

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



elsewhere. To Wish 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.

THE DEVIL'S WIND

*Davies,
Splendours
of the
Raj*

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

tensions were far greater in areas that did not revolt or which remained loyal to the British. The spark came not from within the peasantry or from amongst the displaced magnates, but from within the Company's own army, inflamed by rumours that cartridges for the new Enfield rifles were smeared with pigs' and cows' fat, an affront to Muslims and Hindus alike. However, the disaffected sepoys did not attempt to lead the rural insurrection which followed the breakdown of government control; they concentrated in Lucknow, Cawnpore and Delhi, where the old Moghul Emperor, Bahadur Shah, became a puppet figurehead for all the various factions. The rising occurred at a point when the British were powerful enough to disturb the traditional structure of Indian society, but when they lacked the effective instruments of social control. It promoted a resurgence of the old ways, a wild, atavistic spasm of violence against the steadily advancing new order of Westernised values and institutions, but it was unco-ordinated with no expressed aims, no real unity and no fundamental driving purpose. It marked the death throes of old India and the dawn of the nation state.

The ferocious storm of violence which engulfed Upper India in 1857 has left many evocative monuments and sites which, curiously, remain largely unknown in England. The Mutiny came as a profound shock to the British. It left a mark deep in the Imperial consciousness, a sense of betrayal, leading to a change of emphasis and eventually to policies designed to extricate Britain from India rather than to found an Asiatic society based on liberal ethics of utility and education. The Mutiny was a nightmare to be forgotten, but one which haunted the official mind for the duration of the Raj.

The first suggestions of incipient mutiny occurred as early as 26th January 1857 when the 19th Native Infantry refused the new Enfield cartridges and were marched to Barrackpore to be disbanded. In March a young sepoy, Mangal Pande, intoxicated by drugs, ran amok firing on his British officers until the redoubtable General Hearsey himself seized and disarmed the man. Pande was hanged from the branches of the great banyan tree at Barrackpore. The flashpoint occurred at Meerut, 48 miles north of Delhi, on 8th May. The mob swept through the cantonments looting and burning everything in sight. White women and children, cornered in their own homes, were cut to pieces by the razor-sharp tulwars of the cavalry or were beaten to death with iron cudgels, their mutilated bodies left sprawling in the gardens of their own bungalows. The fate of many was horrific. The pregnant wife of one officer was butchered by the market slaughterhouse keeper; another, infected with smallpox, was burned alive by firebrands tossed at her clothes. It was a scene which repeated itself in station after station all over Bengal and Bihar. The British were taken completely unawares and there was a fatal delay in responding. Within a month the British were dislodged from Delhi and most of the surrounding area, and invested in Lucknow and Cawnpore. Elsewhere prompt or decisive action won the day. The Bombay and Madras Presidencies held, but Bengal went up in flames, and with the entire area between Calcutta and Delhi denuded of European troops it seemed to many that the days of the British were numbered.

At Cawnpore the situation was dire in the extreme. Here the British under General Wheeler had retreated into a shallow earth entrenchment only four feet high, an exposed position incapable of stopping even musket fire. One of the major reasons why the Mutiny made such an impact on mid-Victorian England was that for the first time large numbers of English women and children were in the forefront of events and liable to the most brutal treatment. Their sudden exposure to the ferocity of siege and insurrection, often at the hands of those they trusted most, released deeply-suppressed racial tensions. The pangs of childbirth came upon some in the midst of the most dreadful discomfort, and in the worst possible season. The June sky was like a great canopy of fire, and shade of any sort was impossible. 'Some saw their children slowly die in their arms, some had them swept away from their breasts by the desolating fire of the enemy. There was no misery which humanity could endure that did not fall heavily upon our English women.'

By day and by night the raking fire of muskets and artillery never ceased. There was not a single place immune from bullets or round shot. Shells rolled and hissed across the entrenchment exploding in a hail of lethal splinters to spread mutilation and destruction in all directions. A single shell killed seven married women of the 32nd Foot crouched in a trench. A round shot took off the head of General Wheeler's son, Lieutenant Wheeler, before the eyes of his horrified mother and sisters. A rare account of the siege written by one of the handful of survivors, Amy Horne, was published in Calcutta in 1893. After the first week the thatched roof of the barrack building caught fire and all vestiges of relief for the sick and wounded, and shade for the women and children, went up in flames.

A few were dragged out regardless of their excruciating wounds, but the rest were burnt alive . . . Great God, was it thus to be, was it possible that human beings could endure so much! . . . The whole place was nothing but a ruin, the walls were perforated and it would be vain to describe the havoc this fire caused, the walls

A grisly view of Wheeler's entrenchment at Cawnpore.

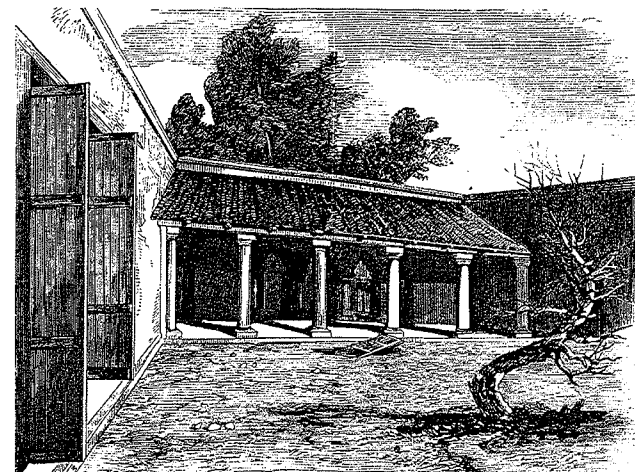


retained the heat for several days and were unapproachable, the Doctors warned us not to go in, that we would die, or lose our reason, some went in preferring the heated rooms to the sun. Mrs Belson and child, Miss Campbell, Colonel Williams' daughter, Miss Yates, Mrs Christie and child, these all died of a maddening fever, Rev Haycock was bereft of reason, a perfect maniac ... Death was everywhere. Two little girls of eight and nine years of age had been left by their mother for the night in one of these rooms; you can imagine her feelings when she came back in the morning and found that a shell had burst in the room and killed them, their bones and flesh were gathered in a sheet and thrown into the well outside, which was the grave of our dead.

The swarm of flies were a plague and the offensive smell from the dead animals unbearable. They mostly prowled near the well, where they were shot, fragments of their flesh falling in and polluting the water ... Words cannot describe our wretched condition and misery.

The position at Cawnpore was completely untenable, and when Nana Sahib, the rebel leader, offered safe passage to Allahabad if the garrison capitulated, Wheeler had no choice. On the morning of 27th June the garrison marched out to the Suttee Chaura Ghat on the river for embarkation into the boats, a straggling column of men, women and children, highly suspicious of the whole affair. Their suspicions were justified for during the embarkation into the boats fighting broke out, some say accidentally, most that it was planned. The great majority were shot or cut to pieces in the water. The survivors were hauled from the river. The men were shot a few days later, and the women and children incarcerated in the city at the Bibigarh. There were few exceptions. One was Ulrica Wheeler, youngest daughter of the General, who was carried off by a sowar and was discovered years later living in Ambala. The remainder were less fortunate. When it became clear that a relieving force under General Havelock was nearing the city, the remaining captives were slaughtered, and their dismembered bodies put down a nearby well. Havelock described his entry into the city in his memoirs:

The troops now advanced to the Sevada Plain, East of Cawnpore. Some of them hastened to Wheeler's entrenchment, and to the building where the women and children had been confined, and were struck with horror at the sight which met their eyes. The pavement was swimming in blood and fragments of children's and ladies' dresses were floating in it. They entered the apartments and found them empty and silent but there also the blood lay deep on the floor, covered with bonnets, collars, combs and children's frocks and frills. The walls were dotted with the marks of bullets, and on the wooden pillars were deep sword cuts, from some of which hung tresses of hair. But neither the sabre cuts nor the dents of bullets were sufficiently high above the floor to indicate that the weapons had been aimed at men defending their



The Bibigarh, Cawnpore: scene of the massacre of the women and children.

lives, they appear rather to have been levelled at crouching women and children begging for mercy. The soldiers proceeded with their search when in crossing the court yard, they perceived human limbs bristling from a well and on further examination found it to be choked up with the bodies of the victims, which appeared to have been thrown in promiscuously. The dead with the wounded till it was full to the brim.

Surgeon General Munro discovered a large sharp hook six feet from the floor around which were found a child's prints. 'Evidently a wounded child had been hung upon the hook, and the poor thing in its feeble struggles, had left the impress of its little bleeding fingers on the wall. This was horrible to think of or look at, so I hurried from the room.'

The well was covered to form a grave and a terrible vengeance was enacted under the dreadful Brigadier Neill. Each miscreant apprehended was forced to lick the blood from the Bibigarh floor before being defiled and hanged.

For those who gaze with misty-eyed nostalgia on the days of the Company and the Raj, it is as well to recall the terrible passions which lurked beneath the surface of Anglo-Indian society, and the latent theme of communal violence which erupted again during partition in 1947. It is hard to convey to the modern reader the traumatic effects of the massacres at Cawnpore and the lamentable events of the Mutiny, but they left a permanent mark on the Anglo-Indian mind and it is no surprise to discover that the sites of these melancholy events were revered.

At Cawnpore little has changed in over one hundred and thirty years. Although the passions are long spent, there is still an evocative aura about the place. The Suttee Chaura Ghat remains unaltered from

the fateful day. One can wander from the site of the entrenchment down a dry winding path to the river and summon up images long since forgotten in England. At the river the little hexagonal temple to Shiva is still there, but there is nothing to mark the spot save a small plaque by the roadside erected in 1930. The principal monuments are concentrated in the old entrenchment which is marked out with stone boundary posts around the Cawnpore Memorial Church, which was raised in honour of the fallen at the north-east corner of Wheeler's defences.

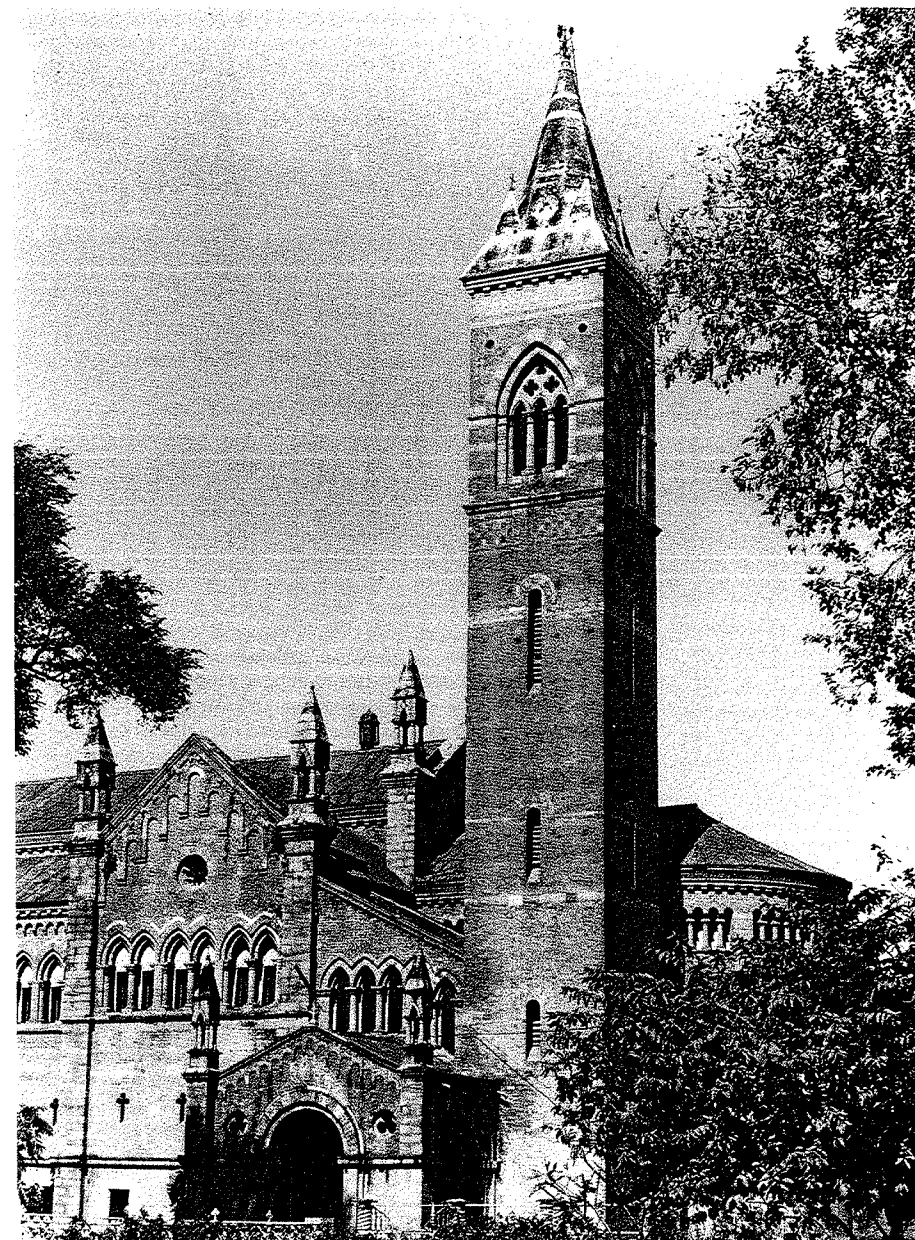
The church was designed by Walter Granville, architect to the East Bengal Railway and later consulting architect to the government of India. It was commenced in July 1862, but not completed until December 1875, the conciliatory climate prevailing after the Mutiny rendering fund-raising difficult. The original designs were modified substantially, but the completed structure in a Lombardic Gothic style is handsome, executed in bright red brick with polychrome dressings. It is dominated by a lofty campanile and spire and the rose window over the western entrance is filled with fine stained glass which dapples the polychrome interior. The apsidal east end has a series of marble tablets on which are inscribed the names of the fallen. The walls are studded with memorials including a canopied tablet to the engineers of the East Bengal Railway and a captivating brass plate in memory of John Robert Mackillop who sacrificed himself procuring water from the well for the distressed women and children. Galleries run around the upper half of the church lit by arcaded clerestory windows.

The church is a peaceful place in which to indulge in quiet contemplation of the terrible tragedies which occurred in and around this consecrated ground, but the most evocative of all the monuments erected in India lies outside in the churchyard, where the screen and memorial, which were raised over the Bibigarh well, have been moved from the Memorial Gardens to a more discreet and appropriate place. No Indian was allowed inside the original enclosure and it is an extraordinary tribute to the maturity and magnanimity of the Indian people that the monument was carefully relocated in 1948 and not merely swept aside as one of the more gruesome trappings of imperialism.

The Memorial is approached through two gateways over which are inscribed the moving words – 'These are they which come out of great tribulation'. The centrepiece is a beautiful carved figure of an angel by Baron Carlo Marochetti with crossed arms holding palms, a symbol of peace. It was paid for by Lord Canning, and is surrounded by a handsome carved Gothic screen designed by Henry Yule of the Bengal Engineers in 1863. The enclosure is rarely visited now, and an elegiac mood hangs over the place accentuated by Marochetti's mournful seraph which stands in permanent reproach to the folly of man.

Forty-nine miles to the north stands Lucknow. In 1857 it lay at the eye of the storm and here amongst the shaded lawns of the Residency compound was played out one of the most compelling dramas in the history of the British Empire. The defence of Lucknow became the British Thermopylae, an epic, heroic struggle against overwhelming

The tall campanile of Walter Granville's Memorial Church, completed in 1875. The interior is a shrine to the fallen.



odds. Lord Canning's words, later inscribed in stone, bear witness to the extraordinary hold which the siege had on the Victorian collective mind: 'There does not stand recorded in the annals of war an achievement more truly heroic than the defence of the Residency of Lucknow.' For a nation which prided itself on understatement, that is a measure of the awe in which the whole episode came to be viewed.

In 1857 Lucknow was the capital of the newly annexed state of Oudh. It was seething with discontent, a seedbed of sedition and anti-British feeling. The outbreak at Meerut and the collapse at Delhi had undermined British authority in the whole region and on 30th May, the native regiments in the Lucknow cantonment burst into revolt in a frenzy of looting and killing. But the British were more fortunate than at Cawnpore for the Commissioner Sir Henry Lawrence had made preparations to resist a possible rising. The Residency compound had been quietly but steadily fortified for the previous month, and large stocks of grain and food had been collected.

The *Times* correspondent, W. H. Russell described Lucknow as 'a fairy-tale city, more vast and brilliant than Paris; a vision of palaces, domes azure and golden, cupolas, colonnades, long façades of fair perspective in pillar and column, terraced roofs – all rising up amid a calm still ocean of the brightest verdure . . . Spires of gold glitter in the sun. Turrets and gilded spheres shine like constellations.' This was not an exaggeration for the Nawabs of Oudh had lavished crores of rupees on civic improvements and extravagant palaces to create a city unequalled in opulence and grandeur in the East, an Oriental vision of magnificence recalling Kublai Khan's fabled Xanadu. As part of this vast dream-like vision the Residency occupied a privileged position on a raised plateau close to the river commanding views of the city and the river crossings including Rennie's famous iron bridge.

The actual Residency building had been commenced in the 1780s, but it had taken several decades to complete so that, architecturally, it lacked cohesion, acquiring something of the air of an English country house with wings and ranges added on at various points in time. The building enjoyed the usual extensive verandahs and porticos. Contemporary sketches show the windows screened by canvas blinds, but the really distinguishing feature was an octagonal corner staircase tower crowned by a shallow cupola. Beneath the principal rooms was a suite of tykhanas or underground rooms for use in the hot weather, elements which Thomas Twining thought were the innovation of Claude Martin at Constantia, but which were common expedients in Oudh. The basement had enormous walls thick enough to accommodate niches and cupboards, and a huge underground swimming pool.

Throughout the first half of the 19th century a whole complex of European buildings arose around the house to provide a conclave of houses, buildings and offices commensurate with the political power of the Resident. The area was entered through an impressive triumphal gateway and guardhouse, The Baillie Guard, named after Major John Baillie, the Resident between 1811 and 1815. Architecturally the archway was in the tradition of Government House, Calcutta and the Residency at Hyderabad, a classical screen designed as a public



statement proclaiming the power of the British Resident to the whole city. Nearby lay a detached Banqueting Hall, not dissimilar to that erected in Madras, standing on a rusticated plinth and carrying paired columns punctuated by Venetian windows. Adjacent stood the Treasury and Council chamber. The building, later known as Dr Fayrer's house, also dates from the early 19th century. This was a handsome structure with excellent neo-classical detailing of Adamesque fans over the rectangular door openings. Quite who was responsible for the actual design and construction of this fine complex of European buildings is difficult to know, but they have been attributed to William Trickett, architect and engineer to the King of Oudh in the early 1820s, and it would be surprising if he hadn't had a hand in them.

Today the whole area stands as a romantic ruin, preserved in aspic like an Oriental Pompeii, the classical columns and thin red brick structure beneath accentuating the Roman analogy; an oasis of Western civilisation overtaken not by natural calamity, but by events so terrible that henceforth they were christened 'The Devil's Wind'.

After the open insurrection of 30th May discretion was thrown to the winds and the defensive position around the Residency was strengthened into a continuous chain of buildings, walls, trenches, palisades and ramparts. Pits were dug and filled with sharpened stakes and batteries were sited to provide overlapping fields of fire. The siege began in earnest on 30th June, the day after a sizeable British force of infantry and cavalry went out to meet the mutineers at Chinhat only to

The Residency, Lucknow: The Baillie Guard Gate was designed in the manner of the great entrance screens at Calcutta and Hyderabad. Only the brick core survived the siege.

The most poignant image of the Great Mutiny. Baron Carlo Marochetti's mournful seraph marked the location of the well at the Bibighar. Now it stands in the Memorial Churchyard with Henry Yule's Gothic screen.

be defeated and very nearly annihilated by an overwhelming number of mutineers. If the situation had been grave before Chinhath, it was parlous after.

Few thought that they could last a week, let alone eighty-seven long days of ferocious fighting. When at last Havelock and Outram broke through to the beleaguered garrison on 25th September, the relieving force had been bled so white that it too was invested for a further fifty-three days before it was finally evacuated by Sir Colin Campbell on 25th November. The city was not retaken until March 1858, and only then at a fearful price. Amongst the fallen lay Havelock, who died at the Alam Bagh shortly after the relief of the Residency, and also Major Hodson of Hodson's Horse, killed in the fighting at La Martinière, where his grave lies outside the gates. Tennyson put it all to verse:

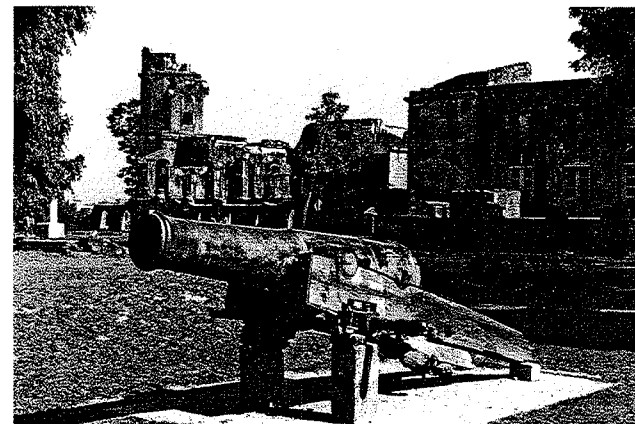
Banner of England, not for a season, O banner of Britain
has thou
Floated in conquering battle or flapt to the battle cry
Never with mightier glory than when we had rear'd thee
on high,
Flying at the top of the roofs in the ghastly siege of
Lucknow
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but ever we raised
thee anew,
And ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

The subsequent preservation and veneration of the ruins as a lasting monument to British stoicism have sterilised the site, so that now it is difficult to invoke the images of suffering and hardship which raged here amongst the manicured lawns and shady walks of the garden areas; except that is for the tykhana. Here deep in the underground room, the women and children of the 32nd Foot were kept, and from the cool, chill atmosphere and dark, dank walls emanates a curious kind of melancholy which haunts the casual visitor. Here twenty feet below ground 1857 seems very close indeed.

But the Ruins remain, which still speak of the past!
The stranger now treads, with full reverence, the ground,
Where the sleepers will sleep till the last Trumpet's sound.

Outside the epicentres of revolt at Cawnpore and Lucknow, the Mutiny seems as remote as any other historical event. At Arrah the little house defended by twelve Englishmen and fifty Sikhs for eight days against over 2,000 mutineers is now an historical monument, but one which is rarely visited. Only at Delhi do a few reminders linger on to convey the drama of the great siege and storming of the city. There the British had been swept out by the influx of the first mutineers from Meerut. They clung precariously to the Ridge outside the city where gradually sufficient forces were mustered to carry the city by storm between 13th and 20th September 1857.

North of the Kashmir Gate stand two country houses which were



Hallowed ground. The romantic ruins of the Residency have been preserved as a perpetual reminder of the epic of the race.

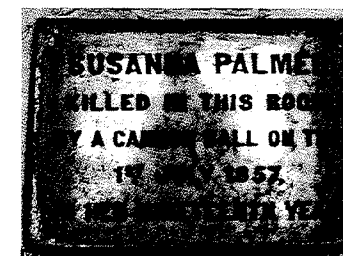
erected in the early 19th century – Hindu Rao's and Metcalfe House. Both acquired a reputation during the siege of Delhi as salient points in the British lines, and both survive. The former was erected in 1830 for William Fraser, as a country retreat outside the city, and it shares the usual classical features – verandah, pilasters and a deep plinth. Architecturally Metcalfe's House is more interesting. Situated by the river Jumna the verandah faces south in the form of a terrace, beneath which is a subterranean room under the actual river bed to provide cool shelter during the summer. Although this was common in Oudh, it was very unusual in Delhi. Emily, Lady Clive Bayley, the daughter of Sir Thomas Metcalfe, recalled the house vividly in happier days:

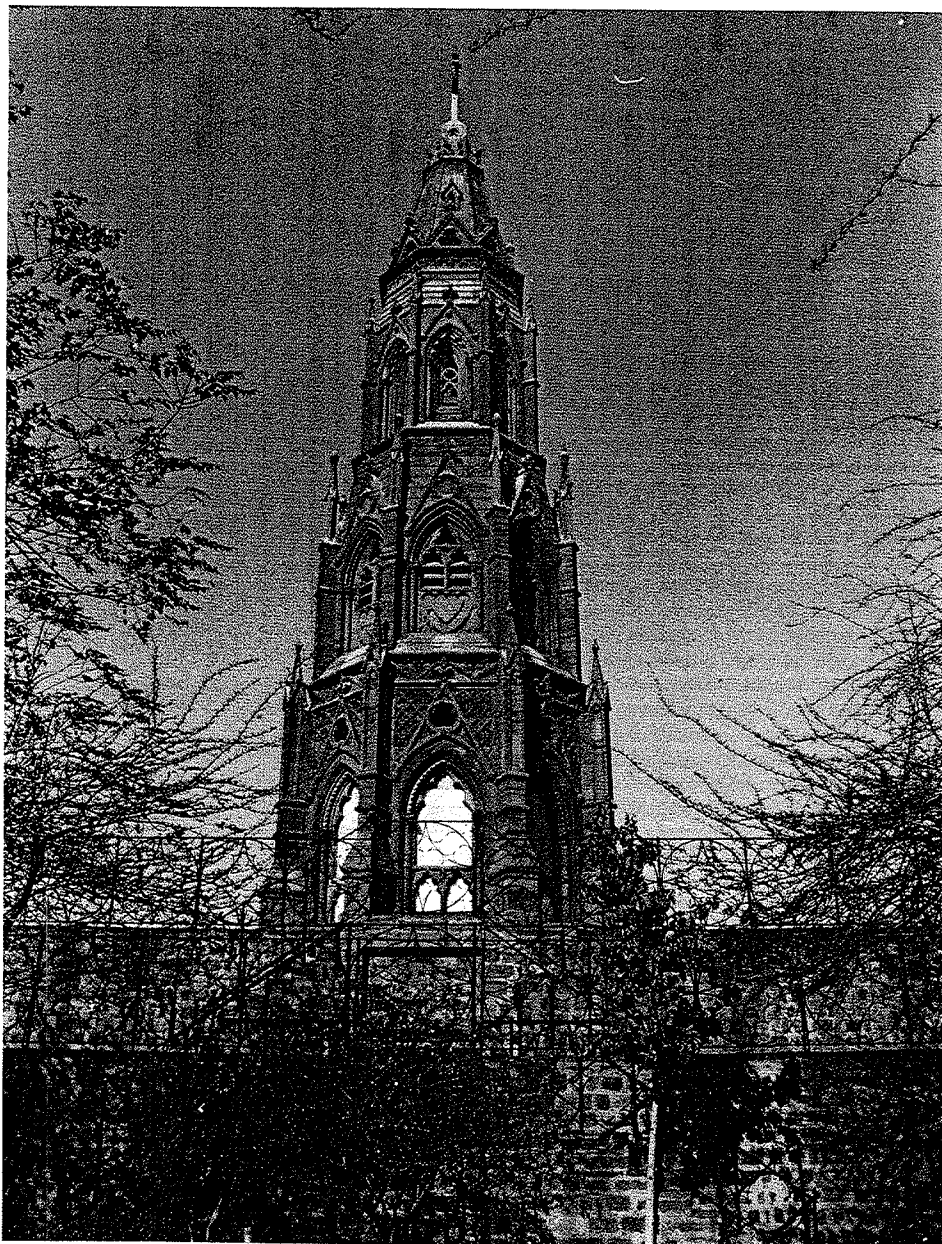
The rooms were so large, so lofty, and there were so many of them, all on one floor, and all twenty-four feet in height. Study, library and Napoleon Gallery in one line faced the north portico; then the drawing room and banqueting-room behind them facing east and west; then the day-room and small drawing room, the dining-room and serving-room. These opened in to the oratory and lobby, off which opened the large spare bedrooms and dressing-room. Then facing the south verandah, my Father's bedroom, my Mother's sitting-room and my bedroom.

Externally the house followed common established themes. 'Round all four sides of the house was a splendid verandah, twenty to thirty feet wide and very lofty, the roof supported by magnificent stone pillars.' The house was badly damaged during the siege as it was the site of Metcalfe's Battery and the scene of heavy fighting.

Elsewhere along the Ridge stand the Flagstaff Tower around which the British survivors of the insurrection gathered on the night of 11th May shocked and confused, and the octagonal spire of the Mutiny Memorial. This was erected by the army shortly after the Mutiny and it takes the form of a Gothic memorial cross reminiscent of the Eleanor

"Whilst retrieving china from the Residency drawing room, Susanna Palmer was mortally wounded early in the siege. After suffering the agonies of amputation, and considerable suffering, bravely borne, she died later, her only thought for her surviving father." Tragedies such as these were commonplace and horrified Victorian England.





crosses in England. Set on a high platform it contains a staircase from the summit of which can be obtained a spectacular view of the city. The cross has three principal stages crowned by a low spire, and around the base are panels inscribed with the names and regiments of those who died in the recapture of the city.

Many of the fallen are buried outside the Kashmir Gate in a small overgrown cemetery. Here lies Brigadier-General John Nicholson, perhaps the most charismatic of all the figures thrown up by the Mutiny, a giant of a man of enormous physical strength and talent who held down the North-West Frontier and the Punjab, before arriving outside Delhi to a tumultuous welcome, escorted by his personal guard of devoted Multani horsemen. Nicholson was a legend in his own lifetime and it was his presence and driving force, more than any other single factor, that carried the city. He was a lonely, tortured character full of contradictory impulses, yet he was venerated as a deity by a sect who thought 'Nikkul Seyn' was the reincarnation of Brahma. They rejoiced when he beat them, believing it to be a sign of his true divinity rather than the manifestation of a dark, sadistic streak. He was adored by his followers and fell mortally wounded at the hour of triumph, shot through the chest as he led his men forward through the alleys of the city. When he was buried his personal band of tough Multani cavalry were inconsolable, throwing themselves to the ground in a spontaneous outburst of hysterical grief.

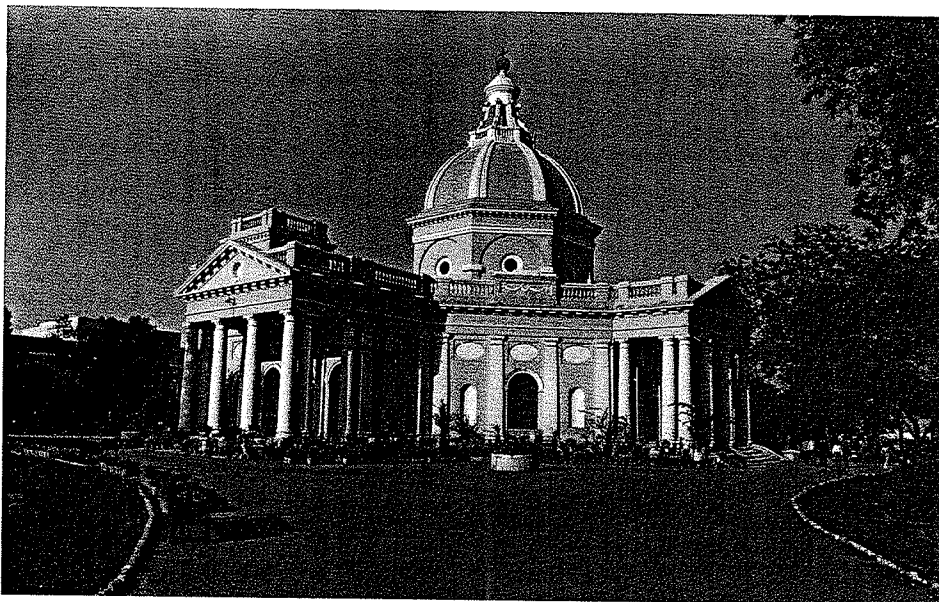
Just inside the Kashmir Gate, through which the British stormed on the night of the 13th September, stands St James's Church, a local landmark both now and in 1857, its distinctive dome appearing strangely incongruous in a city of more exotic forms. The church was consecrated in 1836 and it was erected at the sole expense of the legendary Colonel James Skinner, of Skinner's Horse, in fulfilment of a vow made while lying wounded on the field of battle. Architecturally it is a most unusual departure from the established pattern of Gibbs derivatives which recur throughout India. In plan it resembles a Greek cross, with Tuscan porticos to three of the arms, the fourth forming the choir. The dome is carried on an octagonal drum, but the symmetrical appearance is offset by a low clock tower placed between two porticos. Internally, it is surprisingly spacious, enriched with Ionic pilasters and modillioned cornices. The walls are relieved by niches and circular recesses. Outside in the compound a small railed enclosure is dedicated to the Skinner family, and there is a memorial to William Fraser, agent to the Lieutenant-Governor at Delhi and builder of Hindu Rao's house, who was murdered in 1835. The area around the church was subject to fierce fighting. Contemporary photographs show the extent of the damage it sustained. The golden orb crowning the dome was used by the sepoys for target practice, but it was reinstated after the Mutiny and the church stands to this day as a resplendent monument to that curious mixture of martial and pious qualities that pervaded Anglo-India and which reached its most distasteful extremes during the Mutiny.

As the Mutiny petered out into the sporadic lawlessness of 1859, it became clear that things could never be the same again. The days of the



An early photograph of Brigadier-General John Nicholson, mortally wounded in the storming of Delhi on the night of 17th September 1857.

The octagonal spire of the Mutiny Memorial on the Ridge outside Delhi.



St James's or Skinner's Church, Delhi. The scene of fierce fighting in 1857, the original orb and cross over the Baroque dome were used by the rebels for target practice.

Pale women who have lost their Lord Will kiss some relics of the slain – Some tarnished epaulette – some sword – Poor toys to soothe such anguished pain.

Cawnpore Cemetery: The price of Empire was never cheap.



Company and its army were over. The Crown assumed direct control through the instrument of the Viceroy, and this new personal relationship accounted for the extraordinarily close bond that was to develop between the Queen and her Indian subjects. British administration was reorganised into a mould which was to last more or less unaltered until 1947. Far greater emphasis was placed on respect for India's complex socio-religious systems. The army was completely reorganised. The financial base of the administration was overhauled. But the single most important change was the call for greater contact and understanding between the two communities, which had been diverging since the early 19th century. British interests which were once identified with social engineering and policies of Westernisation and change, went into reverse. The *ancien régime* of the princes, maharajahs and liege chiefs, which the evangelical radicals regarded as a barrier to change, became the main bulwark of the British Raj. Those who had remained loyal were showered with rewards, decorations and status in the new order, but in the long term it was contrary to India's real interests and the Raj became identified as reactionary and backward-looking, unable to come to terms with the new forces of the age. The future lay in the great new urban centres, not in the old princely courts where privilege and nepotism reigned, and it was no coincidence that in the aftermath of the Mutiny the focus of commercial activity and expansion shifted to the west coast and the emergent commercial centre of Bombay, which was destined to grow from a forgotten backwater to a great Imperial city within three decades.

CHAPTER 7

BOMBAY: URBS PRIMA IN INDIS

In 1781 Samuel Pechel wrote in his *Historical Account of Bombay*:

The island of Bombay is the antient property of the English East India Company; it hath hitherto been of all her settlements the most conducive to the greatness of the nation in Asia; yet through the splendor of achievement, great acquisition of territory and immense harvests of wealth in Bengal and the Coast of Coromandel, it hath been in some measure overlooked and, as if in a corner of the world unnoticed.

In the early years Bombay was rivalled by Surat to the north where the first English factory had been established. Until the early 19th century it was only the success of the Bombay ship building yards run by Parsees which made its existence worth while. The town was renowned for the extraordinary quality of its ships, constructed in Malabar teak, and it enjoyed the signal honour of constructing numerous ships-of-the-line for the Admiralty, the first orders ever placed outside England.

Bombay was isolated from contact with the east coast across the mainland by the Maratha tribes, and their general hostility accentuated the insularity of the island colony. The independent merchants of Bombay maintained a valuable, if limited, commerce in raw silk, pearls, dates and perfumes with Muscat and Arabia, in spices, sugar and ambergris with Java, Malacca and the East Indies, and in cotton and bullion with China. This commercial contact created an unusual social system, which remained a distinctive local quality throughout the Raj. Bombay society was more cosmopolitan and liberal in its attitudes, unlike the rather rigid social hierarchies which characterised Madras and Calcutta. The Parsees, Sephardic Jews and the British associated freely and without prejudice, sharing a mutual interest in the warehouses, counting houses and shipyards that were the commercial *raison d'être* of the city. A quality of informal intimacy and open-handed friendship characterised the place, but the actual English population was minute – only 250 resided within the walls in 1813.

In the early 19th century the chains which had bound the potential commercial vitality of the town were severed one by one. On the night of 17th February 1803 the town was devastated by a great fire. The real importance of the fire lay not in the improvement of the town within the walls, but the inducement to construct a new town outside with wider, regular streets, relieving the congestion of the old Fort area. The expansion of the trading community was given an enormous boost in 1813 when the insidious trade monopoly of the Company was



St James's or Skinner's Church, Delhi. The scene of fierce fighting in 1857, the original orb and cross over the Baroque dome were used by the rebels for target practice.

Pale women who have lost their Lord Will kiss some relics of the slain – Some tarnished epaulette – some sword – Poor toys to soothe such anguished pain.

Cawnpore Cemetery: The price of Empire was never cheap.



Company and its army were over. The Crown assumed direct control through the instrument of the Viceroy, and this new personal relationship accounted for the extraordinarily close bond that was to develop between the Queen and her Indian subjects. British administration was reorganised into a mould which was to last more or less unaltered until 1947. Far greater emphasis was placed on respect for India's complex socio-religious systems. The army was completely reorganised. The financial base of the administration was overhauled. But the single most important change was the call for greater contact and understanding between the two communities, which had been diverging since the early 19th century. British interests which were once identified with social engineering and policies of Westernisation and change, went into reverse. The *ancien régime* of the princes, maharajahs and liege chiefs, which the evangelical radicals regarded as a barrier to change, became the main bulwark of the British Raj. Those who had remained loyal were showered with rewards, decorations and status in the new order, but in the long term it was contrary to India's real interests and the Raj became identified as reactionary and backward-looking, unable to come to terms with the new forces of the age. The future lay in the great new urban centres, not in the old princely courts where privilege and nepotism reigned, and it was no coincidence that in the aftermath of the Mutiny the focus of commercial activity and expansion shifted to the west coast and the emergent commercial centre of Bombay, which was destined to grow from a forgotten backwater to a great Imperial city within three decades.

CHAPTER 7

BOMBAY: URBS PRIMA IN INDIS

*Davies.
Splendours
of the
Raj*

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abolished. Trade with England was transformed. Between 1809 and 1816 the annual trade in raw cotton trebled from thirty million to ninety million lbs. Finally in November 1817 the power of the Peshwa, titular head of the Marathas, was broken at the Battle of Kirkee and the constraint on trade and communications across the mainland was lifted. English supremacy was assured and the old-established trade routes across the Deccan plateau were drawn into the economic hinterland of Bombay. The town became the commercial centre of the Arabian Sea and in 1819 it stood poised to expand further under the enlightened guidance of the new Governor, Mountstuart Elphinstone.

Elphinstone was an unpretentious liberal man of considerable prescience and charm, extending an easy familiarity to natives of all ranks. He fostered the expansion of trade, the moderate and uniform settlement of the revenues and the education of the people. 'On this side of India there is really more zeal and liberality displayed in the improvement of that country, the construction of roads and public buildings, the conciliation of the natives and their education, than I have yet seen in Bengal,' exclaimed Bishop Heber.

By 1830 the road to the Deccan had been opened and improved. Visually the town gained immeasurably from the construction of Cowper's Town Hall and Hawkins's Mint (see page 100) and systematic land reclamation did much to transform Bombay from an unwholesome swamp into a salubrious residence. Economic growth was sustained throughout the 1830s by a steady rise in American cotton prices. By 1830 annual exports of Indian cotton to England exceeded one million bales. At last in 1835 Bombay became a bishopric, and in 1838, a city, with the Church of St Thomas raised to cathedral status. However, unlike Madras or Calcutta, the city had little of the architectural ambience of a great metropolis.

A description of the city appeared in the *Asiatic Journal* of May to August 1838:

The town or city of Bombay is . . . nearly a mile long . . . the houses are picturesque, in consequence of the quality of handsomely-carved woodwork employed in the pillars and verandahs, but they are inconveniently crowded together, and the high conical roofs of red tiles are very offensive to the eye, especially if accustomed to the flat-turreted and balustraded palaces of Calcutta.

More than one visitor thought that the only building with any architectural charm was the Cathedral. It is certainly worthy of veneration, not so much for its architectural merit, which is slight, as for its age and historical associations. The Cathedral was begun by Gerald Aungier in 1672 but it was not formally opened until 1718. Built in stone the plan is simple, with a vaulted roof. Like all cathedrals, it is a repository of fascinating monuments which bring alive the glorious feats of Imperial arms. Consider Major Eldred Pottinger's, the hero of Herat who defended the Afghan city against all odds, dying a few years after, aged 32, or Bacon's monument to Captain Hardinge RN, the

younger brother of Lord Hardinge, who died in 1808 in a brilliant engagement in which his undermanned and outgunned frigate captured the French cruiser *Piedmontese*. Of the civil monuments, that to Jonathan Duncan, the Governor, is delightful, depicting him receiving the blessings of young Hindus, a reference to his successful repression of infanticide in certain districts of Benares and Kathiawar. A noble fellow, he was inspired by the now unfashionable belief in absolute rather than relative moral values, a belief so irresistible that it swept away slavery from the Empire and motivated the evangelical radicals who abolished suttee, thuggee and other native practices abhorrent to the European mind. Katherine Kirkpatrick, the mother of James Achilles Kirkpatrick the Resident of Hyderabad, died at 22 and is commemorated in a marble mural by the younger Bacon raised by her sons:

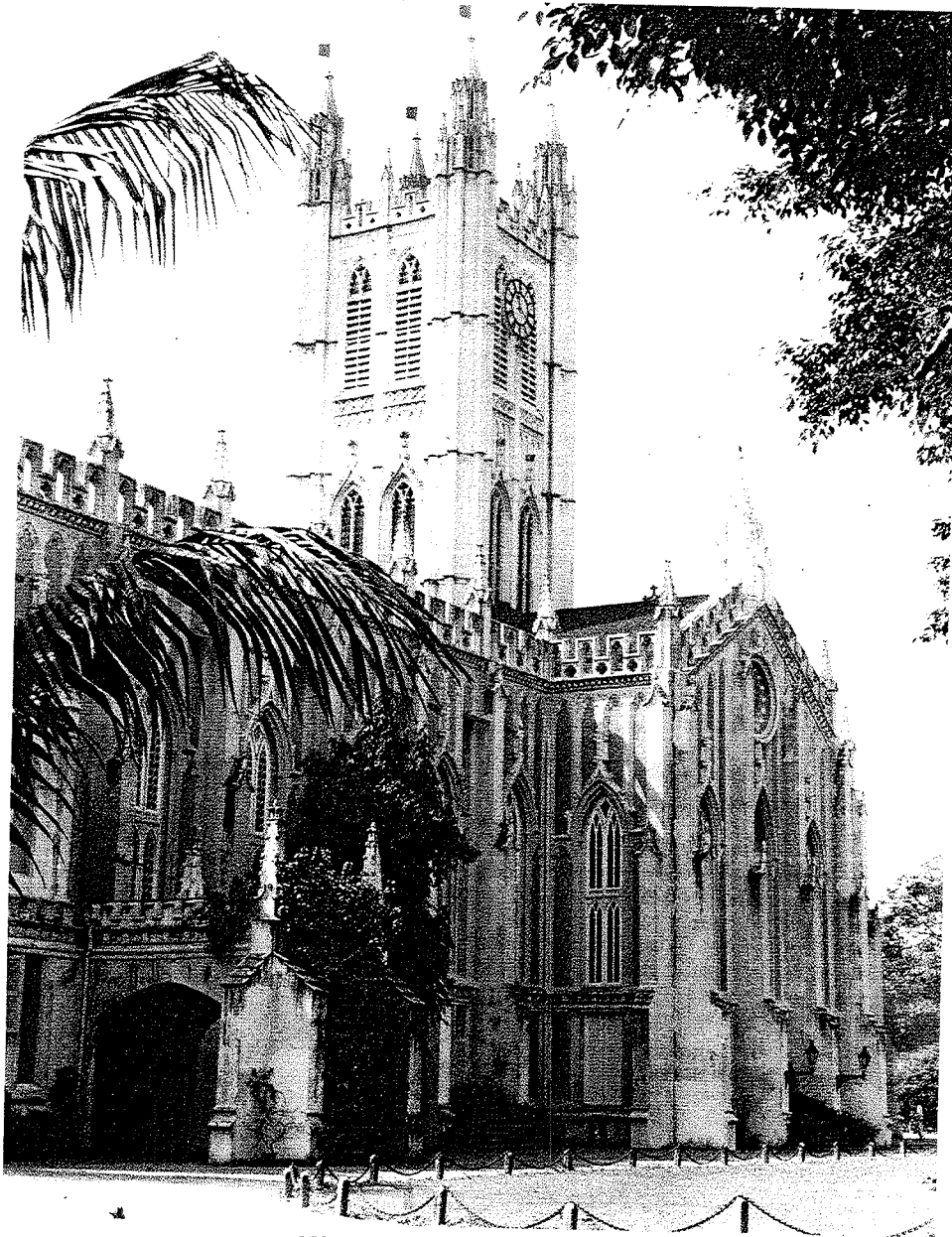
Image of Truth! In Mind by few surpassed
In Beauty's mould by Nature chastely cast . . .
That thy own Sons, asserting Nature's claim
Join to commemorate a Mother's Name;
And hallowing with their Fears the votive stone
Record her virtues and attest their own.

Such memorials marking the passage of time and the vanity of all human endeavour culminate in a small memorial tablet to Henry Robertson Bowers, 'noble Birdie Bowers', of the Royal Indian Marine, who died with Scott in the Antarctic on the ill-fated expedition of 1912.

In the 1840s two churches were commenced in India, St Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta, and St John's Church, Bombay. They are of seminal importance in the architectural history of Anglo-India. A new enthusiasm was being transmitted from home – Gothic – but in terms of style these two manifestations of it were quite different.

After eight years in construction, St Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta, was completed in 1847 and was regarded with justifiable pride as a handsome edifice. The style chosen was suitably Christian, English Perpendicular Gothic adapted to the vicissitudes of the climate. The tower and spire were modelled on Norwich Cathedral with certain modifications cribbed from Canterbury. Much of the external and internal detailing was copied from the finest carving to be found in York Minster. The architect was William Nairn Forbes, the military engineer who designed the Calcutta Mint, as the Church Building Committee were unable to afford an architect from England.

Forbes was a gifted man, but not a genius. If the Calcutta Mint was flawed by architectural solecisms and a certain clumsiness of detailing, then the Cathedral also lacks that essential spark which separates the work of an inspired professional from the military dilettante. More importantly it was conceived in a whimsical Gothic style which was essentially backward-looking and conservative. It belongs to the same era of pretty, picturesque Gothic as St Peter's Church of 1835 in Fort William (page 51). It was conceived at a point just prior to the



formulation of new principles of Gothic architecture by Pugin and Ruskin and promoted by the Cambridge Camden Society (later the Ecclesiological Society) but it is a noble structure for all that and it is important, for it broke the mould of Gibbs derivatives which hitherto had dominated church design in India. Bishop Wilson was the 'first to intimate discontent with the style of churches previously built in India', and Forbes gave it visible expression.

The constraints were considerable. Funds were short, the sub-soil poor and available materials limited, but Forbes received valuable assistance from C. K. Robison, the city magistrate and designer of Metcalfe Hall, and also from Major Fitzgerald both of whom served on the Building Committee. The building was constructed in a peculiar brick especially prepared for the purpose, which combined lightness with compressional strength; the dressings were of Chunar stone, and the whole edifice was covered inside and out with polished chunam. The adaptations to the climate and the site are self-evident. The lancet windows in the choir and transepts are carried down to plinth level to increase ventilation. There is no nave, as the soil was considered incapable of supporting the mass of clustered columns, arches and side aisles, and also their presence would have reduced ventilation and impaired the view. The roof is unusual. It is a shallow curve spanned by iron trusses adorned with Gothic tracery, and, when built, it was one of the largest spans in existence.

The original east window was the gift of the Dean and Chapter of Windsor to whom it was presented by King George III for use at St George's Chapel. It depicted the crucifixion after a design by Benjamin West, but was destroyed by a cyclone in 1864. The present design by Clayton and Bell is extremely fine. However, the *tour de force* of the entire composition is the magnificent west window designed by Burne-Jones in 1880 as a memorial to the Viceroy Lord Mayo, who was assassinated in the Andaman Islands. It is the finest piece of stained glass in India, a panoply of exquisite colours and Pre-Raphaelite figures.

The reredos is also High Victorian and can be attributed to Sir Arthur Blomfield. It is executed in alabaster with panels of Florentine mosaic depicting the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Magi and the Flight into Egypt. The Willis organ is one of the finest ever made by the firm. In common with most of the public buildings of Calcutta, the Cathedral suffered from the vagaries of the climate. An earthquake brought down the upper stage of the steeple in June 1897. It was restored but after another earthquake in 1934 it was rebuilt to the design of Bell Harry tower at Canterbury.

Forbes lies buried in the church to which he devoted many of the last years of his life. He was a Scot born in 1796 at Blackford, Aberdeen and he died a Major General on his way home at Aden in 1855. His body was brought back to Calcutta and interred beneath a fine mural tablet, surmounted by his bust, and flanked by female figures, one bearing a trumpet and laurel wreath, the other a pen and scroll.

The Afghan Memorial Church of St John the Evangelist at Colaba, Bombay was commenced in 1847 and consecrated eleven years later. Its



Major William Nairn Forbes, architect of St Paul's Cathedral and the Silver Mint.

St Paul's Cathedral, Calcutta. The tower was recast without the original spire after the 1934 earthquake.



Afghan Memorial Church, Colaba, Bombay. The first church in India to embody new principles of Gothic architecture.

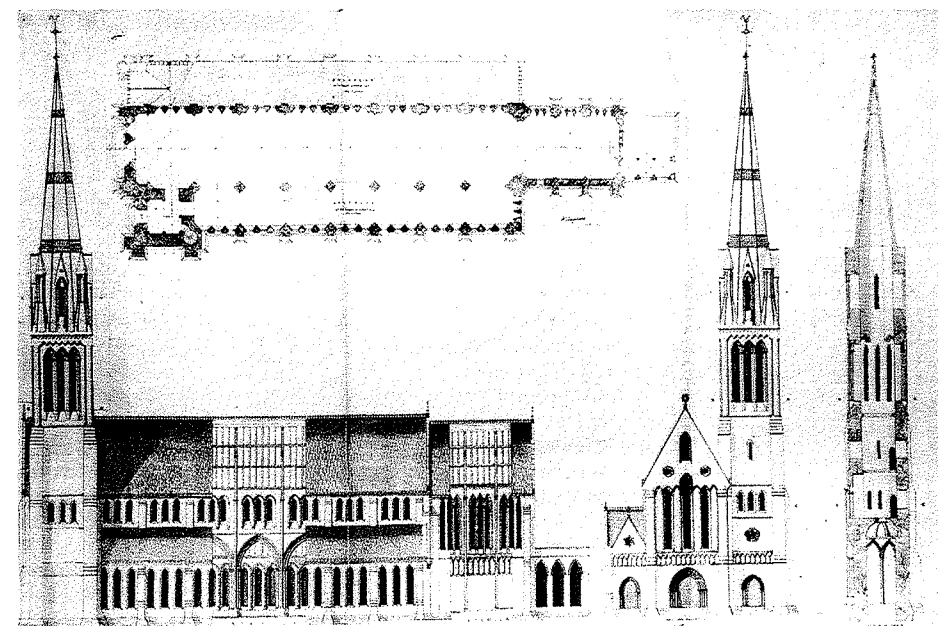
building history is confused. The architects J. M. Derick and Anthony Salvin were instructed to prepare drawings, but the plans eventually adopted were those of Henry Conybeare, son of the Dean of Llandaff, and Town Engineer of Bombay at the time. Architecturally it is not outstanding, but historically it is most important for it was the first church erected in India along the lines laid down by the Ecclesiological Society, embodying the new principles of Gothic architecture advanced by Pugin. In style it is Early English with a tower and thin spire, nave and aisles and some fine stained glass by William Wailes. The interior is lit by a series of narrow lancet windows and the chancel is lined with marble memorial tablets to the fallen of the First Afghan War. If much of the interior seems rather plain, then this was due to the absence of a skilled labour force versed in the arts of Western carving. To modern eyes it all looks conventionally straightforward, but in 1858 it was revolutionary, particularly in India, and it pointed the way forward to those High Victorian Gothic buildings, secular and ecclesiastical, that were to become the hallmark of the late Victorian

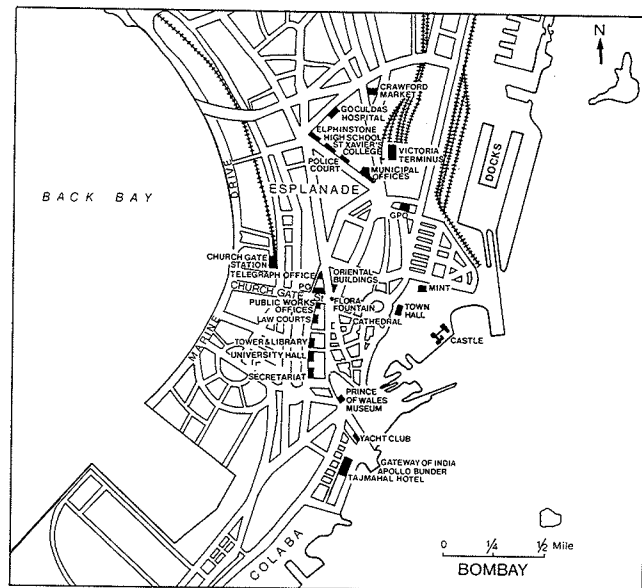
Raj. When new it was considered 'unrivalled among the churches of the East', and it remained a local landmark long after more ebullient Gothic buildings rose in the city.

As early as 1846 *The Ecclesiologist* had argued for two basic colonial styles – Hyperborean and Speluncar, one intended for the north and one for the southern parts of the Empire. The northern, Hyperborean style should, it argued, be based partly on the native vernacular style for whichever country the building was designed. For the southern regions a variation of Lombardy Gothic was advocated, 'the mother of mediaeval architecture' and a style associated with warm climates. Speluncar (literally cave-like), a name as pretentious as the ideas it conveyed, should have monumentality, with heavy planes, massive piers and brilliant polychrome masonry.

Outlandish as the names may be, the ideas were influential and permeated the intellectual establishment. Great thought was given to the adaptation of European styles to an Indian or colonial context in a way which would combine architectural integrity with functional refinement. In 1868 T. Roger Smith, a Bombay architect, wrote: 'Now the proper corrective is not, I hold, the direct imitation of Asiatic types, but the adoption of those European styles which have grown up in sunshiny regions. Such styles are ancient Roman, or even Greek ... or the Renaissance and Gothic of Southern Italy or the Early Gothic of Southern France.'

Henry Conybeare's original drawings of the Afghan Memorial Church. The design was simplified in the course of construction. A comparison with the photograph shows the altered broach spire.





In this and other lectures he went on to claim that 'the style native to England - English Gothic - is not fitted to be transferred to India without large modification' and 'a leaning towards the peculiarities of the best Oriental styles is desirable.' These 'peculiarities' he thought were 'walls of ample thickness, covered with a profusion of delicate surface ornament, absence of vertical breaks, prevalence of horizontal cornices, and walls often replaced by lines of piers or columns'.

The debate was never resolved and continued right through to the 1920s with stormy exchanges of views over the style adopted for New Delhi, but it is easy to see how the enthusiastic promotion of new principles of Gothic architecture coincided with the search for a more successful form of tropical construction, and the history of Bombay for the next fifty years was dominated by the quest for an effective synthesis between the two.

The steady consolidation and expansion of Bombay's fortunes which characterised the 1830s gathered momentum in following decades, facilitated by the rise of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway which reached Thana in 1853. The first stage of the rival Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway opened in 1860, reaching Broach and Baroda in 1861, Ahmedabad in 1863 and Bombay in 1864. The East India Company resolutely refused to finance railways on its own and it remained unimpressed by Dalhousie's dream of a unifying network of lines welding together a nation out of the scattered villages of the sub-continent. However the suppression of the Mutiny had demonstrated the enormous strategic advantages conferred by the railway and

telegraph, and with the abolition of Company rule in 1858, the way lay clear for the construction of a rail network which would become one of the most enduring symbols of British rule.

The latent forces of commercial and economic prosperity which had been accumulating in Bombay for over four decades were unleashed in a sudden frenzy of activity. By 1864 there were thirty-one banks, sixteen financial associations, eight land corporations, sixteen printing press companies, ten shipping companies, twenty insurance companies and sixty-two joint stock companies. In 1855 there had been none. In 1857 the first cotton mill opened. By 1860 there were seven. Investors, developers, speculators and entrepreneurs were swept along on a tide of enthusiasm made irreversible by the sudden slump in the supply of American cotton to the Lancashire cotton mills on the outbreak of the American Civil War. Bombay was 'cottonopolis', a vast clearing house for all the great cotton fields of India. Irrespective of quality, prices climbed to staggering levels, earning an additional £75 million over pre-war prices in five years. Sir George Clerk wrote to the Governor, Sir Bartle Frere: 'Everything is at famine prices in Bombay just now, while [men] in trade and profession are making fortunes, our government servants are pinched for food.' Later the Municipal Commissioner Arthur Crawford simply remarked: 'no one ever drank anything but champagne in those days.'

Of course it was all too good to last. Land values rose fourfold as speculation in land became frenetic and land reclamation schemes became the order of the day. 'Financial associations formed for various purposes sprang up like mushrooms; companies expanded with an inflation as that of bubbles; projects blossomed only to decay.' When the crash came only two old-established land companies survived intact, but the general enthusiasm for land reclamation and improvement impelled a continued interest in urban expansion.

The influx of unprecedented wealth coincided with the arrival of a new Governor. Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere was one of the most dynamic Imperial figures of his day. After a distinguished record in the Mutiny, he was appointed Governor in 1862, and under his enlightened tutelage the city was transformed into the Gateway to India. On his arrival Frere made his intentions plain. 'I look forward with the utmost confidence to the time when we shall hear that Bombay has taken her place among cities, owing as much to art as she does to nature and position.'

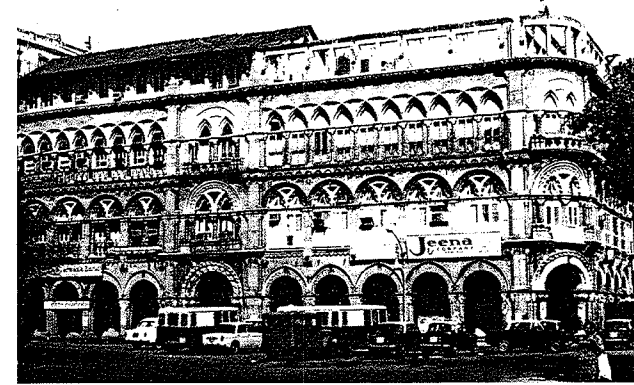
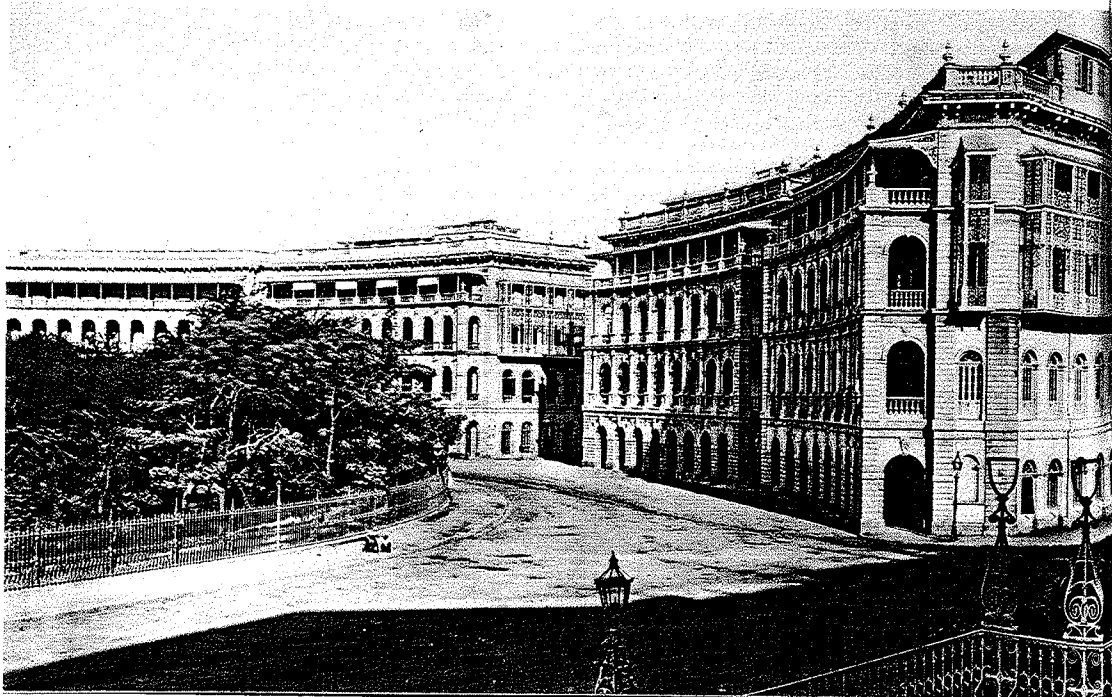
One of his first major civic improvements was the removal of the old town walls which surrounded the Fort area, a project which had been mooted as long ago as 1841, when a letter to *The Times* exclaimed: 'The maintenance of the Fort of Bombay is not only useless. It has become a downright and most serious nuisance to the inhabitants at large.' In 1864 the ramparts were demolished and most of the city's roads were widened and improved as part of a strategic plan prepared by James Trubshawe, architect to the Ramparts Removal Committee. A few years earlier the Municipal Commissioner, Charles Forjett, had been responsible for the laying out of Elphinstone Circle on the site of Bombay Green, the first example in the city of civic planning on a grand scale to

a scheme conceived by Frere's predecessor Sir George Clerk. Forjett was an extraordinary individual. As Deputy Commissioner of Police in 1857 he was largely responsible for saving Bombay from insurrection. He personally haunted the most dangerous bazaars and slums in disguise, apprehending all who muttered anything remotely seditious, and the culmination of his career was his elevation to Municipal Commissioner in 1860. It was a new appointment replacing the earlier Conservancy Board in which 'obtuseness, indifference and party spirit appeared to have completely overcome whatever modicum of public spirit was still conserved among its members.'

Elphinstone (now Horniman) Circle bears eloquent testimony to the ideals of the new administration. Planned around the focus of the Town Hall, it comprises a circus with central gardens surrounded by ornamental iron railings imported from England. The site was bought by the Municipality and sold in building plots to English firms at a large profit, but the design of the buildings was controlled to create a unified composition of Italianate façades. On the western edge of the circle is a magnificent Venetian Gothic palazzo transplanted from its spiritual home on the Grand Canal to more exotic climes, complete with bracketed eaves, arcaded storeys and interlacing arches, all executed in warm brown sandstone.

Frere maintained the impetus of civic improvement generated by his predecessor and seized the opportunity to give Bombay a series of buildings worthy of her wealth, pre-eminence and location. He stipulated that the designs should be of the highest architectural character with conscious thought given to artistic effect and presence. As a result, paradoxically, Britain's finest heritage of High Victorian

Elphinstone Circle: an early photograph taken from the Town Hall steps in about 1870. Note the conspicuous absence of people in the European quarter, a characteristic conveyed in many early photographs. The delicate cast-iron balconies and attic verandahs were imported from England.

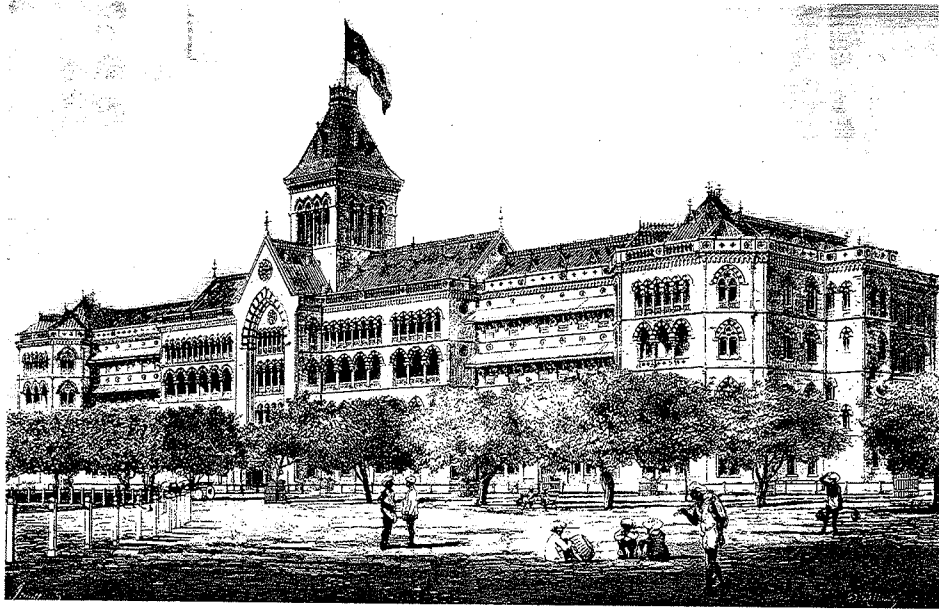


This splendid Venetian Gothic palazzo standing on the western edge of Elphinstone Circle was damaged by fire in 1982.

Gothic architecture lies in Bombay. Here in a great phalanx lie the Secretariat, University Library, Convocation Hall, Law Courts, Public Works Office, the Post Office and Telegraph Department, a truly Imperial vision, resembling a line of massive stone warships, monolithic, awe-inspiring and supremely self-confident. Once they faced out across the sea in silent tribute to the naval power which built them, but subsequent land reclamation has changed their relative location in the city. As a group they coalesce to form an impressively romantic skyline and they bequeathed an identity and style which was taken up and used all over the city for the remainder of the century.

The architectural prototypes for the public buildings of Bombay are not hard to find: they are the great Gothic buildings then in process of erection in London, which were readily available to the Public Works Department (PWD) in the pages of professional journals such as *The Builder*. Scott's competition design for the Foreign Office is a clear source for many with its central tower, symmetrical façade and Venetian inspiration.

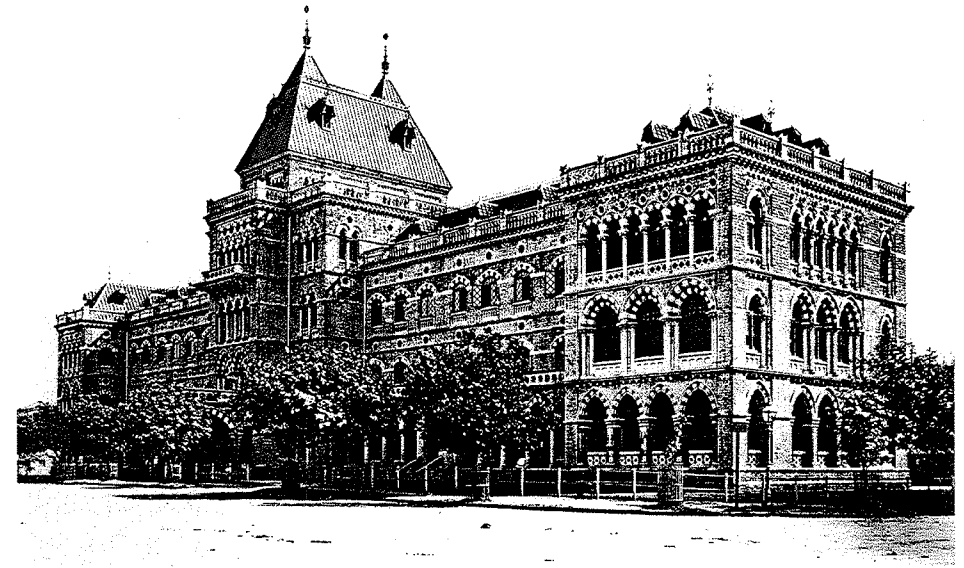
The old Secretariat was the first government building planned by Frere and it was designed by Colonel (then Captain) Henry St Clair Wilkins, Royal Engineers. Wilkins is an elusive yet eminent figure in the architectural history of Anglo-India. Born in 1828 at Beelsby, Lincolnshire, he was educated privately and at Addiscombe College. In common with other officers in the Bombay Department of Public Works he was trained in civil architecture, and he worked in Aden, as well as Bombay. He commanded the Royal Engineers in the Abyssinia campaign of 1869 for which he was mentioned in despatches and made ADC to the Queen. He died in bed in London in 1896. The Secretariat was built between 1867 and 1874 and it coincided with the erection of Scott's St Pancras Station in London. Designed in a similar Venetian Gothic, the most Oriental of all Italian styles, it is an immense symmetrical pile comprising an arcaded central range with a lofty tower over the central staircase. The entire front elevation of this range is made up of arcaded verandahs enriched with structural polychromy,



The Secretariat: designed by Colonel Henry St Clair Wilkins and erected between 1867–1874.

and the central axis is further accentuated by a huge gable which breaks forward beneath the tower. This accommodates the staircase window in a single ninety-foot arch, recalling Scott's sheer west wall at St Pancras. The wings are terminated by chamfered end bays which are broken on the flanks by canted secondary staircase compartments. Besides the usual expedient of setting the rooms behind deep arcaded verandahs, the most obvious concessions to the climate are the huge projecting canopies which run in continuous bands over the first- and second-floor windows on the wings, affording protection from both sun and monsoon rains. These are covered in red tiles and carried on cast-iron brackets. The main roof, which is similarly treated, rises from behind a machicolated parapet, which is sufficiently robust to unify the entire composition. The whole is topped by crested ridges of ironwork and ventilating dormers. It is a magnificent structure faced in buff-coloured stone from Porebundar, enriched with blue and red basalt, with capitals and cornices by native artists in white Hemnagar stone. The quality of the carving is excellent.

Wilkins also designed the Public Works Office, which has a close affinity to the Secretariat. This is hardly surprising as it was commenced in May 1869 and was under construction at the same time. Its centrepiece is curious – a wide staircase tower with twin pyramidal roofs linked across the middle and crowned with finials. Beneath the tower the staircase block breaks forward to provide verandahs, and at ground level it breaks out again to form an umbrageous *porte-cochère*



The Public Works Office, a magnificent essay in Venetian Gothic, photographed shortly after its completion in 1872 and now obscured by the mature trees.

with a terrace over. The wings are terminated by end bays which are the finest elements in the whole composition – pure Venetian Gothic with arcaded storeys enriched with structural polychromy. The Venetian inspiration, iron-crested, tiled roofs, common use of local stones, ventilating dormers, shutters and machicolated parapets are common themes which illustrate Wilkins's individual conception of tropical Gothic architecture.

The Post Office was designed by James Trubshawe of the Ramparts Removal Committee who had been brought over to prepare an overall plan of civic improvements for Frere. He was assisted by W. Paris, who designed the adjacent Telegraph Office (1871–1874). Both buildings are faced in buff-coloured sandstone from Coorla in Salsette, with columns of blue basalt. The Post Office is mediaeval Italian Gothic in origin with bracketed eaves and shallow pitched roofs punctuated by two centrally placed towers with pyramidal roofs, between which projects an enormously deep two-storey carriage porch, the upper level constituting an outdoor tiffin room for clerks. Interestingly the staircases are not in the towers, but tucked away on the flanks. Today the original effect is impaired by the forest of aërials and masts which cluster on the roof, but the presence of the modern equipment bears witness to the original functional convenience of the building and its successful adaptation to the climate.

In 1869 when Wilkins was appointed as Chief Engineer for the campaign in Abyssinia, his absence enabled Lieutenant-Colonel James

Augustus Fuller (1828–1902) to step from the penumbra of his superior. Fuller had supervised the erection of all these major buildings and he was able to assume the commission for the new Law Courts with some confidence. They were started in 1871 and completed in 1879 in Early English Gothic with Venetian overtones; entirely appropriate for one of the principal groups of courts in the Raj, evoking all the historical associations of the rise of English liberty and the rule of law, but adapted to reflect the by now established style of their neighbours.

The building is colossal, 562 feet long and 187 feet broad, dominated by a large central tower on either side of which are octagonal towers 120 feet high, surmounted with spirelets of Porebundar stone and crowned by figures of Justice and Mercy. These towers accommodate private staircases for the judges, the main staircase lying on the eastern side and approached by a groin-vaulted corridor in Porebundar stone with a floor of Minton tiles. The courts embody all the august solemnity of their antecedents in England. The internal design and layout are clearly influenced by Street's successful designs for the Law Courts in the Strand. These had been exhibited in *The Builder* and *Building News* and were under construction at the same time as Fuller's in Bombay. The building embodied the latest fire precautions with four-inch hosetaps provided on each floor. Unlike the adjoining public offices the Law Courts have a more gaunt aspect, being faced in roughly dressed blue basalt enriched with dressings of chunam, and Porebundar, Coorla and Sewri stones, capped by roofs of Taylor's patent red tiles.

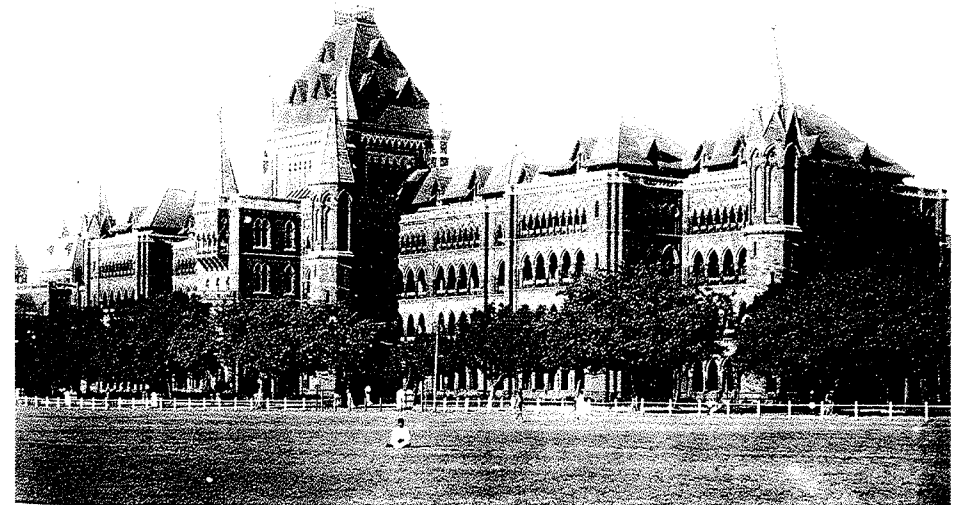
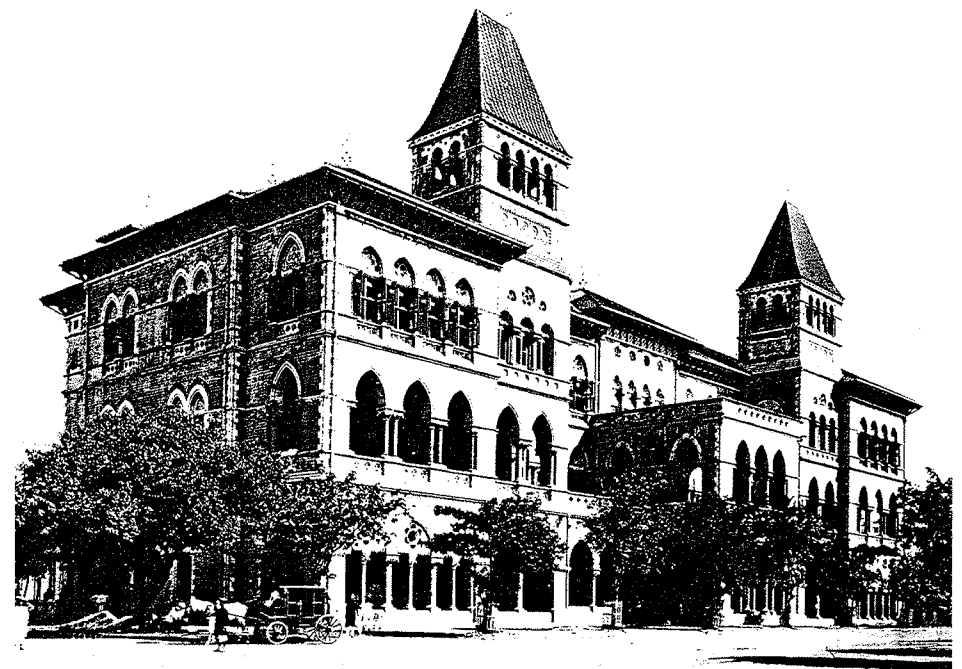
However, the most distinguished buildings in the group stand between the Secretariat and Law Courts and they were designed not by an enthusiastic military engineer, but by one of the most gifted architects of the 19th century – Sir George Gilbert Scott. The Convocation Hall and Library of the University, the latter with its enormous Rajabai Tower, is one of Scott's most outstanding designs, yet strangely it is little known in England.

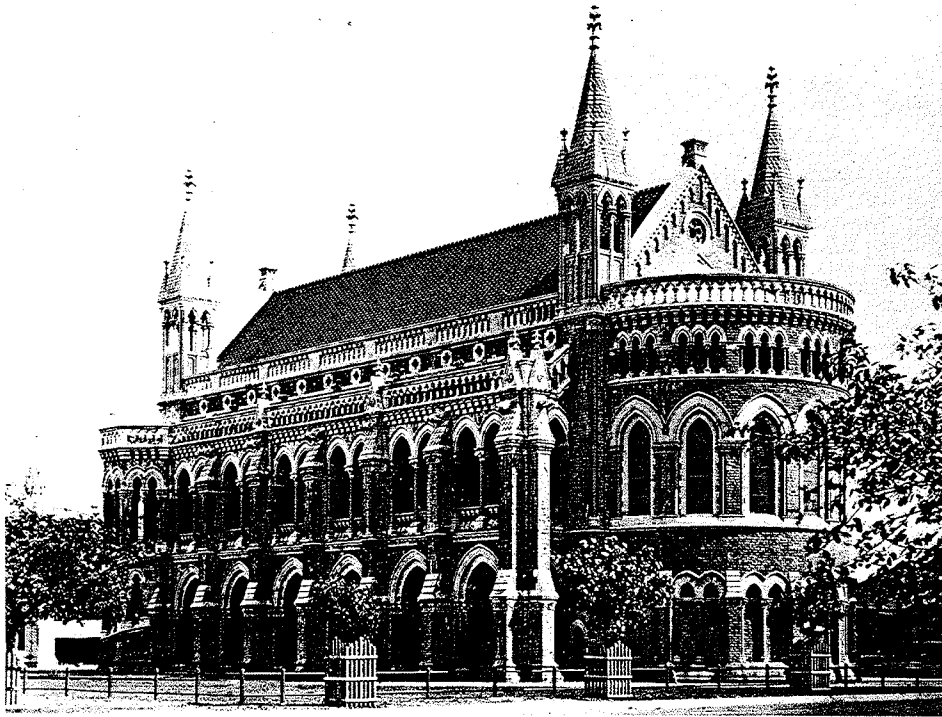
The University Hall was funded by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Ready-money, one of a number of Parsee benefactors whose generosity provided the resources to implement Frere's vision. The Hall is designed in the decorated early French style of the 15th century with an ecclesiastical air. The south end is apsidal and separated from the main body of the Hall by a grand arch. A handsome carved timber gallery passes round three sides of the Hall, carried on elegant cast-iron brackets, and the interior is enhanced by the light from a large rose window suffused with the colours from its stained glass. Externally the most distinctive elements are the open spiral staircases flanking the entrances, which provide access to the side verandahs, and which recall the mediaeval staircases of the French Renaissance at Blois and Chambord, but the glory of the University is the Library and Clock Tower completed in 1878. This, too, owes its existence to private munificence. It was endowed by Premchand Roychand, the most famous Hindu banker and broker of his day, a quiet, unassuming man whose modest manner concealed the brain of a financial wizard.

The choice of Scott, as architect, was inspired, for although he never visited India, he was able to indulge his knowledge and love of Italian

The Post Office, designed in a mediaeval Italianate style. The area over the porte-cochère was an outdoor tiffin room for clerks.

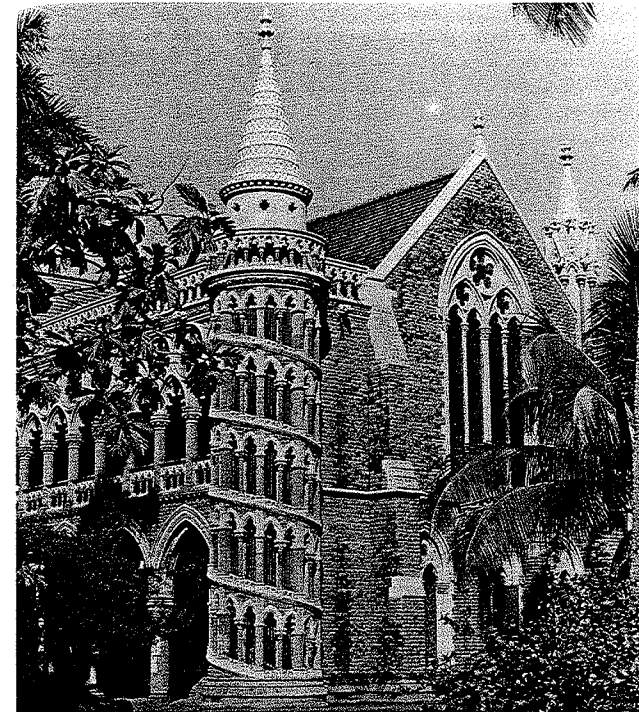
The Law Courts. This vast pile built by Lieutenant-Colonel James Fuller recalls the romantic Gothic fantasies of the competition for the London Law Courts.





The University Convocation Hall by George Gilbert Scott in the decorated French style of the 15th century.

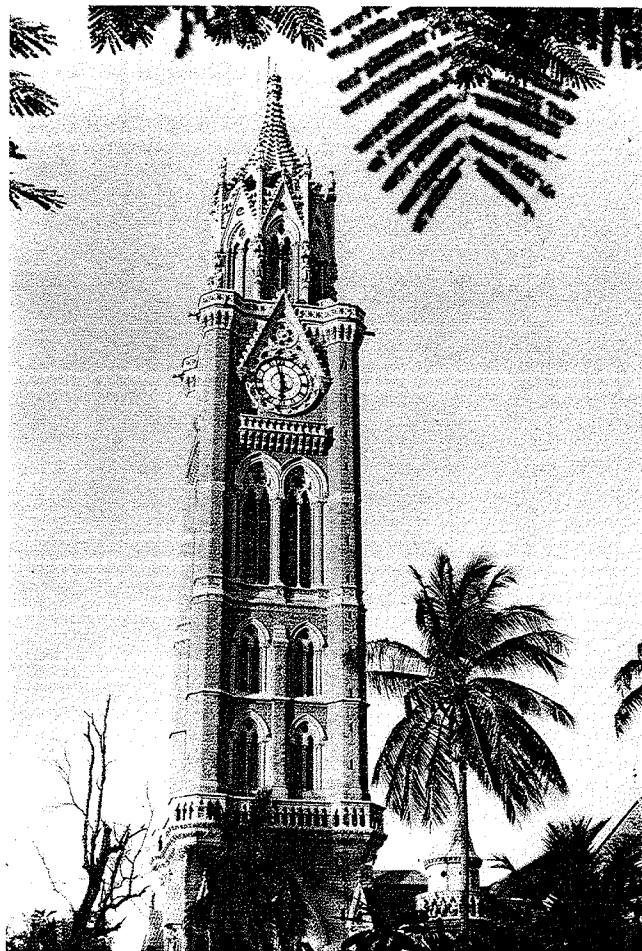
and French Gothic detailing to an unprecedented degree, unconstrained by the cold, wet English weather. The Library has arcaded galleries taken straight from Venice crowned by a pierced parapet of finely detailed stonework, creating a feeling of airiness, delicacy and cool repose. The open spiral staircases placed in each corner are developed from those on the Hall and rise full height surmounted by stone spires, but the most remarkable feature of the whole complex is the soaring Rajabai clock tower, a paean of controlled exuberance celebrating the Gothic Revival and the memory of Roychand's mother, after whom it is named. The design is Scott's interpretation of Giotto's campanile in Florence, but it is highly individual and related to its context. Around the octagonal corona stand sculptured figures eight feet high representing the castes of Western India, and above these, forming finials flanking each face, stand another set of caste figures all modelled by the Assistant Engineer, Rao Bahadur Makund Ramchandra. There are twenty-four in all on the building. Although the location and figures may be Indian, and the inspiration Italian, the building exudes all the ecclesiastical fervour of mid-19th-century Oxbridge. From the chimes of this monumental landmark emanate the sounds of 'Home Sweet Home', 'God Save the Queen' and popular hymn tunes.



University Library. The corner spiral staircases are an eclectic blend of the Mediaeval and the French Renaissance.

Why was it that in a comparatively short space of time Bombay acquired a legacy of some of the finest Gothic Revival buildings in the world? Clearly the city's new-found wealth, enlightened patronage and enthusiastic government created an atmosphere for innovation and change, but the availability of good building stone was crucial, releasing the Bombay sappers and PWD architects from reliance on the brick and chunam which prevailed elsewhere. Moreover the process generated its own momentum. In the early years there were hardly any native sculptors capable of executing European carving, but in 1865 the appointment of John Lockwood Kipling to the Bombay School of Art marked the first stage in a rapid revival of native craftwork, and the growth of a local workforce well-versed in stone masonry became a factor in the continuation of the style. Kipling was the father of Indian Arts and Crafts and more than any one person he was responsible for a renaissance of native craft skills and pride in the quality of local workmanship. Now his reputation is eclipsed permanently by the meteoric career of his son, Rudyard, the Imperial muse. A revival in Indian crafts was sorely needed if there was ever to be any real fusion of styles between east and west. The Frere Fountain designed by Richard Norman Shaw and sculpted by James Forsyth demonstrates how even

The colossal Rajabai Tower over the University Library is one of Scott's finest and least-known works.



the most gifted architect and distinguished sculptor could go wrong when substituting frenetic European eclecticism for authentic native styles.

It is ironic that a style associated so closely in England with a revolution in ecclesiastical design should have given birth in Bombay to a revolution in secular works. The Afghan Memorial Church at Colaba was an important precursor of the revolution that was to follow, but in Bombay it had relatively little impact on church building. This was more by accident than design. An ambitious scheme for the complete reconstruction of St Thomas's Cathedral was put forward by James Trubshawe, but it became one of the first casualties of the financial collapse in 1865 with only the apsed chancel built. It survives as a curiously incongruous remnant tacked on to the original Cathedral. This and a vigorous little memorial fountain by Scott outside the west

door are the only hints of an alternative vision for the Cathedral that never came to fruition. Elsewhere the only other ecclesiastical building worth mentioning is a small church built by William Emerson at Girgaum (1870-73), a quirky little French Gothic building of no great distinction but full of insouciant charm, designed by the future President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, and one of the most interesting architects at work in British India.

William Emerson (1843-1924) trained with W. G. Habershon and A. R. Pite, and became a pupil of the renowned William Burges in 1865. Burges had been commissioned to design a new home for the Bombay School of Art on the understanding that virtually unlimited money was available, and he produced a characteristic 13th-century French Gothic design infused with Oriental motifs and a flamboyant open staircase as an architectural centrepiece. Emerson worked on the design. It is difficult to know how much can be attributed to him, but it gave him an immediate focus for his not inconsiderable talents and launched him on a career in India. At the age of 23 he was dispatched to Bombay with Burges's drawings. The scheme was never executed, as the available funds were not nearly as extensive as Burges had been led to believe. The city is poorer for it, but for William Emerson new opportunities arose. For similar reasons designs for a new custom house by Cuthbert Brodrick, architect of the exotic Turkish Baths in Leeds, were stillborn.

Soon after Emerson's arrival he was commissioned to design the Arthur Crawford Markets, another facet of Frere's scheme for the city, brought to realisation by the eponymous Municipal Commissioner at a cost of £160,000. The building is supposedly 12th-century Gothic in origin, and the biographer of William Burges, Joseph Mordaunt Crook, has discerned echoes of Burges's stable block at Cardiff Castle. It stands on a corner site, and like some English country market buildings it has a prominent clock tower crowned by a cupola, with a gable to each frontage and open timber galleries beneath (now infilled). The main entrance is through three semi-circular polychrome arches above which are bas-reliefs by John Lockwood Kipling, depicting the

ARTHUR CRAWFORD MARKETS, BOMBAY.
W. EMERSON ARCHITECT



The Crawford Markets by William Emerson with panels of bas-reliefs carved by John Lockwood Kipling.

Imperial ideal – strong-limbed Indian peasants thriving under a beneficent Imperial sun. The human reality is beneath, an endless drama of survival played out on a stage of Caithness stone. Inside the market lies a drinking fountain designed by Emerson, but simplified when executed by Kipling, and paid for by the aptly-named Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney. Today it is almost overwhelmed by stalls.

A visit to the markets is one of the most compelling experiences in India. The noise is deafening, the crowd suffocating and the senses are assaulted by such an array of sights and smells that the unprepared visitor fresh from the order and calm of a European city emerges reeling. The main halls are carried on iron columns with corrugated-iron roofs designed by Mr Russel-Aitken and the walls are lined with elegant iron lamp brackets cast in the form of intertwined reptiles. Beneath these roofs one can obtain almost anything – brilliant fresh flowers, betel nuts, oranges, grapes, bananas, onions, mangoes, cat fish, sword fish, wildfowl, ducks, caged birds, all the exotic produce of the east concentrated into one enormous pageant. The market lies on the edge of the European quarter of the city. Beyond lie the bazaars of the native quarter. Sir Edwin Arnold wrote:

A tide of Asiatic humanity ebbs and flows up and down the Bhendi bazaar, and through the chief mercantile thoroughfares. Nowhere could be seen a play of livelier hues, a busier and brighter city life. Besides the endless crowds of Hindu, Gujarati and Mahratta people coming and going between rows of grotesquely painted houses and temples, there are to be studied here specimens of every race and nation of the East.

Bombay resembles Victorian London not just in its civic architecture, but in its exuberance, colour and sheer dynamism. Both grew up with the same *laissez-faire* ethos, and both underwent similar attempts at civic improvement by well-meaning philanthropists and officials, but the difference is that in London the process continued. Gradually order was imposed on chaos and the congeries of uses and activities were unwound one by one. In Bombay this never happened, and it retains all the characteristics of the Victorian city, good and bad. As the wealth of the city increased, social problems of overcrowding, poor sanitation and epidemic disease rose in direct proportion. In 1864–65 there was a serious cholera outbreak, but the average annual death rate remained below that of London for many years, until improving environmental standards at home tipped the balance of figures against Bombay. As the programme of civic improvement gathered momentum Western innovations, such as gas lighting, were introduced. A portion of the town was lit in October 1866 and, as the lamplighters went from lamp to lamp, 'they were followed by crowds of inquisitive natives who gazed in mute astonishment at the new western wonder that had appeared in their midst.'

The munificence of the great Parsee and Hindu philanthropists was boundless. Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy endowed a Benevolent Institution

for Parsees, Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney donated no less than forty drinking fountains to the city (and two in London), and David Sassoon, a Baghdadi Jew and patriarch of one of the wealthiest families in the world, was equally prolific.

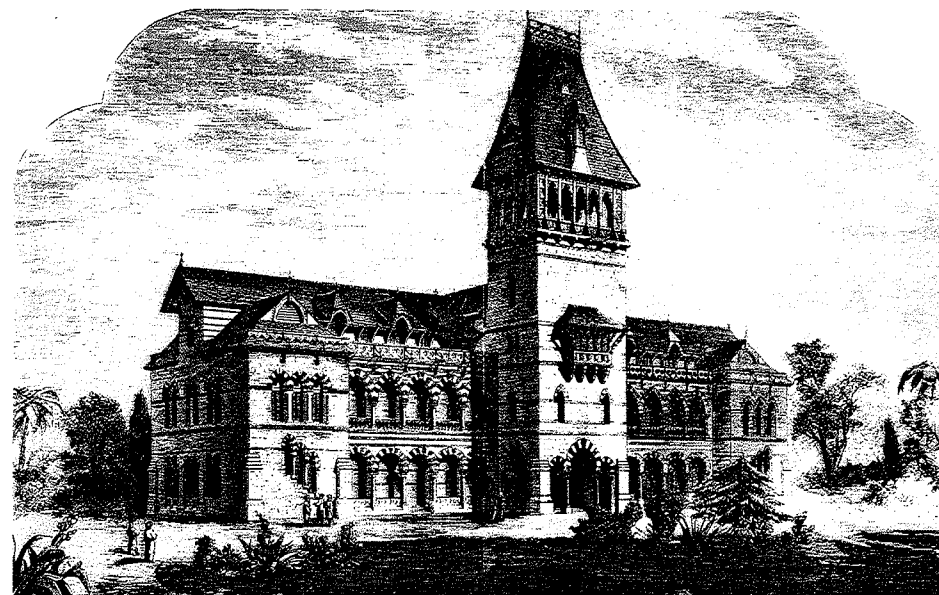
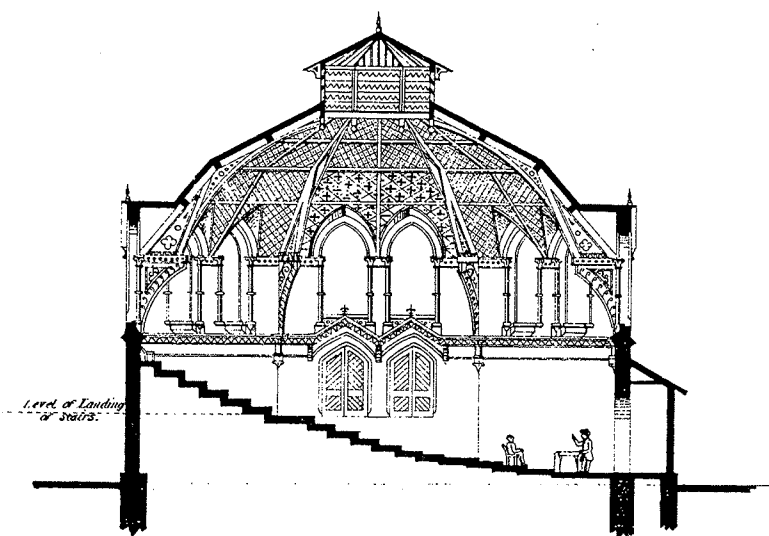
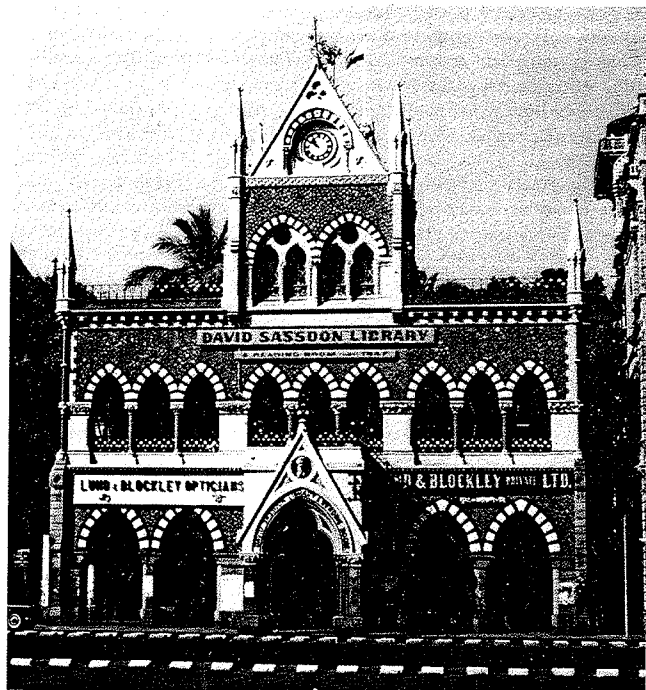
The Mechanics or Sassoon Institute stands on Esplanade (now Mahatma Gandhi) Road, a delightful little building of immense charm and character sandwiched between the stately pile of Elphinstone College and the old headquarters of the Army and Navy Stores, one-time purveyors of tropical provisions to the newly-landed Indian civil servant. The Institute was founded to provide a library and lecture facilities for mechanics and engineers and includes a public reading room and a small museum of artifacts and drawings. The street frontage is faced in coursed rubble, arcaded on both storeys with an open verandah at first-floor level and a central entrance porch with a bust of Sassoon in *alto rilievo* by Kipling, all executed in Venetian Gothic like a miniature of Scott's rejected Foreign Office design. The centre bay rises another storey with corner spirelets and a little gable and clock. Inside there is a large entrance hall with a statue of Sassoon by Woolner, but the real surprise is at the rear where there is an octagonal lecture theatre beneath a ribbed roof ventilated by a central lantern, all finished in a complementary style.

The Mechanics Institute was designed by Colonel Fuller in conjunction with Scott, McClelland & Co, a firm of architect/builders who practised widely in the city. Precisely what relationship existed between the military authorities and the civil firm is unclear, but they were influential. In 1868 D. E. Gostling of the firm produced an unusual scheme for a group of four semi-detached bungalows, which unfortunately remained unexecuted. The firm also produced a design for an ice house for Messrs Tudor & Co, ice importers, which combined functional utility and Venetian Gothic apparel, complete with polychromy, crenellations and stepped gables.

Elsewhere the craze for Gothic buildings raged unabated. To the north of the city at Byculla, opposite the Victoria Memorial Gardens, James Trubshawe erected new premises for the Elphinstone College, an institution for the dissemination of Western education endowed by Sir Cowasjee Jehangir Readymoney. It opened in 1871, distinguished by a lofty central tower with a projecting canopied balcony. This appears to have been extended at a later date into an elaborate two-storey affair, reminiscent more of the ornately carved galleried façades of local Gujarati houses, than the architectural spirit of mediaeval Italy. Lalla Rookh would have been at home here rather than Romeo's Juliet. The building is now a hospital and has suffered from unsympathetic infilling of the first-floor arcade and painting of the stonework, but the red corrugated-iron roofs are probably original.

In 1865 Major Medley, RE wrote in *Professional Papers on Indian Engineering* 'Will somebody invent a new material for roofs in India?' Unfortunately they did. By the 1870s the use of corrugated and cast iron was increasing. The invention of corrugated iron and its export to the east in enormous quantities is one of the more dubious advantages conferred by the British Empire. It was mass produced in such

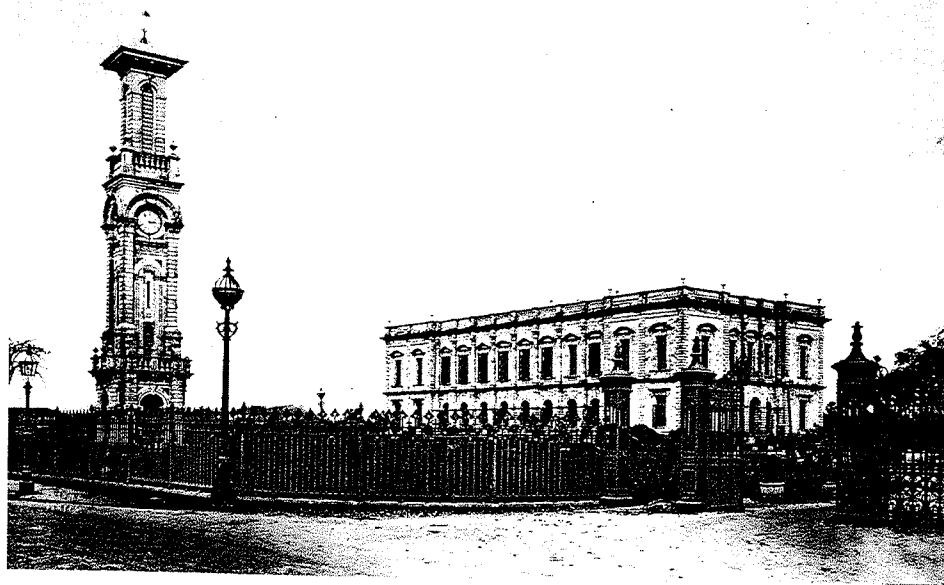
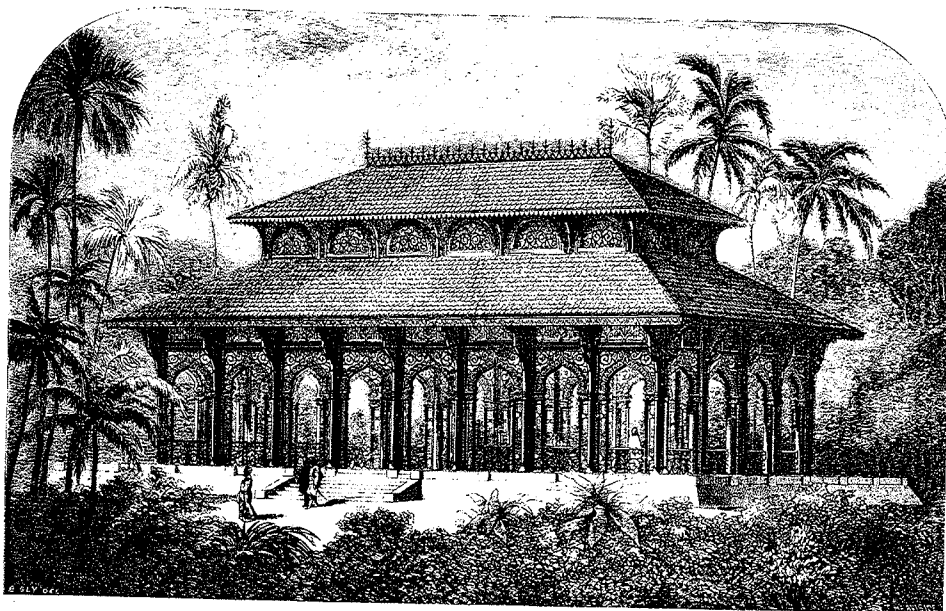
The former Mechanics' Institute, now the David Sassoon Library. Venetian Gothic on an intimate scale. (Below) Section through the octagonal lecture hall showing the internal ornament.



Elphinstone College with its carved balcony and galleried bell-tower.

quantities and was so cheap that in the space of a few years it displaced traditional roofing materials and the skills that went with them. Graded shingles, ornamental tiles and other traditional materials were swept away causing irreparable damage not just to local industries, but to the visual appearance of countless Indian temples and monuments.

Cast iron had been used in India in small quantities for decades. In the 18th century bar iron was one of the recurrent imports from Europe and in 1815 an entire cast-iron bridge had been exported to Lucknow after designs by the eminent Sir John Rennie, although it was not mounted until 1844. By 1865 prefabrication reached more sophisticated levels and a railway bridge was designed for immediate use outside Bombay without abutments or intermediate columnar support. By the 1880s, Macfarlanes of Glasgow offered a wide range of prefabricated structures ranging from hotels to drinking fountains designed for colonial use. An entire Durbar Hall was exported from their Saracen Foundry to Madras, thoroughly Indian in inspiration, but the great masterpiece of prefabrication was a colossal cast-iron kiosk designed by Owen Jones and R. M. Ordish, the engineer, for use in Bombay. It was made by Handyside of Derby in 1866 and it was widely regarded as one of the most remarkable specimens of ornamental ironwork of its time. Before its despatch to India it was exhibited on land adjoining the Royal Horticultural Society Gardens in South Kensington. Its ultimate fate remains unknown. As depicted in *The Builder* for 1866, it may have been intended for the newly opened Victoria Gardens and Museum, but if it was, it does not appear to have arrived there.



The Victoria Museum, opposite Elphinstone College, is exceptional for it is the only significant Bombay building of the period designed in a classical style. Quite why this should be is puzzling. It may be that it was felt to be a more appropriate style for a public museum, but this is unlikely: the first significant 'correct' secular Gothic building in England was the University Museum, Oxford, finished in 1860. It is more likely that it was the personal whim of its founder, Dr George Birdwood. In any event in 1862 Sir Bartle Frere laid the corner-stone to a highly creditable Palladian building by William Tracey. At its inauguration the Museum was eulogised as 'one of the greatest boons which England could have conferred on India'. Today it is as popular as ever and a Sunday afternoon stroll in Victoria Gardens is as much a part of Bombay routine as is a post-prandial walk in Regent's Park in London. The Museum has acted as a magnet for discarded British artifacts – and in its gardens lie unloved statues and odd items of street furniture including a splendid brachiated cast-iron lamp column. Tracey died before he could supervise the layout of the remaining buildings in the gardens, and Scott, McClelland & Co stepped in to finish the job. The Italianate Sassoon Clock Tower is their work, in Porebunder stone inlaid with Minton tiles and panels, keystones, arches and dressings of Blashfield's terracotta imported from Lincolnshire. The four faces portray morning, evening, noon and night. At the entrance to the gardens is their classical screen enriched with medallions of the Prince and Princess of Wales sculpted by James Forsyth, who also carved the cupids in Portland stone. The capitals are copied from the Temple of Jupiter in Rome.

Inside the gardens stands a bust of Lady Frere by Noble under a circular rotunda designed by Tracey and closely based on the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates in Athens, a pure Greek temple with a cresting of acroteria. The greatest delight is a large tropical planthouse in the style of Decimus Burton's Palm House at Kew – a cast-iron curvilinear frame covered with dark green open latticework embracing all sorts of exotic foliage. Who was responsible for this extraordinary structure, I do not know, but it is a wonderfully inventive piece of design perfectly suited to the climate.

Victoria Gardens was a classical aberration and Bombay remained a city founded in the tradition of Ruskinian Gothic, but it was a tradition which had not yet reached its climax. Over the next twenty years enthusiasm for Gothic as the official style for public and private buildings remained unswayed by vitriolic attacks in the press and journals. In 1867 the *Bombay Builder* complained: 'Here in Bombay where lacs upon lacs have been spent within a few years, and within so small a radius, there is hardly a building that is not positively ugly to look at, not one that is in the least degree instructive.' *The Builder* at home in England commented: 'The fearful overdone Gothic architecture in our Bombay buildings should be a warning to all architects.'

Feelings between civil architects and the military engineers of the Public Works Department remained strained for the duration of the Raj, and often the unresolved professional relationship was exacerbated by social condescension on the part of the military. A report in

The cast-iron kiosk designed by Owen Jones and R. M. Ordish, and made by Handyside of Derby. Its fate remains a mystery.

Victoria Museum and Gardens shortly after its opening with the Sassoon Clock Tower in the foreground. The classical style was unusual in Bombay at a time when Gothic prevailed.

The Builder of 1869 called for reform and lamented: 'The few civil engineers are snubbed and made to eat humble pie to military engineers, who really do nothing but sit at office and write minutes and reports, and carry out a system of scarlet tape unknown even in red-tape England.' Even in 1920 the lowly status of the architect was noted by the Consulting Architect to the Government of India, John Begg: 'The opinion of a civilian of over twelve years' standing or, say, of a Lieutenant-Colonel, will outweigh that of any architect even on an architectural point. A full Colonel's or a Collector's, will make or mar the success of a cathedral.'

In spite of the constant rumble of criticism both in England and India and repeated allegations of incompetence, the PWD continued undeterred in its own complacent fashion. Throughout the 70s and 80s further additions were made to the city's stock of Gothic buildings. Many were concentrated in a triangle of land bounded by Cruickshank Road, Carnac Road and Hornby Road and they all follow the same unregenerated Ruskinian Gothic style of the 1860s. The Goculdas Tejpal Native General Hospital in Carnac Road is by Colonel Fuller in Early English Gothic, and boasts imported cast-iron staircases from Macfarlanes in Glasgow. It follows the common theme of a central tower and projecting bay over the *porte-cochère*, but the arches to the centre bay are slightly cusped, hinting at the greater concessions to Moorish and Saracenic architecture which were to follow. Even more surprisingly, the operating theatre is sited over the entrance porch.

In Cruickshank Road the Cama Albless Obstetric Hospital follows the same form, but the tower is embellished with corner turrets and, interestingly, the windows are shaded by conical iron hoods tucked into the window reveals. At the junction of Carnac Road and Cruickshank Road stands the Elphinstone High School, a more spirited interpretation of Ruskinian ideals, and it is no coincidence that it is by G. T. Molecey, colleague of W. Paris and assistant to James Trubshawe. It stands on a high platform screened by trees. A fine flight of steps leads to three semi-circular headed entrances enriched with clustered columns, radiating bands of red Bassein stone and elaborate wrought iron gates. St Xavier's College and the Police Court complete the group, the latter by John Adams, Architectural Executive Engineer and Surveyor to the Government. Completed in 1889 it has a slender *flèche* spire and exceptionally fine carved stonework, an indication of how far native craftsmen had developed under Kipling's tutelage in just over twenty years.

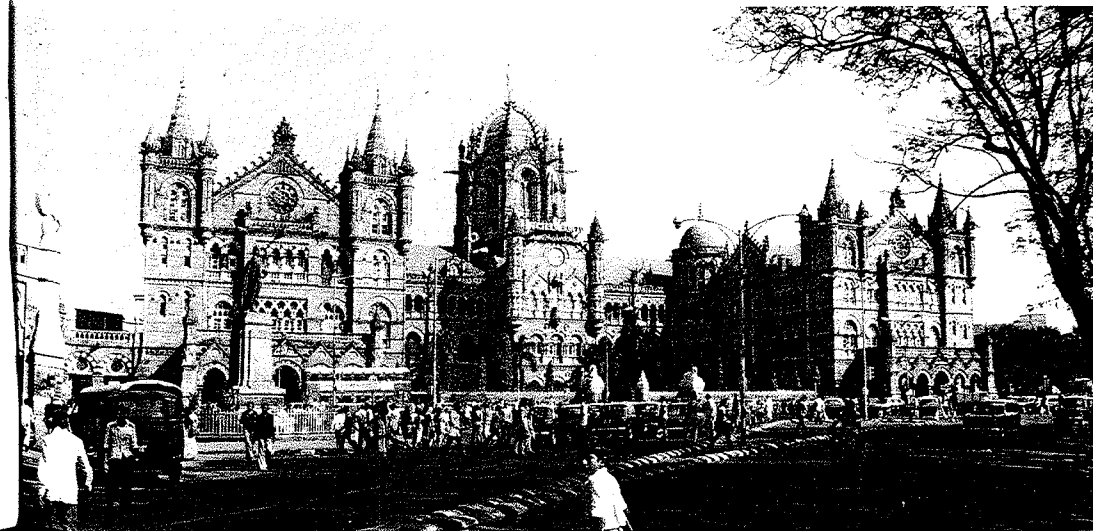
Throughout this period a most distinguished local architect was at work in Bombay using the established derivative Gothic style, but also developing a synthesis with indigenous styles that was to blossom at the end of the century. He was Frederick William Stevens (1848-1900). Stevens was trained as an architect in Bath and first went to India as a lowly assistant engineer in the PWD in 1867 under the capable Colonel Fuller. An early drawing of Poona Law Courts is in his name (although they were designed by Major G. J. Melliss), but his first significant work in Bombay was the Royal Alfred Sailors' Home (1872-76), superseding an earlier design in cast iron by J. Macvicar Anderson.

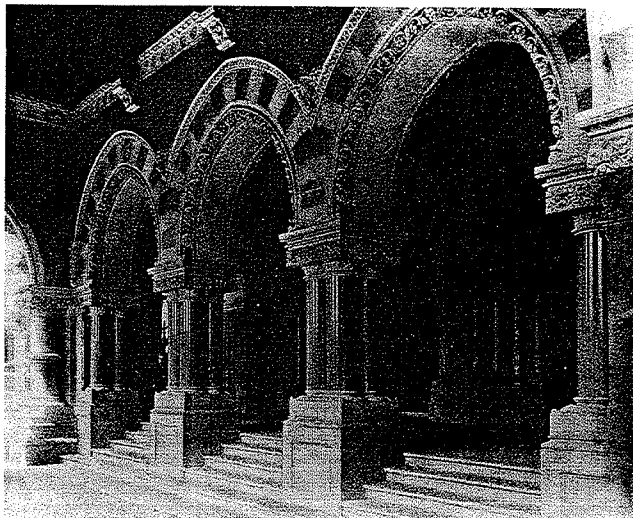
The Sailors' Home is interesting as it is an early attempt to infuse Gothic architecture with Muslim nuances. There is a faintly Saracenic influence to the arches, although the pediment has all the arcane qualities of a South Indian temple. It portrays Neptune, nymphs, seahorses and sealions, but it is English in origin, carved by Mr Boulton of Cheltenham in Bath stone. The capitals and cornices are by Kipling and the ironwork by Macfarlanes. It is not a happy composition and lacks cohesion, the pediment in particular appearing incongruous. In 1880 an editorial in *The Builder* remarked that 'the building in question looks handsome,' but that the pediment 'needs to be something more than what an ornamental sugar top is to a bride cake.'

Whatever its failings the Sailors' Home was sufficient to establish Stevens's reputation and two years after its completion, he received one of the most prestigious commissions ever offered in India - a new terminus for the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, at that time the largest and most extensive architectural work in India.

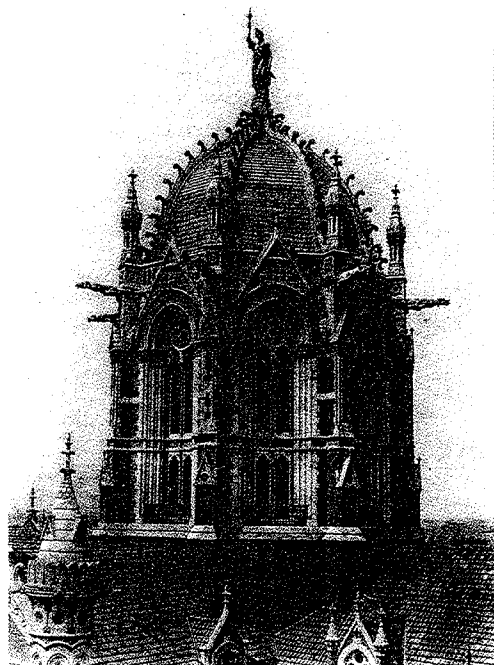
The Victoria Terminus station is the finest Victorian Gothic building in India. Inspired by Scott's St Pancras Station, it was erected between 1878 and 1887. It is a highly original work albeit one rooted firmly in the tradition of Ruskin, Scott and Burges. The building epitomises the spirit of the age in which it was built, and it is a paean of praise to the railway, which more than any other factor fostered the rise of Bombay. It is the supreme example of tropical Gothic architecture, with only a subtle hint of Saracenic motifs; a riotous extravaganza of polychromatic stone, decorated tile, marble and stained glass. Unlike St Pancras, VT is symmetrical and is surmounted by a colossal masonry dome, ostensibly 'the first applied to a Gothic building on scientific principles', and this claim is probably true. Beneath the dome the staircase rises in magisterial sweeps to each floor. The booking hall is spanned longitudinally and transversely by pointed arches with wooden groin-vaulted ceilings decorated with gold stars on an azure ground and reminiscent of Scott's interiors at St Pancras. The dado is clad in Maw's glazed tiles of rich foliated designs. The windows are filled with stained glass or with ornamental wrought iron grille-work to

Victoria Terminus: an ambitious exercise in architectural exuberance. The riotous ornament and romantic skyline invoke comparisons with Scott's St Pancras Station.





The Victoria Terminus: (Below), the dome crowned by Thomas Earp's statue of Progress; (Above) richly-carved detail on the porte-cochère.



reduce the glare of the sun. The fittings of local woods are finished with brass railings. Small wonder that it cost over £250,000.

In the entrance corridor leading to the main hall the groin-vaulting has richly carved and decorated diagonal ribs springing from the backs of grotesque animals. The central bosses are formed into heads of the lion and tiger from the mouths of which the original gas lanterns were suspended. The Imperial Lion and the Indian Tiger to designs executed by Thomas Earp recur full size on the monumental gate piers flanking the main entrance. Most of the surface ornament, foliated sculpture and ironwork was designed by the Bombay School of Art in conjunction with Stevens, who conceded that it was quite the equal of anything to be found in Europe, but the enormous fourteen-foot-high figure of Progress crowning the dome is Earp's, as are the stone medallions of Imperial worthies (including Frere), which enrich the front elevation.

Victoria Terminus is an architectural sensation both in perspective and in detail, where the excellent use of local stones and fine native carving is a tribute to the School of Art. If it has a fault, it is perhaps in the ratio of its length to its height. Victorian Gothic buildings enjoy a natural verticality, which should be accentuated and enhanced, but the enormous foreground and the endless flank elevation of the train shed beyond, impart a horizontal emphasis. To those used to Scott's soaring clock tower at St Pancras or the Rajabai tower at the University, the towers to the end wings seem at least a storey too short, but swept along as one of the two million passengers who pass through the building every day such architectural delicacies seem rather academic. Bombay VT is one of the architectural treasures of India – long may it so remain.

However, Stevens hadn't finished by any means. On the success of Victoria Terminus, he resigned from government service in 1884 and set up his own practice, receiving the commission for the new Municipal Buildings in 1888 by invitation from the Bombay Corporation. He was joined by B.G. Triggs and T. S. Gregson and later by his son, Charles Frederick, in 1896. The buildings were finished in 1893: a vast office complex standing at the apex of two roads opposite the Victoria Terminus. The Municipal Buildings are Stevens's masterpiece in which he gave free reign to his creative impulses, combining Venetian Gothic and Indo-Saracenic architecture in an architectural symbiosis of exotic forms and details. For sheer ebullience it is unsurpassed in British India, and more than any other building, it exudes the twin qualities of Imperial and civic pride, self-confidently symbolised in the crowning figure on the central gable – 'Urbs Prima in Indis'. The stylistic experiments of Fuller and Wilkins, Trubshawe and Emerson to find a form of High Victorian Gothic architecture adapted to the climatic extremes of Bombay, here find their resolution in a supreme expression of controlled composition. The window arches are cusped, the corner towers elaborately domed, but the *tour de force* is the vast domed staircase tower triumphantly proclaiming British supremacy to the world at the zenith of the Empire. It is Xanadu conceived through very English eyes from the Bath office of a High Victorian Goth, for Stevens returned to England to prepare his drawings.

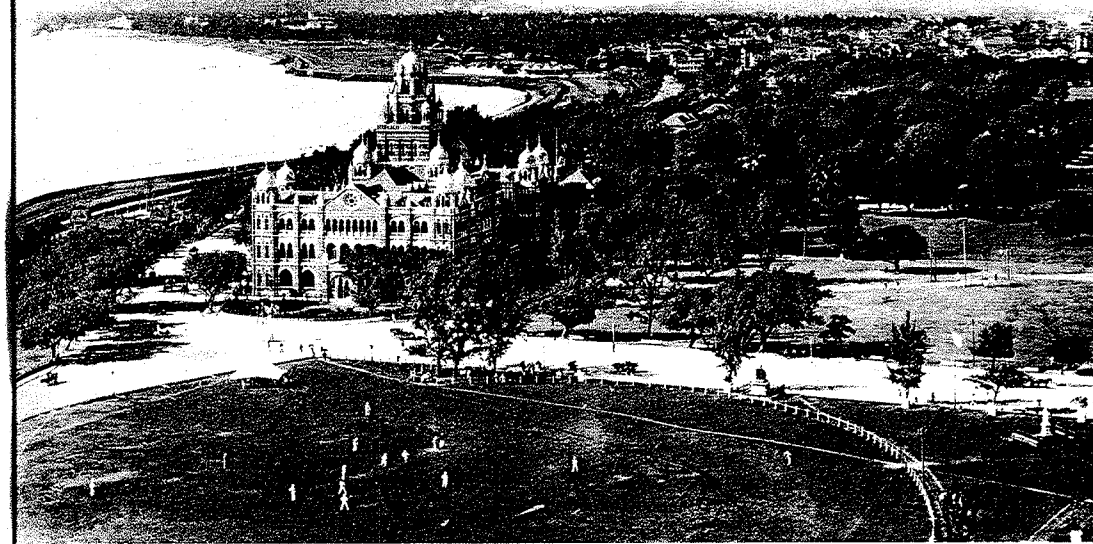


(Left) Municipal Buildings on completion in 1893: a wonderful combination of Venetian Gothic and Indo-Saracenic forms. The winged figure crowning the gable is 'Urbs Prima in Indis'. Note the horse-drawn tram in the foreground.



(Right) Oriental Buildings, remodelled and romanticised from the existing Cathedral High School in a conscious attempt at civic improvement.

History should know more of this man, for he was one of the most inventive, resourceful and romantic of all the practitioners of Victorian Gothic architecture, yet he is virtually unknown in England. Doubtless this has much to do with sheer distance. If he had practised in Bradford or Manchester, he would be venerated as an equal of Scott, Burges or Butterfield. It has more to do with subsequent attitudes to Victorian Gothic architecture and the hysterical denunciation of the period by the architectural historians of the succeeding generation. In 1931 the illustrious critic Robert Byron, referred to Bombay as 'that architectural Sodom' and wrote: 'The nineteenth century devised nothing lower than the municipal buildings of British India. Their ugliness is positive, daemonic.' Aldous Huxley thought Bombay 'one of the most appalling cities of either hemisphere' all 'lavatory bricks and Gothic spires,' and, sharing the prejudices of his generation, concluded that 'it had the misfortune to develop during what was, perhaps, the darkest period of all architectural history.' Not all showed such fanatical intolerance, mostly just those vociferous intellectuals mesmerised by the Modern movement. The journalist G. W. Steevens considered that Bombay had the richest and stateliest buildings in India 'challenging comparison with almost any city in the world,' and I agree with him. 'The Briton feels himself a greater man for his first sight of Bombay.' The Indians, of course, used to assimilating different races, cultures and conquerors, have never ceased to admire it all, and quite right too, for it is possible to love both Bombay and New Delhi simply for what they are

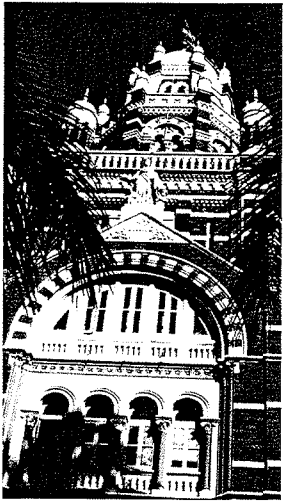


— opposites, just as it is possible to appreciate St Pancras and King's Cross. The heart may belong to one, but the mind may enjoy both.

Stevens's romantic inclinations may have achieved apotheosis in the Municipal Buildings, but he went on to design a second great rival terminus for the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railway at Churchgate in 1894–96. Oriental Buildings, opposite the Flora Fountain, was remodelled substantially at this time by Stevens from premises occupied by the Cathedral High School. It shares with Churchgate a common use of grey facings with bands of white stone dressings. It is an evocative affair with a spiky silhouette of spirelets, turrets and gables looking like a setting from some tropical *Gotterdammerung*. It goes unmentioned in *Murray's Guide*, overshadowed by the reputation of the great termini and Municipal Buildings along the road, but it is an excellent climax in the townscape.

The Churchgate terminus is based on the plan and form of its rival. There is a similar gabled centrepiece and *porte-cochère*, projecting wings flanked by square towers, and the whole is surmounted by a large domed lantern which reduces in stages; but the differences are self-evident. The square towers to the wings and central gable are capped by Oriental domes and subsidiary domelets, and the whole mass of the building is different, more compact with a greater vertical emphasis accentuated by the huge west window which lights the central hall. The most obvious difference is in the external facings which at Churchgate are rough-hewn in blue basalt inlaid with bands of

Churchgate Terminus by Frederick William Stevens. Cricket matches are still played on the Maidan, seen in the foreground, today.



Churchgate Terminus: (Left) the receding stages of the tower and dome inlaid with structural polychromy; (Right) The spirit of Progress surmounting the gable on the west front.



brilliant white counterpointed with red Bassein sandstone creating a Byzantine quality. The dome is Stevens's least successful, lacking the majestic qualities of both VT and Municipal Buildings, but it is an interesting feature punctuated with corner pavilions, the domes on which repeat on the buttresses to the upper stages. Monumental statuary plays an important role, the gable over the entrance being crowned by a statue of progress complete with locomotive.

Stevens died in 1900 in the city he did so much to improve. His obituary records that his buildings 'carried out in them with conspicuous success that blending of Venetian Gothic with Indian Saracenic by which he created a style of architecture so excellently adapted to the climate and environment of Bombay.' In this respect his works were outstanding, but while others elsewhere developed Indo-Saracenic themes based on a scholarly study of Moghul architecture and other precedents, in Bombay the vigour and originality which characterised Stevens's work was not replaced.

In 1909 a vast new General Post Office was raised in Indo-Saracenic style by John Begg, who had worked with Alfred Waterhouse and Colonel Edis before going to India via South Africa. It is a rambling building with corner domes and pierced balustrades to the window arches and with a central dome formed, unusually, in brick. However, the final manifestation of the impulse of civic improvement which had been triggered by Frere in the 1860s rippled in and around the Apollo Bunder overlooking the beautiful harbour of Bombay in the early 20th century.

The Taj Mahal Hotel was built in 1903 on the basin of the adjacent Bombay Yacht Club and its inception was due to Jamshetji Nusserwanji Tata, one of the wealthiest Parsees in the city, a man of enormous power and influence with diverse interests in iron and steel, hydro-electricity,

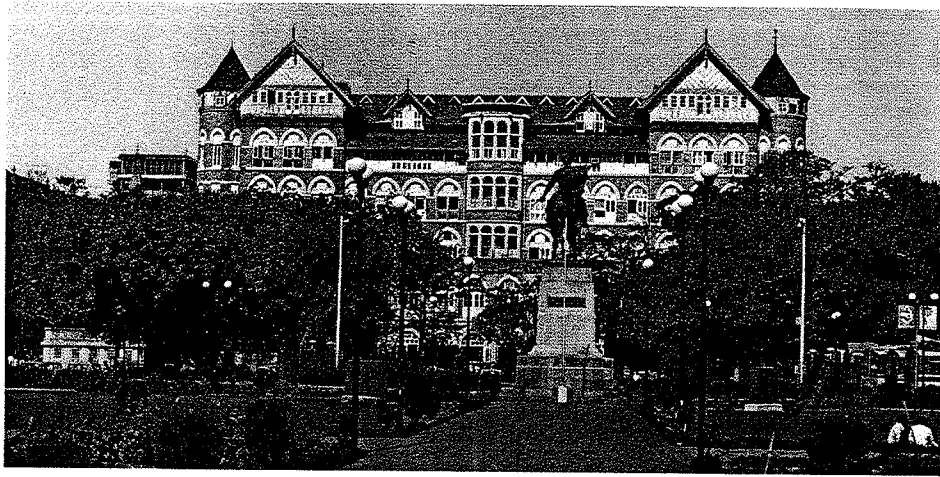
shipping and banking. The hotel, designed by W. Chambers, who worked for a local practice, was one of the great hotels of the British Empire, on a par with Shepheard's in Cairo and Raffles in Singapore. Its site is quite magnificent, facing out over the Arabian Sea to greet new arrivals as they steamed in on the great P. & O. liners. The building is reputed to have several allusions to Gujarati architecture, but it is really an eclectic confection calculated to whet the appetite of the incoming visitor. Predictably it is symmetrical and over its centre rises a huge red dome crowned by a belvedere. Each corner boasts a domed circular tower. The second to fourth floors have a rhythm of six projecting canopied balconies and the ground floor boasts a cool arcade which provides an outdoor bedroom for many of the beggars who haunt the hotel entrances in search of baksheesh.

Next door to the Taj stands the old Bombay Yacht Club now taken over by the Indian Atomic Energy Commission, a captivating pile, described by Jan Morris as 'a mixture of the Swiss and Hindu styles', but it is really nothing of the sort. It is a rather restrained affair by Bombay standards, symmetrical with corner towers crowned with conical roofs and bargeboarded gables, recalling the romantic juxtaposition of gables and spires which characterises the work of Norman Shaw and the Queen Anne Revival, although the lower stages betray its Gothic origins with square casement windows set in pointed arches.

Just round the corner near Stevens's Sailors' Home stands the Prince of Wales Museum — a stately pleasure dome, if ever there was one, with a foundation stone laid by the future George V, on his Indian visit of

The Taj Mahal Hotel: one of the great hotels of the British Empire overlooking the Arabian Sea.





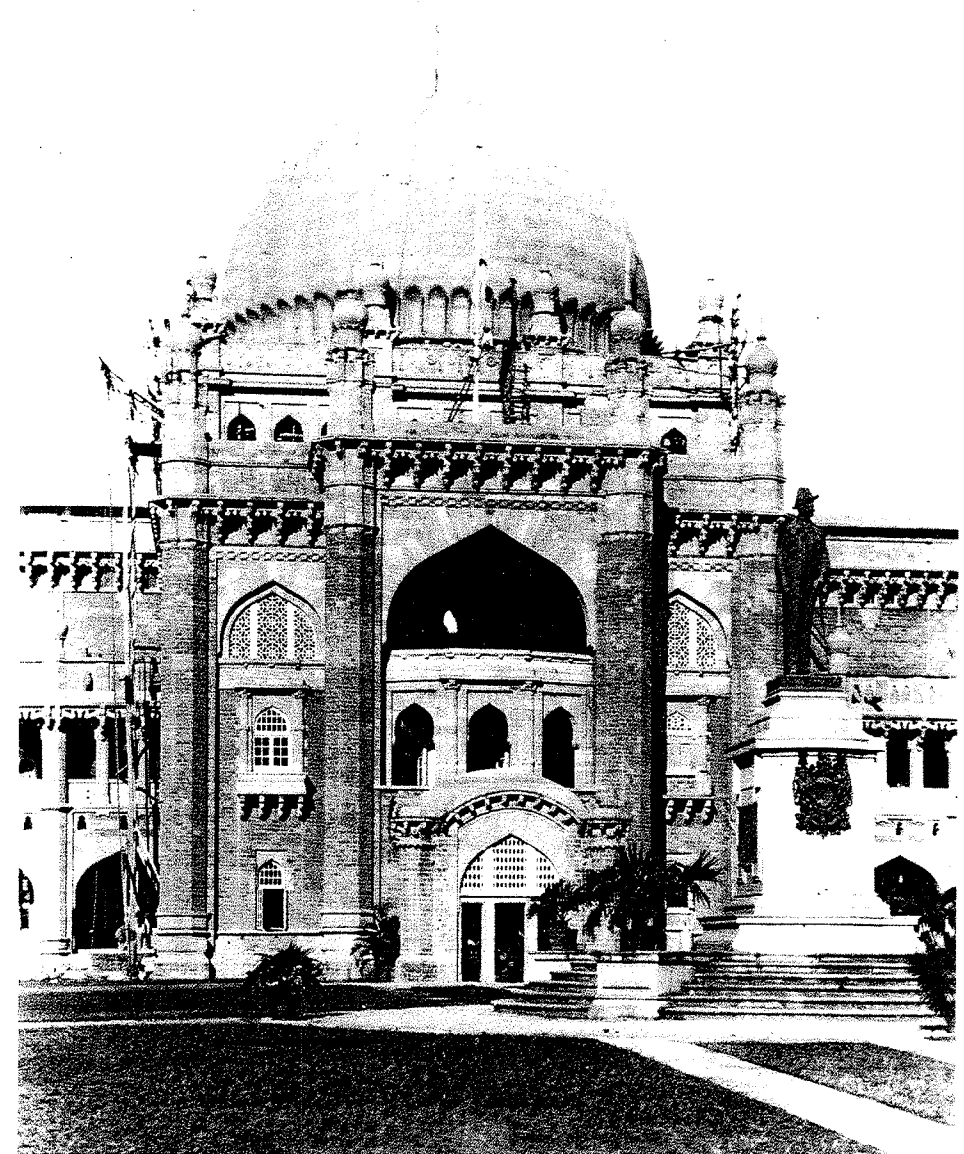
The former Yacht Club, now the offices of the Indian Atomic Energy Commission.

(Right) The Prince of Wales Museum in the course of erection using fragile bamboo scaffolding. (Below) George Wittet, seated on the left, the architect.



1905. It is a vast complex of buildings given cohesion and character by a monumental tiled concrete dome and the scholarly interpretation of local Indian architecture of the 15th and 16th centuries, all finished in blue basalt and yellow sandstone from Coorla and set in luxuriant gardens where palms throw dappled light onto the textured coloured stone. The architect was George Wittet (1880–1926), Begg's successor as Consulting Architect to the Government of Bombay, and a committed Orientalist for public buildings.

Wittet was the designer of the last great building in the group, the Gateway of India, intended as a triumphal arch to commemorate the visit of George V and Queen Mary in 1911, en route to the Delhi Durbar. Today it is portrayed more often as the point of exit through which the last British regiment marched in 1948. These emotive associations have hindered its fair assessment as a work of architecture: it would be fanciful to read into it a subtle loss of confidence, as some have done. Wittet indulged his knowledge of local 16th-century architecture and produced a monument firmly in the Indo-Saracenic tradition, in honey-coloured basalt, complete with side chambers to accommodate civic receptions. Today it looks rather isolated and it remains unaligned with the axis of the former Yacht Club, but this was intentional for the arch was only part of a much wider scheme which Wittet intended for the area, but which never came to fruition. Since Independence this dislocation has been atoned for by the pleasant garden around the site, and the casual visitor, rummaging through the market stalls, pays little heed to such architectural improprieties – except perhaps the Englishman. To him this remains the spot where almost three hundred years of rule ended, and where the last British troops, like well-mannered guests who knew that the party was over, departed, not with animosity and bitterness, but in warmth and friendship. Never has a nation given up an Empire in such a way.



As the 1st Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry marched through the streets on the morning of 28th February 1948 thousands packed the roads leading to the quayside, many an eye dimmed with tears. Spontaneous cheers of 'England Zindabad' and 'Jai England' greeted the troops as hundreds reached out to pat 'the boys' goodbye. 'I would think today of the finest act in the long and historic connection between the United Kingdom and India – the grant of freedom to our country, an act of courage and vision which will stand the test of time ... I wish you well, my friends, it is my earnest hope that friendly relations will continue to exist between Great Britain and India and that the two countries will play their part in the preservation of the peace of the world, which is so essential for the welfare and progress of mankind. Godspeed and every good wish for the future.' As the Governor's words faded there was a rush after the men as they embarked on the launches, farewells echoing across the water until they were far out to sea, and as the ships steamed from the bay the strains of 'Auld Lang Syne' floated from the quayside and out into the Arabian Sea.

The Gateway of India. Modelled on the Gujarati architecture of the 16th century and built to commemorate the visit of George V and Queen Mary in 1911.



CHAPTER 8

SARACENIC DREAMS

High on the table-land of the Deccan plateau, 120 miles east of Bombay, lies Poona. Once it was the capital of the fierce Maratha Confederacy which dominated Western India for over one hundred years until its final defeat by the British at Kirkee in 1817. With the establishment of British paramountcy it was transformed into a major military cantonment and hot-weather resort for Bombay. Even with the growth of the hill station of Mahabaleshwar, Poona retained its popularity and acquired a social cachet of international renown.

As a satellite of the greatest commercial city in India, it is no surprise to discover buildings of a similar form and style to those in Bombay. Christ Church, Kirkee was designed by Paris and Molecey, assistant architects to the Bombay Ramparts Removal Committee, after earlier designs by an amateur archaeologist and clergyman called Gell, ran into severe problems. It is an unpretentious affair which would go largely unnoticed in an English village, other than that its western face is protected from the monsoon by a cavernous wooden verandah. A far more eloquent essay in the tropical Gothic style is the Poona Law Courts, designed by Major G. J. Melliss, the local executive engineer, a vigorous and disciplined composition on which F. W. Stevens worked as assistant engineer, although it is pure, unregenerated Gothic and betrays none of the Indo-Saracenic nuances which were to develop so spectacularly in Stevens's later works in Bombay. Other prominent public buildings are consanguineous expressions of Bombay architecture – the Poona Engineering College, the Sassoon Hospital (by Wilkins and Melliss) and, in Eastern Kirkee, the Deccan College, an august institution founded by the first Parsee baronet, Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, well executed in grey trap-stone.

However, the ambience of the town was set when Sir Bartle Frere decided to vacate the old government house at Dapuri, and to build a new edifice at Poona, or more precisely near a pass or 'Khind' dedicated to the elephant-god Ganesh, which gave the house its name: Ganesh Khind. Located just outside the city the house is approached through dense dry thicket. It was designed by James Trubshawe.

Architecturally it is most unusual, defying any obvious classification, but its spiritual antecedents are Italianate and the tall, eighty-foot high flag tower has been described accurately as a 'Victorian rendering of an Italian campanile'. Like the Lawrence Asylum at Ootacamund, the building is inspired by Prince Albert's ambitious Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, the progenitor of many Anglo-Indian Italianate compositions. It is crowned by a brightly painted open metal cupola carrying a flagstaff, but in fact the tower only