

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

*Davies
Splendours
of the
Raj*

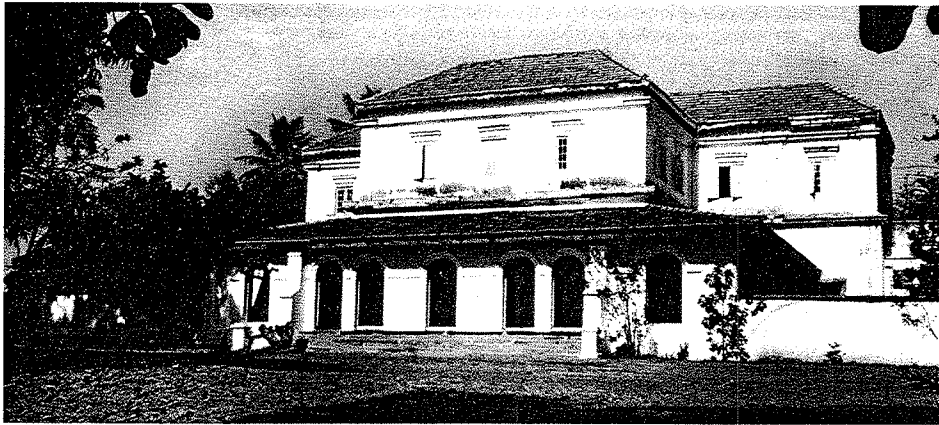
In a loop of the river Cauvery at Seringapatam stands a bungalow set in a garden of great beauty, but the house is lonely and isolated, haunted by memories of a past tragedy. Here in April 1817 Colonel Scott, the Commandant of the British garrison, returned from parade to find his wife and daughter dead 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



The Scott Bungalow, Seringapatam.

and better adapted to the climatic extremes of Bengal. Vernacular structures had been used as out-buildings and privies to the grander classical compositions in the main towns, but out in the mofussil or in the remote tea plantations of Assam these simple structures were the principal form of European housing.

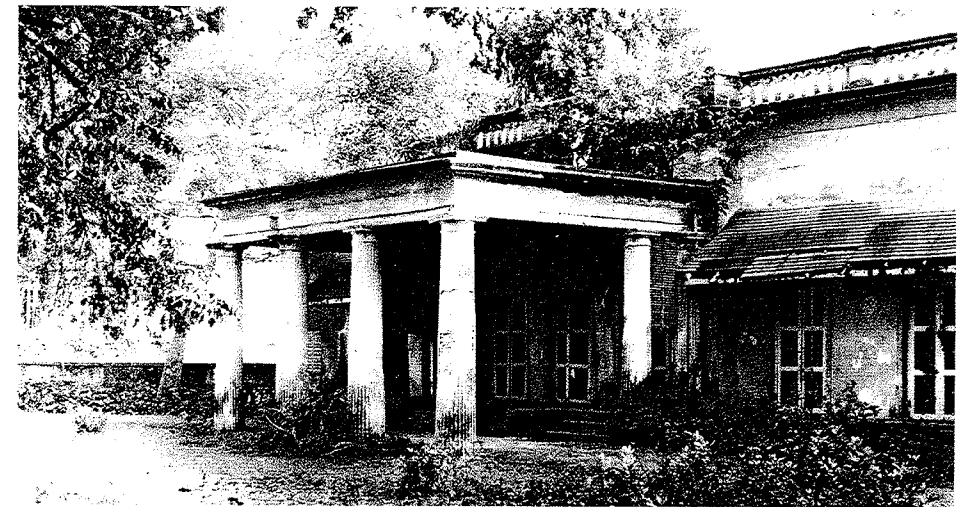
In the early 19th century many Englishmen arrived in India imbued with a Romantic nostalgia for rural life, then currently in vogue in Europe. In England this had been given eloquent expression in the *cottage ornée* and with the development of the first London garden suburb at St John's Wood from 1820 onwards, where small Picturesque villas were set in an Arcadian landscape. It was natural that nostalgic and romantic concepts of the mother-country should be grafted on to the simple indigenous structures of Bengal, which were cheap and flexible. The result was an exotic Anglo-Indian hybrid – the bungalow, and its appeal was obvious when compared with the chaotic squalor of Indian towns. As a native structure it was perfectly adapted to the climate; the wide verandah provided shade from the harsh Indian sun and protection during the monsoon rains, whilst the plan form, layout and voluminous interior promoted a cool flow of air.

In 1801 an observer described the English as living in 'what are really stationary tents which have run aground on low brick platforms. They are "Bungalows", a word I know not how to render unless by a Cottage. These are always thatched with a straw on the roof and the walls are sometimes of bricks and often of mats.' By 1824 the name and house type were in common usage. Bishop Heber wrote: 'Bungalow, a corruption of Bengalee, is a general name in this country for any structure in the cottage style and only of one floor. Some of these are spacious and comfortable dwellings, generally with high thatched roofs, surrounded by a verandah, and containing three or four good apartments, with bathrooms and dressing rooms, enclosed from the eastern, western or northern verandah. The south is always left open.'

Clearly by Heber's time the bungalow had developed into a far more

comfortable house type than its vernacular antecedents. The British rapidly took up the bungalow as an ideal form of tropical housing and exported it all over the world. In one of those peculiar cultural distortions of Empire, which gave the British dungarees and mulligatawny soup and the Indians blazers and banana custard, the bungalow was adopted as the universal form of colonial housing throughout the Empire – from Rangoon to Adelaide, and from Durban to Toronto. With the development of planned suburban cantonments, the bungalow came into its own and acquired more European characteristics. The bungalow should have been a great social leveller. Everyone lived in them regardless of status from the Governor of Bombay in his double-roofed bungalow on Malabar Hill to the lowliest peripatetic official in his dak bungalow, but with the development of an English caste system in India as rigid and arcane as the Indian, the bungalow soon began to acquire elements which portrayed social status. Wooden posts gave way to Doric and Tuscan columns, tiles displaced thatch, and roof pitches were screened behind ornamental balustrades. The English love of gardening was taken to its limits. Each bungalow was set in its own large landscaped compound, promoting the growth of widely dispersed settlements, which were serviced by cheap native labour. Urban expansion tended to occur horizontally rather than vertically, spreading across the flat open landscape of Bengal and Upper India. In order to create points of interest in these huge suburban cantonments entrances were accentuated by the addition of elaborate carriage porches. The superimposition of classical detailing over these indigenous structures reflected a desire to emulate, in miniature, the grand town residences of Calcutta and, still more deep-seated, a desire to maintain a European identity and values in a heathen land. Mud was replaced by brick and plaster or chunam. As the European population

Barrackpore: Early 19th-century bungalow with fluted Doric portecochère.

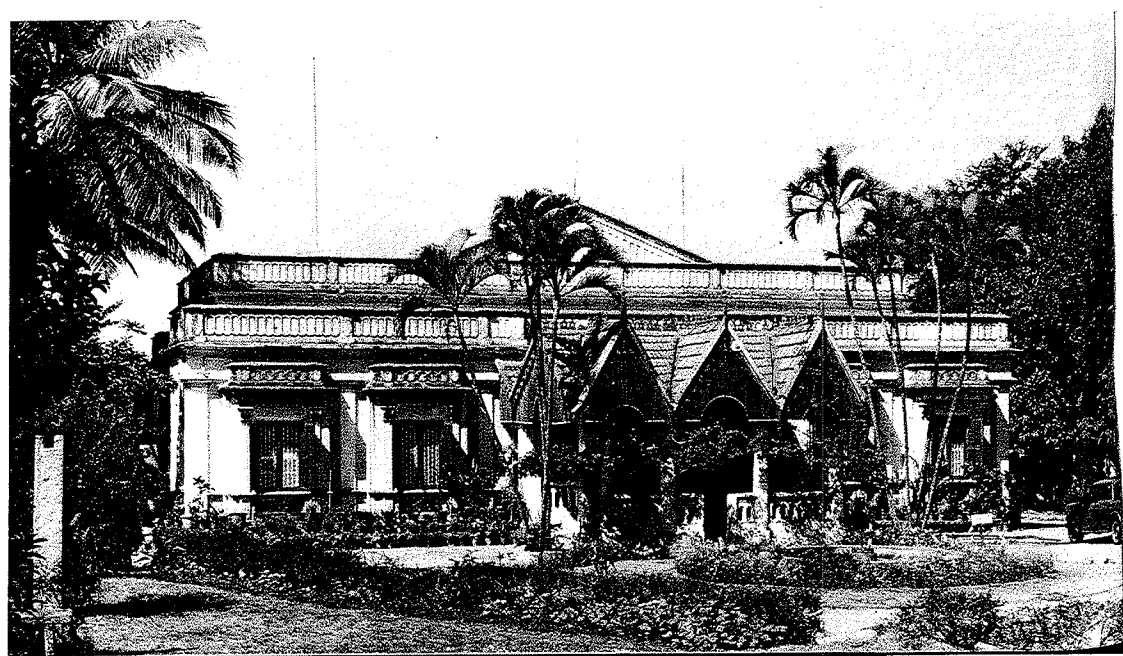


expected higher standards of comfort and accommodation local Indian techniques of 'cutcha' construction using sun-dried bricks gave way to English methods of 'pukka' building using kiln-baked bricks, bonded by a mortar made of brick dust, water, sand and cut hemp.

Bungalows were affected by the same architectural fashions as public buildings, so it is no surprise to find in a typical cantonment, such as Barrackpore, a variety of popular motifs and styles – fluted Doric, plain Tuscan, Adamesque fans over arches, Venetian windows and Regency Gothick quatrefoils. Common devices were used to control temperature and light – Venetian shutters to the windows and doors, cane tatties suspended from verandahs, and latticework screens simulating the elaborate carved screens of *moucharabya* work found on Moghul buildings. Internally the pitched roof was usually screened by sheets of stretched muslin which aided proportion, and maintained air circulation. Often in hot weather these were soaked with water to cool the atmosphere. These diaphanous ceilings provided a useful barrier against snakes, spiders and other unwelcome intruders, who otherwise were prone to drop from the thatch onto the disconcerted occupants beneath. Air circulation was aided by the punkah, a large cloth or glass fan suspended from the ceiling and drawn to and fro by the punkah-wallah. Mechanised fans or 'thermantidotes' were introduced in about 1780 in Calcutta and they were widely adopted soon afterwards in Bombay and Madras.

The plan form of many classical bungalows is similar. The house is entered through a colonnaded portico which functions as a *porte-cochère*. Here carriages could wait for guests in the shade rather than in the glare of the outside compound. This leads to a wide colonnaded verandah, part of which is sometimes enclosed to form a study or office. Usually the drawing room leads straight off the verandah, a lofty

Bangalore: A mid-19th century bungalow overlain with later Gothic details.

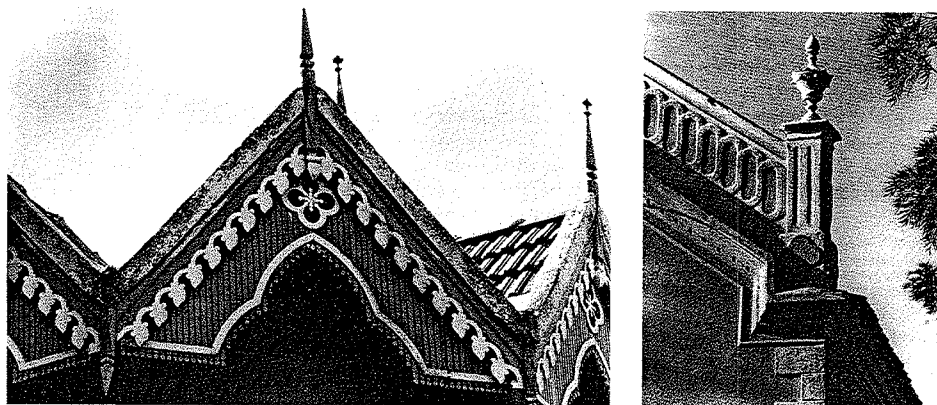


spacious room with the roof structure exposed. Generally the dining room lies behind the drawing room and they are connected by an open archway or classical screen beyond which lies the rear verandah which functions as the main delivery entrance and centre of household activity. Usually kitchens were kept away from the house in a separate outbuilding.

There was, and still is, a time lag between fashions in England and India, and architecture was not an exception. It was not until the 1870s that classical forms of architecture for bungalows gave way to more romanticised Gothic styles. Frequently in the case of vernacular buildings, the two styles overlapped to create delightful hybrid designs of great charm and refinement. Nowhere was this more evident than in Bangalore and Mysore in Southern India. Here a particular local tradition was developed which cultivated the Picturesque long after it had been superseded in England. Wide porch roofs and gables were enriched with elaborately carved bargeboards and fretwork canopies known as 'monkey-tops'. These distinctive features usually took the form of projecting, pointed hoods over windows and doors, or canopies enclosing verandahs and porches. From being accessories to the design, they became the focus of the design itself. They were made of a close trelliswork of vertical slats, usually measuring about one and a half inches by half an inch and painted dark green and white which, when combined with cascades of brightly-coloured bougainvillea, created a fairy-tale atmosphere, a Gothick Arcadia. Usually the secluded verandahs were used for informal entertainment. Cane and bamboo furniture was manufactured to complement the architecture of a tropical Elysium, untarnished by the impact of corrugated iron which later disfigured so many of the hill stations. The verandah acted as a sort of private territorial buffer zone around each house where the European occupants could come to terms with the country about them.

Often classical and Gothick details were combined in wonderful flights of imaginative fancy. One particularly popular design was that of a classical colonnaded portico set between two crenellated and gabled wings with quatrefoil windows, and window and door openings embellished with 'monkey-tops' and carved bargeboards. Frequently the serrated profiles of the monkey-tops were complemented by elaborately detailed bonnet tiles employed as crestings to the roof. The whole effect was enhanced by the choice of colour, which was usually red-oxide, yellow-ochre or cream with the ornament highlighted in white. The plaster was usually chunam, applied to give the impression of a stone façade, usually with rusticated quoins, but further points of brilliant colour could be achieved by stained glass fanlights and windows. In Bangalore and Mysore floors were made of cool local slate or unglazed terracotta tiles.

In Bangalore the increasing density of occupation and rising land prices saw a gradual reduction in the size of garden compounds and there was pressure to expand vertically rather than horizontally. Often bachelor officers and officials shared accommodation in 'chummeries' where individual rooms were let off and sanitary facilities were communal. By the early 1900s many houses had two storeys enriched

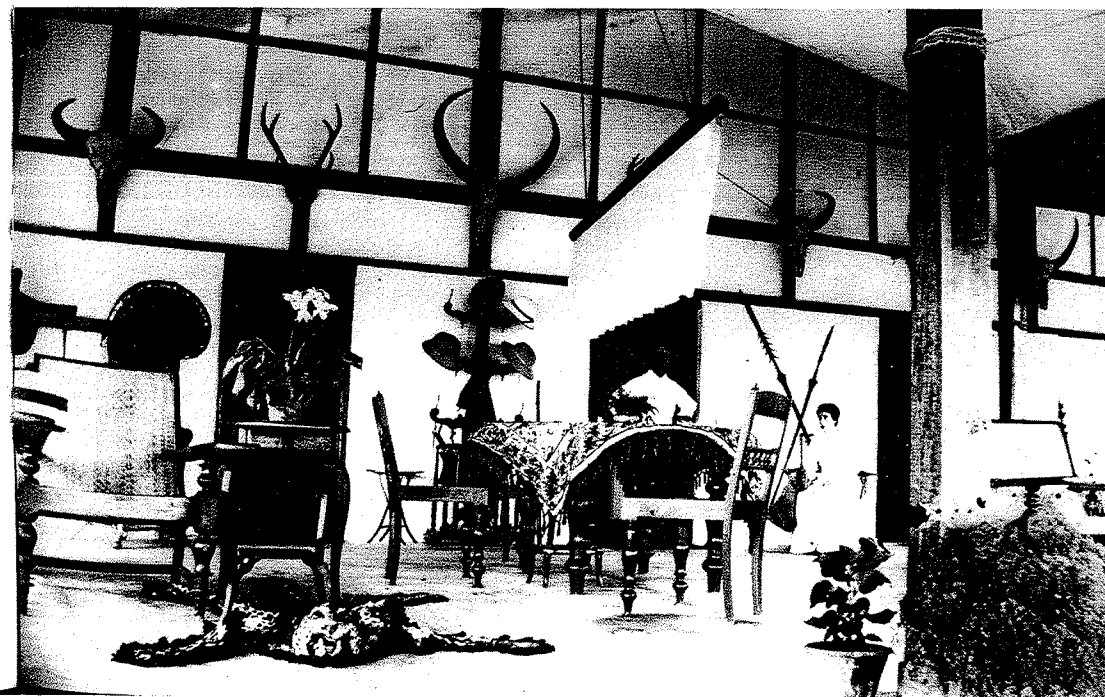


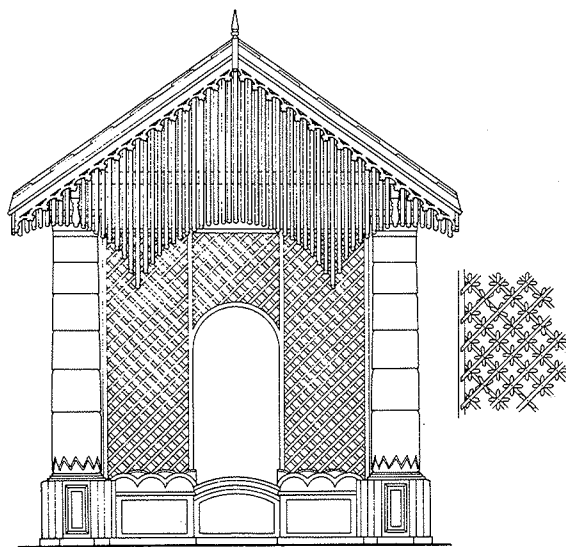
with the same architectural detailing of lattice-work, monkey-tops and crested tiles. Frequently these houses boasted hexagonal or octagonal bays, providing additional facets to the already highly fragmented form and mass of the structure. In the suburbs of Mysore there are a number of well-preserved officers' 'bungalows', which have long since lost the single-storey form of their Bengal prototypes, and which most resemble detached Victorian villas, yet they retain elaborately carved bargeboards, verandahs and crested roofs. The carriage entrances have been replaced by gravelled drives for automobiles.

The Indian bungalow was regarded as the perfect house for all tropical countries and its success was allied to the growth of prefabricated building techniques which were pioneered by the British in the early part of the 19th century. The basic concepts of industrialised building – standardisation of parts, mass production, flexibility and ease of assembly on site – were available by the mid-century, and for the next fifty years these were developed and explored all over the Empire, particularly in South Africa, North America and Australia. The most essential component of this process was the use of iron. The principle of increasing the rigidity of sheet iron by fluting or corrugating had been known for a long period, but the first patent was not granted until 1829. This was acquired by Richard Walker, who pioneered its application to practical building construction. Sheet iron painted green or red had been used as a roofing material in St Petersburg, for instance, since 1814. An ordinary London town house of 1820 in Wilmington Square has a similar sheet iron roof, and it was used in the colonies from this date, but it was only with the advent of hot-dip galvanising patented by Craufurd in 1837 that durability

Monkey-tops and crestings in Bangalore.

Difficult to tell where hat stand ends and antlers begin on this typical verandah. The punkah hangs stationary above the table.

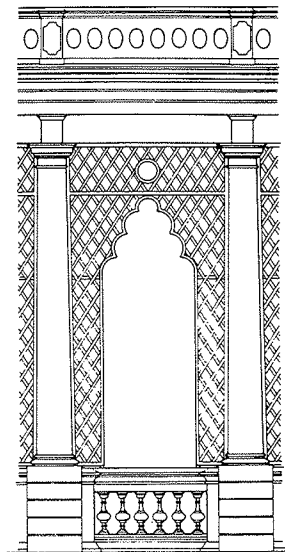




Typical trellis-work details in Bangalore.

was obtained. In 1843 John Porter's works in Southwark was the first to manufacture corrugated iron in the United Kingdom, and a year later the Phoenix Iron Works in Glasgow went into mass production. The advantages of prefabrication became allied with the idea of a cheap, portable form of housing for emigrants and iron houses, churches, hotels and arcades were exported all over the world. The Great Exhibition of 1851 held in the vast prefabricated iron and glass Crystal Palace in Hyde Park added impetus to the movement, and a portion of Paxton's palace itself later ended up as a sugar store in Commercial Road, Durban. An iron lighthouse was exported to Barbados, a customs house to Peru and Matthew Digby Wyatt designed an iron church for Rangoon. In the Crimean War many of the barrack buildings were prefabricated, and later an iron bungalow was designed for Bombay. In India the availability of cheap supplies of timber meant that generally iron was used more as a roofing material. An advertisement in the *Bombay Builder* for 1865 advertised sectional portable wooden buildings with double skin walls and roof to permit a free flow of air, demonstrating the common application of prefabrication techniques to local materials. However, iron remained a popular and durable form of construction. By 1891 British production of corrugated iron exceeded 200,000 tons, of which 75 per cent was exported, and when new government offices were erected in Simla, they were constructed entirely from prefabricated iron parts which could be transported up to the hills with relative ease.

The Indian bungalow arrived in England in 1869 when, unobtrusively, it invaded Kent at Birchington-on-Sea. Its introduction can be attributed to John Taylor, a pupil of J. P. Seddon, the eminent

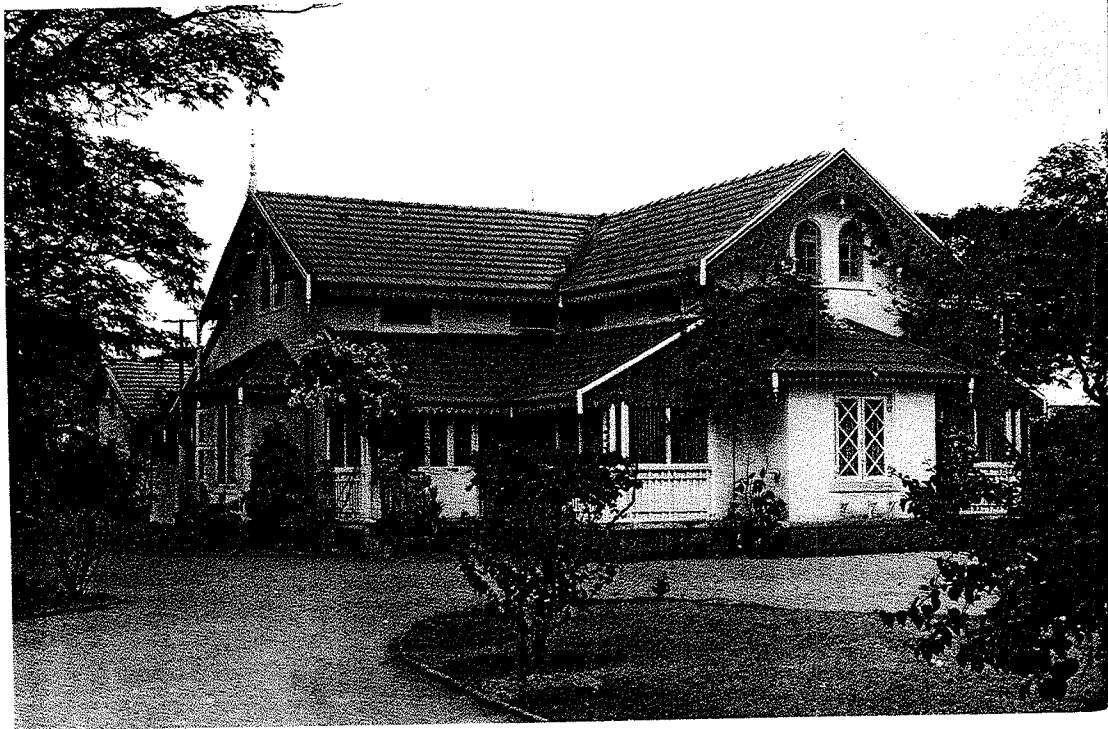


architect, who later collaborated in the venture. The Birchington bungalows incorporated the latest sanitary appliances and structural techniques. Taylor's were rather utilitarian – some were even portable wooden structures – but Seddon's were more substantial affairs with squat towers and sgraffito work by George Frampton. They proved immensely popular as coastal retreats for the wealthy infirm. Dante Gabriel Rossetti took one and died there in 1882. He lies in Birchington Churchyard, his bungalow demolished. The novel concept of the bungalow proved so influential that by 1928 Clough Williams-Ellis was aghast at the 'bungalowoid growth' which had spread across much of Southern England, and believed that it 'constitutes England's most disfiguring disease'. To this day its popularity remains and the bungalow lives on, the exotic product of an intermarriage of cultures, a sort of architectural tart from poor rural origins, taken up by the colonial middle classes only to be discarded far from its original home, briefly loved but now disdained, providing temporary solace for the urban masses in pursuit of leisure and the status of a second home.

In the later part of the 19th century the second home was a very characteristic aspect of Anglo-Indian life. With the development of the bungalow as the ideal form of colonial housing came the search for the ideal form of colonial settlement, and being an English ideal it was one imbued with many of the attributes of the English provincial resort. The development of the hill station was a peculiar and unlikely phenomenon, but one which exerted enormous influence over the pattern and nature of colonial life. Annual furlough in the hills was all that kept many officers and wives from premature demise in the intolerable heat of the plains. As Kipling noticed, it often came too late:

Ay, lay him 'neath the Simla pine –
A fortnight fully to be missed,
Behold, we lose our fourth at whist,
A chair is vacant where we dine.

Between 1815 and 1947 the British created over eighty hill stations on the lower mountain ranges of India at levels varying between 4,000 and 8,000 feet. They fall into four main regions, each providing rest and recreation for great urban centres of European population. The foothills of the Himalayas contain the largest number: Simla, Mussoorie, Naini Tal, Murree and Dalhousie were among the most favoured, although in later years the ornate 'Swiss Chalet' houseboats of Kashmir became popular alternatives. In the north-east the incomparable Darjeeling with its views of Kanchenjunga and the Everest range, and further east Shillong in Assam, remained favourite resorts for Calcutta. Over in the west, lay Poona and Mahabaleshwar serving Bombay, and in the south the stations of the Nilgiri Hills – Ootacamund, Coonoor, and Kodaikanal served Madras. Although each station has a highly distinctive character of its own, they all share common features – an Arcadian setting, an informal layout and a strict social hierarchy – a nostalgic



recreation of English upper-class values in the Indian hills.

In the north Simla was the summer capital from 1864 onwards. Here, for six months of the year, perched 7,000 feet high in the foothills of the Himalayas the temporary capital of the most powerful rulers in Asia lay in celestial isolation. But the military realities were never apparent. The prevailing atmosphere was one of relaxation and calm; recuperation from the searing heat of the plains below with dream-like visions of the snow-capped Himalayas beyond.

English attention was drawn first to the area during the Nepalese War in 1815. Two years later a government survey of the Sutlej valley was carried out. In 1821 Major Sir William Lloyd reached Simla. 'It is impossible that Simla and its sublimity can ever be effaced from our minds', he recalled. In 1822 Captain Charles Kennedy was appointed Superintendent of the Hill States. It was he who erected the first house at Simla in 1825, a pretty little gabled cottage with a cruciform plan and central chimney stack surrounded by a Gothic verandah. As early as 1824 Europeans, chiefly invalids from the plains, had permission to establish themselves in the locality rent-free from the Maharajah of Patiala and the Rana of Keonthal. The station rapidly acquired a reputation as a sanatorium, and this together with Kennedy's reputation as an effusive host, led to the visit of the Governor-General Lord Amherst in 1827 and the erection of over sixty houses by 1831. It was Amherst who once rebutted an over-zealous aide with the retort: 'The Emperor of China and I govern half the human race, and yet we find time to breakfast.' The fashion for retreat having been set, the Commander-in-Chief Lord Combermere came the following year accompanied by his ADC, Captain Mundy. According to Mundy, conditions were primitive:

Three late 19th-century bungalows on the outskirts of Mysore. The one at the top left was used in the T.V. series The Jewel in the Crown.

The wooden pent-roof ... only admitted of my standing upright in the centre ... though this canopy of planks was lined with white-washed canvas it by no means excluded the rains ... so peremptorily as I, not being an amphibious animal could have wished; and during some of the grand storms the hailstones rattled with such stunning effect upon the drum-like roof, that the echo sung in my ears for a week after. [He shared his accommodation with] an eternal carnival of rats ... I soon grew tired of these four-footed Pindarees, became callous to their nocturnal orgies and kept a cat.

Combermere laid out a road around Mount Jakko, the highest peak in Simla, and Lord William Bentinck, Amherst's successor, became a regular visitor, residing at his own house, Bentinck's Castle. Many houses were let for the season and all had chimneys and fireplaces to compensate for the altitude. Most had fanciful homely names – Swiss Cottage, Fountain Hall, Daisy Bank, Woodbine Cottage and Sunny-bank, but all were erected on common structural principles entirely unlike those used in the plains. In 1839 Charles French noted:

The walls of the houses are erected after a singular fashion unlike anything in the plains. Cement is seldom or never used except in the outer coatings. Instead of this a brittle kind of stone resembling slate, and which is procured in great abundance in the hills, is in the first instance shaped in to squares or parallelograms. These stones are then adjusted or laid down in layers of two or two and one half feet in thickness, and this they do regularly and neatly without the aid of lime or mortar. At every two, three or four feet of the height of the wall, the adjusted pile of stones is bound down with long pieces of timber laid horizontally over the edge of each side and connected by cross bars of wood. It cannot well be conceived how this plan can lend much strength to the walls or promote their stability, but practically it has been found to succeed.

He went on to mark how the roofs were either slated or shingled in a shallow angular form; one or two were thatched, but none tiled. The slating was crude and not brought to any great perfection. Ample supplies of pine and fir were available from the Mahasu forest nearby, but demand was so high and felling so uncontrolled, that soon the exposed soil was washed away into the valley.

French's description of construction techniques is important, because it demonstrates that the form and structure of the hill residences were based on long-established vernacular principles and not on imported European know-how. Many of the local temples and native houses demonstrate a traditional technique of construction, one dictated by the availability of materials and the exigencies of the climate. Heavy winter snowfalls necessitated pitched roofs, whilst common design features such as fretwork bargeboards were employed to protect the eaves from wind and to carry off meltwater in spring. The

British merely developed these indigenous structural elements into design features from their own architectural experience: wooden tie beams became exposed timber framing, and fretwork eaves and canopies became ornamental carved bargeboards, often in the style of the alpine cottage.

Emily and Fanny Eden accompanied their brother, Lord Auckland, to Simla in 1838–39. They lived in Auckland House, which still survives as part of a much wider complex of buildings. The original house was single storey with a compressed-earth roof, which Emily described as 'a jewel'. Everything was brought with them from Calcutta including carpets, chandeliers, and wall-shades. To improve the decor she 'got a native painter into the house, and cut out patterns in paper, which he then paints in borders all round the doors and windows'. She found that 'It makes up for the want of cornices and breaks the eternal white walls of the houses'. The hill on which the house stood was christened 'Elysium' in honour of the stunning sisters who resided there. Perhaps less appealing was 'Bentinck's Nose', a landmark which bore a noticeable resemblance to the Governor-General's remarkable protuberance.

In 1839 Simla residents were favoured with a glimpse of Mrs James, then 15 years old, 'who looked like a star amongst all the others'. Emily Eden thought her 'undoubtedly very pretty, and such a merry, unaffected girl', but with far-sighted prescience she noted that 'she is very young and lively, and if she falls into bad hands she would soon laugh herself into foolish scrapes'. It would be an understatement to describe her life as one of 'scrapes', for as the notorious dancer Lola Montez she went on to become the courtesan of King Ludwig of Bavaria, until scandal forced her to flee in disguise to England, where she remarried. Prosecuted for bigamy, she fled to Spain where her new husband died. She proceeded to the United States, and married yet again. On a tour of Australia she burst into the offices of the *Ballarat Times* and horse-whipped the editor for libel. Back in America she lectured on the Art of Beauty and spent the last years of her life ministering to reformed prostitutes. She died in New York in 1861 aged 38.

One of the delights of Simla was the pleasure ground at Annandale, a large flat clearing in the forest surrounded by an amphitheatre of hills. It was used for all major social occasions including a brilliant *fête champêtre* for Prince Waldemar of Prussia in 1835. A cricket ground was laid out in 1847. Gymkhanas and race meetings were the most popular diversions, even though 'rarely does a meeting pass without some serious accident, such as a rider rolling down a precipice either with, or without his horse, into the valley below'.

Not all social events were organised successfully. In a satirical piece in *The Delhi Sketch Book* Stiggins, writing from 'The Hovel', Simla referred to the 1851 Annandale Flower Fete:

Now all sage committee men, take my advice,
When you get up a flower fete, provide something nice, ...
Be careful that whenever Englishmen meet
They never depart, without something to eat.



Simla around 1870.

It is an indication of the extraordinary confidence that pervaded the Raj that the British could consider seriously the idea of ruling one-fifth of mankind from a remote Himalayan village whose only connection with the outside world was one tortuous and precipitous road. With the outbreak of the Mutiny in 1857, after a few initial alarms, all remained quiet in Simla and the Hill States. Had it not, virtually the entire government would have been cut off. The crisis of confidence induced by the rebellion did not curtail the practice of retreating to the hills. In fact from 1864 onward Lord Lawrence positively advocated the wisdom of removing the government to Simla on strategic grounds, although by then communications had been much improved as part of a grandiose project of Dalhousie's to form the Great Hindustan and Tibet Road. It was preposterous, as though the whole of Whitehall moved lock, stock and barrel to St Moritz for the summer, but until the advent of air conditioning it was essential if work was to be sustained. Kipling put it to verse in 'A Tale of Two Cities':

But the rulers in that City by the Sea
Turned to flee –
Fled with each returning Spring & tide from its ills
To the Hills.

As a result of the annual diaspora to the hills Simla changed. There were two distinct societies – the official and the social, the bees and the butterflies, and the station was no longer just a resort; physically it

changed into an eccentric suburb of Calcutta, 700 miles away, adding further incongruity to its already idiosyncratic appearance.

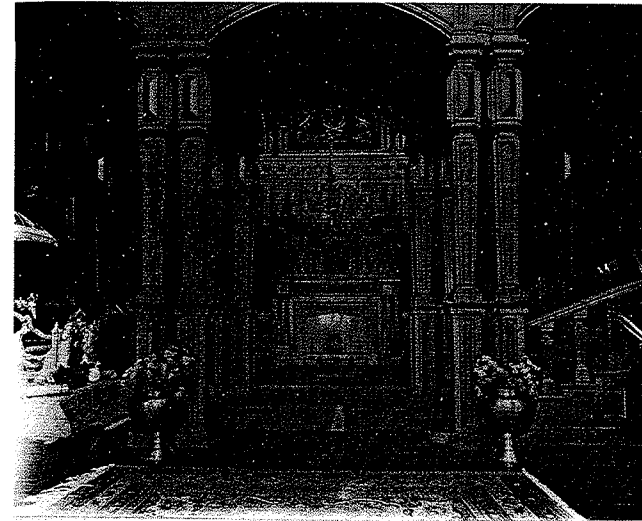
From 1862 to 1888 the Viceroy lived in Peterhof which was generally regarded as unsuitable for a Viceregal establishment and which Lord Lytton thought 'a pigstye'. Like most of Simla it was perched high on a precipice with hardly any grounds to front or rear, and it was not until Lord Dufferin pressed energetically for a more appropriate residence that a new Viceregal Lodge was built in 1888. Peterhof survived until 1981 when it was gutted by fire. The site chosen for the new house was entirely appropriate for the residence of the Viceroy of the Indian Empire for it was a natural watershed, the drainage on one side flowing down to the Sutlej and on to the Arabian Sea, and on the other into the Jumna and out into the Bay of Bengal.

Queen of these restless fields of tide,
England! What shall men say of thee,
Before whose feet, the worlds divide?

Dufferin had long cherished dreams of building a great romantic house under his own direction. He had tried before at his seat at Clondeboyne in Ireland and later when Governor-General of Canada, in Quebec, but at Simla he was given the resources to fulfil his fantasies. The designs were prepared by Henry Irwin, based on earlier proposals advanced by Captain Cole, but Dufferin himself suggested the plan of the building and interfered at every opportunity. He constantly modified and examined all the drawings, visiting the site daily, usually with his wife, who shared his enthusiasm for the building. She was amused by the appearance of the native labourers, particularly the women who 'walk about with the carriage of empresses, and seem as much at ease on the top of the roof as on the ground floor; most picturesque masons they are.'

The design is a free interpretation of the Elizabethan or English Renaissance style with few concessions to India in its detailing or form. It could be transposed to the Highlands and function perfectly well as a country house. Indeed later residents compared it somewhat unkindly to a 'Scotch hydro', and even to Pentonville Prison, with its crenellated tower and forbidding blue and grey facings of local limestone and sandstone. Nevertheless the Dufferins loved it and the spectacular views to the north and north-east more than compensated for its unyielding elevations.

Internally the great entrance hall and gallery are the principal feature around which the main rooms are disposed. A huge teak staircase provides access to the upper floors and the gallery; rising full height through the house, it gives a sense of space and grandeur to the building. The state dining room is panelled to a height of ten feet, enriched with pierced Elizabethan strapwork carrying the armorial bearings of former Governors-General and Viceroys. Curzon with his scholarly mind and obsession for historical accuracy later corrected several of the armorial devices and altered the decorations, which had been provided by Messrs Maple & Co, London. More significantly he



Viceregal Lodge: Entrance Hall. The overbearing teak panelling and sombre ornament oppressed many occupiers of the house. Subsequent Vicereines made considerable efforts to improve the decor. The Viceroy's state howdah can be glimpsed on the left of the picture.

also raised the external tower which was thought to be out of proportion, and spent considerable sums on correcting defects in the structure.

Architecturally the house is a creditable composition and compares favourably with many similar Victorian country houses of the period. It incorporated several innovations including electric light and even a separate indoor tennis court, similar to that built by Dufferin at Rideau Hall, Ottawa, as well as older salvaged treasures such as the mirrors from King Thebaw's palace in Mandalay. Today it is used as an Institute for Advanced Studies, but it is a sad, eerie place. It was never homely and it exudes that peculiar melancholy of departed greatness which hangs like an aura over many grand buildings which have outlived their original function. When I visited it in 1981 the building was shrouded in mist which added to its forbidding aspect. A lone watchman guarded the interior, the smoke from his fire lit in the middle of the entrance hall floor wreathing insubstantial patterns amongst the dust sheets.

By the time the walls of Viceregal Lodge were erected, the quintessential character of Simla had been firmly moulded. Most of the principal public buildings were concentrated along 'The Ridge', which was dominated by Christ Church: an adequate Gothic composition enhanced by its crowning position on the skyline. Designed by Colonel J. T. Boileau, it had been commenced in 1844, but it was not consecrated until 1857 after a series of incremental additions including the tower. It was always a small church, and where once the vicar preached a sermon berating the ladies on the space occupied by their voluminous crinolines, the congregation has now dwindled to less than ten.

Viceregal Lodge, Simla: a grim, forbidding edifice in quasi-Elizabethan style designed by Henry Irwin for the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin.

The timber-framed Post Office buildings were another landmark on 'The Ridge', a little above its junction with 'The Mall', the legendary 'Scandal Point' of Kipling's Simla. They still survive in a style which can best be described as Wild West Swiss. Beneath The Mall and The Ridge, which were exclusively European preserves, lay the bazaars of the native quarters cascading down the hill in a vertiginous warren of alleys and shacks. 'A man who knows his way there can defy all the police of India's summer capital, so cunningly does veranda communicate with veranda, alley-way with alley-way, and bolt-hole with bolt-hole', wrote Kipling. In its heyday it was one of the spy centres of the world. The model for Lurgan Sahib of Kipling's *Kim*, a certain Mr Jacob, actually ran a curio shop similar to Lurgan's in between his more furtive activities as political agent, mesmerist and spy in the 1870s and 80s, a local figure around whom many mysterious tales revolved.

With the consolidation of Simla as the summer capital, several older residences were used by the great officers of state – 'the heaven-born', so that Simla acquired the soubriquet 'the abode of the little tin gods'. The Private Secretary to the Viceroy resided at Observatory House, once the home of the eccentric Colonel J. T. Boileau, the architect of Christ Church, Simla and St George's, Agra, a keen astronomer, who built his own observatory here in 1844 and gave his name to the locality – Boileaugunge. The Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab occupied Barnes Court, one of the most famous houses in Simla, a half-timbered neo-Tudor pile where Lord Napier, Colin Campbell, General Anson and Sir Hugh Rose had lived, with an extravagant Moorish ballroom enriched with decoration designed by John Lockwood Kipling, Rudyard's father, and Principal of the Mayo School of Art in Lahore. Lockwood Kipling also designed the fresco around the chancel window of Christ Church. From 1885 onwards the Commander-in-Chief resided at Snowdon. In the early 1900s, as a diversion from his quarrels with the imperious Curzon, Kitchener enlarged and stamped his own personal flavour on the house. A huge walnut staircase was installed embellished with trophies taken from the dervishes at Omdurman and from the Boers in the Transvaal, including a curious oak coat of arms removed from the back of the canopy under which Kruger used to sit in Pretoria. An oak chimneypiece was installed in the billiards room inscribed with the motto 'Strike and fear not', a maxim dear to Kitchener's heart.

Elsewhere new buildings were erected to accommodate facilities and offices for the 'heaven-born' of the administration. A new civil secretariat arose on the site of Gorton Castle on The Mall, a gaunt, sinister edifice built in a style resembling Scottish baronial. The designs were prepared by the eminent Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob, an enthusiastic advocate of Indo-Saracenic styles. He left a remarkable legacy of fine buildings in Lucknow, Jodhpur and Jaipur, but alas not in Simla for the Secretariat is rather a monster, looming above the fir trees. Perhaps more typical of the local style is the old Hotel Cecil, which is built on a precipice so that the entrance from the road is near roof level and one descends to the principal rooms. It incorporates all the familiar nuances of the Simla style: exposed timber framing, balustrated terraces



hanging high over precipitous chasms, canopied balconies and serrated profiles of fretwork and crestings.

The most imaginative manifestation of timber-framed building is the Ripon Hospital designed by Henry Irwin in 1885 and built by Campion and Learmouth. It is interesting because it demonstrates the extent to which Gothic detailing could be adapted to accommodate the inherent constraints of timber-framed construction. It is a delightful building with a very distinctive open staircase, which is clearly influenced by the great mediaeval staircases at Blois and Chambord and Scott's much later use of the same element in the University Hall in Bombay. Here it is executed in open timber framing crowned by a corrugated iron roof, but it has charm, originality and vitality, elements which are rare architectural attributes in Simla, where the ubiquitous use of corrugated iron creates a transient, ramshackle character. Later the architects T. E. G. Cooper and A. Craddock did much to improve the artistic flavour of the station in a series of well-built business premises, and James Ransome's work, as consulting architect to the government of India, raised standards still higher.

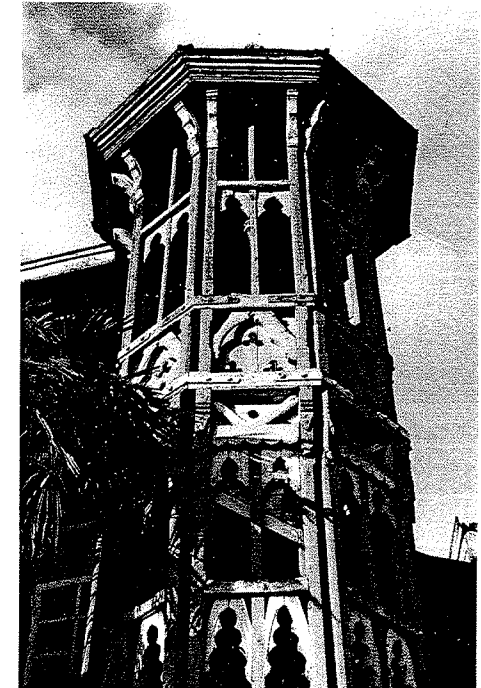
However, the great government and commercial buildings were, and still are, the exceptions in Simla. It is the modest villas once inhabited by the ordinary officials and colonials which mark the place. Constance Cumming described them in 1884 as 'a good deal like Swiss chalets with a strong family likeness to each other'. Here under the shaded verandahs of Oakwood, Sunnybank or Woodbine Cottage the mem-

The timber-framed Post Office buildings above 'Scandal Point' still survive in a much-altered form.

Snowdon, the Drawing Room. The traditional residence of the Commander-in-Chief was remodelled by Kitchener, whose portrait hangs over the mantelpiece. The lavish interior was a thinly disguised attempt by Kitchener to challenge the status of the Viceroy, Lord Curzon.



The sinister Gorton Castle by Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob once housed the Civil Secretariat.



sahibs met to chat and gossip about the latest affairs or the unreliability of their servants, who shuffled discreetly to and fro with cups of tea, lemonade, and other essentials of colonial life. Such pleasant interludes were punctuated only by the occasional crash of a monkey leaping across the iron roof in pursuit of mischief or a discarded sandwich.

As the Imperial sun reached its zenith in the skies of Asia, communications with Simla were transformed by the construction of an astonishing mountain railway. It was one of the outstanding feats of British Imperial engineering and was a matter of justifiable pride. It cost over £1 million and was designed by H. S. Harington, the chief engineer of the Kalka-Simla railway. It runs over sixty miles in a series of tight reverse curves with gradients of over three feet in every hundred. Five miles is entirely underground in a series of 107 tunnels. Nearly two miles are out across precipitous viaducts balanced over yawning chasms, but it was not built without mishap. Suddenly in November 1903 all work stopped amidst great excitement amongst the native work force. The bones of a great snake had been discovered embedded in one of the tunnels, but on careful investigation the wonderful serpent was revealed to be an iron pipe carrying fresh air to the workings.

With the arrival of the railway in 1903, Simla society became less

(Left) The Old Hotel Cecil was built, like much of Simla, on a precipice. The entrance is at roof level and one descends to the main rooms. (Right) Ripon Hospital: an inventive adaptation of Gothic detailing using available local materials.

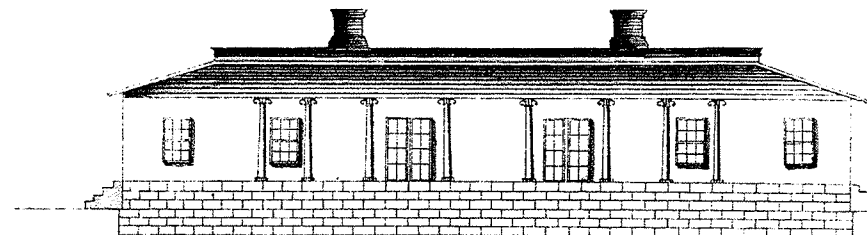
closed and introverted. Hotels and boarding houses sprang up to accommodate an increasing number of visitors, and now there were too many people for the Vicereine to meet. In summer over 7,000 Europeans made the journey up from the plains, but the trip was now in the narrow-gauge carriages of the railway and, in later years, by the elegant electric railcar, which still glides serenely through the hills. Emily Eden's world of caparisoned jampans and palanquins had gone forever, submerged in a confused jumble of over 1,400 European dwellings.

If Simla is like some fading insubstantial dream, far to the south in the Nilgiri Hills, Ootacamund, the Queen of Hill Stations, evokes an altogether different response. It is a pastiche of rural England preserved in aspic, a window on a forgotten world.

Ooty, as it was popularly known, was a paradise for the exiled Englishman. In 1818 two surveyors, Whish and Kindersley, returned from an expedition in the Nilgiris with wonderful tales of a lost world – a hidden plateau over fifty miles across and eight thousand feet up in the hills. Here, it was said, the soil was rich, the air fresh and the moors and thicket teemed with wildfowl and game. The local collector at Coimbatore, John Sullivan, listened attentively to the story and determined to see for himself. The following year he set off with a French naturalist. When finally they broke out on the plateau, the Frenchman, who had been on the verge of death from fever, recovered miraculously, fortified by the buoyant air and equable climate. Sullivan returned in 1820 with a passionate interest in the development of Ooty. The government of Madras were almost as enthusiastic as Sullivan at the prospect of a restorative sanatorium in the hills where invalid officers could go to recuperate, instead of the long voyage to the Cape of Good Hope, which further debilitated already infirm constitutions.

In 1823 Sullivan built the first house in Ooty. The plans and elevation survive. They show a long, low single-storey bungalow raised on a shallow stone platform. The verandah is carried on a series of Ionic columns and the windows appear glazed with casements in the manner of Georgian sashes. Unusually the building was constructed entirely of stone, hence the name 'Stonehouse', and it survives embedded in part of a later building now used as government offices. Sullivan appears to have moved here permanently from this date onwards with his wife and children, much to the disapproval of the Madras authorities.

In 1826 the enlightened Sir Thomas Munro, Governor of Madras, visited Sullivan at Stonehouse for four days, access from Coimbatore having been improved by the construction of a road through the hills built by convict labour. At this time Sullivan was in sole control of Ootacamund and its development, and he used the opportunity to acquire as much land as possible for himself. By 1829 he held five times more than any other European resident. It was he who introduced the first European species into the region, English apple and peach trees, as well as strawberries and potatoes. Soon after, oak, fir, pear, walnut,



Stonehouse: The first house in Ootacamund built by John Sullivan in 1823.

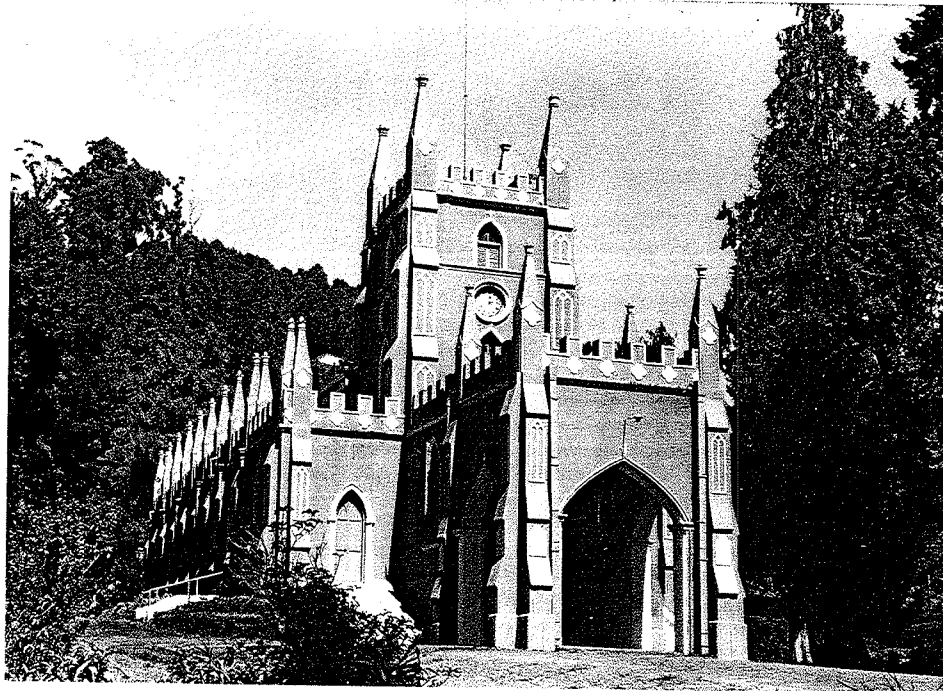
chestnut and pine arrived with English flowers: roses, dandelions and honeysuckle. The climate was such that English species grew in great profusion, and with far more vigour and abundance than at home. Each new resident became an enthusiast, so that in a comparatively short space of time the landscape acquired the characteristics of Sussex or even Westmorland, for Sullivan had dammed the local streams and created an ornamental lake.

Eventually Sullivan's grip was weakened when a Military Commandant was appointed in 1830, but Ooty continued to blossom and expand in all directions. The then Governor of Madras, Stephen Lushington, became a regular visitor residing either at his brother's house, Lushington Hall, or at the house of Sir William Rumbold, which is now the Club. To Lushington it all resembled 'Malvern at the fairest season'. Soon eucalyptus and Australian wattle were introduced to replace the rapacious felling of the local forests, and these spread across the open downland imparting a more wooded and secluded look.

In 1830 St Stephen's Church was consecrated by the Bishop of Calcutta. Named in Lushington's honour, it was designed by Captain John James Underwood of the Madras Engineers, who had already been active in building a sanatorium for invalid officers. The building timber was removed from Tipu Sultan's Lal Bagh Palace at Seringapatam, and to economise the pillars to the nave were constructed in the same salvaged teak but plastered over to resemble stone. However, as usual the economies, while not enough to placate the Court of Directors in London who complained about being kept in the dark about the whole project, were sufficient to cause later structural problems. In a few years the roof needed repair and there were complaints of dim light and poor ventilation. Today St Stephen's, like much of Ooty, looks like a pasteboard parody of itself. This is accentuated by the flat yellow ochre colouring of the external walls, the light and the absence of any significant moulded stucco ornament. But imagine it in stone, and it would grace any English village without much adjustment – crenellated parapets, buttresses and finials. Only the deep carriage entrance gives it away, but like all English parish churches it has grown incrementally over the years. The pews were added in 1842, the clock and bell in 1851, and the ubiquitous plaques and monuments of English ecclesiastical life mark the way of all flesh. But it is the churchyard and its tombs straggling back up the steep hill behind the church which impart a feeling of continuity and age. This is no longer a new resort. It is a town with its own roots, home to generations who lived, loved and



John Sullivan, founder of Ootacamund.



died here, and the cemetery is not haunted by the bitter-sweet romantic melancholy which pervades many in this land. It is calm, peaceful, timeless – a real place of rest for exiles who once held dominion over palm and pine.

Over the next hill from the church stands the Club, that singular repository of English values. The building was erected in about 1830 as a hotel for Sir William Rumbold, and the work was supervised by his butler, Felix Joachim, who later ran the hotel. Although trusted implicitly by his master, he was 'an unmitigated scamp' who lined his own pockets at Rumbold's expense. Rumbold was a partner in William Palmer & Co, a notorious firm who lent vast sums of money to the Nizam of Hyderabad at extortionate rates of interest. Rumbold's house was the most comfortable in the station at this time. Here in 1834 those two giants of British India – Lord William Bentinck and Thomas Babington Macaulay met for the first time, Macaulay passing the time making early jottings for his great Indian Penal Code.

When the Club was convened in 1843 it took over Rumbold's house and steadily expanded into one of the most eminent in India, the social centre of 'snooty Ooty'. The basic form and appearance of Rumbold's early house remains with its central Ionic portico and low wings. The style is typical. It reflects the form and massing of 'Stonehouse' on a slightly grander scale, and the elongated façade seems an early design feature recurring on other surviving buildings including the school, which I suspect is Underwood's original. The nearby Savoy Hotel (formerly Sylks), built as a school for the sons of those in the Church Mission Society, is almost certainly by Underwood, for the roof has similar salvaged teak beams to those used in the church, and later, in 1841, Underwood acquired the house for his own use.

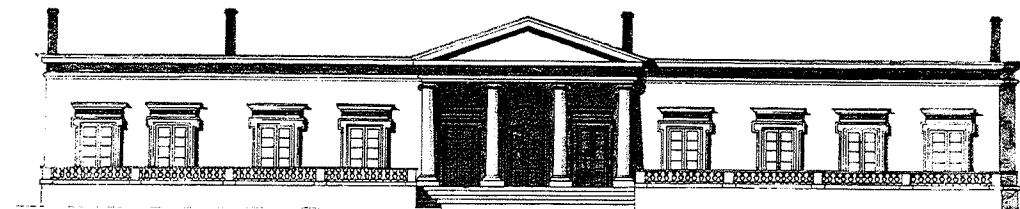
An aura of timelessness pervades the club. Interspersed amongst the flayed tigers and animal trophies are stirring prints of Rorke's Drift and Tel-el-Kebir. It is beautifully maintained, as always, for its declining clientele; the brasswork gleams, the leather shines, and the kitchen can still rustle up baked fish and lemon tart for the infrequent visitor. It was here in the club in 1875 that a young subaltern of the Devonshire Regiment, Neville Chamberlain, perfected snooker, the game he had conceived in the officers mess at Jubbulpore, and on the walls of the billiards room the first rules were posted, but the fun, the laughter and the *esprit de joie* have departed, and the club, like Ooty itself, lives on past memories and nostalgia.

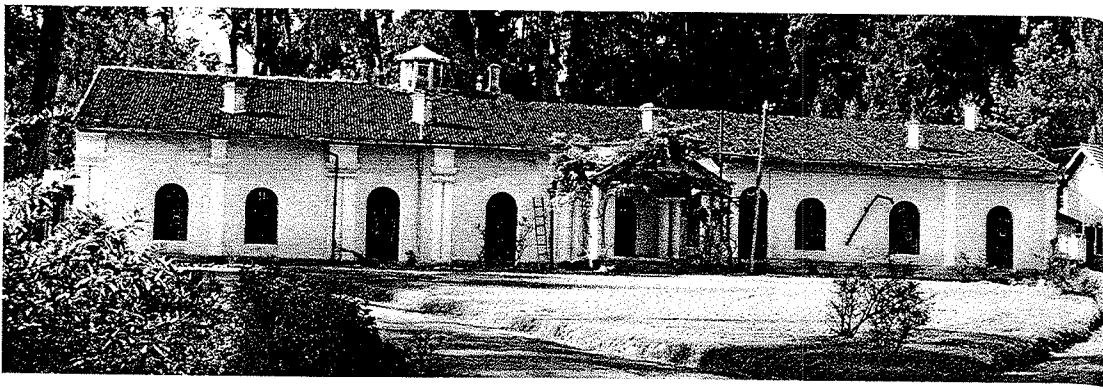
Homesickness and nostalgia for England run as common themes through most of the diaries and letters of the expatriate British. Lady

St Stephen's, Ootacamund, built by Captain John James Underwood in 1830 using salvaged timbers from Tipu Sultan's palace at Seringapatam.

St Stephen's Churchyard.

Sir William Rumbold's House: The original building is now incorporated into the Club. The Ionic centrepiece remains a recognisable feature.





The single-storey pilastered school has all the hallmarks of an early building and is probably Underwood's original.

Betty Balfour wrote of a day in 1877: 'The afternoon was rainy and the road muddy, but such beautiful English rain, such delicious English mud. Imagine Hertfordshire lanes, Devonshire downs, Westmorland lakes, Scotch trout streams and Lusitanian views.'

Not all shared her enthusiasm for this distorted dream of an English Eden. Edward Lear thought it resembled Leatherhead and that the light made it undrawable. Richard Burton, the great explorer, arrived as a young officer in 1847 and reserved his most astringent comments for the Ootacamund soir  e, which 'happens about once in twelve months to the man of pleasure, who exerts all the powers of his mind to ward off the blow of an invitation.' He went on to describe the 'scene of unfeignedness' and other 'similar horrors . . . He must present Congo [tea] to the ladies, walk about with cake and muffins, listen to unmelodious melody and talk small . . . in spite of all efforts [he] will occasionally give vent to half or three-quarters of some word utterly unfit for ears feminine or polite.'

The prevailing social mood was that set by the Ooty Hunt out after jackal on Wenlock Downs, the regular picnics in nearby beauty spots, like the Tigers Cave, the morning stroll down grassy lanes past Charing Cross and on to the Botanical Gardens, but somehow the whole town is a curiously distorted vision of England, an anachronistic reflection in an Oriental mirror. One recalls Kipling:

If England was what England seems
And not the England of our dreams . . .

If the prevailing social mood was the English country set, the prevailing architectural character was, and still is, Gothic, but a Gothic which eschews the architectural canons in favour of charm and eccentricity. On a knoll near the church stands the Civil Court, which was enlarged from Breek's Memorial School in 1899, to provide for civil litigation. It has a dumpy little staircase tower and spire, crested corrugated iron roofs, diamond paned windows, carved bargeboards and a needle-thin clock tower crowned by a pyramidal roof, all executed in dark red



The Law Courts: Erected in 1873 this ramshackle courthouse was once Breek's Memorial School.

brick. The rambling Lawrence Asylum is modelled on Osborne House, and like the Nilgiri Library (1865) is by the excellent Madras architect Robert Fellowes Chisholm. The latter opened with a ball, the lofty Reading Room lit by five arched windows and a tall Gothic window at the far end, providing a charming setting for the occasion. It is a pretty red brick building with stucco dressings and little scrolled gables flanking a central chimney stack. Rapidly it became a favourite meeting place. Today it's as though the clock stopped in 1935 with old copies of the *Illustrated London News* left out for the casual visitor to thumb through. Now its entire membership is less than fifty.

As Ooty became the summer social centre of Southern India, native Indian princes acquired their own houses in the area. Fernhill Palace was the residence of the Maharajah of Mysore. The original house, built in 1842, was transformed by the addition of large ballrooms and suites for private entertainment. In a sunken hollow in the grounds an indoor

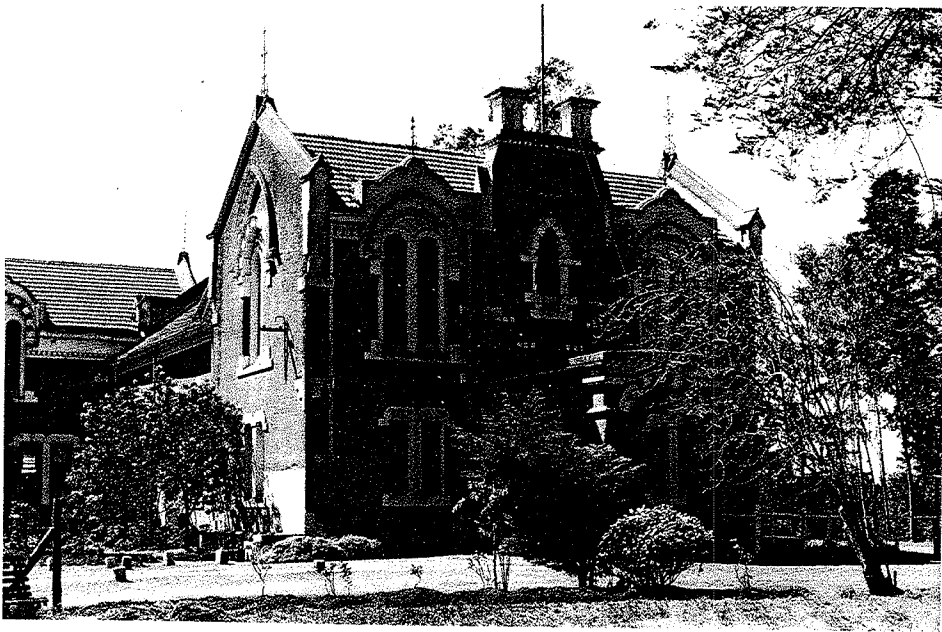
badminton court was built for the relaxation of guests and visitors. The whole complex is a riot of carved bargeboards, ornamental cast-iron balustrading, trelliswork and verandahs set in a compound studded with firs, cedars, palms, and monkey puzzle trees. The house is painted deep red oxide with green painted timberwork, and it is the culmination of the Swiss chalet style which pervades much of the architecture of Ootacamund.

Over to the north Arranmere, once the residence of the Maharajah of Jodhpur looks distinctly Home Counties with an Arts and Crafts air, mullioned and transomed windows and beautifully manicured lawns. Inside there is an underground passage, a direct link between the main house and the separate quarters of the Maharani, which enjoy breathtaking views of the blue-tinged horizons of the Nilgiri Hills.

Other palatial residences survive either as hotels or government colleges. Woodside has two handsome marble chimneypieces in its reception rooms taken from the huge mansion built at Kaiti by Lord Elphinstone. The Cedars belonged to the Resident at Hyderabad, Baroda Palace, to its eponymous owner, and high upon Elk Hill, Elk Hill House was built by George Norton for his own use in 1836.

In the 1860s the bare hills surrounding the town were given over to plantations of cinchona imported from Peru and eucalyptus brought from Australia. Today these impart an exotic look and smell to the countryside, complemented by the luxuriant growth of other imported species in the Botanical Gardens, which rise up the side of the hill to the

The Nilgiri Library, 1865, by Robert Fellowes Chisholm.



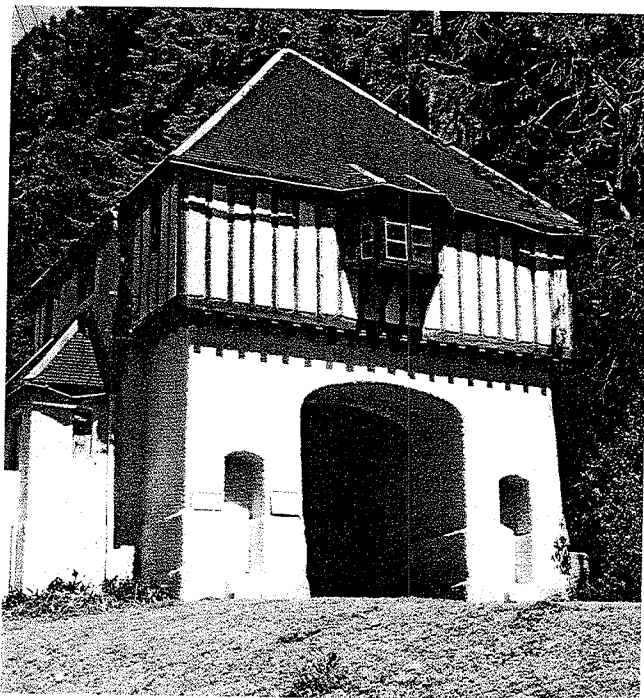
entrance to Government House. The Gardens were laid out by Mr MacIvor who was sent out from Kew to supervise in 1848. He introduced Persian vines, mulberry trees, cascades of camellias, and countless other shrubs and trees.

Government House was erected for the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos during his tenure as Governor of Madras in 1877. It is a large, Italianate mansion in cream-coloured stone with a projecting round-arched central portico and paired columns, copied from the Duke's family seat at Stowe in Buckinghamshire. There is an elegant frieze beneath the eaves, but little else to distinguish it from many other late Victorian Italianate mansions. Nearby and below stands the older, more modest original Government House. The road into the estate skirts the Botanical Gardens and the entrance is marked, not by a triumphal entrance screen in the manner of Mysore, Hyderabad, Lucknow or Calcutta, but by a half-timbered and roughcast lodge suitable to the prevailing vernacular style of the station. Today the house is untenanted for most of the year, other than by the millions of rock bees which have set up home in the portico, as they have at the former Residency at Hyderabad, as though they had a penchant for grandiloquent lodgings.

Unlike Simla in the north, Ooty never succumbed to the onslaught of the great offices of state, and there remains an identifiable continuity of style and ambience. As late as 1896 the little Union Church was erected in a pretty Regency Gothick style, fifty years after it went out of fashion

Fernhill Palace: The Maharajah of Mysore's private badminton court. The carved bargeboards of the palace may be seen in the background.

Government House: Gate Lodge. The Arts and Crafts style is rare in India in spite of its nostalgic associations. This Voyseysque Lodge marks the entrance to Government House from the Botanical Gardens.



elsewhere. To Whish and Kindersley, Ooty seemed a little unreal, a sort of lost world, and a trace of that remains to this day, although its isolation is no longer a reliable bulwark against change and the twentieth century.

The development of the hill station occurred at a point when British power was consolidated sufficiently for settlements to be developed in remote and inaccessible areas in the confident knowledge that British troops could be called upon to cope with any emergency, an assumption that nearly proved fatal during the Mutiny. The hill station grew up as a response by Europeans to life in India. They were essentially resorts developed to provide rest and recreation, an alternative to the inhospitable towns and cities of the plains. The principal beneficiaries were the women and children, but the price paid was stultifying boredom. Deprived of any effective domestic, economic or political role the memsahib lived a static existence where time hung heavily on her hands. The hill station was just a welcome consolation for those who lived their lives in exile. They were always pale imitations of life at home, and never more than wistful reflections of the real thing, which is why today they seem so forlorn and rather sad. Conceived in nostalgia, they seem destined to decline into melancholy, for old empires don't really die, they just fade away.

CHAPTER 6

THE DEVIL'S WIND

In the early 1850s India was undergoing a period of acute stress as the changes of the past thirty years pressed hard upon the traditional social structure of the country. The high-minded liberal innovations of Bentinck, Macaulay and the evangelical radicals had altered native perceptions of British rule. It was no longer a disinterested instrument of control over-ruling the factional, fissiparous structure of Indian society, but one with a passionate belief in its own role, driven by all the remorseless moral rectitude of the Victorian social conscience. Government was seen to be partial, bestowing patronage and benefits on those who collaborated with the new forces of innovation.

Technological changes such as the introduction of the telegraph and railway, and the development of irrigation and road works disturbed the ultra-conservative basis of Indian society. The great revenue assessments of northern India displaced many traditional land-holding communities and individuals, fostering the growth of usury and a crisis within the village structure. It was no coincidence that when the military mutiny broke out in 1857, the banias or money-lenders were the first to suffer in the civil insurrection that followed in its wake. The most obvious focus for the welter of grievances was the political doctrine of 'lapse' adumbrated by the Governor-General, the Marquess of Dalhousie. Under this expedient British rule was extended to those territories without direct heirs and persistent political mismanagement of native states was used as a valid excuse for annexation. With the takeover of the huge Muslim state of Oudh, the activities of the British began to alarm the entire Indian ruling class.

As early as 1833 Sir John Shore remarked with considerable foresight: 'I do not imagine that this [revolt] will be effected by a combination among the native princes, or by a premeditated insurrection; it is more likely to happen when totally unexpected, and to have its origin in some petty disturbance.' Richard Burton, the great explorer, was more forthright and warned of 'the forthcoming St Bartholomew's Day in the east'. Contrary to popular belief the Indian Mutiny was neither a war for Indian independence, nor a religious conspiracy, nor a populist revolt based on agrarian grievances, although there were elements of all these in its complex origins. Essentially it was a post-pacification revolt falling between periods of primary and secondary resistance. The response was compartmentalised, reflecting the uneven impact of colonial rule and the diverse development of various social groups. It involved only parts of Upper India, and portions of the population, splitting the decaying fabric of Indian society into bloody civil war. Paradoxically, often social