madras. Typical of the handsome classical buildings which visitors compared to some vision of the Ancient World.

In 1798 the second Lord Clive, eldest son of Robert Clive, became Governor of Madras. When he arrived he found the accommodation at his disposal quite insufficient for a person of his standing, particularly when compared with the grand palace of the Nawab of Arcot. The existing Company facilities were split between the old Admiralty building in the Fort, the Garden House at Triplicane and the Public Assembly Rooms. He demonstrated that the rationalisation of Company accommodation would pay for the cost of the improvements, but the Court of Directors in London, who eschewed any suggestion of



This fine Ionic rotunda in Fort Square was raised in 1799 to celebrate Cornwallis's victory over Tipu Sultan. The original statue of Cornwallis is now in the Connemara Library, Madras.



conspicuous expenditure on military or political aggrandisement, replied tersely: 'It is our positive order that no new and expensive buildings shall be commenced or grounds purchased for the creation of such buildings thereon without our previous sanction obtained upon the plan and estimate, as well as upon the expediency of the works.' The Court of Directors had good reason to be apprehensive. In the space of the next five years two of the most splendid public buildings ever erected by the British in India were to be raised by two separate Governors — one in Madras and one in Calcutta.

Clive appointed a civil engineer to reorganise the Engineers' Department at Madras which had come in for harsh criticism over the collapse of several arched buildings. He chose John Goldingham for the post, a Danish mathematician who had come to work in the private observatory in 1786. The Company took over the observatory and rebuilt it in 1794 and Goldingham became astronomer and marine surveyor. This accomplished scientist was also an enthusiastic architect of exceptional skill. Clive trusted him implicitly and allowed him a fifteen per cent commission on all works. In 1800 Goldingham was instructed to prepare a scheme of repairs for the old Fort House and for extensions to the Garden House at Triplicane.

The existing Garden House had been purchased from a Portuguese merchant, Luis de Madeiros in 1753. It was a typical example of a type for which the city was famous. During the French wars it had been occupied and damaged, then repaired and improved, but Goldingham remodelled it on a far grander scale. The ground floor was given over to

Government House, Madras designed by John Goldingham in 1800. Classical architecture adapted to local needs with irregular intercolumniation and deep verandahs.

a hall and offices. On the first floor he formed a great drawing room and dining room approached by a grand double staircase with wrought-iron balustrading. One wing was given over to offices and the other to Clive's natural history collections. Goldingham's designs have a two-storey central range set forward from the wings embellished with a pedimented centrepiece of substantial projection. Both storeys have deep set colonnades to afford protection from the sun and the house is orientated towards the sea to obtain fresh breezes from the Bay of Bengal.

Architecturally the house retains its original character as a country residence, and the extensive verandahs which enclose three sides of the building demonstrate the manner in which the classical language of architecture was adapted to suit the local conditions and climate. The intercolumnar spaces vary considerably and the impact of the colonnaded verandahs is so dominant that the façade of the actual house is deeply recessed in shadow, providing much-needed shade at the expense of architectural balance.

Criticism of colonial architecture as crude, illiterate or imbalanced was once common, and it accounts for the widely-held view that the British left a legacy of architectural mediocrity. It is unfair, as it disregards the ingenious adaptations to local conditions expressed in many buildings. Moreover many classical buildings were erected in England at this time, which showed a similar lack of scholarly accuracy. Nash's terraces in Regent's Park take considerable liberties, but are widely admired.

The most extraordinary feature of the new complex of buildings was a monumental basilica designed as a completely separate Banqueting Hall. It was an entirely new structure intended for official entertainment by the Governor on a scale which hitherto had not been attempted in Madras. What is more important is that it was a symbol of the changing spirit of the age – a powerful architectural statement that British interests were no longer mercantile but Imperial. It comprises a huge temple separated from the main house. Set on a rusticated podium with a balustraded terrace to three sides of the main hall, the building is embellished with Tuscan-Doric three-quarter columns which rise through two storeys to carry an entablature with a frieze of urns and shields. Although this is a solecism, it is derived from William Chambers's *Treatise on Civil Architecture* and the lack of scholarly veracity did not worry Goldingham. The end bays on each frontage have niches at the lower level, whilst each alternate door opening is enriched with a pediment. The ends of the building are terminated with huge pediments, which once were adorned with trophies commemorating the triumph of British arms – the siege of Seringapatam over the principal northern entrance, and similar devices commemorating the Battle of Plassey over the southern entrance. The flight of steps sweeping up to the northern entrance were flanked by sphinxes, which were lost when the building was remodelled in 1875.

Today the martial trophies have been removed and replaced by the arms of the Indian Republic. The fine paintings of prominent British military figures which once hung in the main hall have been dispersed.



This collection, including pictures of Wellesley, Munro, Eyre Coote and Cornwallis, complemented the martial qualities of the building and deliberately created a formidable symbol of British ascendancy. It received fierce criticism from the Court of Directors in London, which objected to the military symbolism and continued to regard English interests in India purely in terms of the balance sheet. In 1803 the Directors wrote: 'It by no means appears to us essential to the well-being of our Government in India that the pomp, magnificence and ostentation of the Native Governments should be adopted by the former; the expense to which such a system would naturally lead must prove highly injurious to our commercial interests.' Bishop Heber regarded the whole flamboyant edifice as in vile taste, but the enraptured *Madras Government Gazette* considered it to be 'the most magnificent, beautiful specimen of architecture which the science and taste of Europe ever exhibited in India'.

The interior of the hall survives unaltered and it is an impressive space providing a magnificent setting for formal public functions. It is one large hall with side galleries lit by the attic windows, the light from which throws the ornamental moulded ceiling and cornice into sharp relief. The lower tier of columns supporting the galleries has a composite order, the upper Corinthian, and when the hall was inaugurated with a grand ball on 7th October 1802 it must have been a splendid sight. The social establishment of the entire city turned out.

Subsequently several additions were made to the building which have marred the original effect. Steps were added to the south entrance

Goldingham's Banqueting Hall evokes Imperial and martial values and consciously reflects the ideals of the Ancient World.

in 1875 and in 1892 it was re-roofed, but the most damaging alteration came in 1895 when the terrace was enclosed by an arcaded verandah, which truncated the façades and severely undermined the architectural effect. Today the building is renamed Rajaji Hall and it houses offices for the Tamil Nadu State Raffle – 'Fortuna Imperatrix Mundi'.

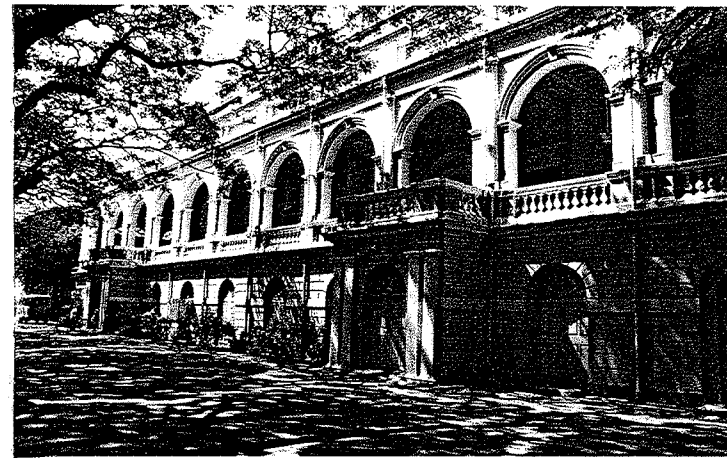
Presented with a *fait accompli*, the Court of Directors could do little. Government House was completed and occupied, but Clive paid the price of his extravagance. He was recalled to England in August 1803. The costs had been enormous – 106,000 pagodas for Government House and 74,000 pagodas for the Banqueting Hall – but the result was a magnificent complex of Georgian buildings, which were well adapted to the climate, catching the balmy breeze of the Coromandel coast, and which imparted dignity and standing to the administration.

Goldingham's plans for the government buildings were part of a wider scheme for the park in which they were situated. Fountains, basins, a mound, sunken garden and separate farmyard were all part of the overall conception, designed to recreate in India the Arcadian setting of an English country house in its own estate. A design was prepared for a bridge over the river Cooum and for a monumental bridge gate, but neither were implemented. Later two pretty classical entrance lodges leading to the main road were provided but they did not form part of the original conception.

Today the park and buildings form an oasis of calm and peace in the centre of the city which has long since engulfed the surrounding area. Others soon followed the precedent set by the Governor and built their own garden houses. Unfortunately few typical garden houses remain in their original settings. Most of those in Triplicane have been demolished or submerged in later development. One notable exception lingers on – the Madras Club – once known as the 'Ace of Clubs' and justly renowned as the finest in India. The Prince of Wales stayed here on his visit in 1875.

The Club was founded in 1831 because Madras lacked a proper focus for informal social activities. The project was undertaken privately and supported by the Governor, Stephen Lushington. Over 30,000 rupees were raised to purchase the house and grounds of a certain Mr Webster. This was a typical garden house, 'a substantial upstairs building facing nearly north and in a substantial compound'. It had no outbuildings and the interior was divided into numerous small ground-floor apartments with two fine upper rooms on the first floor.

One of the earliest additions was the erection of an octagonal 'divan' some distance from the south front of the house in 1832. It was paved with Italian marble and used as a smoking room. It survives surrounded by later extensions and it retains much of its original charm and character. Ten years later much more extensive alterations were carried out which changed the form of the original house. A new smoking room was thrown forward from the centre to form the main feature of the principal west front. Over the next thirty years circumjacent buildings were acquired and included within the compound. Tennis courts, swimming baths and hot and cold steam baths were provided, conferring a reputation for luxury and relaxation which was unrivalled



Banqueting Hall: the Victorian arcaded verandah is a later addition truncating the original façades.



The derelict portals of the old Madras Club. The imposing central portico was added in 1865 demonstrating the durability of Palladian architecture well into the 19th century. The ground floor is a porte-cochère.



The octagonal divan added to the south front of the Madras Club in 1832 is still paved with Italian marble. The swastika ornament on the balustrade is a common symbol denoting well-being.

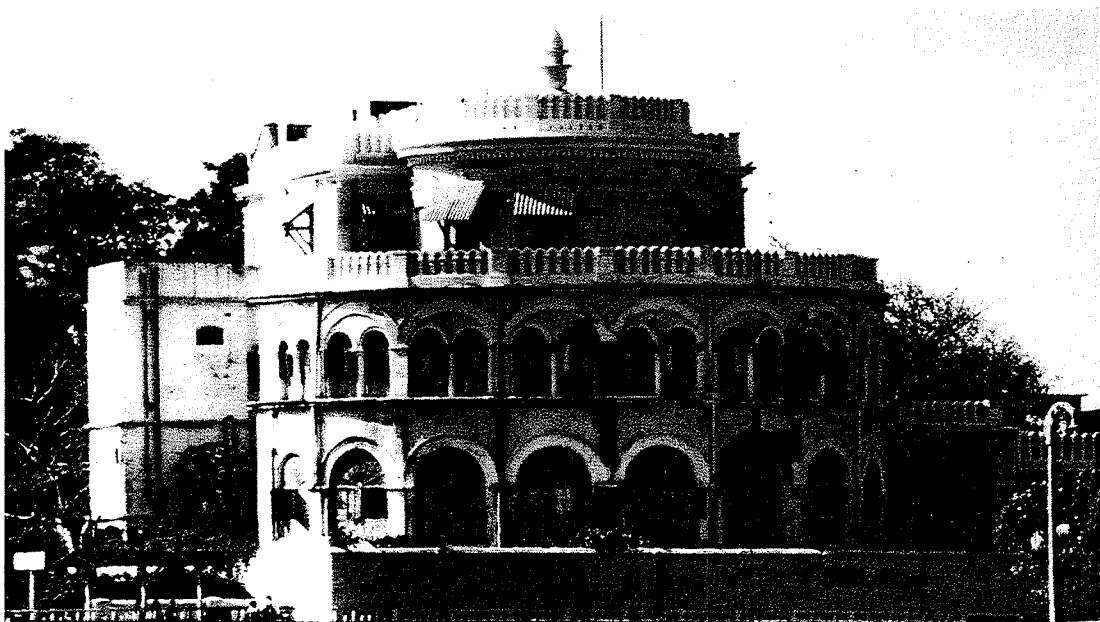
throughout India. Further extensive changes took place to the Club in 1865. It was intended to create a grand central staircase, but this had to be abandoned. The original portico was demolished to make way for a reading room across the entire upper floor and a deep verandah was erected on three sides, the north face being embellished with a pedimented classical façade which formed the distinctive main entrance facing the compound. One of the less successful innovations was the introduction of a fountain in the main hall; it proved so attractive to frogs and other non-members that it was removed some years later to the south garden.

By 1900 the pressing demand for short-term residential accommodation for officers and officials had been met by numerous extensions. Long two-storey ranges of officers' quarters were added in a traditional classical style, but the new card room built in 1882 represented a radical departure. A Gothic timber pavilion with stained glass windows perched above one of the rear wings, it was designed by Robert Fellowes Chisholm, the architect responsible for giving Madras so many of its splendid Indo-Saracenic and Gothic buildings.

For many years a shortage of ice was a major inconvenience, and enormous amounts of saltpetre were used for cooling, but in 1840 the Tudor Ice Co was formed and the Club took shares. In 1842 a curious circular building was erected on the foreshore to store huge blocks of ice imported from America. Later, with the advent of local ice factories, the building was converted, ironically, into a home for Brahmin widows, providing a highly symbolic refuge from the flames of the funeral pyre. Crowned by a slender pineapple, it is a local landmark.

Further north amongst the Indo-Saracenic domes of the Law Courts lies a graceful fluted Doric column of Pallavaram gneiss, once the old lighthouse. It was designed by Captain J.E. Smith of the Madras Engineers and opened on New Year's Day 1844. Over 120 feet high, it

The former Ice House is now a refuge for Brahmin widows.



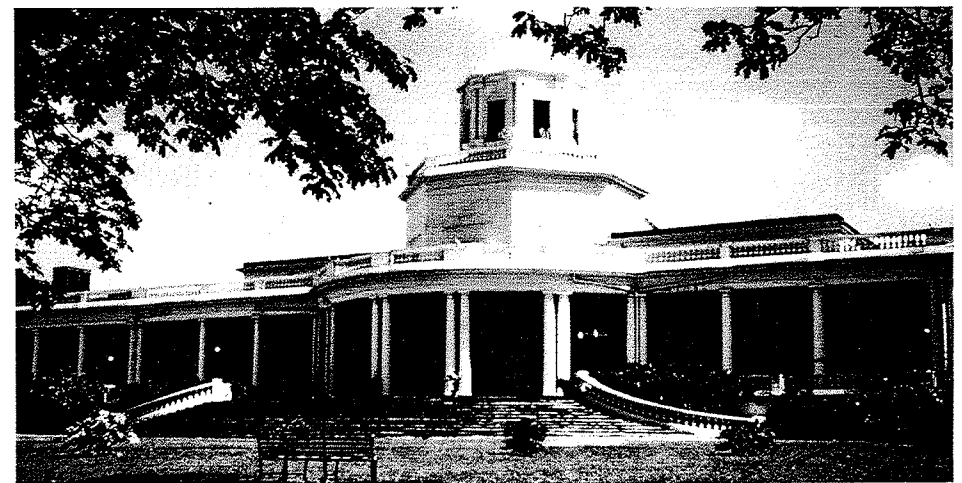
was crowned by a polygonal lantern with the latest parabolic reflectors visible for fifteen miles, but this was removed when the new lighthouse opened in the highest minaret of the High Court, and only the column remains.

The nearby Adyar Club (now known as the Madras Club) was founded in 1891 in a fine early 19th-century house once owned by Mr George Moubray, but it represents an unusual departure from the usual local 'flat-tops', as the garden frontage facing the river is crowned by an octagonal cupola. The original design, now embedded in a later extension, comprised the central octagon with its cupola, approached by a pillared portico and two lower flanking wings. The Octagon Room survives with an arcaded perimeter surmounted by segmental-headed windows, and the walls are adorned with *trompe l'oeil* paintwork, which is now deteriorating rapidly in the salt-laden atmosphere.

Although relatively few examples of Madras 'flat-tops' or garden houses survive today, a clear impression of their appearance can be obtained from contemporary drawings and pictures. An outstanding series of illustrations were made by John Gantz (1772–1853) and his son, Justinian (1802–1862), and these convey vividly their urbane elegance.

Gantz was an Austrian who worked for the East India Co as a draughtsman, architect, lithographer and topographical artist. He worked for some years with Lieutenant Thomas Fraser of the Madras Engineers and it was through him that he acquired a working knowledge of architecture and building. His son Justinian also practised as an architect. Their work is clearly influenced by contemporary pattern books such as *The Works in Architecture of Robert and James Adam* and more than one building shows a sympathy for Adamesque details. Their illustrations were fully worked up designs showing garden houses in idealised rural settings complete

The Adyar Club with its octagonal cupola. Justinian Gantz depicted a similar building type in a watercolour of 1832.



with Indian figures, but the architectural forms and detailing are typical. The houses have deep verandahs to provide shade and are adapted from Palladian prototypes. Pedimented centrepieces and semi-circular bays to the garden frontages are common themes imparting a degree of grandeur and presence, as well as a welcome respite from the unremitting sun. The harsh rays reflected from the dazzling white Madras chunam created deep shadow and an impact similar to that of their classical antecedents in Ancient Greece and Rome. Architecturally the grammar was modified to suit the tropical location with column spacings altered from the classical discipline and infilled with ornamental wooden screens or cane 'tatties'. Venetian shutters were fixed to the windows and the characteristic 'flat-top' roof provided solace on hot nights when owners could retreat there to take advantage of the evening breezes off the sea. In general the main living quarters were at first-floor level with the servants or smaller rooms at ground-floor level, whilst the grander houses boasted large projecting *portes-cochères* and elephant porches capable of accommodating local grandees in a style to which they were accustomed.

Lady Gwillim, wife of the Chief Justice of Madras, arrived in 1802 and described her house and others in detailed letters to her mother and sister in England:

The houses of all Europeans are nearly equal as to goodness and size ... They are all like Pictures of Italian Palaces with flat roofs or balustrades ... The walls, columns and balustrades are all polished. The walls of rooms are sometimes painted as stucco rooms in England of pale green blue ... Some people colour the chunam for the outside of the house of a light grey in imitation of the grey granite of the country leaving the columns, pilasters, white. The floors are also of this chunam coloured according to the fancy of the owner and here it so exactly resembles marble pavements that I should not have known if our house has black squares and white ones for the sitting rooms ... Some have Dove and Black squares ... We have folding doors in all the rooms which are half way green painted Venetians, the windows are all Venetians and no glass, but we can thus exclude the light yet have air from room to room.

A typical Madras 'flat-top' of the type illustrated by John and Justinian Gantz and described by Lady Gwillim.

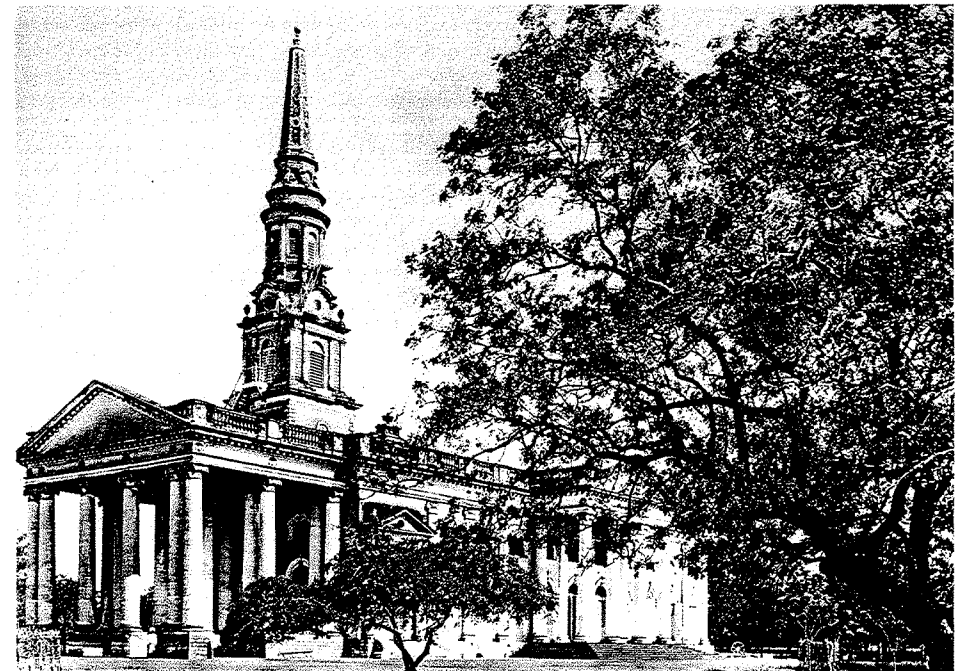


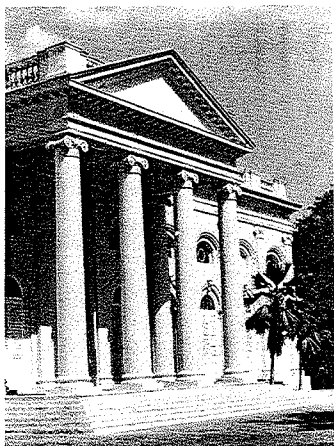
The Church was tied up inextricably with the expanding power of the East India Company, and in Madras two churches became prominent new local landmarks. St Mary's in the Fort had long been part of the skyline of the city when viewed from the sea, but between 1816 and 1819 St George's Cathedral and St Andrew's Kirk were built.

The prototype for both, and also for many of the lesser edifices erected throughout India and the Empire, was St Martin's-in-the-Fields, London by James Gibbs. Its plan, elevations and distinctive tiered spire recur from Canada to Australia and from South Africa to India. Ironically its Baroque style persisted long after it had been overtaken by neo-classicism, and the Greek and Gothic revivals. As late as 1867 the Dutch Reform Church at Cradock in South Africa was designed on this prototype. Its success is not difficult to explain. Symbolically it lay at the heart of the Empire and after St Paul's, it was the grandest church in London. More importantly its details were reproduced in Gibbs's *Book of Architecture* in 1728, and therefore its plan, form and dimensions, together with alternative options were readily accessible to remote colonial engineers in need of inspiration and guidance. Functionally it is an excellent prototype with a long nave of three bays and a simple chancel at the east end. The pedimented portico, long pilastered sides with galleries and side aisles, and the plain apse with its Venetian window all convey an image of splendour and of the classical values. Architectural purists objected to the colossal tower and spire, which appeared to be unsupported, and to its vertical emphasis which detracted from the balance of the basilica beneath, but the building made up in sheer impact and presence for what it lacked in good manners.

The plan of St George's Cathedral was prepared by Captain James

An early photograph of St George's Cathedral completed in 1816. An eloquent essay in Baroque architecture.



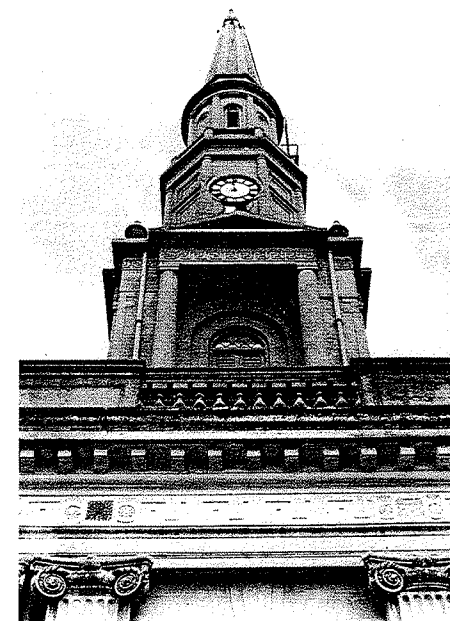


This Ionic porch on the flank of St George's is detailed impeccably in dazzling white chunam.

Caldwell (1770–1863), but his assistant Thomas Fiott de Havilland (1775–1866) was responsible for the working designs and construction of the church. De Havilland was largely responsible for both major churches in Madras. He was born in Guernsey, the eldest son of the Bailiff Sir Peter de Havilland. Educated at Queen Elizabeth College, Guernsey, he served widely in India, and, like Caldwell, he lived to a ripe old age, returning home to enjoy his retirement. Set in a spacious compound, St George's steeple is a precise copy from Gibbs's *Book of Architecture* and his variant designs for a circular church. The flanks are embellished with Ionic porches and aedicules and the west front has a large projecting portico. The whole edifice is faced in dazzling white polished chunam – a pure white Christian monument in a heathen land. It was consecrated by Bishop Heber on 16th January 1816. Soon it became a favourite haunt of the English community. The interior is also white and conveys an impression of light and space. A double row of eighteen tall smooth Ionic columns carry an arched ceiling which is beautifully decorated in raised plasterwork. The aisles are lined with semi-circular headed stained glass windows above panelled and louvred doors which allow a free flow of air. The chancel is apsidal with a marble altarpiece of St George crowning a broken pediment. The pews have carved Gothic details to the end panels but the backs and seats are finished in light canework, a concession to the climate which is common in South India. A number of fine marble monuments line the walls including a statue of 'Faith' by Flaxman commemorating John Mousley, Archdeacon of Madras, and Chantrey's excellent monument to Bishop Heber, the second Bishop of Calcutta, and author of the hymn 'From Greenland's Icy Mountains', who drowned in a swimming pool at Trichinopoly in 1826.

To the north-east of the Church is the cemetery, approached through a pretty pavilion crowned by an octagonal cupola. The first interment was that of Elizabeth de Havilland, the architect's wife, on 14th March 1818. 'She stands first in the awful book and gives a date to the register' reads the epitaph on her sepulchre of local black granite. The cemetery is enclosed by a railing made of eleven hundred musket barrels, pikes, and halberd heads, and over one thousand and fifty pistols and bayonets. Interestingly later extended sections reproduce the same details. It is alleged that these were brought from Seringapatam after the defeat of Tipu Sultan in 1799, as a number of pieces are engraved V. Dubois, and Tipu's arsenal was run by the French, but it is more likely they were surplus war material put to good use.

At St George's de Havilland demonstrated his talent as an excellent practical architect, but at St Andrew's Kirk he developed the vocabulary of James Gibbs into a distinctive individual statement. It is the finest 19th-century church in India, standing in a large open compound overlooked from various parts of the city. The Scottish Presbyterian Church in India had requested Kirks in each Presidency. The Elders of the Kirk were eager for a quick start and wanted a circular plan form. The original plans were prepared by Lieutenant Grant, the temporary Superintending Engineer, and as he was keen to commence before he was superseded, he borrowed Gibbs's plan for a circular

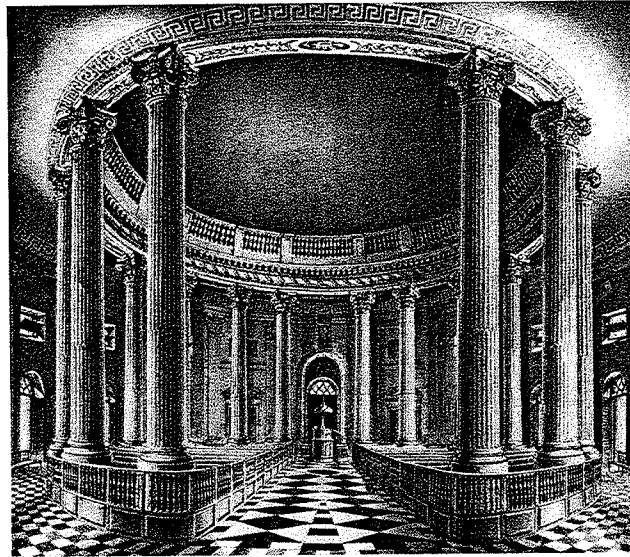


church proposed for St Martin's-in-the-Fields. In spite of pressure to start, the design was criticised by Colonel Caldwell on the grounds of its unsuitability to the climate, and he modified it, retaining the circular form, but preparing an entirely new plan for its design and construction. De Havilland superintended the work of erection and dealt with the detailed constructional problems, including the sinking of pottery wells in the soft ground to carry the foundations. As at St Mary's no timber was used in the construction to prevent attacks by white ants.

Externally St Andrew's is distinguished by a steeple closely modelled on St Martin's, but twelve feet higher. The main entrance faces west and is approached through a deep porch carried on a double colonnade of twelve massive fluted Ionic columns which give an impression of great strength and power. It is surmounted by a pediment inscribed with 'Jehovah' in Hebrew and the name and date of the church in the frieze. The façade on the chancel side is most unusual with a pediment flanked by two enormous British lions and a frieze inscribed with the motto of the East India Company – 'Auspicio Regis et Senatus Angliae'.

Internally the body of the church is a circle 81 ft 6 ins in diameter with a rectangular compartment to the east and west. The circular part is crowned by a shallow dome with an annular arch around it over the aisles. The entire dome is painted sky blue and decorated with gold

The steeples and spires of St George's Cathedral (left) and St Andrew's Kirk (right), bear witness to the influence of James Gibbs and St Martins-in-the-Fields.



The nobly-proportioned interior of St Andrew's, illustrated by Justinian Gantz, showing the ambitious circular plan.

stars. The entablature and frieze are of stone with a brick cornice above, on which rests the dome. The dome's equilibrium is preserved by the lateral pressure of the annular arch around it resting on the walls of the building. Four columns are granite, the remainder local ironstone.

The complex construction of the dome must be attributed to de Havilland, as he had experimented with huge brick spans for many years. As early as 1801 he had built a huge free-standing brick arch spanning 112 feet in the garden of his bungalow at Seringapatam to prove that it was feasible, and later he used these techniques in the ballroom extension at Government House, Mysore. The arch remained until 1937 when it crumbled through neglect and from the unwelcome attentions of curious visitors, but vestiges remain. St Andrew's is perfectly adapted to the climate with cane pews, and a cool chequer-board black and white marble floor. Like St George's, the side walls are pierced with semi-circular openings infilled with louvred doors beneath stained glass fanlights. When the doors are open glimpses of the palms and tropical vegetation in the compound outside provide an exotic counterpoint to the cool European architectural forms within.

St Andrew's and St George's are important not just as architectural monuments, but because they demonstrate the growing sense of awareness amongst the British of their political power in India. Opened in 1821 St Andrew's exudes self-confidence and presence, and the incorporation of political symbolism into the external ornament is a new departure, underscoring British political and religious hegemony.

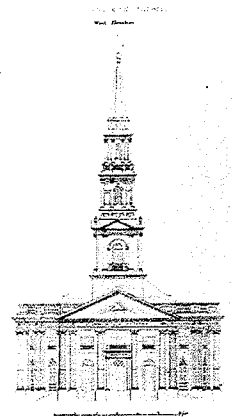
By the mid-19th century Madras had become a backwater – attention had shifted to the capital at Calcutta – but it remained an active and prosperous city rooted firmly in the classical tradition of architecture. Two prominent public buildings were erected at this time and both retain the classical vocabulary.

Pachaiyappa's College is a famous Madras institution. The school was founded on the posthumous generosity of Pachaiyappa Mudhiar, an interpreter in the East India Company's service. The present building was erected between 1846 and 1850 and was opened by Sir Henry Pottinger, the governor of Madras, as a lasting memorial to its religious and educational benefactor. Architecturally it is chastely detailed with an Ionic portico crowned by a pediment based on the Athenian Temple of Theseus. The whole edifice is raised high on a plainly detailed stucco plinth which is now submerged by the booths and shops of the bazaar area. Today it looks extraordinary, a pale Greek temple hovering over the chaotic squalor of the market beneath, the pursuit of education raised high above the pursuit of wealth, adding an accidental dimension to the architectural juxtaposition of two cultures.

The Memorial Hall was erected shortly after the Indian Mutiny as a thanks-offering for deliverance from the traumatic events of that time. Funds were raised by subscription and plans were prepared by Captain Winscom to accommodate over six hundred people plus offices for the Bible Society, Religious Tract Society and Vernacular Education Society. Consultations were carried out with a local builder, Mr Osterherder, for an estimate and in common with local practice costs were based on a sworn oath rather than contract. Work was delayed by unsettled weather and costs rose so rapidly that the plans were modified by Colonel Horsley, omitting the offices, but retaining the style, dimensions and material – local chunam on a brick core. It is a calm, dignified building, as befits a memorial of deliverance. It is cruciform in plan, raised on a low podium with a pedimented Ionic portico inscribed '1857' and with a verse from the 15th Psalm: 'The



St Andrew's Kirk showing the annular arch supporting the dome. The carved Corinthian capitals are exceptionally sophisticated.



St Andrew's Kirk: The west elevation drawn by the architect Thomas Flett de Havilland. It is the finest 19th-century church in India.



*Pachaiyappa's College, 1846–1850,
based on the Athenian Temple of
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Lord hath been mindful of us. He will bless us'. To those who built it, this was not a pious hope for the future but a very real conviction of continuing Divine intercession on their behalf.

The classical architectural heritage of Madras is as much an expression of late 18th- and early 19th-century English values as London's squares or the crescents and terraces of Bath, but because it lies stranded by the receding tide of Empire it has had scant attention and even less protection from demolition and decay. The once numerous Madras 'flat-tops' are becoming rarer and rarer. Even the Madras Club, the epitome of gracious European living, lies empty and derelict, the residential wings given over to mouldering files of abandoned papers. The fine octagonal divan provides shelter for a destitute family, whilst Chisholm's Gothic card room has thrown in its hand. However, extraordinarily, it seems that the building will survive. Now it is owned by Indian Express Newspapers and work is in hand to repair the main building for use as a theatre and offices for the company, an encouraging sign that it is possible to find new uses for old buildings in the most unpromising situations. For generations now Madras has had an atmosphere of splendid decay, but somehow it has survived with its integrity intact, basking in the refulgent glow of its magnificent past.

Clive kissed me on the mouth and eyes and brow,
Wonderful kisses, so that I became
Crowned above Queens – a withered beldame now,
Brooding on ancient fame.

CHAPTER 3

CALCUTTA: POWER ON SILT

'Round their little fort and close to it, by degrees they built themselves very neat, useful, if not elegant houses, a church, a court house and laid out walks, planted trees and made their own little district neat, clean and convenient.' This eye-witness account of early 18th-century Calcutta indicates how only twenty years after Job Charnock's death, the town had become a thriving European enclave. Even at this time European houses were set in their own garden compounds, but expansion was haphazard and unco-ordinated. Hamilton wrote in 1710: 'The town was built without order, as the builders thought most convenient for their own affairs, everyone taking in what ground best pleased them for gardening, so that in most houses you must pass through a garden into a house, the English building near the river side and the natives within land.'

The houses of the period are described as being without flues, Venetians, glass windows or punkahs, but with panelled doors and frames with a network of cane at the windows. Often these were quite crude structures usually with thatched roofs, but some resembled detached English town houses with rectangular window openings and balustraded roofs, completely unadapted to the climate. All the principal buildings were concentrated within the walls of Fort William – the Governor's House, barracks, factors' houses, writers' quarters, warehouses and workshops, but the church, hospital and numerous houses stood outside the ramparts, which enclosed a small area – 710 feet long by 340 wide at the north end widening to 485 feet at the south end. The Fort is described by Hamilton as 'an irregular Tetraon of brick and mortar called Puckah, which is a composition of Brick-dust, lime, Molasses and cut Hemp and is as hard as and tougher than firm Stone or Brick ... About fifty yards from Fort William stands the Church built by the pious Charity of Merchants residing there.'

With the exception of St Anne's Church with its tall steeple, the only building of architectural distinction was the Governor's House, considered by Hamilton to be 'the most regular Piece of architecture that I ever saw in India'. It is depicted in contemporary illustrations as a symmetrical building raised on a podium above the level of the Fort walls, a central pilastered range with end wings and a monumental entrance gate facing the river. To the front of the Fort lay the Great Tank, a huge reservoir of water fed by natural springs, which survives as a central feature in the present town plan of Calcutta. At this time it was highly valued as an essential public amenity. The banks were laid out with orange groves and pleasant gravelled footpaths, and the area enclosed by iron railings.



Pachaiyappa's College, 1846–1850, based on the Athenian Temple of Theseus.

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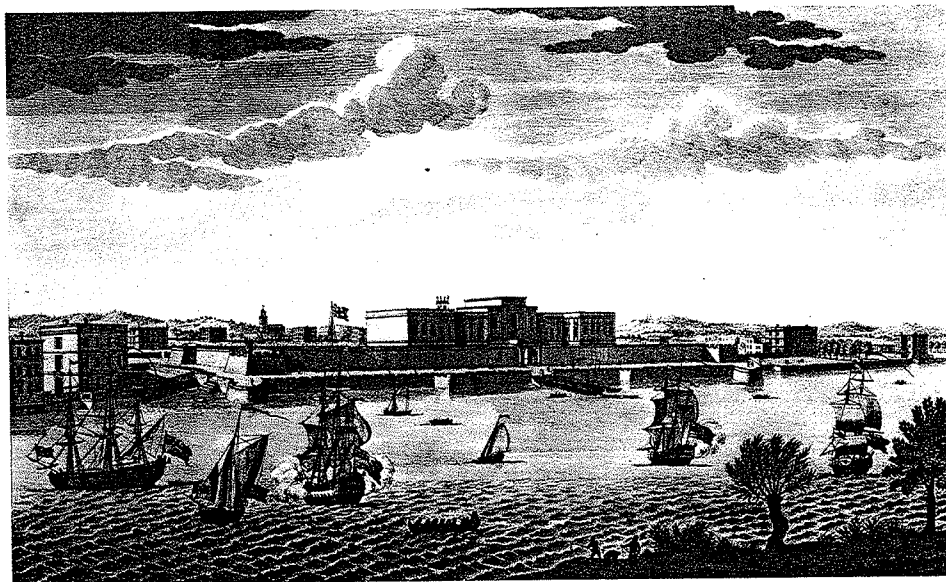
CALCUTTA: POWER ON SILT

*Davies.
Splendours
of the
Raj*

'Round their little fort and close to it, by degrees they built themselves very neat, useful, if not elegant houses, a church, a court house and laid out walks, planted trees and made their own little district neat, clean and convenient.' This eye-witness account of early 18th-century Calcutta indicates how only twenty years after Job Charnock's death, the town had become a thriving European enclave. Even at this time European houses were set in their own garden compounds, but expansion was haphazard and unco-ordinated. Hamilton wrote in 1710: 'The town was built without order, as the builders thought most convenient for their own affairs, everyone taking in what ground best pleased them for gardening, so that in most houses you must pass through a garden into a house, the English building near the river side and the natives within land.'

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The original Fort William in 1754 by Jan Van Ryne. The Baroque houses on the left of the picture show few concessions to the climate and could almost be in London.

Socially life for the Europeans had become more pleasant, in spite of the devastating mortality rate. The closed routine of the early factories had relaxed slightly and become less formal and introverted. Senior officials were allowed to bring out their wives, whilst many of the less exalted married into the large Armenian community who by 1724 had their own church, St Nazareth. Hamilton considered the life very pleasant: 'most gentlemen and ladies in Bengal live both splendidly and pleasantly, the forenoons being dedicated to business, and after dinner to rest, and in the evening to recreate themselves in chaises or palankins in the fields, or to gardens, or by water in their budgeroes.'

It was a period of relatively quiet consolidation and expansion when gold was plenty and labour cheap. Most Europeans worked hard to acquire wealth, tempted to risk their lives in the insalubrious climate of Bengal to obtain a level of financial security and status which was beyond their reach in England. The risks were very high indeed for Calcutta was nothing more than an undrained marsh surrounded by steaming jungle. Hamilton mentions that: 'One year I was there, and there were reckoned in August about 1200 English, and before the beginning of January there were 460 burials registered in the clerk's books of mortality.' Until 1800 the European inhabitants met on the 15th November each year to congratulate each other on having survived.

Disease and sickness were not the only disincentives to the would-be Nabob. The climate severely debilitated the European constitution. Sudden storms of terrifying violence were common, particularly

towards the close of the south-west monsoon. On 30th September 1737 a cyclone of immense force devastated the town. Over 300,000 people were killed in Bengal and 200 houses were destroyed in Calcutta alone. The steeple of St Anne's Church was demolished. One report alleges that it was swallowed into the ground whole without breaking, but this is unlikely as the main body of the church survived. Nevertheless the level of the river rose forty feet and barques of over sixty tons were hurled two leagues inland over the tops of high trees.

A storm of such ferocity was exceptional, even by Indian standards. A grisly postscript was reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the following year. A French merchant ship was beached and wrecked by the storm and efforts were made to salvage the goods. Two men were despatched successively into the hold, each to disappear without trace. At length one more hardy than the rest ventured forth. He too disappeared. Eventually their apprehensive companions sent for torches to light the flooded hold, to be confronted by a huge alligator patiently expecting more prey. The story concludes 'it was with difficulty they killed it, when they found the three men in the creature's belly.'

By the 1740s Moghul power was waning fast. Although the Nawabs of Bengal paid allegiance to Delhi, they grew increasingly despotic as Imperial control diminished to nominal suzerainty. In 1742 Maratha horsemen invaded Bengal and Orissa sweeping all before them. Although the Nawab, Alivardi Khan, came to terms and paid tribute to remain unmolested, the speed of the advance to within a few miles of Calcutta not only demonstrated the political vacuum which the Moghuls were leaving, but also the vulnerability of the town to attack. The principal result of this scare was the construction of a three-mile ditch around Calcutta, embracing most of the European houses. Many had been constructed outside the walls of the Fort with a complete disregard for defence. The ditch was worthless as a defensive line and although there were ambitious proposals to erect an eighteen-foot high wall to the inner side with gates, lamps and drawbridges to the principal roads, nothing was done. Such complacency in the face of a volatile political situation was dangerous and provocative.

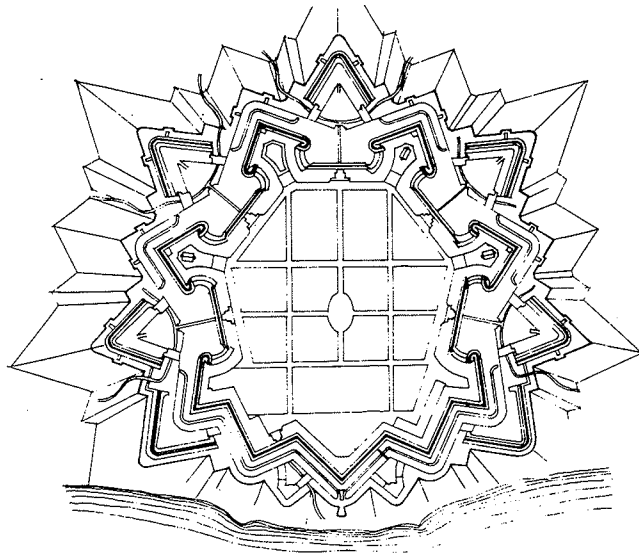
In 1756 Alivardi died. He was succeeded by his twenty-year-old son, Suraj-ud-Daulah (Lamp of the State) who was spoilt, impetuous, obstinate and profligate. He loathed the English, coveted their wealth, and as soon as an opportunity presented itself he attacked Calcutta with an army of 50,000. The Fort was untenable and it fell on 20th June 1756. One hundred and forty-six prisoners were taken, but only twenty-three survived the following night in the Black Hole.

The news took seven weeks to reach Madras, where it might have been accepted as a limited reverse, but for the fortuitous presence of Clive and Admiral Watson in command of a force of 1,500 Indians and over 900 Europeans intended for use against the French. It was diverted north immediately. Calcutta was recaptured on 2nd January 1757 and Clive went on to defeat Suraj-ud-Daulah at Plassey on 23rd June. A nominee, Mir Jafar, was put in his place with the intention of creating a controlled state in the manner in which the French under de Bussy

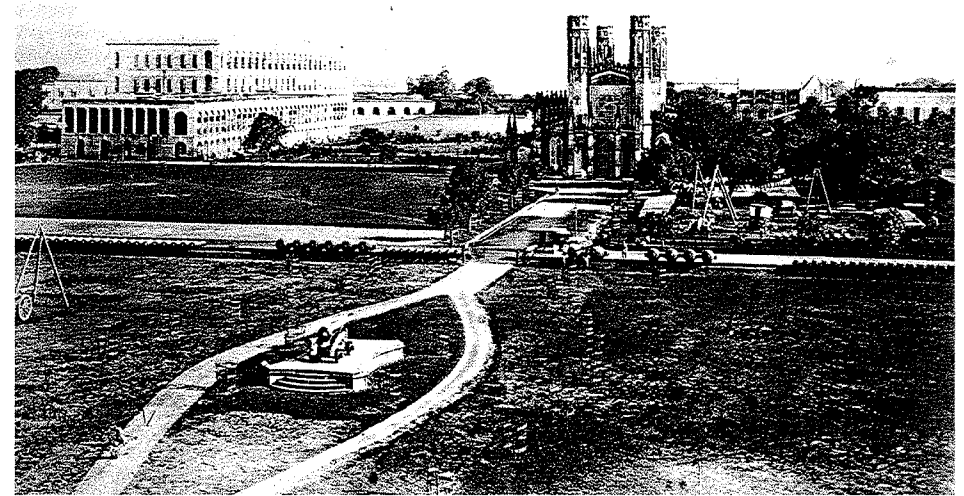
dominated Hyderabad. Clive far exceeded his limited aims. By accident rather than design the Company found itself the master of Bengal with its merchants having a free rein throughout the province. Corruption and venality became endemic. Company servants neglected their duties and concentrated on amassing huge personal fortunes. Abuses were so commonplace that in 1773 Parliament was forced to intervene. The Company's charter was renewed with qualifications, which stipulated that the Governor of Calcutta, assisted by a Council, should be Governor-General supreme over all India.

With the resumption of British control a major change occurred in the form and pattern of European settlement, which was to transform Calcutta into a 'city of palaces', the second city of the Empire. Old Fort William was patched up and used as a customs house for a short period, but a gigantic new fort was planned to the designs of Captain John Brohier, an artillery officer transferred from Madras to Bengal in June 1757 and promoted to Chief Engineer at Calcutta. The designs are based on a modification of Vauban's 17th-century concepts of fortification with certain improvements taken from the work of Cormontaigne. Unfortunately he was a disreputable character. In 1760 he was arrested for fraud in connection with the building works at Fort William, but he absconded to Ceylon where he settled. Nevertheless the work continued under his successors, including the renowned Archibald Campbell, for thirteen years until it was completed in 1773 at a staggering cost of £2 million.

Unlike Fort St George in Madras, where the principal buildings were concentrated within the ramparts, at Fort William the public buildings



Plan of the new Fort William designed by Captain John Brohier. The complex symmetry is based on Vauban's concepts of fortification.



Fort William in the 1860s, with an impressive array of artillery in the foreground. The bastions built by Brohier and his successors can be seen between the barracks and St Peter's Church. It was the most important symbol of British military power in Asia.

remained outside the walls. This was an important change. The static form of development based on defensive enclaves, which characterised early European settlements, gave way to a more dynamic form of dispersed settlement, one more conducive to unrestricted growth and expansion. This was a reflection of growing power and security, and of increasing wealth. Significantly the new Fort altered the entire plan of Calcutta, for to obtain an unrestricted field of fire a huge open space was cleared – the Maidan – which not only rendered the Fort unassailable but also created an enormous vista around which a magnificent collection of public buildings arose. The golden age of Calcutta had begun.

Calcutta seems to have presented a picture of almost continuous building activity at this time. Mrs Kindersley, a typical Englishwoman, arrived in 1767, and the transition from settlement to city was all too evident: 'After Madras, it does not appear much worthy describing . . . People keep constantly building . . . the appearance of the best houses is spoiled by the little straw huts . . . which are built up by the servants for themselves to sleep in: so that all the English part of the town is a confusion of very superb and very shoddy houses.'

The town was increasing in size daily impelled by a steady influx of European merchants and traders. Houses became extremely scarce and the demand for imported European comforts was insatiable. Mrs Kindersley noted that 'furniture is so exorbitantly dear, and so very difficult to procure, that one seldom sees a room where all the chairs and couches are of one part.'

With the completion of the Maidan in 1780 an opportunity was provided for the rising merchant classes to express their new-found wealth in a more visible form. The old bamboo-roofed bungalows and vernacular buildings were swept away and replaced by grander houses

which blatantly reflected the aspirations and status of their European owners. This open display of wealth contrasted with Indian social values which were expressed in a totally different physical form, and so naturally led to a very different town plan. Wealthy Indian merchants concealed their properties in a maze of mean huts and dwellings. Generally their access was tortuous through alleys and courts which could be barricaded in times of riot or civil emergency. Their houses were inward looking, often arranged around central quadrangles which provided cool, shade and quiet repose even in the heart of the teeming bazaars.

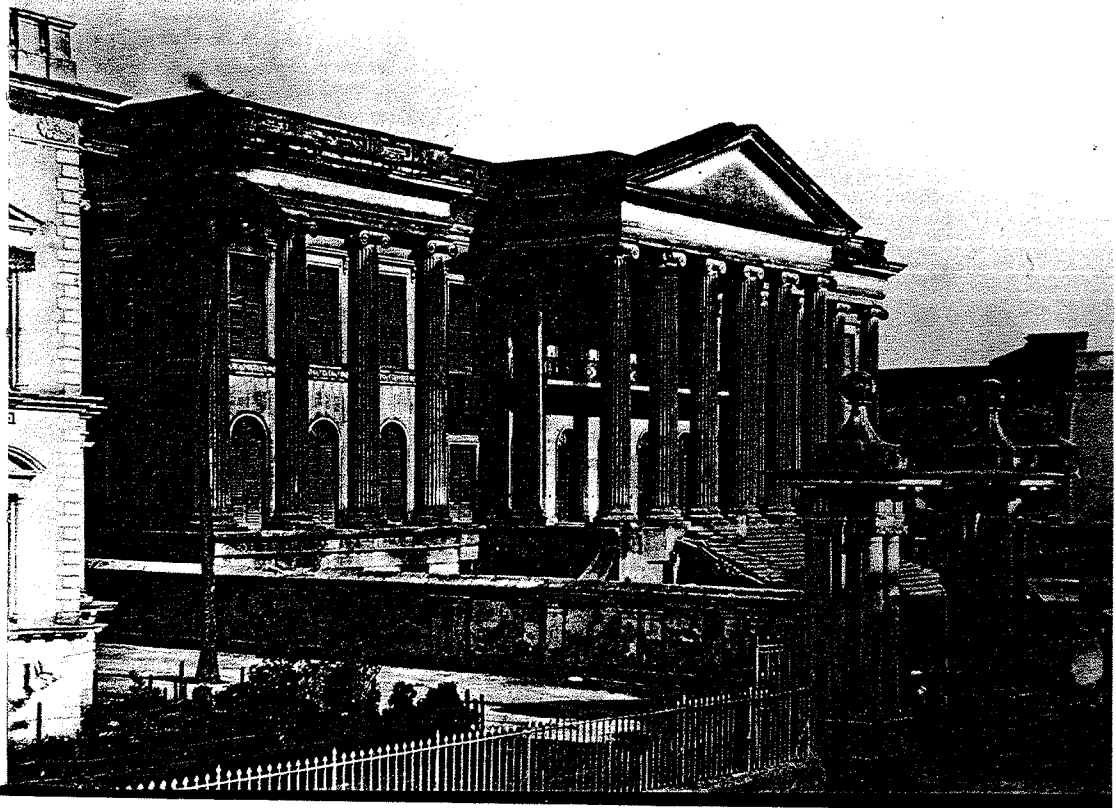
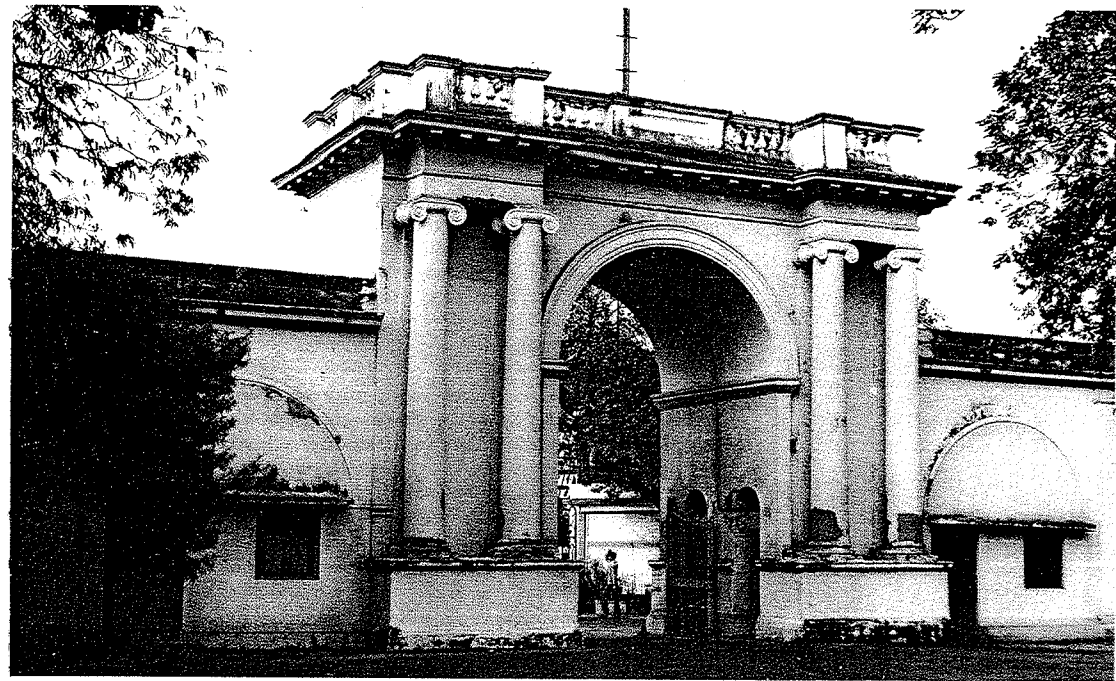
The public expression of wealth by English Nabobs and merchants also contrasted with contemporary English precedents. In London town houses of the period were fairly small in size with simple external designs which relied for impact on their grouping into terraces, squares or crescents. In India Georgian town houses resemble scaled down versions of English country houses and Palladian mansions rather than the narrow London town house.

These fine Indian mansions mark the first stage in the adaptation of European forms of architecture to an Indian context. Most follow a similar pattern, a well-proportioned block of two or three storeys set in its own garden compound with the inner rooms protected by a deep verandah or portico. The siting of individual buildings in their own compounds or garden areas was as much a reflection of good planning, to promote a cool flow of air and to reduce the risk of disease, as from any desire for exaggerated individual splendour. It dictated a dispersed form of settlement with considerable distances between houses, so movement between them was either by carriages or palanquins, which afforded protection from the heat. The entrance porticos of the houses were transformed into *portes-cochères*, where carriages could wait protected from the fierce heat of the sun. Occasionally these are of enormous proportions and designed to accommodate the elephants of visiting dignitaries arriving by 'howdah' – *portes-pachyderms* might be more apt.

The facing materials for the houses was always the same – a brick core covered with Madras chunam, but in the harsher climate of Bengal it rapidly deteriorated and required constant re-polishing or re-painting, creating a vision more redolent of the peeling terraces of St Petersburg than the monumental masonry of Greece and Rome. The use of a material that could not stand the strain of the climate or endure over time, unlike the marmoreal permanence of Greece and Rome, disturbed many contemporary observers. However grand or heroic the conception, the effect was diminished if the façade was peeling and the brick core showed the sham beneath the structure. Bishop Heber noted: 'There is indeed nothing more striking than the apparent instability of the splendour of this great town; houses, Churches, and public buildings are all of plastered brick; and a portico worthy of a Grecian temple is often disfigured by the falling of the stucco, and the bad rotten bricks peeping through.' In many ways the symbolism was apt for these were grand houses where the public façade was all important, built for parvenus – merchants who had acquired a veneer

Each European house was set in its own garden compound. Monumental entrance screens and other devices proclaimed the status of the occupant.

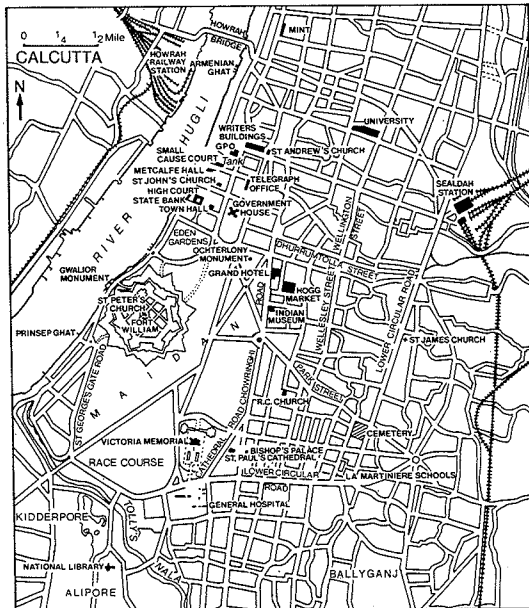
This rare early photograph of a fine Greek Calcutta mansion conveys vividly the character of the 'City of Palaces'. Note the elaborate gate piers with ball finials and the damp-stained chunam.



of upper class values and status but lacked the aristocratic substance beneath.

The spaciouly planned districts of Calcutta – Chowringhee, Alipur, Garden Reach and the central Maidan itself – indicate the recognition which was afforded to the cooling effect of the wind off the river and the absolute necessity of obtaining shade from vegetation. However, in the Esplanade and Chowringhee the crowding was such that a continuous street frontage of boundary walls and gates arose complementing the classical architecture of the houses. Gate piers were rusticated, pilastered or treated with niches, pediments and ball finials. The overall effect is depicted in a variety of fine illustrations from the period, such as those of James Fraser and the Daniells. Generally verandahs were embellished with devices which provided shade but allowed a cool passage of air. Screens of wooden ribs, bamboo tatties or plaited grass were hung between the columns of the verandah and kept moist. These screens are important indigenous features which became an individual art form in themselves, recurrent ornamental elements in Anglo-Indian architecture.

Today many of the town houses of Calcutta have been submerged into the bazaars of the expanding city, but a few typical examples remain within their compounds. The Royal Calcutta Turf Club in Middleton Road, Chowringhee is a well-preserved type. Once it was the home of the Apcar family, shipping magnates, and the house was erected in about 1820. The south front has a fine pedimented verandah



carried on coupled Doric columns, and the north front, a long projecting *porte-cochère* which protects visitors from sun and rain. Internally the entrance hall extends through two storeys, but the treatment of the staircase with warm brown panelling and teak columns is an unexpected variation from the ubiquitous use of plasterwork. Simple timber chimneypieces add to the homely relaxed atmosphere, but they seem to have been ornamental and could rarely have been of use in Bengal. Close to the Calcutta Turf Club, in Middleton Row stands the Loretto Convent, another well-preserved example of the 18th-century Calcutta house. It was once the home of Henry Vansittart, Governor of Bengal between 1760 and 1764, and also of the eminent Sir Elijah Impey, first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court from 1774 to 1782. The Bishop's Palace with its hexastyle portico dates from the early 19th century, but it is representative both in form and style of the prevailing classical ethos of the period.

At this time Chowringhee still retained something of the atmosphere of a suburb. To Emily Eden it resembled Regent's Park with individual stucco villas set in verdant garden compounds. The resemblance to a London suburb was more than just a passing fancy. Bishop Heber described his arrival at twilight: 'From Kidderpoor we passed by a mean wooden bridge over a muddy creek, which brought us to an extensive open plain like a race course, at the extremity of which we saw Calcutta, its white houses glittering through the twilight ... with an effect not unlike that of Connaught Place and its neighbourhood, as seen from a distance across Hyde Park.'

Perhaps the most evocative survival from the period is Warren Hastings' house at Alipur, once on the southern outskirts of the city. It was built around 1777 and was described as a 'perfect bijou'. Originally it was a simple, two-storeyed white cube with living quarters on the ground floor. In the particulars of sale in 1785 it is described as 'an upper roomed house ... consisting of a hall and rooms on each floor, a handsome stone staircase and a back staircase all highly finished with Madras chunam and the very best materials'. The effect of the polished

Warren Hastings's much-loved house at Alipur built in 1777. The original house is the two-storeyed centrepiece. The cavernous hoods and open shutters on the west face are common later features.



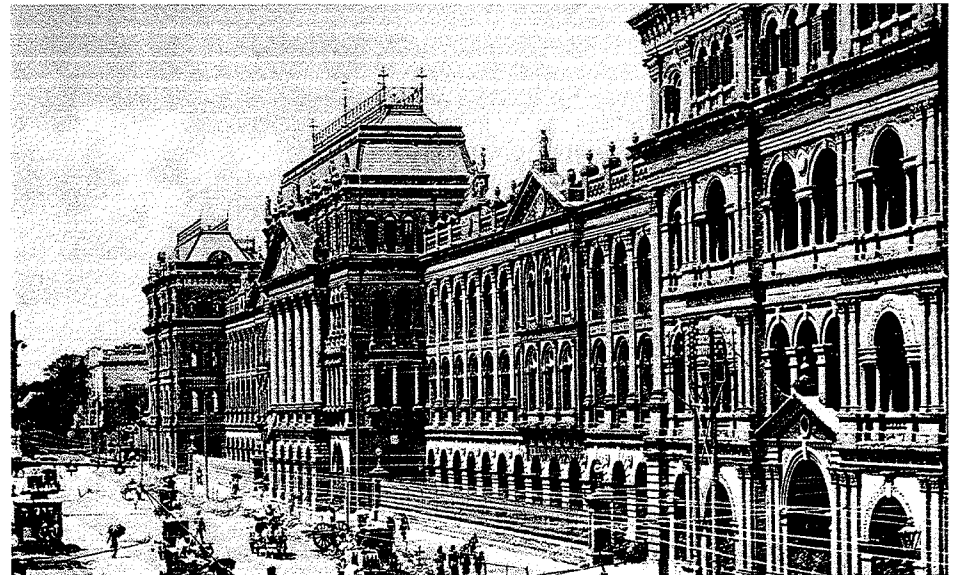
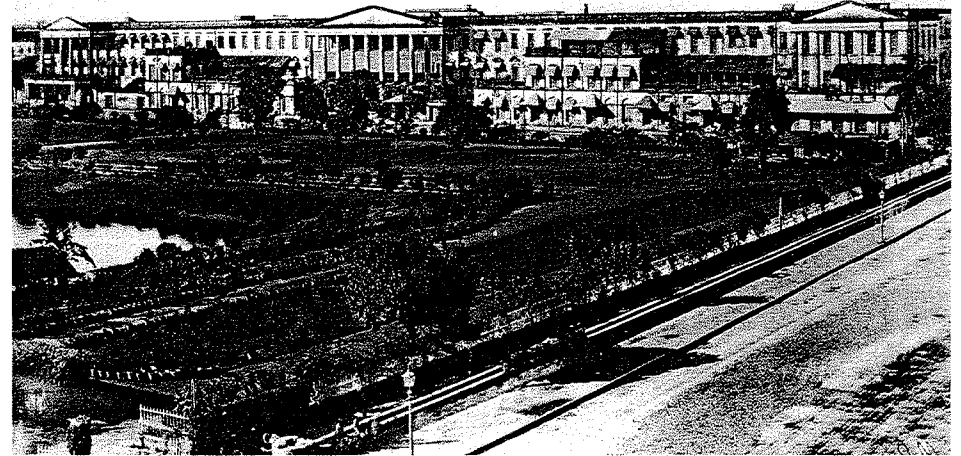
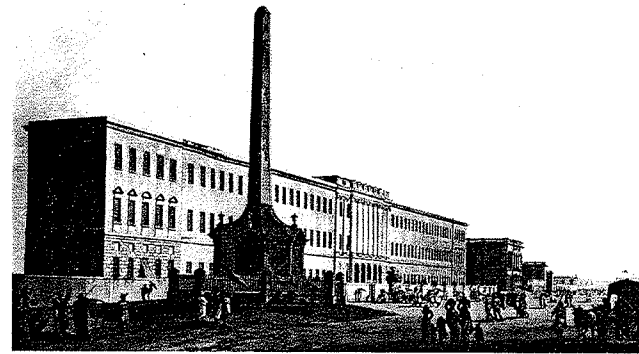
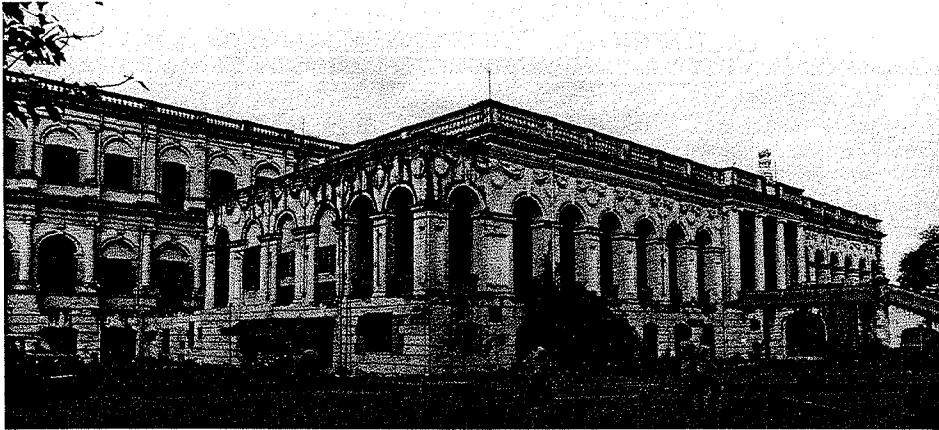
(Top) Writers' Buildings built by Thomas Lyon in 1780, illustrated by the Daniells in 1797. This vast austere building demonstrates the mercantile preoccupations of the East India Company at this time.

Holwell's monument to the Black Hole stands in the foreground. (Middle) With the growth of Imperial self-awareness attempts were made to embellish the original facade with pedimented porticos in the mid-19th century. (Bottom) In 1880 the entire block was refaced to reflect Victorian Imperial and civic pride.

chunam was blinding. Later it was extended and wings were added. Hastings loved the house and spent many happy hours there recovering from the vitriolic attacks made on him by his Council, and when he returned to England the gardens of his house at Daylesford were laid out after the fashion of his garden at Alipur. It is reputed that the house is haunted by Hastings. As late as 1947 Lady Braid-Taylor was subjected to a fearful outbreak of ghostly phenomena which centred on one particular room and which have been witnessed by most incumbents of the house. Today it is a women's college. Nearby lies Belvedere which was the scene of Hastings' famous duel with Philip Francis. Like Hastings House, the original portion is the centre section, but it has been greatly extended. Once the property of the Lieutenant Governors of Bengal, it was used by numerous Viceroy on visits to Calcutta from New Delhi, before being given over to the National Library.

In 1780 an enormous building was erected to the designs of Thomas Lyon to house the junior clerks of the East India Company. Lyon had sailed for India in 1763 to instruct the native workforce at Fort William in carpentry. His companion, Mr Fortnam, was a civil architect. Whether or not he or Fortnam was responsible for the new building is impossible to say. Illustrations of the period depict a very long plain building resembling a barracks with little architectural ornament to suggest that it was the main centre of English mercantile endeavour in India. The windows are repetitive and the entire façade is relieved only by a projecting central range enriched with Ionic pilasters and a balustraded parapet. It is an uninspiring building, but important as one of the few large ranges of classical buildings erected in India which reflect the character and form of the Georgian terraces of London built at this time by the Adam brothers, although in appearance and impact it is more redolent of a stripped version of one of Nash's terraces of the 1820s in Regent's Park. The central portion was used as classrooms for the College of Fort William where new arrivals were taught to become

Belvedere. The famous duel between Warren Hastings and Philip Francis took place on August 17th 1780 just outside the western entrance.



writers in the Company service. Dominating the north side of the main square in Calcutta, the building was never successful as an architectural centrepiece and later it was embellished with low pediments. In 1880 the entire building was refronted using terracotta dressings with a Corinthian façade and a dummy portico and pediment, for use as the Bengal Secretariat.

Early illustrations also depict Holwell's memorial to the Black Hole, which at this time stood at the western end of Writers' Buildings. This took the form of an octagonal obelisk set on a low pedestal with four of the faces enriched with pediments and urns. Its precise date of erection is uncertain, but it was there in 1764 inscribed with the names of the dead, even though four were omitted in error. It was known popularly as 'The Monument'. In 1782 it was struck by lightning, and although repaired its brick and plaster structure fell into disrepair. In 1810 it was again struck by lightning and by 1812 the inscribed panels were illegible. Eventually in 1821 it was demolished, and although most residents welcomed the removal of a memorial to such an unhappy event, at least one indignant correspondent compared its destruction to the removal of the Elgin Marbles. A replica of the monument in Sicilian marble was reinstated by Lord Curzon in 1902. This too has disappeared from the original site to a quiet corner of St John's Churchyard, Calcutta, in a determined effort by the Indian authorities to erase the memory; and the popular Indian view remains that the massacre never took place at all.

One of the major changes in the form and appearance of late 18th-century Calcutta was the erection of St John's Church in 1787, the Cathedral church until the completion of St Paul's in 1847. It is a fascinating building of very considerable interest, portrayed by the Daniells only a year after its consecration.

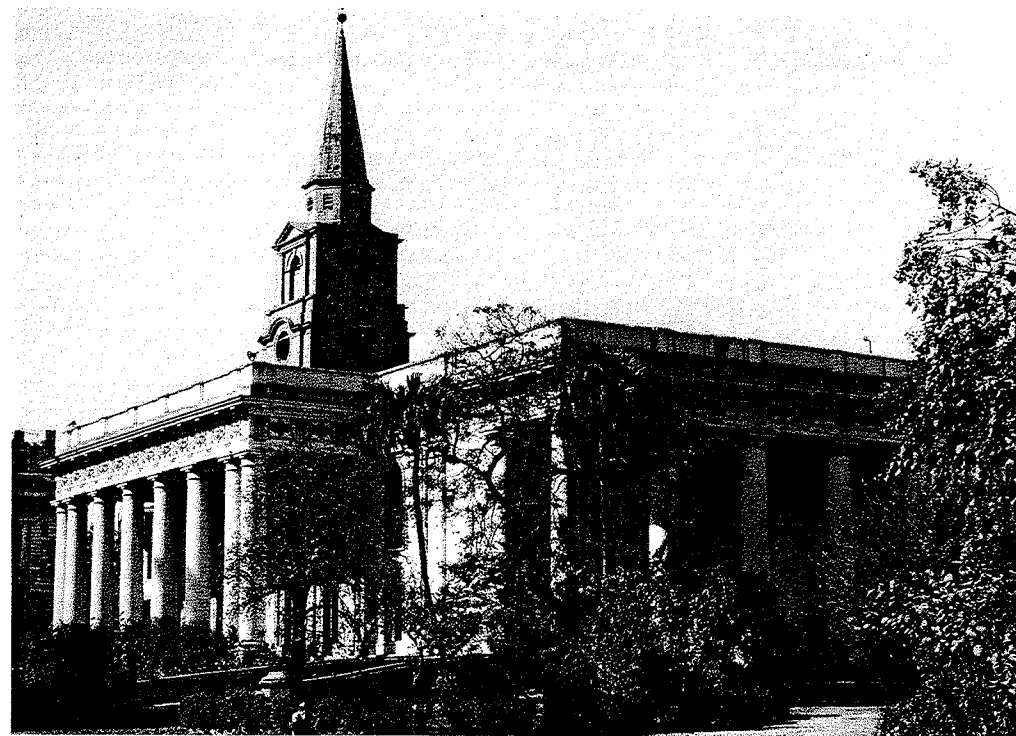
The foundations were laid in 1784 at the crossing of Hastings Street and Council House Street in the heart of the town on the site of the old magazine yard. The money was raised by subscription as the Company was renowned for its parsimonious attitude. Sir John Shore noted: 'A pagan gave the ground; all characters subscribed: Lotteries, confiscations, donations received contrary to law were employed in completing it. The Company contributed but little: no great proof they think the morals of their servants connected with religion.'

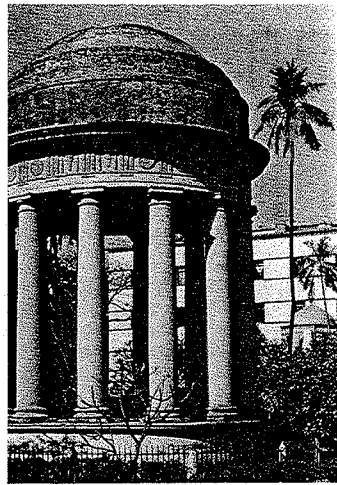
The site was 'L' shaped as a burial ground restricted the west end, and the church owes its peculiar plan form to this constraint. The main approach could not be laid over the burial ground, so the entrance was placed behind the altar with a small vestibule providing access to galleries above. It was an unprecedented arrangement.

The architect was Lieutenant James Agg, Bengal Engineers, described by William Hickey, the diarist, as 'a modest and ingenious man with superior manners', the son of a Gloucestershire stonemason. He arrived with Hickey in November 1777 and worked as an assistant to the Chief Engineer, Colonel Henry Watson. It is alleged that the plan of St John's is based on St Stephen's Walbrook, but this is erroneous. Early suggestions were for a Greek cruciform plan similar to St Stephen's, but the design was rejected and instead, Agg reached for

inspiration from Gibbs's common prototype, St-Martin's-in-the-Fields. The plan is similar, a three-bay nave and galleries, but the juxtaposition is entirely different. A Doric order was used throughout rather than Corinthian as the detailing was easier to carve locally from Chunar stone. Sadly the church was not built as Agg intended. The most distinctive feature of the church is the steeple and spire, which are a modification of St Martin's. The fourth tier was omitted completely to reduce not just the cost, but also the weight of the stone steeple on the marshy ground beneath. The end result is extraordinary. The steeple appears dumpy and compressed and even to the untutored eye it smacks of the amateur enthusiast rather than the gifted professional. Notwithstanding these unhappy adaptations to local conditions, the church was widely admired. Agg made a fortune and returned to England, but the church was altered again at least twice, in 1797 and 1811. The main entrance was moved to the west end under the spire and the original vestibule was abolished. A carriage porch was added to the west end, a ramp to the east end, and deep colonnaded verandahs were placed on the north and south sides to reduce glare and heat after

St John's Church designed by James Agg in 1787 showing the dumpy stone steeple and spire, the entire fourth tier having been omitted. Verandahs were added in 1797 after ladies complained of glare and heat.





The Rohilla Monument in St John's Church burial ground. The frieze is enriched with triglyphs, bucrania, and shields.

ladies complained of the power of the sun. Further mutilations were perpetrated, perhaps the worst being the addition of Corinthian capitals to the Doric columns in the nave in 1811 and the removal of the galleries in 1901.

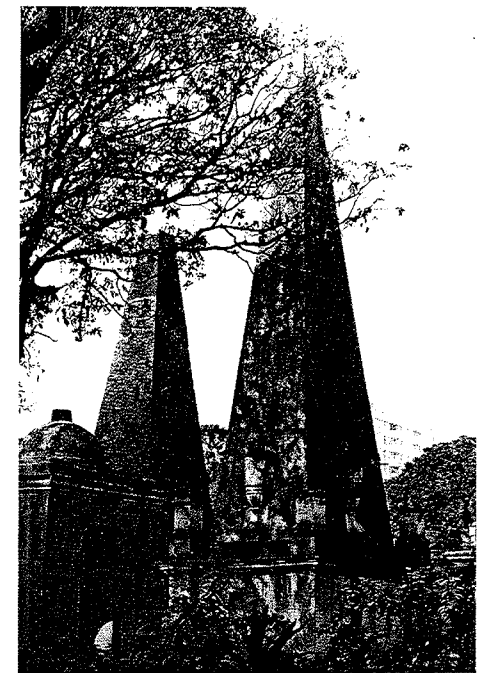
The artist Zoffany provided a painting of the Last Supper as a new altarpiece for the church. It aroused an enormous controversy as the figures depicted were all portraits of well-known Calcutta residents, and there has been much speculation since as to who is who. The walls are lined with a number of fine marble monuments, but the most interesting lie in the burial ground outside. Here rests Job Charnock the founder of Calcutta, beneath his octagonal tomb, and also Curzon's replica of Holwell's monument. Erected in 1817 to commemorate those killed in the Rohilla War of 1794, the Rohilla Monument is a domed cenotaph carried on twelve Doric columns with a frieze enriched with triglyphs, and shields. A fine neo-classical pavilion over fifty feet high, it is closely based on Sir William Chambers's Temple of Æolus at Kew, but with the same martial qualities as the Cornwallis rotunda in Madras. There is a lovely white chunam shrine to Begum Johnson, the grandmother of the Earl of Liverpool, who died in 1812 at the age of 87, outliving her four husbands. She was the matriarch of Calcutta society when she died, with a clear memory of the earliest days of the English. Her conversation 'abounded in anecdote and fascinated all who paid homage to her.' Her tomb is truly delightful – an open pavilion pierced by Venetian arches. When she died the old burial ground was reopened especially for her, and the Governor-General led the funeral procession in his state coach.

Throughout the late 18th and early 19th century most European burials took place in South Park Street Cemetery in Chowringhee and today it looks much the same as when Maria Graham visited it in 1812: 'Many acres covered so thick with columns, urns and obelisks that there scarcely seems to be room for another and the greater number buried here are under five and twenty years of age!' It is a haunting place, like some Imperial city of the dead, and even in death the ostentatious display of power and wealth persists. In spite of all the surface grandeur, life for Europeans was precarious and always shadowed by the prospect of sudden death. Life for many was just two monsoons, and the constant repetitive misery of losing friends and loved ones etched itself deep into the Imperial consciousness. One of the most striking impressions is the high mortality amongst children and women, many of whom married at the age of fifteen or sixteen, only to die of disease or in childbirth before their seventeenth birthday. Sir William Hunter wrote: 'The price of British rule in India has always been paid with the lives of little children.'

To Sophia Goldbourne, who arrived in 1785, the Land of Regrets was aptly named. She wrote home of Park Street: 'Alas, Arabella, the Bengal burying grounds bear a melancholy testimony to the truth of my observations on the short date of existence in this climate. Obelisks and pagodas are erected at great expense; and the whole spot is surrounded by as well-turned a walk as those you traverse in Kensington Gardens.' An anonymous poem of 1811 was more direct:



The pedimented tomb of John Garstin, architect of Calcutta Town Hall and the Gola in Patna.



*For not in quiet English fields
Are these, our brothers, lain to rest,
Where we might deck their broken shields
With all the flowers the dead love best.*

*For some are by the Delhi walls,
And many in the Afghan land,
And many where the Ganges falls
Through seven mouths of shifting sand.*

*Park Street Cemetery resembles an Imperial city of the dead,
an extraordinary repository of funerary sculpture based on
English neo-classical works.*

*I hate the grounds with pyramids oppressed,
Where ashes moulder in sepulchral rest,
Where long effusions of the labouring pen
Weep o'er the virtues of the best of men.*

Architecturally the cemetery is a fascinating repository of neo-classical funerary sculpture in the form of pyramids, pavilions and temples without parallel in England. Many echo the designs of William Chambers and the Adam brothers and are richly imbued with the classical symbols of death – the fragmented obelisk, the urn, the pyramid and on one decayed slab, Thanatos, the genius of Death with his inverted torch depicting the flame of life snuffed out.

The sheer scale of the tombs is impressive. There is a huge pyramid

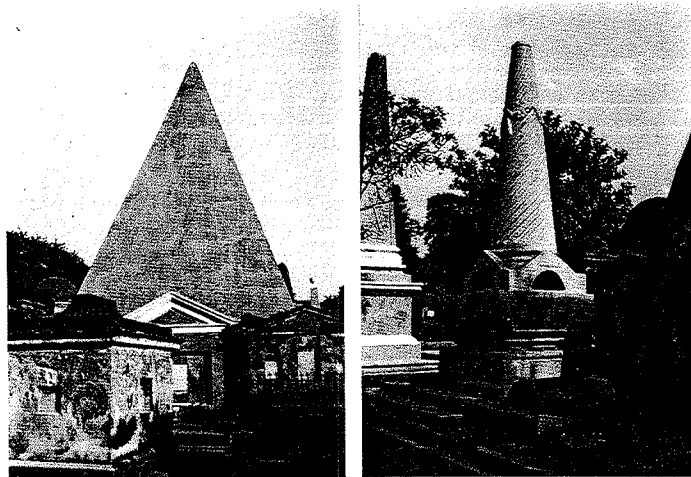
standing on a low pedimented podium – the final resting place of Elizabeth Barwell, a society beauty of such popularity that, confidentially, she accepted twelve separate invitations to a fancy dress ball and asked each suitor to wear an outrageous costume. They all arrived attired in an identical shade of pea-green, but the joke was accepted and, we are told, she danced with them all. She died in 1779. The most famous monument and one of the most original is a spiral column enriched with roses, to Rose Aylmer. The elegy written in her memory by Walter Savage Landor, the poet who loved her, was added to her tomb much later, but it poignantly describes the human misery, the waste of young lives, which was so often the price of Empire:

Ah, what avails the sceptred race!
Ah, what the form divine!
What every virtue, every grace!
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.

She died of dysentery in 1800, aged 20, and the distraught poet lingered on, for sixty-four empty years. Hers is just one of the two million European graves which lie in this land.

When Lord Valentia visited Calcutta in 1803 he considered 'the hearts of the British in this country seem expanded by opulence: they do everything on a princely scale.' His views were influenced by the splendour of the inaugural ceremony for the opening of the new



(Left) Pyramid tomb of Elizabeth Barwell. (Right) The famous spiral monument to Rose Aylmer.

Government House, which had been built by the Governor-General, the Earl of Mornington, the future Marquess Wellesley and elder brother of the Duke of Wellington.

Wellesley had arrived in India in 1798. A departure from previous incumbents of the post, he was a highly cultured aristocrat at ease in the sophisticated grand salons of Europe. He was affronted by the 'stupidity and ill-bred familiarity of Calcutta Society'. His first step towards transforming the whole tone and emphasis of his position from that of 'primus inter pares' to a quasi-monarchical role was the creation of the most splendid Georgian building in India, exceeding even Lord Clive's new edifice, then in the process of construction in Madras.

His predecessors, including Warren Hastings and Cornwallis, had lived in a variety of houses. Some used the Fort House in Fort William which survives in a much altered form as the Outram Institute. When not in use by the Governor-General, it was occupied by the officer commanding Fort William and after 1803 it was used occasionally as a residence for state guests. In 1823 Bishop Heber stayed there and left a detailed description which accurately portrays a typical house interior of the period:

The house consisted of a lofty and well-proportioned hall, 40 feet by 25 feet, a drawing room of the same length, and six or seven rooms, all on the same floor, one of which served as a chapel, the lower storey being chiefly occupied as offices or lobbies. All these rooms were very lofty with many doors and windows on every side; the floor of plaister, covered with mats; the ceilings of bricks, plaistered also, flat, and supported by massive beams, which were visible from the rooms below, but being painted neatly, had not at all a bad effect. Punkhas, large frames of light wood covered with white cotton, and looking not unlike enormous fire-boards, hung from the ceilings of the principal apartments, to which cords were fastened, which were drawn backwards and forwards by one or more servants, so as to agitate and cool the air very agreeably. The walls were white and unadorned, except with a number of glass lamps filled with cocoanut oil, and the furniture, though sufficient for the climate, was scanty in comparison with that of an English house. The beds instead of curtains had mosquito nets; they were raised high from the ground and very hard, admirably adapted for a hot climate.

However, the Fort House was used rarely, the principal residence being Old Government House on the Esplanade which was a rented two-storey building with an arcaded frontage set behind an open courtyard, enclosed on two sides by single-storey wings. The house was set on a rusticated podium and had a shallow pyramidal roofed belvedere, probably a bedroom for use in hot weather. It is depicted in illustrations with balustraded parapets punctuated with dies and urns.

Wellesley considered these existing facilities wholly inadequate and complained to the Court of Directors that 'the Apartments ... were inferior to the apartments in the most ordinary houses of individuals,

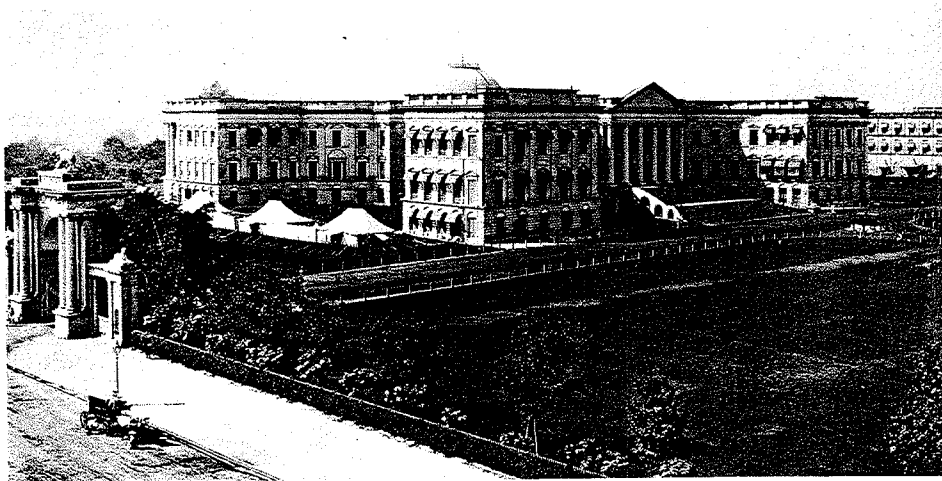
exposing the health of the Governor-General to the most serious injury from the effects of the climate.' He went on to berate the lack of suitable rooms for public entertainment and even for family accommodation, and argued that the rent far exceeded the value of the building.

Within a month of his arrival the Engineer Officer, Captain Charles Wyatt, and Edward Tiretta, the Civil Architect, were instructed to prepare plans, and the Chief Engineer, Major General Cameron, to furnish estimates. Tiretta, was a free-booting Italian who had been an associate of the notorious Jacopo Casanova. As a result of his amorous adventures Europe had become too hot for him and he drifted to India, where we are told 'he became, in turns, respectable, versatile, wealthy and bankrupt'. For many years he held the post of Superintendent of Streets and Buildings or Civil Architect to the Company and he was responsible for numerous public buildings including the remodelling of St John's Church in 1811. Fortunately Wyatt's designs were preferred to Tiretta's, but the Civil Architect retained a close involvement in the construction of the new edifice.

Wyatt hailed from a great family of English architects. He was born in 1758, the son of William, elder brother of the famous James Wyatt, and he entered the army in 1780. He arrived in India in 1782 and by 1800 he had risen to Captain and Commander of Police and, by 1803, Superintendent of Public Works.

Wyatt's scheme was adapted from Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire, which had been built by Robert Adam between 1759 and 1770, on the basis of earlier designs prepared by James Paine. Wyatt's choice of model for the new Government House was not fortuitous. His uncle, Samuel, had supervised Kedleston's erection, and undoubtedly Wyatt had access to the detailed designs which had been published in Robert Adam's *Works of Architecture*, *Vitruvius Britannicus* and most current text books on architecture.

Government House in about 1870. Built by Charles Wyatt for the Earl of Mornington, elder brother of the future Duke of Wellington, it is based on Kedleston Hall, Derbyshire.



Although inspired by Kedleston, Wyatt's designs were not a muted plagiarism of the original, but a thoroughly worked out conception well-adapted to the vicissitudes of the Bengal climate. The similarities are obvious – the basic shape, plan and dimensions, the central block with quadrant corridors linked to corner pavilions, the domed bow on the garden frontage, and the concentration of state rooms in the main block are all common elements. However, the Calcutta house has wide verandahs, a semi-circular projecting portico and colonnade on the south front and, more importantly, it has all four pavilions rather than the two completed at Kedleston. The corridors linking the central block with the pavilions are full height, whereas at Kedleston they are two-storeyed and subordinated to the mass of the principal central range and pavilions. Overall the use of painted plaster creates a quite different character from the textural subtlety of Derbyshire sandstone.

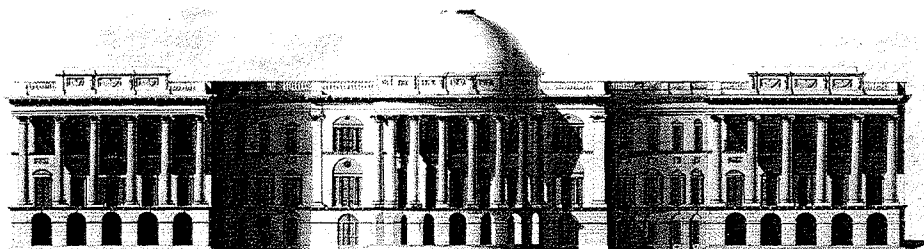
Internally the major difference is the absence of any grand staircase at Calcutta and the substitution of four small staircases in each corner of the main block, a mean arrangement which attracted great criticism. The satirist, Sir Charles D'Oyly, wrote in *Tom Raw the Griffin*:

In such a palace one might have expected
A splendid staircase, as at home we find
In noble edifices well erected,
And made in spacious turns and sweeps to wind,
But here, forsooth, there's nothing of the kind.
It certainly a strange and very rare case is,
One must suppose the architect was blind,
When there was so much room, and lots of spare places
To build four little dingy miserable staircases.

The dome over the south portico was added in about 1814 to increase the impact of the elevation, but in its original form it was not very successful and it too fell foul of D'Oyly's caustic wit:

One word about the dome – 'tis so superior
In every way to domes of brick and stone.
It covers nought below! but ripens sherry or
Madeira – a wood box, perched up alone,
To aid proportion and for dumpiness to stone.

In 1824 it was replaced by a shallow dome crowned by a figure of Britannia with spear and shield but this was struck by lightning and eventually a new cast-iron structure was added in 1852. The dome is entirely decorative, but it does provide a point of balance to the south elevation which might otherwise be regarded as excessively horizontal. Lord Elgin added a small gallery to crown the summit in 1863, but as late as Curzon's time it was used as a store for timber. Indeed Curzon had the unique distinction of having resided in both houses and considered that 'the differences greatly exceed the points of identity', and that there was no comparison between Calcutta and the exquisite Adam detailing at Kedleston. Nevertheless Curzon loved Calcutta and



The south-east frontage of Government House by J. F. Bordwine shows the ornamental dome which so amused Sir Charles D'Oyly.

paid for several improvements to the building out of his own pocket. The balustraded parapet was enhanced by the provision of urns, the tympanum to the north front was filled with the royal coat of arms, and the original arms on the south front, with 'both the lion and the unicorn transcending all bounds even of oriental imagination', were replaced by cast-iron devices from Macfarlanes of Glasgow. It was Curzon too who first painted the house white instead of the dirty umber or yellow which had been preferred, and which accounted for early references to similarities with St Petersburg.

The new building was set in its own extensive twenty-six acre compound and the principal approaches were adorned with monumental neo-classical gateways which recall Adam's screen at Syon House. These four external gateways comprise masonry arches surmounted by sculptured lions and sphinxes, which were made locally in wood by a carver called Woolaston. Later these were replaced in brick and plaster. It is alleged that the sphinxes were rather amply endowed and that their plaster breasts were cut off on the orders of an ADC who thought Lord Wellesley might be shocked at their over-exuberance, but if the story is true, it is more likely that the reference is to the sphinxes flanking the northern staircase which are far more prominent.

The concept of monumental gateways added to the imperial flavour of the design and provided impressive vistas from the surrounding streets. The idea proved influential and they were copied for government houses elsewhere in India, notably at the Residency in Hyderabad and at Mysore, where similar screens survive.

Originally the compound was bare. In 1818 Lord Hastings imported the best Bayswater gravel for surfacing but it remained devoid of vegetation until the late 19th century when Lord and Lady Mayo and the Northbrooks implemented a proper planting scheme, which improved privacy and amenity at the expense of architectural impact on the city.

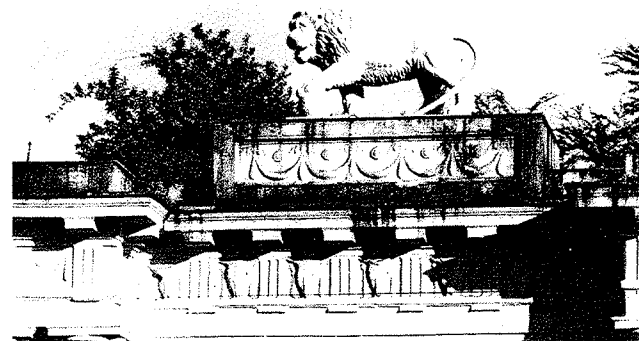
The interior of the building is striking. The ceremonial steps on the north front lead to the first of three state apartments on two floors: the Breakfast or Tiffin Room resembling a gallery, which was used for informal gatherings with screens of columns at either end; a similar room, later the Throne Room, balances the south front; and the two are

joined by the Marble Hall designed on the model of a Roman atrium and used as a state dining room. The plan repeats on the floor above with a spectacular ballroom enriched with an Ionic order. The southern wings were used as private apartments, one northern wing as a Council Chamber and one for guests.

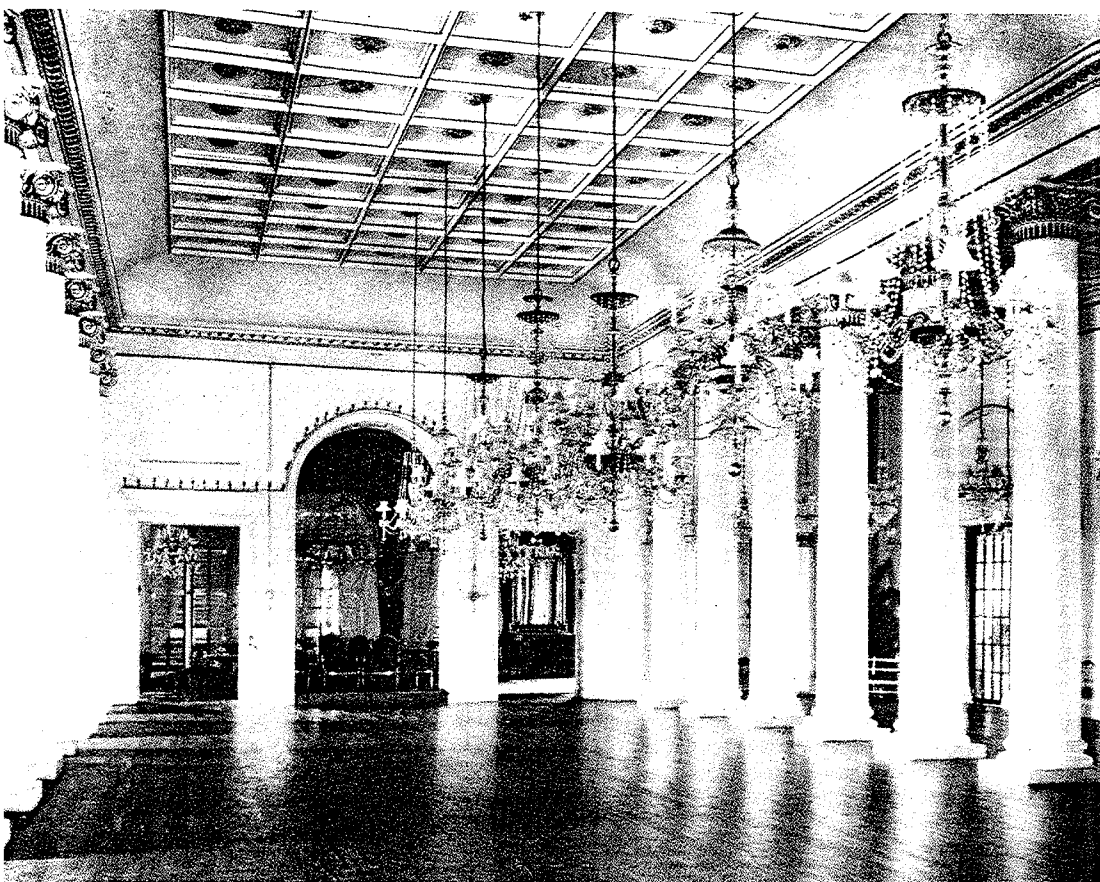
The building is beautifully functional with vistas in all directions – straight through the principal rooms and curved along the corridors. The ceilings have simple painted beams and, in the principal rooms, coffering to designs prepared by H. H. Locke of the Calcutta School of Art, which replaced the original canvas ceilings in 1865. Affinities to Kedleston recur – in particular a line of busts of twelve Caesars. Their origins are obscure but they were a familiar ornamental theme in Palladian houses of the 18th century. The ballroom is the most spectacular space in the house and it was here that the great state balls were held, including the inaugural ball attended by Lord Valentia in January 1803. Valentia described the scene vividly:

The state rooms were for the first time lighted up. At the upper end of the largest was placed a very rich Persian carpet, and in the centre of that, a musnud of crimson and gold, formerly composing part of the ornaments of Tippoo Sultan's throne. On this was a rich chair and stool of state, for Lord Wellesley ... About ten, Lord Wellesley arrived ... The dancing then commenced, and continued till supper. The room was not sufficiently lighted up, yet still the effect was beautiful. The rows of chunam pillars, which supported each side, together with the rest of the room, were of shining white, that gave a contrast to the different dresses of the company. Lord Wellesley wore the Orders of St Patrick, the Crescent in diamonds. Many of the European ladies were richly ornamented with jewels ... The side of the citadel facing the palace was covered with a blaze of light, and all the approaches were lined with lamps suspended from bamboos.

The ballroom was renowned for its mirrors and glass chandeliers, some of which were purchased from the sale of General Claude Martin's



Entrance screen, Government House: Architectural allegory – the British lion triumphant.



The ballroom, Government House. Scene of the inaugural ball and countless state occasions showing the chandeliers which once decorated Claude Martin's fantastic palace-tomb at Lucknow. The coffered plaster ceiling replaced the original canvas one in 1865.

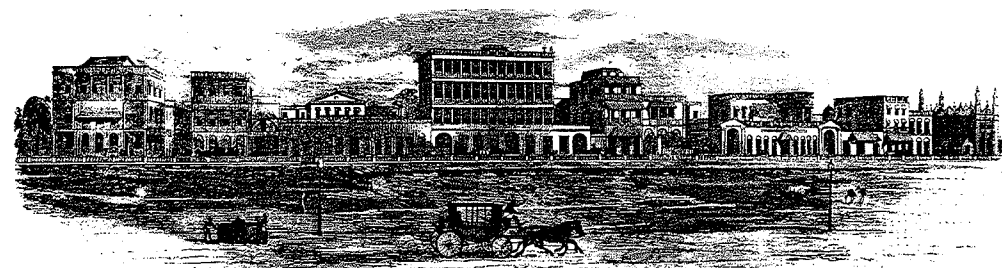
effects and taken from his fantastic palace of Constantia at Lucknow. Miss Emma Roberts noted in 1835: 'handsome sofas of blue satin damask are placed between the pillars, and floods of light are shed through the whole range from a profusion of cut glass chandeliers and lustres.'

Although the new house was generally admired, opinions varied widely. Lord Valentia was firmly in favour:

The sums expended upon it have been considered as extravagant by those who carry European ideas and European economy in to Asia, but they ought to remember that India is a country of splendour, of extravagance and of outward appearance; the Head of a mighty Empire ought to conform himself to the prejudices of the country he rules over . . . In short I wish India to be ruled from a palace, not from a country house; with the ideas of a Prince, not with those of a retail-dealer in muslins and indigo.

This was clearly a passing swipe at the mercantile ethos of the

CALCUTTA: POWER ON SILT



A view of the eastern Esplanade in 1859.

Company. Bishop Heber, always damning with faint praise, thought it 'narrowly missed being a noble structure', dismissed the columns as 'in a paltry style', and concluded 'it has three storeys, all too low, and is too much pierced with windows on every side.' Miss Emma Roberts considered 'it is altogether, whatever may be the fault of its details, a splendid pile.' The architectural historian James Fergusson was well qualified to judge its qualities in a more detached way in 1873. Although he complained of the 'solecism of the order running through two storeys, while standing on a low basement', he concluded 'but, taken altogether there are few modern palaces of its class either more appropriate in design, or more effective in their architectural arrangement and play of light and shade, than this residence.'

Notwithstanding the architectural nuances of the design, the Directors of the East India Company were the most astringent of all critics. Fury at the extravagance and at Wellesley's high-handed style of government led to his recall in July 1805. They maintained they had been kept in total ignorance of the project and its colossal expense (£167,359) but there was little they could do from such a distance. The house was open and in use by the time Wyatt presented the plans in London in October 1804, but a protracted row broke out over financial accountability, which rumbled on long after Wellesley's recall.

The erection of Government House was of seminal importance in the history of Calcutta for it created a focus for the subsequent development of the city. A whole series of classical perspectives were formed with vistas terminated by prominent public buildings and monuments. European ideas of planning, townscape and layout were imposed on an Asian city on a scale which had never before been witnessed, and which was to give Calcutta its name 'city of palaces'. The scale of Government House with its huge open compound, the monumental entrance screens and the grandeur of its colonnaded façades created a centrepiece for the subsequent development of the city and a magnificent focus for British power in India. British aims were no longer mercantile but overtly Imperial.

Mrs Maria Graham arrived in 1809: 'We felt that we were approaching a great capital. On landing I was struck with the general appearance of grandeur in all the buildings; not that any of them are according to the strict rules of art, but groups of columns, porticos, domes and fine gateways, interspersed with trees and the broad river crowded with shipping, made the whole picture magnificent.'

St Andrew's Kirk was designed to close one of the newly-created vistas down Old Court House Street. Placed symmetrically on the axis it was deliberately intended to be a focus in the townscape to upstage the nearby Anglican Church of St John's. The rivalry between Dr Bryce of the Kirk and the Bishop of Calcutta was intense. Bishop Middleton used his influence to prevent the Kirk from obtaining government sanction for a spire. Bryce had travelled with Middleton from England and found him even worse than his other main enemy, the 'prickly heat', and he retorted by declaring he would have a steeple higher than St John's on which a cock would be placed to crow over the Bishop. He succeeded in spite of government opposition and the parlous financial state of the Kirk.

Ironically St Andrew's owes much of its architectural inspiration to St John's, which was widely admired in spite of its architectural and functional deficiencies. The Doric order and frieze are similar, but the steeple is a more successful adaptation of Gibbs's original prototype, and altogether it is a more coherent architectural statement than the loose amalgam of classical detail which characterises St John's. Built by Messrs Burn, Currie & Co, it was opened in March 1818. An early engraving by James Fraser shows its original impact with the entrance portico standing proud of the monotonous façade of Writers' Buildings, a welcome punctuation of the townscape.

The Palladian style, which had been so eloquently expressed in Wellesley's new Government House, continued to prevail and when in 1804 a lottery was held to fund a new Town Hall on the site of the Old Court House, it is no surprise to find that a Tuscan-Doric style was used, firmly in the Palladian tradition. It was designed with a large first-floor saloon for public entertainments and organised meetings with supper and card rooms on the ground storey. The architect was Colonel John Garstin, Chief Engineer for Bengal, whose tomb is preserved in Park Street Cemetery. The building was fraught with problems. During construction the portico collapsed and huge cracks developed in the walls. Two years after its opening in 1813 the ballroom floor developed a spring and the pillars began to crack again. The foundations were blamed, probably rightly, as semi-fluid quicksand caused a history of building collapses in the area. It was overhauled at Garstin's expense in 1818, but he was lampooned by Sir Charles D'Oyly:

When pillars bulged, and their foundations gave
And the Great builder (not to be disgraced)
Commenced anew, folks still were heard to rave
And shunned its tottering walls, as one would shun the grave.

The building complemented Government House and it reflects the adaptation of the Palladian style to an Indian context. The south front has a monumental elegant façade set on a low plinth with the by now characteristic hexastyle portico facing the Maidan. The north portico serves as a carriage entrance.

During the 1820s a number of buildings were erected in India for the purpose of producing a more uniform currency. In Calcutta the new

St Andrew's Kirk, consecrated in 1818.



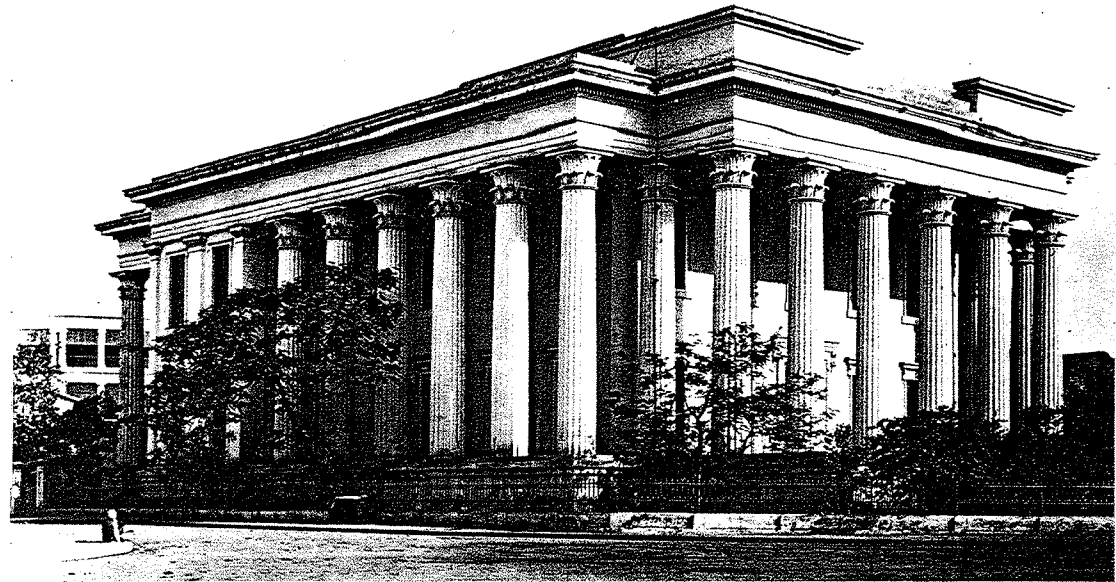
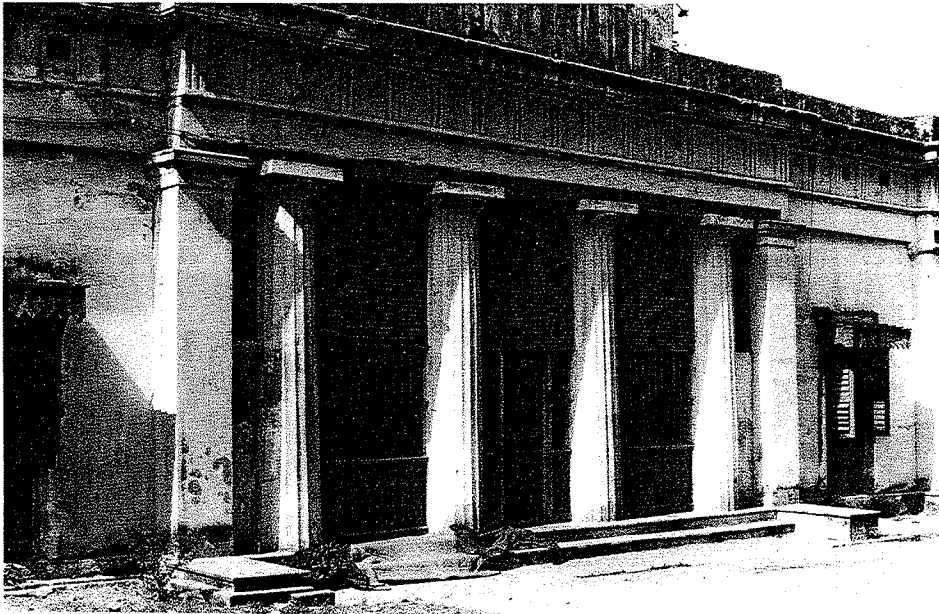
The hexastyle portico of John Garstin's Town Hall, one of the finest buildings of the period. Its demolition has been agreed.



complex marked a substantial departure from the Palladian tradition. The Silver Mint was designed in the latest Greek Revival style, a neo-classical composition creating a striking impact of mass and power. The building is square in plan with a quadrangle in the centre. After the structural failure of the nearby Town Hall, it was built to last with as much brickwork below the soil as above. It was designed by Major W. N. Forbes and took six years to complete, longer than Government House. The building stands on a high platform or stylobate which enhances its impact. The central portico, a copy in half size of the Temple of Minerva in Athens, is set forward from the colonnaded wings, but the authenticity of the building is let down by its clumsy detailing, and in particular, by the manner in which the junction between the abacus and architrave is fudged. In fact the detailing is far crisper on the Mint Master's house opposite, which is a delightful little Greek bungalow with columns in antis enclosing a central verandah. This house demonstrates perfectly two common concessions to the climate – green painted louvred screens between the columns, and *jhilmils*, projecting wooden fretwork canopies over the windows, which have no glass, just louvred shutters.

Given the usual time-lag between European and Indian fashions, the Greek Revival reached India early, but it remained influential for some time. One of the best examples in Calcutta is Metcalfe Hall started in 1840 and opened in 1844. It was founded in honour of Sir Charles Metcalfe, officiating Governor-General between 1835 and 1836, to

The Mint Master's house, facing the old Silver Mint, is a remarkable Greek Revival bungalow. Note the fretwork valances and louvred shutters to the windows.



house the Agricultural and Horticultural Society and the Calcutta Public Library. Later it was intended by Lord Curzon to house the Imperial Library. The building takes the form of a Greek temple with the portico to the principal west front being copied straight from the Tower of the Winds in Athens. The design was chosen by the architect C. K. Robison for its lightness and durability. Colonnades surround the building on three sides, but much of its original impact has been lost by the erection of a high boundary wall which truncates the principal elevations and screens the building.

The conscious pursuit of the Picturesque continued throughout the early 19th century and the classical vistas of Calcutta were progressively enriched with monuments and statuary combining visual amenity with Imperial dignity. In 1824 the northern view from Government House was closed by a stone screen enriched with a beautifully detailed Greek portico enclosing a marble statue of the Marquess of Hastings by John Flaxman. This structure had no functional purpose but was part of a deliberate policy of imparting Imperial grandeur to the capital. In 1866 it was incorporated into the Dalhousie Institute, an Imperial Valhalla, since demolished. A vast column 152 feet high, was raised on the Maidan in honour of Sir David Ochterlony, who had served in every Indian war from the time of Clive onwards, culminating in the conquest of Nepal in 1816. Designed by J. P. Parker in 1828 it is an extraordinary affair – an attenuated Greek Doric column standing on an Egyptian-style plinth and crowned by an upper stage derived from Syrian precedents with a metal cupola of Turkish origin. Inside a circular stone stair winds upward to two narrow viewing platforms.

These major focal points were complemented by public statuary to British figures. Since Independence most have been relocated in the

Metcalfe Hall: The west front is based on the Tower of the Winds in Athens. This fine Greek Revival building is now neglected, the facades truncated by a high boundary wall. C. K. Robison, City magistrate and architect of Metcalfe Hall, is typical of the enlightened amateurs responsible for many British buildings. The book on the table is a copy of Stuart & Revett's Antiquities of Athens, a standard reference work on Greek architecture.

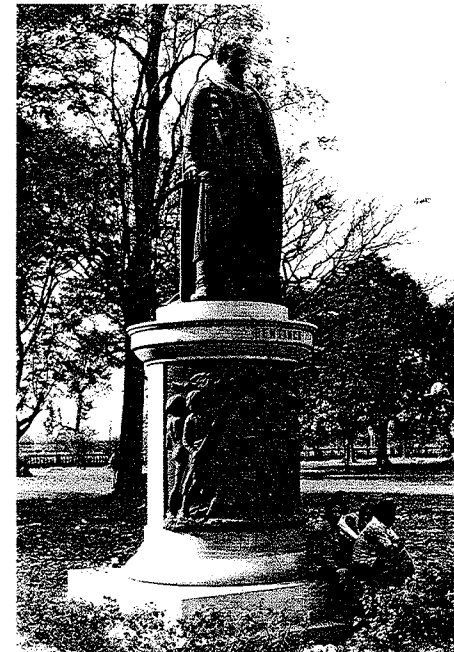




vicinity of the Victoria Memorial. The most eminent sculptors of the time were commissioned and works by Westmacott, Thomas Woolner, Onslow Ford, and J. H. Foley are common. Westmacott's statue of Lord William Bentinck is particularly noteworthy for its effusive inscription to this evangelical radical who abolished suttee. The lower panel depicts a widow-burning ceremony and it is inscribed:

The Ochterlony column designed by J. P. Parker in 1828.

Who during seven years
 Ruled India with eminent providence,
 integrity and benevolence,
 Who, placed at the head of a great empire,
 Never laid aside
 The simplicity and moderation of
 a private citizen.
 Who never forgot that the end of Government
 Is the welfare of the governed,
 Who abolished cruel rites,
 Who effaced humiliating distinctions,
 Who allowed liberty to the expression of
 Public opinion
 Whose constant study it was to elevate
 The moral and intellectual character of the
 Nation committed to his charge.



Lord William Bentinck's statue by Richard Westmacott. The bronze panel depicts a suttee. Bentinck remains highly-regarded in India.

Ironically Bentinck's cultivation of a low-key gubernatorial style so outraged local society that he was compared by one observer to a 'Pennsylvania Quaker', but he did encourage wealthy Indians to sponsor public works. As a result there is a handsome Doric colonnade erected by Raj Chandra Das at Babu's Ghat on the river front. An Ionic pavilion was raised by private subscription at another ghat or landing point to commemorate James Prinsep, the Orientalist.

Bentinck's low-key style remained the exception rather than the rule and, in its accentuation of the martial qualities which underlay the foundation of the Raj, Lord Ellenborough's Gwalior Monument of 1847 is much more typical. This is faced in Jaipur marble and crowned by a cupola made from the metal of guns seized from the enemy during the 1843 war. It was designed by Colonel Goodwyn of the Bengal Engineers. Perhaps the most high-handed expression of these qualities was the dismantling of an entire pagoda from Prome in Burma in 1854 and its trans-shipment and re-erection in Eden Gardens, as a memorial to the First Burmese War. The most eccentric manifestation was Lord Curzon's remodelling of the gardens at the northern end of the Maidan on the plan of the Union Jack.

One of the best-known buildings of the mid-19th century is La Martinière School. The girls' school was designed around a remodelled 18th-century house complete with elephant porch, but in 1835 the boys' school was erected to the designs of J. P. Parker and Captain Hutchinson, a military engineer. It is a rectangular block with Ionic columns which could have been taken straight from Nash's Regent's Park. Faced in chunam, there is a central rotunda now lacking its original dome, with two-storey wings terminating in higher pavilions. The style of public buildings remained firmly in the classical tradition with the ubiquitous use of chunam over a rough brick core. However, by the mid-19th century the heaviness of touch which characterised many of the earlier 18th-century public buildings had been overcome, and over the past hundred years public buildings had multiplied alongside private houses to create a spectacular Imperial capital which engendered civic pride. But there was another side to the city, an appalling underworld of poverty and despair which Kipling portrayed in 'The City of Dreadful Night', where thousands of people slept each night in the gutters outside the palaces of the rich. This was the darker side of mercantile wealth, urban squalor breeding pestilence and disease, the harrowing human price paid by the poor in the 19th century, from Birmingham to Bengal. It was as much a part of the reality of the city as the glittering balls and the sumptuous ceremonial.

Me the Sea-captain loved, the River built,
Wealth sought and Kings adventured life to hold.
Hail England! I am Asia – Power on silt
Death in my hands, but Gold!

CHAPTER 4

CANTONMENT AND RESIDENCY

By the late 18th century the British controlled such large areas of India that a new military strategy was evolved based on the rapid deployment of troops and artillery. This had profound consequences for settlement patterns and for the actual form and layout of urban areas. The concentration of troops in city centres was replaced by separate camps, cantonments, on the periphery of the main cities. From 1800 onward real military power resided in the tree-lined avenues and neatly clipped compounds of these suburban settlements rather than in the formidable bastions of the city forts, which were reduced to mere symbols of Imperial power. It was no coincidence that in the Great Mutiny of 1857 the British were invested not in their old fortified strongholds, but amongst the bungalows and residencies of the European quarters. The origin of cantonments may have been dictated by military necessity, but they had a profound impact on the whole social and spatial structure of British India. They represented the first stage in the physical separation of the rulers and ruled which characterised the Raj; a phenomenon which at its best promoted an aloof incorruptible government and at its worst, arrogant ideas of racial superiority. Insulated from the teeming bazaars of the native quarters, cushioned from the chaos and squalor of native life, the British created a wholly separate existence which bore little relation to the real India. Thus the growth of the cantonment marks a parting of the ways between European and Indian societies. The easy-going familiarity and cultural and social miscegenation which characterised the early settlements was superseded, and the first steps were taken down the road of misunderstanding which led to the charnel house of 1857.

The concept of the cantonment arose from the Moghul practice of peripatetic government. Sir Thomas Roe had noted as early as 1616 that on tour the royal camp covered an area of twenty square miles and that it was organised like a town with regular streets where each nobleman or tradesman had his allotted place, topographically and socially. Like so many other institutions, the British merely adapted this established pattern of life to their own ends, and it suited the hierarchical nature of English society as well, if not better than Moghul India. In reality the actual cantonment was a petrified military camp. Indeed the early cantonments were little more than organised avenues of military tents, and in some areas they remained so when the military presence was likely to be temporary. However, where a permanent garrison was kept, tents soon gave way to thatched bungalows, which in turn were replaced by permanent facilities of mess-rooms, barracks, officers' bungalows, clubs and garrison churches.

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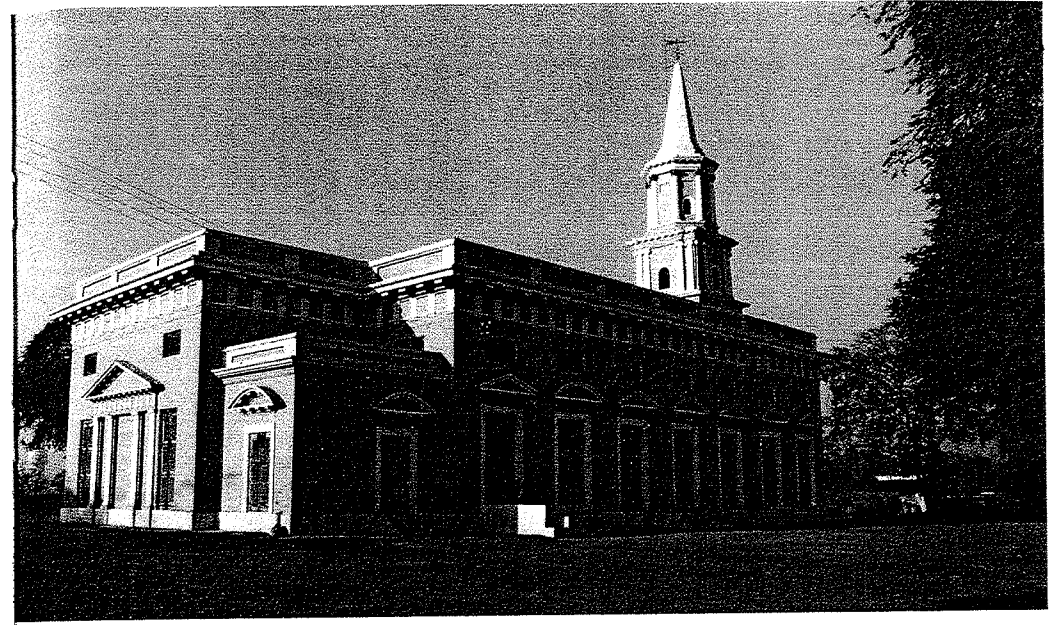


Barrackpore cantonment in the 1870s showing individual bungalows and outhouses in separate compounds. The physical separation of the Europeans into their own cantonments fostered ignorance and racial arrogance as well as aloof incorruptibility.

The layouts and plans of British cantonments tend to differ in the juxtaposition of their constituent parts, but a common pattern may be discerned. Generally they lay five or six miles from the city which they guarded; between city and cantonment were placed the lines of the Indian regiments. This careful segregation of the Indian lines was far more common after the Mutiny had demonstrated the danger of billeting Indian troops within the European quarter. Within the cantonment the civil and military lines were usually kept apart. Most stations were laid out on a grid-pattern of spacious avenues lined with pretty classical bungalows. Each bungalow, designed with a verandah on three sides, was set in its own garden compound and shaded by bougainvillea, climbing plants and elaborate trelliswork. Large open areas were laid out as parade grounds for drill and training, whilst the bigger garrisons had their own clubs, racecourses and parks. The focus for most cantonments was the church.

Agra and Benares have typical cantonment churches of a very similar design and pattern. Both are set in large grass enclosures studded with decaying monuments to forgotten men and women, and both follow the same architectural precedent with steeples based on St John's, Calcutta.

St George's, Agra was built in 1826 to the designs of Colonel J. T. Boileau, Royal Engineers, although the tower and spire were added later. Boileau and his brother were an eccentric pair. Many years later in Simla they astonished polite society by receiving the Commander-in-Chief at their house, each brother standing on his head beside the main



pillars of the central porch, like a pair of inverted statues. Surprisingly the church is conventional and restrained, the entrance being approached through a small vestibule with niches. The interior is divided into a central nave and side aisles by six Ionic columns carrying a slightly vaulted roof. The chancel at the east end has been Gothicised at a later date with a carved white sandstone screen, whilst the altar and reredos are enriched with the marble inlay work for which Agra is famous. The internal ornament is predictable – a heavy dentilled cornice to the nave and aisles and simple reeded architraves with corner rosettes to the doors and windows. Its interest lies in the external treatment. The aisles have louvred doors in the place of windows, a common enough expedient, but the alternating segmental and triangular pediments over each opening are applied straight onto the bare plasterwork like eyebrows, without any supporting pilasters, frieze or order beneath. At the west end the chancel wall is treated in a similar fashion with an implied portico, but it is all surface detail with no structural or functional role. The result is rather delightful; the contrast of white plaster ornament on yellow ochre walls accentuated by the glare of the Indian sun, the crisp horizontal emphasis of the parapet cornice, the repetitive rhythm of pediments to the window openings and the simple rectangular fanlights over, coalesce to form a composition of elegance and charm which would hold its own in Europe.

St Mary's, Benares is similar. The steeple, entablature and frieze are

(Above) St George's, Agra: a typical cantonment church in Upper India designed by Colonel J. T. Boileau in 1826 (Below).



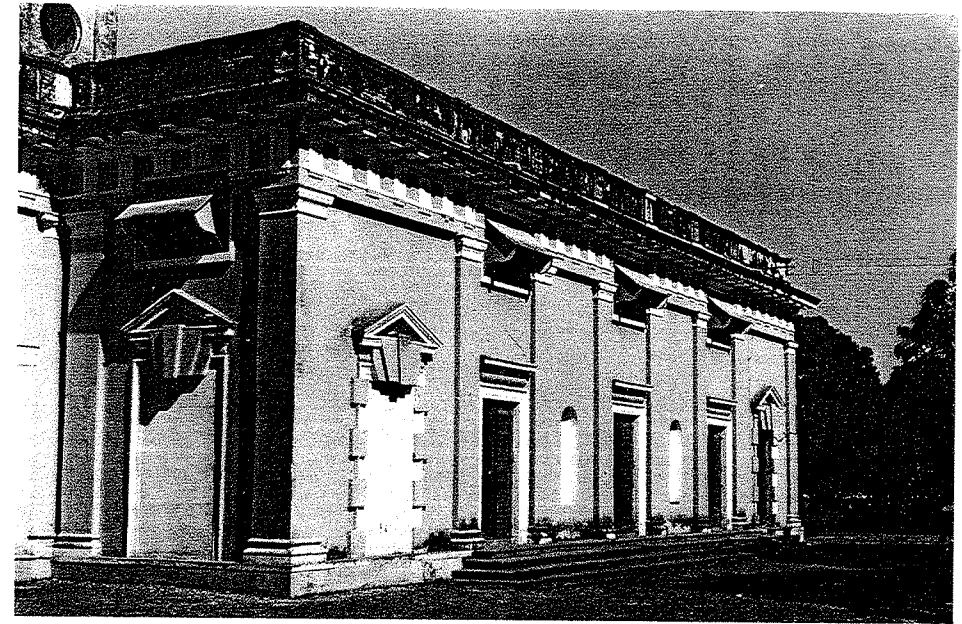
common themes, but St Mary's has a portico, clumsily infilled later. The external treatment of the aisles shows several important differences. The flank elevations are divided by pilasters into seven bays, the two outer bays having blind doorcases enriched with blocked surrounds and keystones in the manner of Gibbs, whilst the five central bays are played down, three with simple louvred doors beneath plain cornices alternating with two bays each with white plaster niches. Above each doorway is a rectangular fanlight protected from the glare of the sun by a plain timber canopy, a simple innocuous device, but one which has a major architectural impact. The frieze has been severed to accommodate each hood and their projection is thrown into sharper relief by the sun than is the case with the elaborate blocked doorways at each end.

Agra and Benares exhibit typical variations on the same ecclesiastical theme, which recurs in many of the up-country churches erected by the British in the early part of the nineteenth century. Nor was this just confined to Bengal. For instance St Mary's, Poona follows a similar pattern. Indeed the character, layout and ambience of the English cantonments share a common flavour, so that from Bangalore to Peshawar, and from Poona to Dum Dum the quintessential Englishness of it all shows through in spite of regional variations.

Barrackpore, fifteen miles from Calcutta, is different. Although it was founded as a cantonment in 1775, it was not typical as it housed the summer residence of the Governors-General. Unlike most cantonments Barrackpore grew up piecemeal in response to changing needs and circumstances. In the mid-1770s it comprised a few crude bungalows interspersed amongst tents, but within fifty years it had become a nerve-centre of the British Empire in India.

The importance of Barrackpore was due to the enthusiasm of Wellesley, who did so much to transform English interests in India from the solely mercantile to the Imperial. Not content with the extravagant expenditure on Government House, Calcutta, he was anxious to find a suitable residence for the hot season. In 1801 he took over the use of the Commander-in-Chief's bungalow, and Captain Charles Wyatt was appointed to supervise repairs and improvements. It is depicted by Henry Salt, the artist, as a simple villa with an Ionic portico, but it became unsafe and in 1804 Wellesley ordered a far more impressive structure to be built. Wellesley's vision of a summer residence was as grandiloquent as his concept for the new Government House. It is alleged that a grand avenue was planned to link the two houses. This is not proven, but he was responsible for planting an avenue of trees at twelve-foot centres all along the Grand Trunk Road from Calcutta to Barrackpore. In 1856 Lady Canning noted: 'The last ten or twelve miles of the road are as straight as an arrow and bordered all the way with beautiful trees, planted in Lord Wellesley's time, mango, banyan, indian-rubber, peepul-like white poplars - teak, with enormous leaves, laurel of several sorts, mimosas, tamarinds etc.' The avenue was devastated by a cyclone in 1864, but it was replanted subsequently, and it is visible to this day.

Wellesley's summer palace had only reached plinth height when he



was recalled to London by the Court of Directors for the extravagance of Government House. They were incensed when they heard of Barrackpore and its estimated cost of £50,000. Sir Charles D'Oyly in *Tom Raw* put it to verse:

The flank elevation of St Mary's, Benares, showing the blind doorcases and blocked surrounds. The frieze has been designed to accommodate the hooded ventilators.

Wellesley first stamp'd it his. He was the boy
For making ducks and drakes with public cash,
Planned a great house that time might not destroy;
Built the first floor, prepared brick, beam and sash,
And then returned, and left it in this dismal hash.

The building lay a melancholy ruin for some years, before Lady Hastings built a conservatory on the site.

Barrackpore remained a favourite resort, and during the ten-year rule of Lord Hastings (1813-1823), one of Wellesley's temporary buildings was remodelled into a summer residence for the Governor-General. The architect was Captain Thomas Anbury, who had succeeded Wyatt; he created an imposing country mansion with a deep entrance portico of eight Tuscan columns on the north façade, and with colonnaded verandahs to the other three sides.

The house was never large and always lacked space for guests, who stayed in bungalows dispersed in the park. An immense drawing room occupied the *piano nobile*, designed for balls and receptions, and there was a dining room and billiards room. Although grandly conceived, the



The country retreat of the Governor-General at Barrackpore designed by Captain Thomas Anbury.

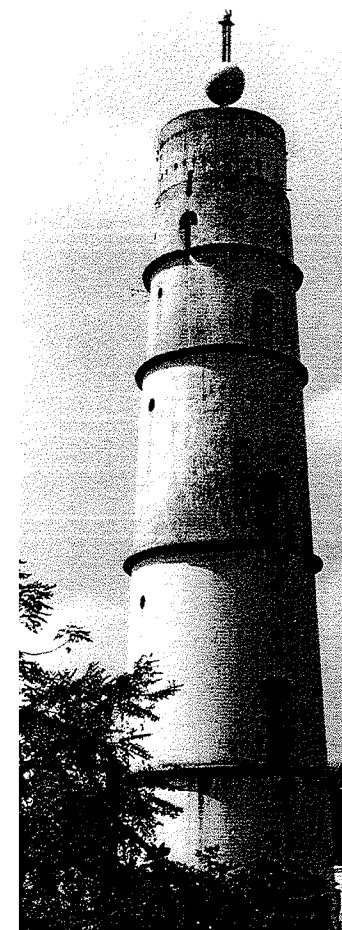
house always had an air of decrepitude with a shortage of suitable furniture. In the words of Emily Eden, Lord Auckland's sister, there were 'no glass windows in the lower storey, and there are no doors whatever to the interior of our part of the house – nothing but open jalousies and (this) spoils our comfort' . . . 'The furniture is worse than that of any London hotel.'

One of the greatest delights of the house was its setting, on an open sweep of the Hooghly with distant views of the Danish colony of Serampore on the opposite bank. Wellesley had enlarged and landscaped the park into an Arcadian vision. Great mounds of earth had been formed to break up the flat ground into an undulating landscape. A series of walks were laid out through gardens designed on English lines, each new incumbent of the house adding their own special contribution. Lord Hastings imported a marble basin and fountain, part of the Royal Baths from the palace at Agra. Lady Canning laid out an Italian garden and planted many more exotic species – bougainvillea, convolvulus, palms and tropical plants, but the strangest feature of the park was the menagerie which provided amusement for many visitors. This had its origin in an abortive scheme of Wellesley's to form a Natural History Institution, but the animals ended up at Barrackpore. The cages in which the animals were kept were treated as ornamental garden features and were designed as neo-classical temples and pavilions, the water birds being kept in delightful Gothic arcades erected over tanks of water. In its heyday the park and grounds must have been an exotic sight. Bishop Heber confronted some lynxes being taken for a stroll in the park in 1823, whilst the elephant stud provided opportunities for evening rides along the river bank on beasts bedecked in magnificent state hangings of scarlet and gold.

Wellesley's pursuit of the Picturesque in the form of an English country retreat on the banks of the Hooghly was fulfilled by his

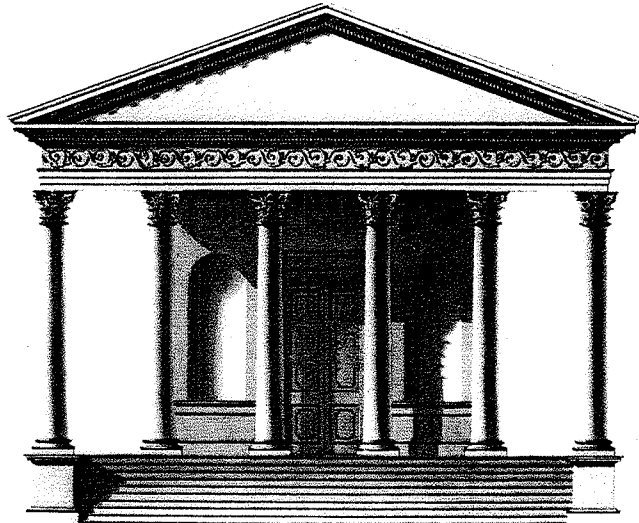
successors, albeit on a less lavish scale and in a more relaxed form than he envisaged. Over the years a number of ancillary buildings and monuments were added to the grounds to enhance its attractions. From the earliest days the round semaphore tower was a conspicuous feature of the grounds, part of a chain of stations for signalling up-river, but the first Lord Minto provided a more elegant and evocative monument in the form of a Greek temple dedicated to the twenty-four officers who had fallen in the conquest of Java and the Île de France (Mauritius) between 1810 and 1811. The Temple of Fame, as it is known, was designed by George Rodney Blane in about 1815. The ends are pedimented hexastyle Corinthian porticos, and the flanks have colonnades of a similar order. The memorial chamber is a simple barrel vault with four black tablets and wall panels commemorating the fallen. With its inscription 'To the Memory of the Brave', it is reminiscent of an 'Heroum' of the Ancient World, but one transplanted to an Oriental setting of palm trees and lush tropical vegetation. Since its erection a plaque has been added to commemorate the battles of Maharajpur and Pannier in the Gwalior Campaign of 1843. Recently the Indian authorities have re-erected some of the discarded equestrian statues from Calcutta on brick plinths alongside the Temple, a remarkably sensitive and practical solution to the problem posed by Imperial statuary in a post-Imperial world. Here on the banks of the Hooghly stand King George V, Peel, Minto, Mayo, Lansdowne, Roberts, Woodburn and Lord Napier of Magdala, assembled as if about to participate in some Viceregal handicap. Napier's statue has a replica at Queen's Gate, London.

One of the most poignant monuments of all is the grave of Lady Charlotte Canning, who died at Calcutta on 18th November 1861 at the age of 44. This sweet and charming lady contracted malaria whilst returning from Darjeeling across the fever-ridden Terai. It was decided to lay her to rest in the gardens she loved and which she had done so much to enhance. Her distraught husband haunted the grave day and



(Above) Barrackpore: The circular semaphore tower, one of a chain of stations for signalling up-river. (Left) The Temple of Fame, Barrackpore, commemorates those who fell in the conquest of Java and Mauritius. The statue in the foreground is of Field Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar. King George V may be glimpsed between the columns on the right of the picture.

The pedimented front elevation of the Temple of Fame recalls the memorials of classical antiquity.



night in an anguish of despair. He died seven months later and lies in Westminster Abbey, 7,000 miles from his devoted wife and companion. The delicacy of feeling shown by the Indian authorities is such that Canning's statue has been moved from Calcutta to Barrackpore, where he stands on a newly-erected pedestal overlooking his wife's grave, a fitting tribute to a man whose clemency did much to reunite India and to salve the wounds inflicted by the Mutiny.

Lady Canning's distinctive memorial crowned by the cross of St Andrew is a replica. The original designed by George Gilbert Scott on a theme suggested by her sister Louisa, Lady Waterford was transferred to St Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta, and thence to St John's Church where it stands in the north portico, the beautiful marble inlay work pitted by the monsoon rains. The original iron enclosure to the tomb, designed from the intertwined initials of her name (C.C.), survives at Barrackpore.

Today Barrackpore has lost much of its original character. The house is used as a police hospital. The great drawing room is a typhoid ward, where a scoreboard shows the number of patients, recoveries and deaths, like some bizarre cricket match:

For when the One Great Scorer comes
To write against your name
He marks – not that you won or lost –
But how you played the game.

The marble fountain from Agra is cracked and ruinous, the house dilapidated and the grounds given over to the police and army. But it's all still there – The Temple of Fame, the bungalows, the Great Banyan



tree from which the first mutineer Mangal Pande was hanged, and even the memorial to *Myall King*, Lord William Beresford's racehorse, three times winner of the Viceroy's Cup, Calcutta, who died on the racecourse in 1893 and who lies in the garden of Lord Kitchener's former bungalow.

With the expansion of British political power in the late 18th century, Europeans became a common sight throughout Bengal, Bihar and Orissa. They aroused no more interest than the numerous waves of conquerors who had preceded them. As the administrative and revenue-collecting arms of the Company were consolidated, European dwellings sprang up in rural areas and provincial towns to house a growing number of officials and merchants. In the early years most were content with simple vernacular dwellings, but their growing political and personal prestige coupled with the desire for European standards of comfort led to new residences on European lines.

In rural areas most follow a recognisable pattern based on the country residences outside Calcutta, a plain plastered rectangular block with an entrance portico and verandahs set in a large garden compound, but there are delightful exceptions. At Bankipur outside Patna there is a fine Gothick house with crenellated parapets, rusticated staircase towers and pointed arched windows decorated with hood moulds. The entrance portico is a beautiful hybrid, neither wholly European nor Indian in conception. In the mofussil often grander structures were built to convey the power and authority of the Company to the local population.

Benares, the religious centre of Hindu India, came under British control in 1775 and it delighted British antiquaries. One such man was

The grave of Lady Charlotte Canning beside the Hooghly river, designed by George Gilbert Scott in collaboration with her sister Louisa, Lady Waterford. The ornamental ironwork of her intertwined initials (C.C.) may be seen in the background.

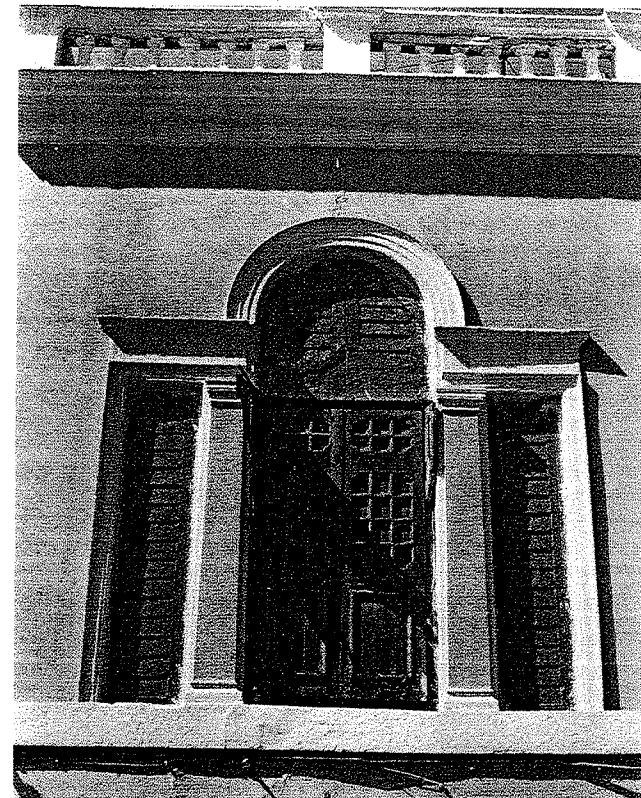
James Prinsep who was Assay Master to the Mint between 1820 and 1830. He was a gifted Orientalist and scholar with a profound interest in and respect for the astonishing architectural heritage of the city. He carefully surveyed many historic buildings and monuments and instigated a programme of restoration and repair. It was an important step in the interpenetration of two cultures, which fostered a fascinating exchange of cultural and artistic values. From 1815 onward the Indians learnt European painting techniques, depicting Hindu ceremonies and practices for the British, whilst the British acquired a far deeper knowledge of the complex social and religious customs of their subjects. One unusual result of this was the erection of an Indian well in the English village of Ipsden in the Chilterns. The Maharajah of Benares became a close friend of the Commissioner Edward Anderton Reade between 1846 and 1853. On Reade's retirement to England the Maharajah wanted to give to a charity and, recalling how Reade compared the water problems of Benares to his own native Chilterns, he donated funds for a well in his village. The cast-iron well, designed by Reade with a Saracenic dome, bears witness to the warmth of the personal relationships which often bridged the two cultures.

There are two typical buildings of the early 19th century in Benares – the Mint, designed by James Prinsep, and the Nandeswar Kothi opposite. The Mint has been altered extensively from Prinsep's original design and is now given over to a carpet showroom and airline offices, but interior details of the period survive including reeded architraves, raised and fielded six-panel doors and a few pretty chimneypieces with fluting and corner rosettes.

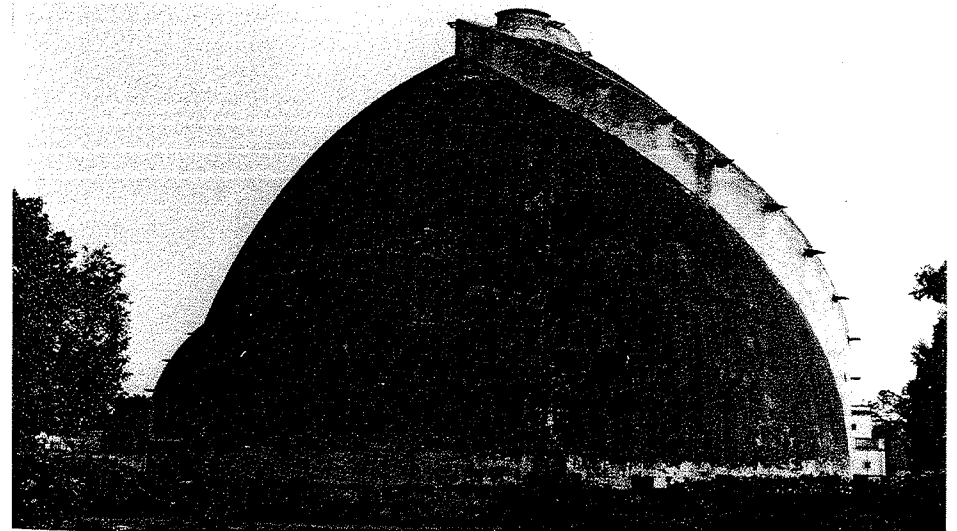
The Nandeswar Kothi stands in its own grounds opposite the former Mint and is owned by the Maharajah. King George V and Queen Mary stayed here in 1906, as the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the house has been altered little since. Today a new hotel and the shops of the bazaar have encroached upon the compound, but the interior lingers on in a state of splendid decay. The watercolours decorating the walls are spotted with mould, the pictures of the Viceroy Lord Lytton, turned yellow with age, whilst the drapes and hunting trophies are eaten by moth and worm. It was in this house that Mr Samuel Davis, the Judge and Magistrate, was besieged by the followers of Wazir Ali, the deposed Nawab of Oudh in January 1799. The mob killed the British resident nearby and attacked the house. The Judge sent his family on to the roof and successfully defended the staircase single handed with a spear, until the cavalry galloped to the rescue from the old cantonment.

If life could be precarious for up-country Europeans, it was far more so for the native cultivator, who often not only was oppressed by local native landowners and banias, or money-lenders, but also suffered from the unpredictable vicissitudes of the climate. Crop failure and famine were endemic and in the late 1770s this prompted Company intervention with the idea of erecting 'golas' or storehouses for grain for use in times of famine. Accordingly in 1786 a monumental conical structure was erected at Bankipur, near Patna.

The Gola is probably the most extraordinary building erected anywhere in the British Empire. It was designed by John Garstin, later



Nandeswar Kothi, Benares: Venetian window. The roof above was defended by Samuel Davis in 1799.



The Gola, Patna: Designed by John Garstin in 1786. The cantilevered stone platforms are resting places for sacks of grain on the long climb to the top.

Surveyor-General of Bengal and the architect of Calcutta Town Hall, but in 1786 a humble Captain of Engineers. He was born in Manchester Square, London and was one of the most gifted military engineers in India. His tomb in Park Street Cemetery, Calcutta is one of its finest surviving neo-classical monuments and it is a fitting tribute to a man whose work did much to raise the architectural quality of Anglo-Indian buildings.

The drawings of the Gola are preserved in the British Museum and they show a vast beehive-like structure over ninety feet high. The shape is conical with symmetrical spiral ramps up the outside to an opening at the top where the grain was thrown in. Cantilevered stone platforms recur every ten feet or so on which to rest the sacks of grain. The scale is gigantic – 426 feet round at the base, a diameter of 109 feet internally and walls over 12 feet thick. Murray's *Handbook to Bengal*, a fascinating repository of obscure facts, alleges that Prince Jang Bahadur of Nepal once rode a horse up the ramp to the summit, whilst inside 'a blow on a tin case there fills the air with a storm of sounds, which can be compared to nothing so well as to the hurtling of volleys of tent-pegs thrown from every quarter with great violence'. A contemporary of



Major-General John Garstin,
Surveyor-General of Bengal, by John
Opie.

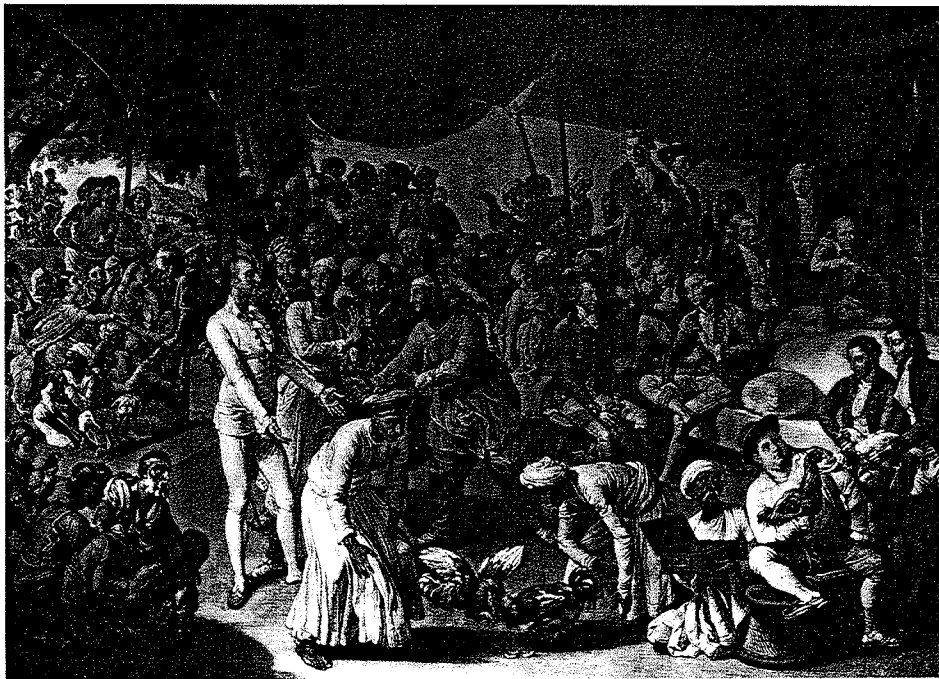
Garstin's who visited the Gola in 1806 was more direct on its acoustics. 'It has so good an echo that it repeats 32 times', she noted.

Architecturally this bizarre structure has been compared to the superhuman, neo-classical visions of Nicholas Ledoux and the megalomaniac schemes of his French associates, but this seems rather fanciful. Its importance lies in another direction. The symbolic beehive form is dictated by its function and it is entirely devoid of any superfluous ornament. Its origins probably lie in the circular godowns and conical storehouses which were once common in the area, but the scale has been transformed to the monumental. Whether or not Garstin was attempting to make any sort of architectural statement it is difficult to say, but it is unlikely that as a military engineer he was motivated by anything deeper than functional necessity. The building was rarely used, as it could not contain more than a day's ration for the local population, and the expansion of the chain used in the structure was a design fault which led to the cracking of the brick and plaster shell. Today it is as much a curiosity as when it was first built, but glimpsed from the river it is an evocative landmark and one well worth preservation. At sunrise the views from the summit are truly magnificent with distant prospects of the sails of the river traffic framed by the palm-fringed shores of the Ganges.

Imperialism implies control, but the Company tried where possible to consolidate its position through indirect influence rather than direct rule. Even at the height of the Raj, over two-fifths of India was administered by native princes. In the late 18th century Oudh and Hyderabad were regarded as the most important native allies where it was essential to maintain English suzerainty. The idea of a controlled native state was not new. It had influenced Clive in his handling of the situation in Bengal, and the French in Hyderabad,

The Nawabs of Oudh were renowned for their fabulous wealth and for their sybaritic court. In the last quarter of the 18th century the Nawab was Asaf-ud-daula, a man 'mild in manners, polite and affable in his conduct', possessing no great mental powers, but well-disposed towards the English. He was fascinated by the new technology of the age and expended over £200,000 each year on English goods, often with little idea of how they worked or should be displayed. 'Without taste or judgment, he was extremely solicitous to possess all that was elegant and rare ... and his museum was so ridiculously displayed, that a wooden cuckoo clock was placed close to a superb timepiece which cost the price of a diadem.'

During this crucial period of expansion and consolidation, an English Resident was maintained at the capital in Lucknow to advise and, where possible, to exert influence over foreign policy. The Nawab paid for and erected a splendid Residency as part of a wider programme of civic improvements, which reflected the magnificence of his court. He enjoyed over twenty palaces and a hundred gardens and parks. However, it was a Frenchman in the service of the Company who acted as its unofficial agent and who was responsible for maintaining a smooth relationship with the Court, often acting in trusted liaison between the Nawab and Resident. He was Major-General Claude



Colonel Mordaunt's Cockfight by John Zoffany. Claude Martin is on the sofa, holding his calf.

Martin, a charismatic figure, who served initially as a French soldier under Lally. After capture at Pondicherry in 1761 he formed a company of chasseurs and served the English East India Company. From 1760 onwards he worked for the Surveyor-General of Bengal in a variety of capacities and learnt a wide range of skills from ballistics and cartography, to engineering and architecture. Most engineer officers were expected to undertake a wide range of tasks, and many were more than adept in a variety of different fields out of sheer necessity. Thus when Martin retired from active service through ill-health in 1779 it is no surprise to find him as a watchmaker, gunsmith, balloonist, amateur diplomat, surveyor and architect with novel ideas on design and construction. In 1782 he was promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel by the Company for his efforts in dissuading the Nawab from supporting the rebellion by the Raja of Benares the year before. In 1784 we find him mediating between the Court and the Resident and indigo farming with the Frenchman De Boigne. As late as 1792 he returned to active service and served Cornwallis well in Mysore, for which he was made a full Colonel, before returning to Lucknow, where, by a combination of astute money lending and business acumen in the indigo trade, he amassed a huge fortune which he lavished on his two houses – the Farhad Baksh and Constantia.

Thomas Twining visited his town house, the Farhad Baksh, in January 1795:

In the afternoon we were introduced to Colonel Martin, an officer who had acquired considerable celebrity in this part of India ...

We found him in a large and elegant mansion, lately built by himself, on the banks of the Goomty ... The house had the appearance of a fortified castle, and was indeed constructed with a view to defence, with draw-bridges, loopholes and turrets, and water, when desired, all round ... The most handsome room was one which he had constructed over the river itself, the exterior walls resting upon pillars placed in the middle of the Goomty.

Today the Farhad Baksh is unrecognisable, having been extensively altered and incorporated into a later palace, but it does illustrate Martin's idiosyncratic tastes in architecture and an obsession with defence, which are the hallmarks of his surviving palace-tomb, Constantia. Constantia is an extravagant architectural fantasy in a city with a reputation for architectural exuberance. Today it houses La Martinière Boys' School, a foundation established from some of the proceeds of Martin's will. This adds a further bizarre dimension to the whole edifice, for the speech, slang, interests and uniforms of the boys are those of Edwardian Harrow or Eton. It was here that Kipling's boy-hero Kim was supposed to have been educated, but India hardly intrudes at all. Here is an English public school, endowed by a parvenu French General, and housed in a fabulous mausoleum in the heart of India. The names of the boy's houses – 'Hodson', 'Cornwallis', 'Lyons' and 'Martin' – evoke an ethos long since vanished from the mother country.

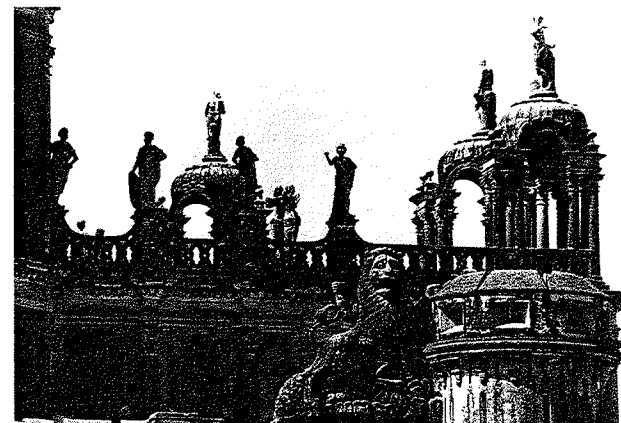
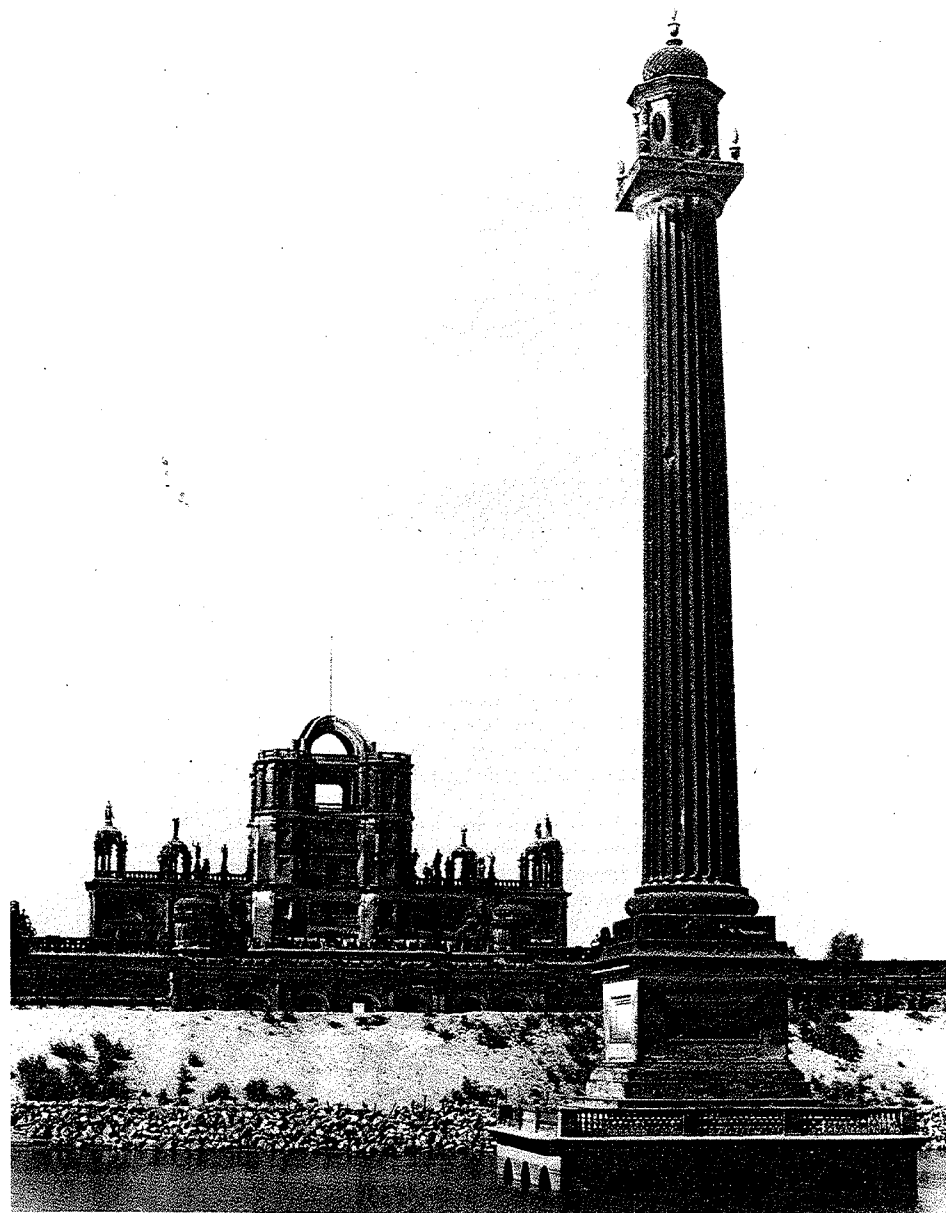
As a work of architecture it is a real hybrid, a disturbing restless building of the most peculiar design. Situated on an immense podium it is a symmetrical pile with an arcaded lower storey from behind which rises a huge central tower formed from four octagonal corner turrets linked by bridges. The first storey has corner pavilions and lines of sculpture figures in full silhouette on the skyline. Vast heraldic lions, taken from the Company coat of arms, loom over the ground storey, and the whole resplendent mass faces a large lake from the centre of which arises a substantial fluted pillar. The curved side wings were added in 1840, and these enhance the impact. Unfortunately flood precaution measures and a large earth dyke have severed the house from the lake, radically impairing the composition. The building was completed over thirty years after Martin's death by R. H. Rattray, but the Calcutta architect J. P. Parker supervised and it is no coincidence that the fluted column in the lake resembles the Ochterlony Column, for he designed them both.

Lord Valentia visited the house in 1803 and thought it:

A strange fantastical building of every species of architecture, and adorned with minute stucco fret-work, enormous red lions with lamps instead of eyes, Chinese mandarins and ladies with shaking heads, and all the gods and goddesses of heathen mythology. It has a handsome effect at a distance, from a lofty tower in the centre with four turrets; but on a nearer approach, the wretched taste of the ornament only excites contempt. A more extraordinary combination of Gothic towers, and Grecian pilasters, I believe was never before raised.



Claude Martin by Renaldi.



Bizarre ornamental statuary embellishes the skyline of Constantia. The lion's eyes glowed red during Lord Valentia's visit in 1803.

The interior is equally lavish. The original reception rooms are now used by the school as a library and chapel. They are covered in a riot of bastardised rococo ornament executed by imported Italian craftsmen. Hundreds of real Wedgwood plaques and bas reliefs are pegged into the plasterwork which is moulded into myriads of arcane shapes and devices, including Martin's own coat of arms. In the central tower the rooms are linked by a circular purdah gallery half-way up the walls. Martin devised his own ingenious air-cooling system. Great pillars run from the top to the bottom of the building in the centre of which are air shafts with holes to each room, allowing warm air to rise and cooler air to descend. Beneath the great podium lies the *tykhana*, a characteristic feature of houses in Oudh, a whole complex of underground rooms for use in the hot weather. These were provided beneath the new Residency built by the Nawab for the English Resident, but Thomas Twining believed them to be experimental when he visited Martin in 1795. The palace was still under construction. He was critical of the smoke and heat from the number of lamps needed to light the subterranean chambers, but Martin seemed undeterred and already he had planned to site his tomb there.

Martin died of bladder stone on 13th September 1800. His tomb lies beneath the tower in a vaulted chamber, approached through huge iron doors. Originally the stone figures of four life-size sepoy soldiers stood sentinel over the tomb, but these were destroyed in 1857 when the building was occupied by mutineers and Martin's bones were scattered. The bones were later reinterred, but the sepoy soldiers never resumed their silent vigil.

Martin is a mysterious figure, grown more so with the passage of time. Undoubtedly he acted as a sort of double agent in the interests of the Company, but spiritually he was a Renaissance man — a condottiere, artist, man of science, banker, engineer, craftsman and liberal benefactor. Even more strange is the vehement attack mounted on him after his death by Lord Valentia. In a scurrilous passage he wrote: 'a more infamous or despicable character than the late General Martin never

(Left) Constantia, Lucknow: The fantastic palace-tomb of Claude Martin erected to his own peculiar designs. It now houses La Martinière School. The column was built by J. P. Parker after Martin's death.

existed. He had not a single virtue, though he laboured to assume the appearance of several.' The precise reason for this vitriolic attack on Martin is unclear, but doubtless his Oriental lifestyle (he kept four wives) was partly to blame. There were also wild allegations about the origin of his wealth motivated as much by jealousy as anything else. His portraits by Zoffany, Chinnery and Renaldi show a person of refinement, a tall man with a fine figure, open countenance, and keen and vivacious eyes. The contents of his will bear witness to the essential goodness of his character. It is partly a profession of faith, and partly an apology for his life as well as a final testament. The greater part of his fortune went towards the foundation of educational institutions for boys and girls in Lucknow, Calcutta and Lyons, his home town, the rest went to a trust for the poor of all faiths in Calcutta, Lucknow and Chandernagore. He left handsome pensions for his wives and the many dependent women and children whom he took under his wing, who had been deserted or abandoned as orphans by Europeans, so the aura of impropriety that attaches to his name seems undeserved. Unfortunately his great library and art collection and much of his furniture were dispersed at auction on his death, the chandeliers from Constantia ending up in Government House, Calcutta.

If the Company owed its favoured position in Oudh to the work of the Resident and the court activities of Martin, at Hyderabad in the Deccan it owed as much to a similar charismatic figure, but one made in a very English mould. He was James Achilles Kirkpatrick.

Kirkpatrick was born in 1764 at Keston, near Bromley, Kent, the youngest of three brothers. Educated at Eton, he arrived in India as a cadet in 1779, but after ten years he was invalided home. His brother, Colonel William Kirkpatrick, was Resident at Hyderabad, and when James returned to India after convalescence he assumed a position on his brother's staff as translator to the Nizam. The post was important for Hyderabad was one of the largest native states – a fragment of the old Moghul Empire covering an area the size of mainland Britain with the Nizam at its head.

In 1797 William Kirkpatrick was relieved of duty through ill-health. His younger brother succeeded him, and over the next nine years he negotiated three important treaties. By a combination of personal charm, diplomatic guile and a lightning *coup de main* he prevailed upon the Nizam to replace his French troops with a British subsidiary force. In a dramatic confrontation with 14,000 French-trained sepoys and over 120 French officers, the Nizam's resolve wavered but Kirkpatrick retained his nerve and secured the surrender of the entire French force without bloodshed. With the French departure British suzerainty was established and the last major centre of French influence in Southern India vanished. For establishing effective British paramountcy, at minimal cost, and for removing a persistent nuisance from the British flank, Kirkpatrick was made an honorary aide-de-camp to the Governor-General.

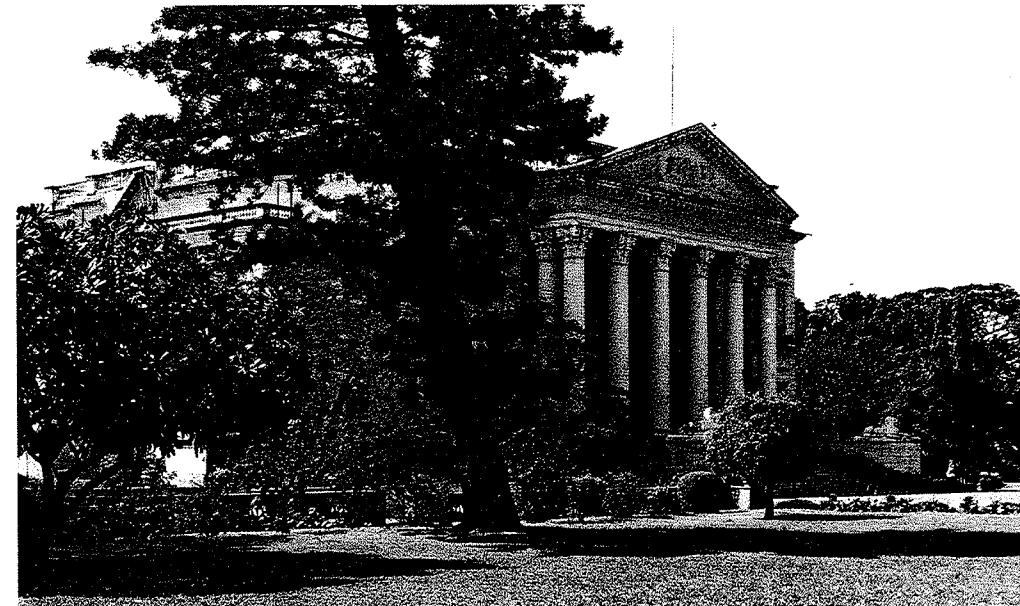
Under his brother and his predecessors the Residency had been housed in a small villa and group of bungalows, but James Kirkpatrick

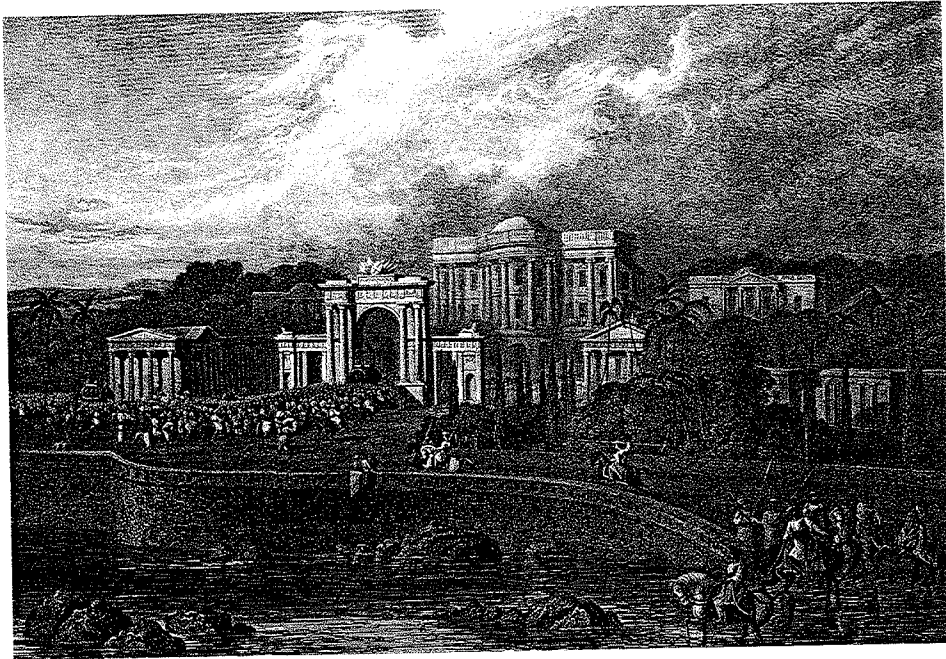
The former British Residency at Hyderabad with the Company's arms over the south front.

was given a sixty-acre site on the river Musi by the Nizam for a new house. It is alleged that when Kirkpatrick first presented his request for the site on a large-scale plan, the Nizam refused, as he did not understand scaled plans and thought that the Resident was asking for the entire Kingdom. When the plan was redrawn on a small card, the Nizam agreed immediately. An immense new house was begun in 1803. It was designed and supervised by Lieutenant Samuel Russell of the Madras Engineers, the son of the Royal Academician John Russell. Conceived in a Palladian style, the house stands as the centrepiece of a wider composition of arcaded walkways, colonnades, wings and stable buildings approached via a triumphal archway from the river frontage. The river approach is a formal processional route calculated to impress on the visitor the magnificence and power of the Resident. Something of its original splendour can be seen from an aquatint drawn by Captain Grindlay around 1813 showing a grand procession entering the Residency. The magnificent architecture, the slow ascending processional way from the river, the imposing entrance portico and the sumptuous interior exemplify the astonishing bluff by which the British maintained their Empire abroad. Paid for by the Nizam, the house was an architectural expression of supreme power intended for political ends. More than one contemporary argued that in a country where power was expressed outwardly and openly, the Company's hegemony could only be sustained by similar measures. In fact in 1811 the Resident wrote:



Major James Achilles Kirkpatrick by George Chinnery.





The splendour of a ceremonial procession approaching the Residency from the river, depicted by Captain Grindlay around 1813.

They can judge of power and authority by no other standard than the external marks of it; and if they saw a Resident with less state than his predecessor nothing would convince them but that he had less power too. The keeping up of an outward appearance of power will in many instances save the necessity of resort into the actual exercise of it. The Resident's authority must either be seen or it must be felt.

Externally the building is influenced by Wellesley's newly completed Government House, Calcutta. The Corinthian entrance portico with the Company's arms in *alto rilievo*, the domed Ionic semi-circular bay on the south front, the grand entrance screen enriched with sphinxes and trophies all recall Wyatt's recent composition. Internally the impression is quite different. It is strikingly neo-classical in conception with oval saloons flanking a large Durbar hall and a central staircase which divides at a landing and ascends in two elegant sweeps. The staircase is reminiscent of Robert Adam's interior at 20, Portman Square or William Kent's earlier staircase at 44, Berkeley Square. The parallels are striking in form and detail, but the Hyderabad interiors are more plainly treated, though none the less creditably executed by native craftsmen.

The lavish architectural ornament of the house was complemented by the opulent lifestyle of the Resident, who travelled in great state on

richly-caparisoned elephants escorted by two companies of infantry and a troop of cavalry. Mountstuart Elphinstone, later Governor of Bombay, arrived in 1801 and left a description of Kirkpatrick in his diary: 'Major K. is a good-looking man; seems about thirty, is really about thirty-five. He wears mustachios; his hair is cropped very short, and his fingers are died with henna. In other respects he is like an Englishman. He is very communicative, and very desirous to please, but he tells long stories about himself and practises all the affectations of which his face and eyes are capable.'

His rather exotic appearance may be accounted for by his marriage to one of the ladies of the Nizam's court, a liaison which caused an uproar in Calcutta and nearly lost him his post. The story of his marriage has gained much in its repeated telling, and it may be apocryphal. Kirkpatrick's love of story telling was well-known, but it is a strange tale with unexpected architectural implications.

It is alleged that Kirkpatrick, known in the Nizam's Court as Hushmat Jung (Magnificent in Battle) was renowned for his good looks. During a court entertainment a young girl, Khair-un-Nissa (Beautiful among Women), had watched him through the purdah and fallen hopelessly in love. Kirkpatrick was sitting alone one night on the terrace when to his astonishment he was visited by an old woman, an emissary, who pleaded the passion of Khair-un-Nissa. At first he repelled the advances made to him, but the princess would brook no denial. After repeated but unavailing overtures through her emissary, the girl resolved to take the matter into her own hands. A veiled figure was ushered into the Residency and pleaded her suit so passionately that the Englishman's heart melted. In a letter to his brother, William, now Military Secretary to the Governor-General, James wrote: 'I, who was but ill-qualified for the task, attempted to argue this romantic young creature out of a passion which I could not, I confess, help feeling myself something more than pity for. She declared to me again and again that her affections had been irretrievably fixed on me for a series of time, that her fate was linked to mine, and that she should be content to pass her time with me as the humblest of handmaids.'

Kirkpatrick relented and married her under Muslim law and the Nizam made him his adopted son. Allegations of bribery, corruption and abjuring his religion descended upon him and, at one point, the Governor-General sent a man to supersede him, but he was headed off by a squadron of cavalry and potential damage to British interests was avoided. After a lengthy inquiry he was exonerated, and was allowed to live in peace.

As a Muslim, Khair-un-Nissa remained in strict purdah, so Kirkpatrick built separate quarters as a zenana. It was enclosed by high walls with pavilions, fountains, galleries and terraces ornamented in a richly Oriental manner with gilding, painting and trelliswork. Unfortunately no trace of the Rang Mehal remains, for it was here that the wives of visitors were entertained, whilst the male guests were received in the Residency. As his wife never left her zenana, Kirkpatrick built a model of the newly-completed Residency in the Begum's garden, where it survives to this day, a miniature replica of the main house complete in

every detail. However when I visited the garden in 1981 part had been crushed by a tree, and it is unlikely to be repaired.

The romantic story of Kirkpatrick and his passionate wife has a postscript. One of their two children, Catherine Aurora, born in 1802, was the inspiration for the heroine Blumine in *Sartor Resartus*, a novel by Thomas Carlyle. Blumine is 'a many tinted radiant Aurora', 'the fairest of Orient light-bringers'. Catherine Kirkpatrick haunted Carlyle for the rest of his days - 'a strangely complexioned young lady, with soft brown eyes and floods of bronze red hair, really a pretty looking, smiling, and amiable, though most foreign, bit of magnificence and kindly splendour, by the name of "dear Kitty"'. She was an exotic creature, 'placid and sensuous who loved perfumes; a half-Begum in short', but she spurned Carlyle and married into an eminent West Country family, the Winsloe-Phillips. She died at the villa Sorrento in Torquay on 2nd March 1889.

To the South of Hyderabad lies Mysore, the territory of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan, whose ferocious resistance to British expansion did not finally end until the fall of Seringapatam and the death of Tipu in 1799. In Mysore city a Residency was erected in 1805 as a focus for British influence in the area, but whilst it shares several common features with the Hyderabad Residency, and Government House, Calcutta, it is wholly different in plan and form.

It was designed by Colonel Wilks in a Tuscan Doric style. The compound is approached by two roads, each with a triumphal entrance arch. The main entrance has a long axial carriageway punctuated by cast-iron lamp columns, but the entrance from the city is a winding avenue boarded by brightly-coloured shrubs and trees. The setting is delightful, situated on a low rise overlooking the city, and the triumphal screens assert the authority of the building long before it is reached. The house is single-storey, but the formal layout and size of the compound serve to diminish rather than accentuate its presence, so that the initial reaction after the splendid approach is one of disappointment rather than architectural climax. Fortunately the feeling is not sustained close-to. The whole complex has great charm and is scrupulously maintained by a staff of thirty for government guests. In plan the rooms are disposed around a landscaped central atrium which is colonnaded on all sides. Green-painted valances reduce glare to the rooms, which are approached off the colonnades through half-height louvred swing doors, whilst the outer walls are screened by arcaded loggias and umbrageous shrubbery. There is a substantial projecting *porte-cochère* fringed with palms and climbing plants. The bedrooms are beautifully maintained with brass beds and many of the original fittings. Like many Moghul houses it is impossible to say where the inside of the house begins or ends, as the central atrium and open vestibule mean that a great deal of the floorspace is essentially outdoors, which provides ample light, but not glare, and cool refreshing breezes to every corner of the house. The house may be conceived along the lines of a Greek or Roman villa, but the plan and practical adaptations to the climate owe much to native sources.

Government House, Mysore: The entrance screen designed to proclaim British power and authority to the city.

Internally the most distinctive feature of the building is the large semi-circular bay room on the south front which was added by Sir John Malcolm to designs prepared by Thomas Ffitt de Havilland, the architect of St Andrew's Kirk, Madras. The ornament is neo-classical with Venetian arches and plasterwork enriched with festoons and paterae, but the most interesting aspect is the roof, which covers one of the largest rooms in South India without intermediate support. We have seen how de Havilland experimented with wide structural spans in the curious arch which he built in his garden at Seringapatam, and clearly he used the experience here.

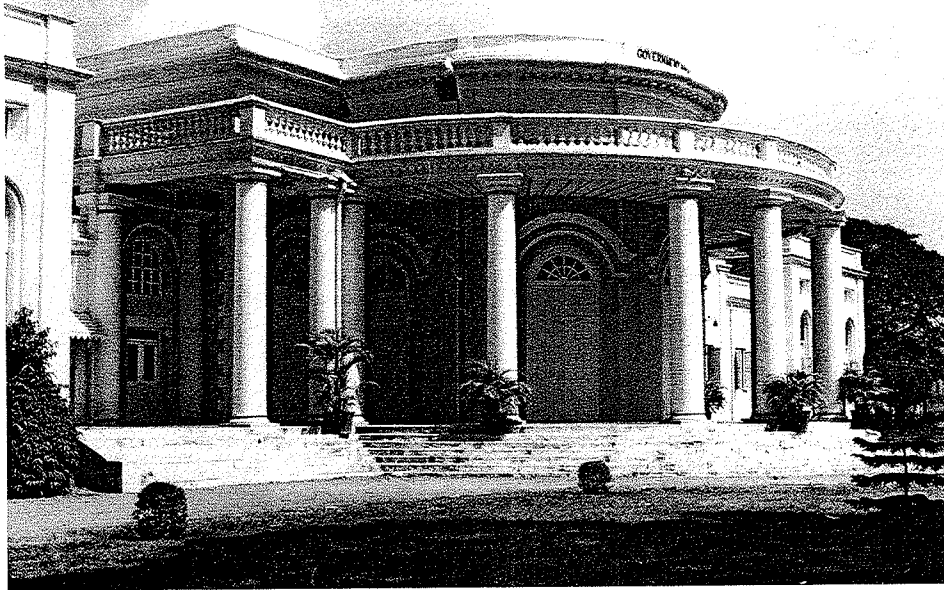
Elsewhere in India the Palladian and neo-classical impulses emanating from the great centres of activity in Madras and Calcutta were sufficiently strong to influence the form and design of European buildings in the remotest areas of the mofussil, but over on the west coast in the third Presidency, Bombay, there was no significant European architectural heritage until the second decade of the nineteenth century when two major buildings were erected in a conscious attempt to create an urban impact - the Town Hall and the Mint.

Since 1718 the town had been dominated by St Thomas's Church and its distinctive low belfry was the principal landmark on the skyline behind the brooding ramparts of the Fort. With the establishment of the See of Bombay, it became the cathedral church and the low belfry was converted into a loftier tower of no particular architectural merit. The only other building of any significance was St Andrew's Kirk, a more modest variation on the usual Gibbs theme, but with a heavy Doric portico which creates a rather leaden impact.



Catherine Aurora (Kitty) and William Kirkpatrick in Oriental dress shortly before their departure to England by George Chinnery.

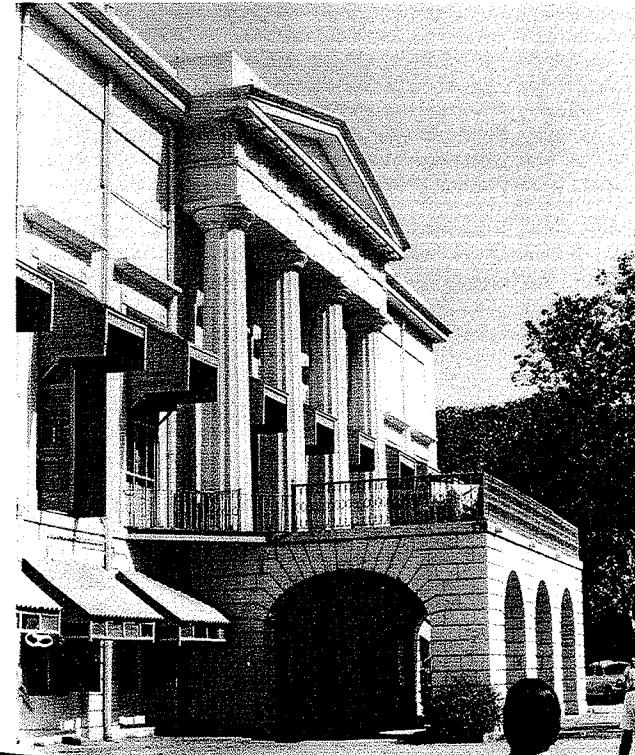
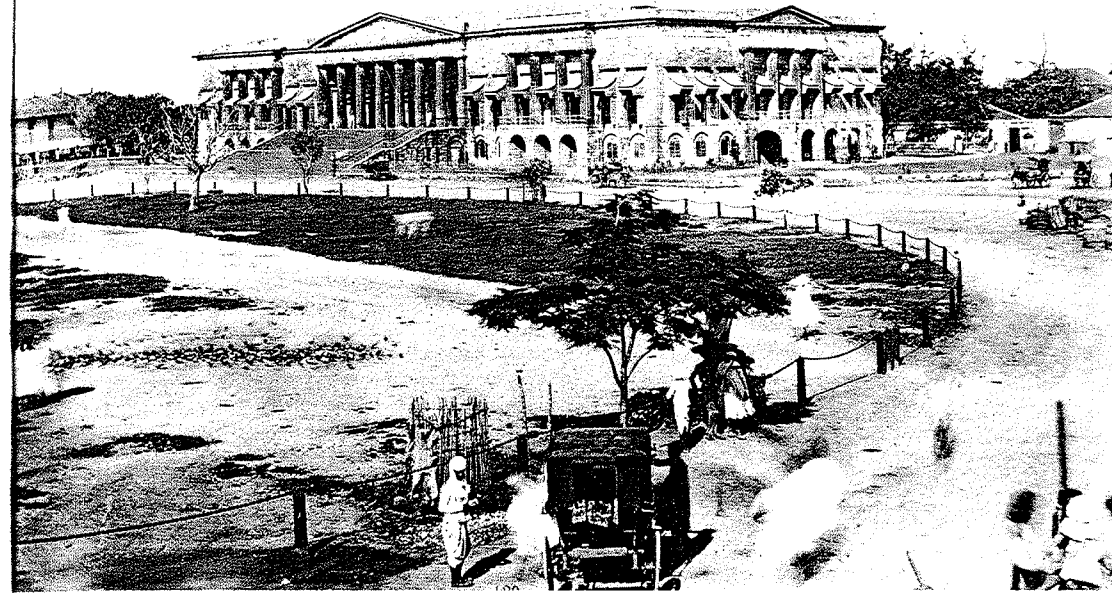




Government House, Mysore: The semi-circular bay room added to the south front by Thomas Piott de Havilland.

The Town Hall was commenced in 1820, but took over fifteen years to complete. It cost over £60,000, most of which was defrayed by the East India Company, and the remainder by private subscription and a fortunate lottery ticket, which yielded £10,000. The intention was to house not just civic offices for the Legislative Council, but a library and museum for the Asiatic Society. The idea for a major public building on the Green was long-standing and the fact that it took over twenty years to come to fruition is a reflection of the relative insignificance of Bombay when compared with the great cities on the east coast, Madras and Calcutta.

The building was designed by Colonel Thomas Cowper, Bombay Engineers, and completed after his death in 1825 by various others, principally Charles Waddington. It is the finest neo-classical building in India with several unique adaptations to the climate. The façade is a massive composition in a Greek Doric order. There is a central octastyle pedimented portico, with columns in antis approached by a wide cascade of steps. Each wing is embellished with a subsidiary portico, and the whole edifice is raised high on an arcaded basement to accentuate the impact. The end result is magnificent – a composition of power and massive solidity, an austere uncompromising statement of the growing might of British India, and it is no coincidence that it was commenced just three years after the defeat of the Peshwa at the Battle of Kirkee in 1817. The huge projecting *jhilmils* or window canopies are part of the original composition, intended to provide shade and cool to the rooms within. They are elaborate structures contained within the



*(Above) Town Hall, Bombay about forty years after its completion. The building exudes the power and confidence of the rising British Empire in India. (Below) Fine original detail of the side portico. The huge projecting *jhilmils* form part of Cowper's original design.*

expression of each window opening, so that, unlike many others which were added to buildings, they enhance rather than diminish the architectural effect, and Cowper tried to integrate them by enriching each valance with a frieze of Greek palmettes.

The Doric columns were made in England and carried out in an East Indiaman as freight. Originally it was Cowper's intention to group them in pairs, but on arrival they were so massive that, fortunately, the idea was dropped and the supernumerary columns were diverted for use at Christ Church, Bycullah, then in the course of erection. The interior of the building was completed by Waddington with a Corinthian order and a large entrance hall immediately behind the central portico. However, in the rooms for the Medical Board on the ground floor he indulged in a piece of antiquarian whimsy and installed four splendid Ionic columns copied from a Greek Temple on the banks of the Ilyssus. Elsewhere in the building is some excellent statuary with figures of Mountstuart Elphinstone, Sir Charles Forbes, and Sir John Malcolm, all by Chantrey. Malcolm stands in a flood of light at the head of a fine elliptical staircase which is approached through the north portico, and the strong interplay of light and shade accentuates the neo-classical austerity of the design.

The Mint was commenced in 1824, and was operational by 1827. It was erected on the Fort rubbish dump to designs prepared by Major John Hawkins, Bombay Engineers, who was sent to England to study minting techniques in the office of Boulton and Watt with Major William Nairn Forbes, the architect of the Calcutta Mint. Architecturally it is an elegant composition, a plain rectangular building enriched with an Ionic portico complementing the Town Hall nearby, although today it is hidden in the Dockyard area and access is restricted.

Christ Church, Bycullah, the fortunate recipient of Cowper's unused Doric columns, was consecrated in 1835, but its principal interest lies in the handsome monument to Sir Robert Grant, the Governor, who died in 1838 at his country retreat at Dapuri. It is related that he walked a favourite path every sunset, but on the day of his death a sentry saw a cat leave by the same door and down the same path as the stricken Governor. The guard were convinced that the Governor's soul had transmigrated to the cat, and as no one was sure later which of the many cats there had been blessed with gubernatorial status, for the next thirty years each time one trotted out of the house, the guard presented arms. No wonder the British love India.

CHAPTER 5

BUNGALOWS
AND HILL STATIONS

In a loop of the river Cauvery at Seringapatam stands a bungalow set in a garden of great beauty, but the house is lonely and isolated, haunted by memories of a past tragedy. Here in April 1817 Colonel Scott, the Commandant of the British garrison, returned from parade to find his wife and daughter dead from cholera. It is alleged that he walked from the house in quiet despair, waded into the river, and slipped beneath its waters to drown his sorrows forever. Actually he did not drown himself, but resigned his appointment and returned to England where he died at his home at Lovel Park, Berkshire in January 1833. On the orders of the Maharajah of Mysore the bungalow lay untouched, as if one day the souls of the departed would return to their last place on earth. In the nearby cemetery lies the tomb of Catherine Isabella Scott (and infant child) who died in childbed on 19th March 1817. In 1875 'Aliph Cheem' wrote:

The mouldering rooms are now as they stood
Nearly eighty years ago,
The piano is there
And table and chair
And the carpet rotting slow;
And the beds wheron the corpses lay,
And the curtains half time-mawed away.

The house was repaired in the 1920s, and the furniture is preserved now by the State Directorate of Archaeology and Museums in Mysore.

Few bungalows have such romantic associations, although many have had their share of human tragedies. Their origins are more prosaic. Bungalows originated in Bengal. In 17th-century Hindustani the word 'bangla' or 'bangala' referred to local village huts, and it was from these crude prototypes that the bungalow developed. There were two possible originals. Both share a rectangular plan and raised floor, but one had a curvilinear roof with crescent-shaped eaves, often sweeping over the walls to form a verandah supported on rough-hewn posts. The other was a double-roofed house with a pitched, tiled or thatched roof, the upper part resting on the walls and the lower part dropped to form a verandah around the edge of the walls.

With the arrival of the British and other Europeans in large numbers the word was soon corrupted and applied to any single-storey building with a verandah. The increasing numbers of officials, planters, and soldiers stimulated demand for a form of mass housing that was quickly built, using local materials, but that was more comfortable than the tent

3 · Domestic

Chez Tapworth

On a ridge – beside a river – in a flowered suburb – on the desert's edge – there stands the home of the empire-builder! One building above all others stood for the intimate side of imperial life: the bungalow, which was to remain for ever a symbol of the British in India. Before we explore Anglo-Indian domestic architecture any further, let us in an idle way, during our afternoon hack, perhaps, or from the dicky of our Packard during a Saturday spin with Frank, briefly inspect this archetypal construction.

It stands, almost certainly, surrounded by a walled compound, and whatever its size, it is likely to be built well away from its neighbours. Behind it, there beyond the banyan tree, its kitchen quarters are cluttered beneath a thin haze of wood-smoke; a gravel drive lined with flowerpots runs down to its front gate, which is guarded by fairly pompous gateposts and marked with its owner's name, G. D. L. TAPWORTH. It is a low oblong building, with a *porte-cochère* of some sort in front of it, probably entwined in creepers, and verandahs under deep eaves all around. Wicker chairs and tables, hammocks, sporting trophies and perhaps a ping-pong table are distributed around these stoeps, and beyond them in the shadows we may just catch a glimpse of chintz and flower-vases, or a glint of cutlery through an open french window. It is not a grand house, not architecturally anything special, but even from our distance on the road outside its character is unmistakable. It represents a culture of distinctive strength, however limited, a people of great resolution, however dull. As long as the British in India are remembered at all, they will be remembered against the background of the bungalow, taking sundowners on its verandahs, playing badminton on its lawns, or –

Gosh darling, there's Muriel Tapworth now, just coming out of the drawing-room. Step on it, for Heaven's sake, before she drags us in for tea . . .

Keeping comfortable

Condemned to spend the best years of his life in the heat of Bengal, the great eighteenth-century Orientalist Sir William Jones (a Welshman, as he was once introduced to George III, who spoke every language but his own) devised a dramatic domestic expedient. Within easy reach of his offices in Calcutta, at the village of Safirabad on the Dacca road, he immured himself in a bunker immune to climate. Its roof was several feet thick, and its rooms were ventilated only by narrow heavily shuttered windows. So he survived the awful summers, resolving that so far as possible 'he would never see the sun, and the sun would never see him' (but dying nevertheless before he was fifty).

The first requirement of a British house in India was shelter against excessive heat, torrentuous rain, or more rarely fearful cold – all conditions which the British, brought up in a clime of equable drizzle, found dangerously debilitating. Two monsoons, said an old Anglo-Indian saying, was the life of a man: and though the mortality rate was certainly hastened by unsuitable diet and intemperate drinking, not to speak of battles, still the climate really was a terrible killer. Jones was not alone in his resolution: in the earlier years of the Empire in India, Britons often went to idiosyncratic lengths to keep the climate out of sight.

Often they turned old tombs into houses. Sir Thomas Metcalfe, British Resident in Delhi in the 1840s, bought a Muslim tomb almost next door to the Qutb Minar, the ancient victory tower which still stands on the hills south of the city. He used the coffin-space below its dome as a dining-room, and around it built an octagonal series of rooms, with entrance halls on two sides, which gave the whole a consequential symmetry. Another Muslim tomb became the home of the British Governor in Lahore, the mausoleum itself again providing a cool core to which miscellaneous rooms and verandahs were added in successive generations. Nobody appeared to resent these irreligious measures, and the British themselves very soon forgot, it seems, that they were sharing quarters with the spirits of the dead.

Another popular device was the *tykhana*, a windowless, underground room copied from Indian models. *Tykhana*s were used in the hottest weather of all, and sound very uncomfortable. Sometimes attempts were made to ventilate them with air shafts, but generally they seem to have been horribly stuffy. Nevertheless they were often furnished as grandly as the rooms upstairs. British official houses in Lucknow had whole suites of them, expensively decorated, and eighteenth-century drawings of the *tykhana*s in a house at Delhi show them nicely fitted out with Corinthian pillars, ornamental fireplaces, beamed ceilings, picture-hung alcoves and a billiard table.

They tried all sorts of mechanical methods to keep their homes cool. The *punkah* was universal in the early years, and the *punkah-wallah*, the man who

kept those heavy flapping fans in motion, was the first familiar of every Anglo-Indian household. In very early days he often sat, as in the courts of medieval potentates, directly behind the chair of his employer, moving a fan by hand. Later he sat invisibly outside the sahib's chamber, pulling a hinged fan by a string slotted through the wall. Sometimes *punkahs* were small and numerous, sometimes they were few and immensely long, like undulating strips of carpet, and complex arrangements of pulleys were needed to keep them on the swing.

Later more elaborate systems came in. Water was kept constantly dripping, for example, through aromatic screens, erected all around the verandahs of houses like enormous cocoons. There was a device like a gigantic pair of bellows, with its snout inserted into the wall of the house: outside relays of servants sat pressing its huge handles together, inside the air was filtered through ice-blocks and blown in fitful gusts around the living-rooms. Or there was the more sophisticated Thermantidote, whose rotatory fan, puffing draughts of air through dampened screens, was often worked by bullocks in the yard.

Electric *punkahs* came and went, and in the 1880s the electric fan arrived. The slow creaking and whirring of this instrument above one's bed, the sometimes irregular rhythm of it, the always present fear that its huge blade might fly off in the middle of the night and decapitate you, became an essential element of the imperial experience. Air-conditioning never reached far below the upper echelons of British India, and the electric fan was, to the end, as much a part of the ambience as the bungalow itself: spectacular numbers of them were sold in India, and if there was no central electricity supply to power them, why, then steam generators chugged away day and night, in a miasma of coal, heat and Indian sweat, to keep the sahibs cool.

The cold weather too, which could be very bitter even on the plains, tried the British harshly. There was 'hardly such a thing', wrote Honoria Lawrence in 1845, 'as a comfortable cold-weather house in India', and forty years later the Vicereine Lady Dufferin described herself as sitting in 'not one, but twenty draughts at a time'. Snugness was a quality the British pined for, but their houses were generally sadly short of it: huge tall rooms, wide open verandahs, folding doors which seldom fitted properly, and were generally left ajar anyway – it was hard to feel cosy in such a setting, and many a poor memsahib, having dreamed of fresh English autumn days throughout the blistering months of summer, when winter came longed for some warm little cottage in Hants or Somerset, wrapped around with old English oak, with a comfortable country tabby on the hearth.

But there, they were not in India for snugness. They were there for duty, for advancement, for adventure. By and large the British never did live comfortably in this empire – luxuriously often, if only because of their multitudinous servants, but seldom *easily*. They learnt to live rough and ready. They thought nothing of sleeping in tents on the lawn, if the house was full, or on the roof if the heat was

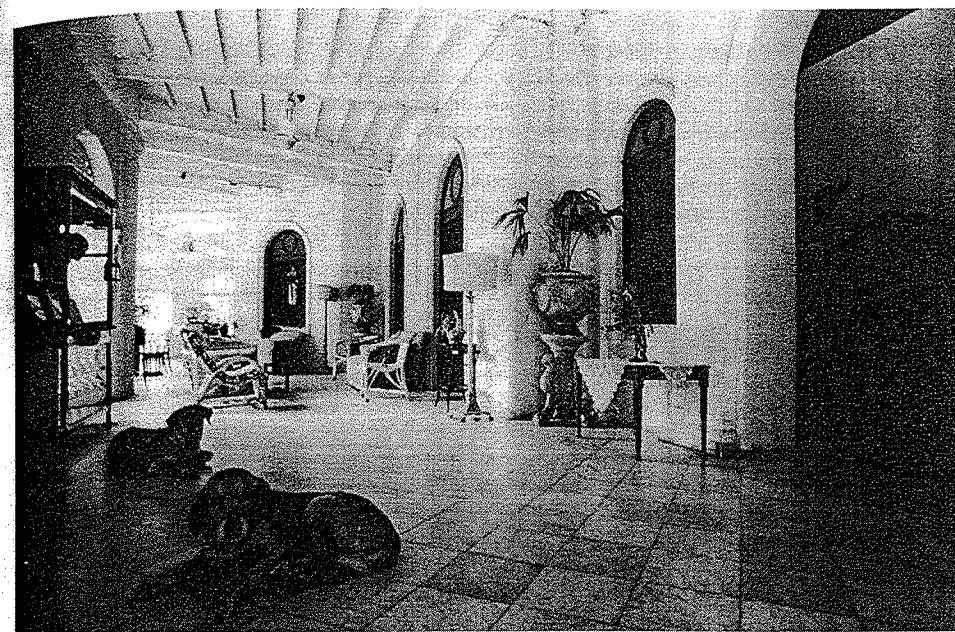
unbearable. They abandoned attempts at privacy, in a society where servants were ubiquitous but seldom slavish. When they went to their baths, in a zinc tub in a bare white-washed bathroom, they generally sluiced themselves out of tin mugs, sponges offering such convenient nesting-places for scorpions. The Vicar of Holy Trinity Church, Karachi, incumbent of one of the hottest livings in the world, was not provided with a refrigerator until 1946; when in the 1930s Lady Bra-bourne, wife of the Governor of Bengal, encountered an Indian urchin wandering about the Marble Hall of her palace, she was told that he was one of a family of squatters which had, for several generations, been living behind a screen of coconut matting on the south verandah.

'Bungle-ohs'

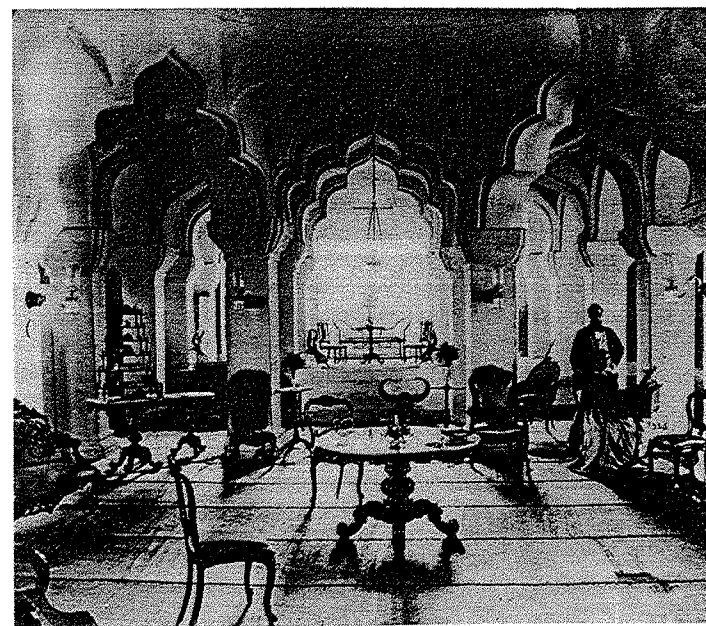
The Anglo-Indian bungalow, then, was evolved to make the best of things. It was called a bungalow probably because it was adopted from Bengali patterns, and it was variously spelt bungalla, bangla, bungelow, banggolo, bangala and bungalo – 'For Sale', said the *Bombay Courier* invitingly in 1793, 'a Bungalo situated between the two Tombstones on the island of Coulaba'. In the early years a bungalow generally meant a humble *cutch* house, built of mud-brick or rushes, but later governors and even viceroys were not ashamed to sleep in one, and it was only when the term came to England, at the end of the nineteenth century, that it acquired a faintly pejorative social meaning, as in 'bungalow-land' or 'bungalowoid developments'.

The first Anglo-Indian bungalows were pretty awful. In 1801 somebody defined them pithily as 'stationary tents run aground', and the explorer Richard Burton, in the 1840s, described the bungalow style simply as 'a modification of the cow-house'. Here and there even now you may still see an example still in use. It is likely to be an oblong structure on one floor, its roof rising unsteadily to a pyramidal centre, its stepped verandah pillared with square mud columns and shaded by low eaves. Its roof was doubtless thatched once, but is now of irregular rough tiles. It is a very primitive house, hardly more than a big hut, and really does look, as a matter of fact, a bit like a cow-house. With lesser regional differences (flat roofs in upper India, for instance, stilted floors in Assam) it was built in its thousands all over British India, generally containing a single square living-room and a bedroom opening off it, with the kitchen quarters in separate shacks.

Most such bungalows were built as bachelor quarters (and they sometimes had a *bibikhana* tucked away behind, for the accommodation of native mistresses). When, especially after the advent of the steamship, more British women and children came to India, the form of the bungalow became rather more complex, and sundry changes were rung upon the theme. It remained nevertheless



The cool of indoor life. A verandah in a Poona bungalow (facing); and a sleepy afternoon on the marble floor of a large private house in Secunderabad (above), once home to a senior soldier. Now it is owned by one of Hyderabad's most prominent Parsee traders. The Moorish drawing-room in Madras is shown in an 1860s print (right).



a simple structure to represent a great empire, and often struck visitors as quaint or even faintly comic, when they contrasted its modest arrangements with the flurry of servants that surrounded it, the impressive space of its compound (fifteen times the area of the house was thought a proper proportion for officers' bungalows in 1925), and the almost limitless authority that it frequently housed. Until the end of the Empire it often had no running water, and even in elegant city suburbs its toilet arrangements were generally limited to the noxious thunder-box.

It did evolve, though, into more pretentious versions of itself. Sometimes it just grew bigger. The bungalow of the Commissioner at Chittagong in the 1870s, for instance, was a hilltop structure that looked like four or five of the old-style structures put together – still thatched, even then, but surrounded by elaborate successions of verandahs and surmounted by a long balustrade ('I have never seen so lovely a place to look at', wrote its inhabitant in 1878, John Beame, 'nor one so loathsome to live in ...'). Such a house now was likely to have three or four bedrooms, with dressing-rooms attached, a study, a playroom for the children, and a dining-room opening through an arch into the drawing-room, while a covered passage connected the serving pantry with the kitchen quarters at the bottom of the compound.

The bungalow became more stylish, too. The portico was the first sign of higher things: it could serve as a *porte-cochère*, or it could be a mere extension of the verandah, and it did wonders for the dignity of the establishment. We see it in many kinds – flatroofed, ostentatiously pedimented, curiously gabled, trellised all over to make a sort of gazebo. Innumerable pots of chrysanthemums or geraniums often gave it charm. Castellations along the top sometimes gave it grandeur.

Behind it the simple shape of the building could be further disguised with parapets, ornamental urns, turrets, wooden spikes, barge-boardings. Though bungalows generally remained single-storeyed, clerestories made their rooms still higher and cooler, attics were sometimes added, and there could be terraces above their verandahs – 'too high for one storey, too low for two', the journalist George Steevens thought they looked when he arrived in India in 1899. Elaborate fenestrations appeared. Regency fanlights blossomed above heavy wooden doors, mullion windows framed stained glass representations of *Ivanhoe* or *The Idylls of the King*. A wonderful variety of accessories came to clothe the Anglo-Indian bungalow down the generations, and many architectural traditions were drawn upon – only the international style of the twentieth century was altogether ignored, the bungalow being, if essentially rather formal, distinctly not formalist.

By the time it came to the building of New Delhi, in the 1920s, the bungalow had reached the climax of its development. Lutyens, who was responsible for the residential layout of the new capital, was not an admirer of British domestic

arrangements in India, which he thought 'extraordinarily unintelligent'; he liked to scoff about 'bungle-ohs', and his own designs for the capital's bungalows, which he wanted faced in marble, were rejected as too expensive. Nevertheless as you drive around the streets of New Delhi today the bungalows of the more senior officials, mostly designed in the end by Government architects, look most agreeable houses. Their gardens are lush and mature by now. Creeper drifts into their wide verandahs. They are of all sizes, being graded according to the importance of their occupants, and in several styles too, but they nearly all give an impression of spacious and airy charm. It is a long way from the stationary tent to these handsome structures, some of them palatial in manner if not in scale, but still the line of descent is direct: it is a curious truth that the British, having chosen the form of their housing in India in the seventeenth century, never devised a better one during the 300 subsequent years of their residence.

On the verandah

A diversion just for a moment, to consider the verandah. It was in some ways the most important part of the bungalow, fulfilling all sorts of socio-economic functions. Just occasionally it was rather a nuisance – Richard Burton, experiencing one during wet weather in the hills, said that it was 'only calculated to render the interior of the domiciles as dim and gloomy as can be conceived'. But in two particular ways it was essential to the purpose and significance of the house.

First, it was the one place the imperialists had just for messing around on. Everything was easygoing about the verandah. Its furniture was meant for lounging. Its floor was covered, if covered at all, with the memsahib's least valuable carpets, or with Chinese matting. Its pictures and trophies were beloved rather than precious. Funny old chairs lay round about, bamboo couches, rocking-chairs sometimes, or sofas with wide arms for the accommodation of glasses. Potted plants were everywhere, and here the little dogs of the household were indulged, lying around on sofas or begging titbits at breakfast time.

And secondly, the verandah was the place where the British woman, in particular, could feel some tentative personal contact with the alien world of India outside. Here hawkers and tradesmen might bring their wares, without actually entering the house proper. The watchman sometimes slept upon the verandah; the tailor was often to be seen cross-legged there in the afternoon. When Mr Tapworth felt obliged to bring one of his native colleagues home for a drink, it was upon the verandah that Muriel generally arranged things: and after dinner, as often as not, when the moon was high, the distant jackals were howling and there was a distant beat of drums from the bazaar, it was upon the verandah that the memsahib, already sketching out her entry for the day's journal, felt herself to be most truly amidst the romance of Old India.

In short, the verandah was a sort of bridge: it linked the rigid and conventional life of the imperialist with the lost liberties of home; it linked the rose-petals of the drawing-room with the dust and dung fires of the land outside; and perhaps, too, it tenuously joined the dreams of the Anglo-Indians with the reality of their existences – for on the verandah sometimes, with a drink in one's hand, or an embroidery frame, friends to laugh with and faithful servants just out of sight, empire-building really could seem, just for the moment, all it was cracked up to be.

Nabobian

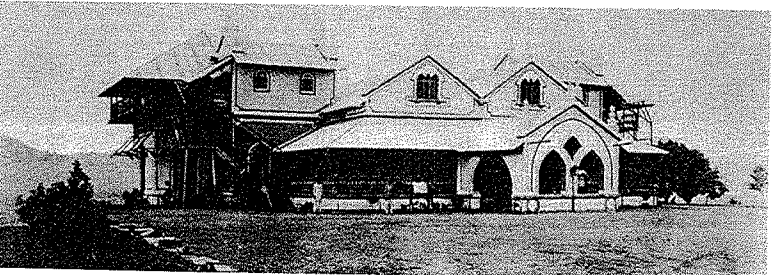
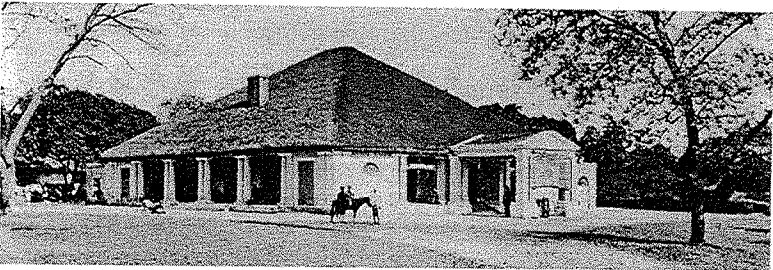
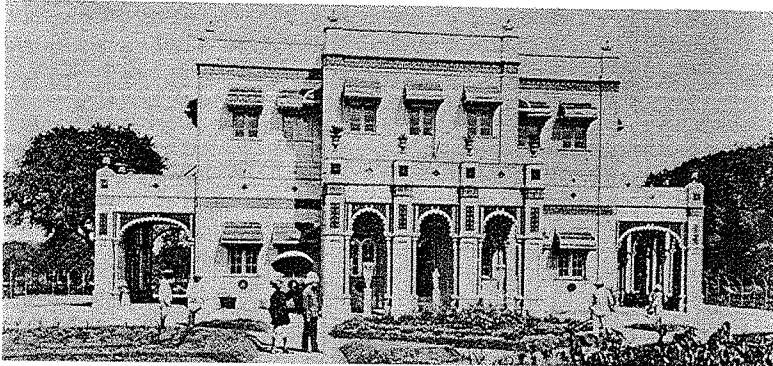
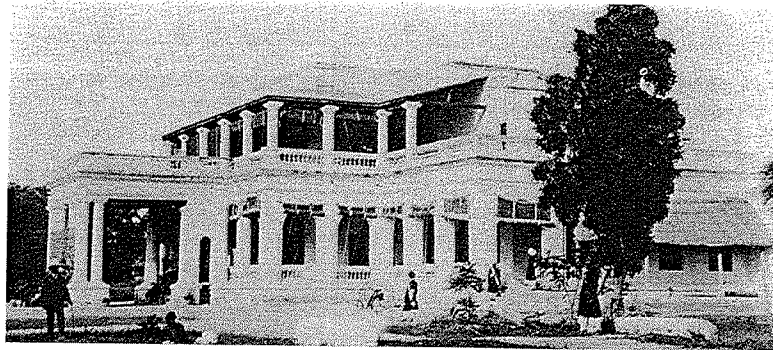
Of course the bungalow would not do for everyone. Rich indigo-planters, who lived like lords, built themselves sprawling country houses; senior officials often indulged themselves with villas – Metcalfe, besides his tomb, had a splendid house in Delhi; and in the Presidency towns the nabobs, uninhibited alike by conscience, red tape, or restraint, commissioned impressive residences. When William Hickey went out to Calcutta in the 1780s he put up what he frankly called a mansion, without regard to expense, 'the bricklayers' carpenters' materials all being of the best'. He was very proud of it – it gained him, he reported, the reputation of having great taste. It looked much like a London terrace-house of the period, built on three floors, symmetrically windowed, with balconies on the *piano nobile*, and tall shuttered doors from which Mr H. might emerge, as a nabob should, to survey the colourful native scenes below.

The principal apartments, he tells us, were furnished with immense mirrors and many beautiful prints ('the expense was enormous'), and indeed the town houses of Calcutta could be very splendid. Gleaming in their lime or plaster facings, aristocratically free in their classical allusions, there was certainly no false modesty to them, and they were much grander than equivalent London houses of the time. The drawing-room of No. 5, Russell Street, by no means unique in its grandeur, was a double cube eighty feet long and forty feet high, and James Fergusson observed once that the Grimani Palace in Venice, one of the greatest of the great houses of the Grand Canal, 'both in dimensions and arrangement would range perfectly with the ordinary run of Calcutta houses'.

They were generally square, solid buildings, with flat balustraded roofs, generally with porticoes and nearly always with verandahs, half-closed with venetian blinds, on the first floor. Their ground floors were often rustically arcaded, while upstairs they were dignified with tall pillars or pilasters, usually in the masculine Tuscan order, and crowned with pediments. They were commonly built at right angles to the highway, great gateways leading between high walls into their compounds, and so they stood there one after the other along the city's main residential street, Chowringhee, like so many embassies or scholarly institutions. Today they are mostly buried in the urban mass of Calcutta, but still



Mansions. Metcalfe House, Delhi (top), was the home of the city's celebrated Commissioner from 1835 to 1853. It was badly damaged during the 1857 rising, but has recently been lovingly restored by the Indian Ministry of Defence, for whom it now houses a science library. Guindy Lodge, Madras (bottom), the former country residence of Governors of Madras Presidency, now provides the home for the Governor of the state of Tamil Nadu. It was acquired by the British Government during the governorship of Thomas Munro, and still houses a herd of deer in its huge gardens. The building is faced with *chunam*, a mortar made with crushed sea shells.



you may find their hapless relics if you look, overwhelmed by the sad congestion of it all, glimpsed up foetid alleys, embodied in sprawling tenements, or detectable only in a few crumbled pillars and a disregarded pediment.

One of the best of them, however, has survived in perfect condition, and gives an enviable impression of life among the Calcutta bigwigs of Company times. It is now the Calcutta Turf Club, but it has been little altered since its days as the home of the Apcars, a prosperous shipping family. It was erected in the early years of the nineteenth century in a distinctly patrician kind. Palladian in style, it is brilliant white of course, built on two floors, with a verandah on the south front and a portico on the north. A fine vestibule, extended through both floors, greets the visitor to this palace, and a beautifully detailed wooden staircase leads upstairs. Downstairs two large public rooms overlooked the gardens: above were family sitting-rooms and bedrooms. It is a meticulous house. Everything fits. The fine teak doors, the marble flooring, the sculpture-niches, the richly carved fireplaces – all are expensively and stylishly executed, and give an unexpected impression of cultivated restraint (for all too many of the nabobs were, as it happens, hardly more than avaricious sots).

In the south, in the outskirts of Madras, merchants and Company officials built no less elegant retreats. Down there the favoured orders were the Corinthian and Ionic, and the houses were more light-hearted and rambling in effect, with curved verandahs often, and bowed fronts, and they sported wide wings with connecting arcades, and shallow domes sometimes, and frivolous towers. The local artists John and Jonathan Gantz, in the 1830s, painted a number of these Madras suburban homes, and delightful they seem to have been, set in their wide green compounds, with their shady porticoes and the wispy Coromandel trees that soon grew up around them.

There is a handsome survivor of these houses, too, in the Adyar (now called the Madras) Club, originally the home of a merchant called George Moubray, and for years familiarly called Moubray's Cupola after its most distinctive feature. The Adyar River flows gently past this mansion, just as the Ouse or Trent might pass a gentleman's seat in England, and the house is full of urbane surprises – a hall thickly clumped with white plastered pillars, intimate alcoves here and there, a whole esplanade of terraces above the lawn: if you wish to catch the evening breezes – 'eating the air', as the Anglo-Indians used to say – you can climb by a succession of ladders into the eponymous cupola itself, high and fresh above the river, where you will find a garden bench waiting to accommodate you, and where a servant will presently follow, no doubt, with your sundowner and your letters from home.

Moubray's Cupola was more like a squire's place than a commuter's villa: here as at home, the British pined for landed consequence. The Anglo-Indian householders of Madras went in for ornamental lakes, landscaped gardens, even

The elegant mansion, rarely attainable in England, was far less costly in India. Scores remain, few of them in the pristine nineteenth-century condition shown here.

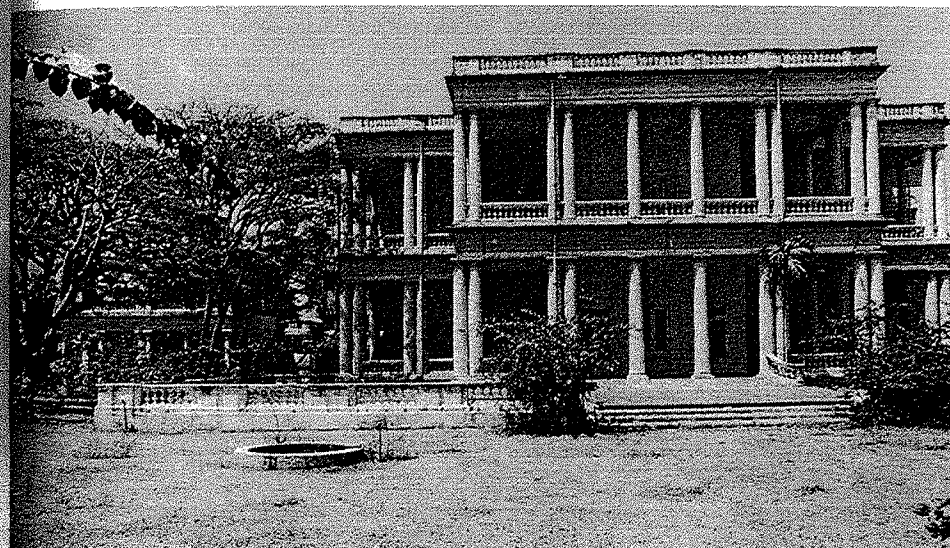
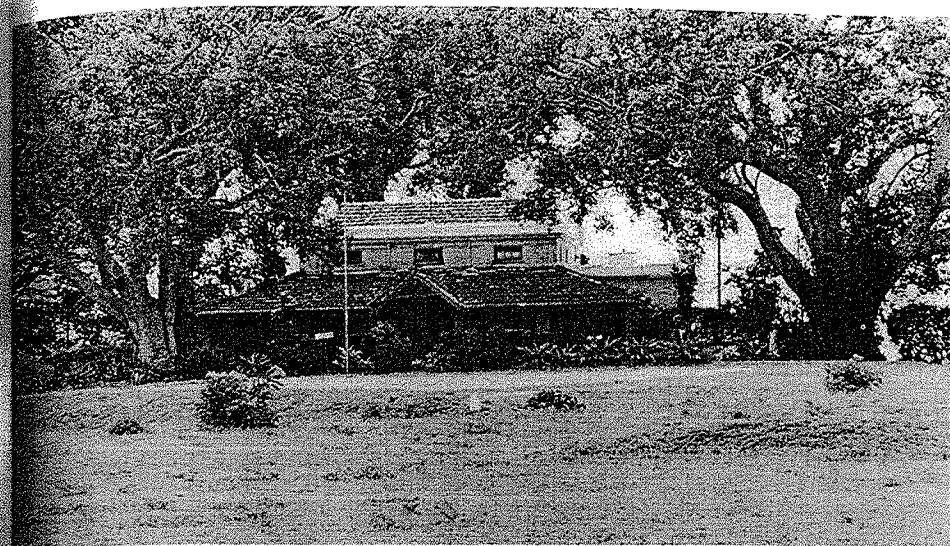


A fine private house in the inner suburbs of Madras, now owned by the British Government and – hence the flag – the official residence of the Deputy High Commissioner.

deer-parks, and around Calcutta, too, country properties called garden houses spread far out of the city centre. In the 1770s the Governor-General Warren Hastings built himself a country residence at Alipur, south of the city, which still stands. It was a simple enough building to start with, a square classical block with a bit of land: but in the way of country proprietors Hastings soon added to it, and by the time he left India in 1786 he was offering for sale two separate houses on the estate, a bath-house, a bungalow, and a range of outbuildings that included four coach-houses and stabling for fourteen horses.

In the hills

The nearest thing most Anglo-Indians got to a place in the country, though, was a rented house in one of the hill-stations. To these high retreats the central and provincial Governments habitually withdrew during the worst of the summer heat, and they were followed by many of the richer businessmen, all the grass



Senior soldiers, vital to the governance of the Indian Empire, were given quarters as grand – almost – as those of the civilian rulers. Flagstaff House, Secunderabad (top), would have housed the commanding general; the great garden house in Madras (bottom), its lawns running down to the River Adyar, was designed for one of the great lieutenants of 'John Company'. Today it is used as a naval pay office.