

## CHAPTER VII

THE effect of the Mutiny on Anglo-India can hardly be exaggerated. It is difficult to see why such terrible bitterness should have been roused among the English at the first news of revolt. The war was to some extent a civil war and as such inevitably bitter. But this does not explain the strange outburst of racial hatred among the secure civilian population of Calcutta. No one is likely to palliate the Cawnpore horror (though the cry for vengeance had broken out before the tragedy of the well was known) but the slaughter of the women was not the work of rebel soldiers and it is even doubtful whether Nana Sahib ordered it. The atrocity gossips enjoyed themselves with salacious and untrue details, but these were easily disproved. The Black Hole of Calcutta would seem to have been an equally repulsive crime but though Suraj-ud-dowla had to be defeated and driven back to his territories, no one seems to have held him in particular horror (indeed Clive and many other English officers accepted handsome presents from him at the conclusion of peace), much less to have blamed his crime on all his followers. Similarly, Tipu, far more purposefully cruel than either Nana Sahib or Suraj-ud-dowla, was never hated with any personal hatred; "that mad barbarian" never lacked admirers even among his enemies. There was nothing to admire in Nana Sahib or in most of the rebel leaders, and it is possible to excuse the massacres and sacks of the "justly infuriated" (to quote the *Oxford History*) loyalist troops. But once the rising was over and every "guilty city" had been visited with fearful vengeance

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it might have been hoped that the victors would soon abandon an attitude of hostile tension. This did not happen. Long after the last rebel had laid down his arms, been hanged or vanished into the jungles the Calcutta Press continued its ferocious tirades. The non-official population was encouraged to believe in a maudlin Government, pro-rebel in sympathy, unpatriotic and radical. When for five years this chorus of abuse and these cries for blood had continued, a European called Rudd was so unfortunate as to be arrested for murdering one of his Indian employees. The murder was attested by a number of witnesses and there was no doubt at all about his guilt. He was duly convicted and sentenced. There was an awful pause ; and then the Press burst into a deafening scream. The *Bengal Hurkaru* which had distinguished itself among other Anglo-Indian papers as an advocate of extermination, now printed leaders, dilating on the wickedness of capital punishment and organised processions and mass meetings of Europeans " to achieve the gain of a human life, an existence which is forfeit to the *public strangler*". The Government refused to yield to the clamour, whereon the Press suggested that several senior officials were secret devotees of the Hindu goddess of destruction, Kali, and desired the life of the wretched Rudd as a human sacrifice to that deity ; as for the rest of the members of Government they had long been known to be crypto-Hindus who had now come out in their true colours.

Eighteen years later, the Ilbert Bill controversy provoked a similar explosion. Unfortunately there was now an Indian Press to reply in kind. And Hartington, warned by Maine, wrote to the Viceroy : " I am afraid that if the English Press takes up the discussion of the proposed measure (the Ilbert Bill) the Native Press will probably reply . . . which may

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not be altogether convenient." That opposition would come was certain. Everything Ripon did roused some opposition and the Government of Bombay had already achieved the distinction of publicly attacking the Viceroy's Local Self-government policy ; but then in that presidency certain works of the seditious author Macaulay were still (in 1882) banned. The extent of the opposition to the Ilbert Bill was, however, unexpected, in spite of past lessons. A monster meeting of Europeans took place at the Calcutta Town Hall, at which " the speeches were of an intemperance beyond all limits of decency ". An Anglo-Indian Defence Association was formed ; the Volunteers were urged to resign ; and attempts were made to seduce the loyalty of the Army. Gangs of planters were brought down to Calcutta to insult the Viceroy in the streets. The wife of the Chief Justice got up a " Ladies' Petition " against the Bill. Day after day the *Englishman* printed letters from furious correspondents, of whom *Britannicus* deserves to be remembered for his opening paragraph. " The only people who have any right to India are the British ; the so-called Indians have no right whatever." Much of the agitation was openly financed by the European capitalists in Calcutta who owned plantations and tea-gardens up-country and were afraid of any diminution in the power and prestige of their local agents. As the head of the Criminal Investigation Department reported to the Viceroy's private secretary : " To make their grievance a general one they raised the cry of danger to European women." Faithful to this policy, the editor of the *Friend of India* exclaimed, " Would you like to live in a country where at any moment your wife would be liable to be sentenced on a false charge, the Magistrate being a copper-coloured Pagan ? " Attempts were made to stir up opinion in England by lurid pictures

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of the nightmare existence facing poor Europeans in lonely districts. A person called Atkins was equipped with funds and sent to England to address working-class audiences. He was not, however, a successful emissary, and "at his most important meeting in Edinburgh, a motion was carried unanimously against him".<sup>1</sup>

The extent of the tumult was such that *Punch* printed a cartoon showing an elephant with Ripon as its mahout and a number of Europeans leaning out of the howdah to attack him ; the title being "The Anglo-Indian Mutiny (A bad example to the elephant)". This was no exaggerated picture. There was already talk of Direct Action by the malcontents ; there were only seventy Europeans in the Bengal Police and the Viceroy felt that "to employ European soldiers against Europeans in this country would be a step of the gravest kind". Finally a compromise of a kind was arrived at, which the English Press in Calcutta announced as a victory for Anglo-Indian agitation and printed incorrect accounts of the so-called "concordat" to establish this claim.

These remarkable manifestations were only symptoms of the self-conscious isolation of the English community in India, which continued with little change for more than half a century after the Mutiny. Even Ripon himself seems to have had no contact, other than official, with Indians. And it is curious to compare the letters of Lady Dufferin with those of Miss Eden or with Lady Falkland's journal. Miss Eden had all a Whig's disdain for those poorer or less well-educated than oneself ; and most of her comments on the people she met, whether Indian or English, in India are faintly acid ; nevertheless when she describes an Indian like Ranjit Singh the man stands out as a real character who

<sup>1</sup> Northbrook to Lord Ripon.

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impressed her for all her well-bred titters at his odd customs. Lady Falkland was deeply interested in the Maratha gentry she met, in their families and beliefs, and she clearly expected her readers to be equally interested. In the letters of Lady Dufferin (a good and vivid correspondent and a vicereine who is remembered still with gratitude in India) Indians are only rarely mentioned and then in the briefest and most formal phrases. She met the Nizam's great minister Salar Jung and comments, "He is quite a giant", and passes on to describe his uniform which "though not very Eastern is handsome". There was "a really magnificent" dinner with the Nizam; and then the Viceregal party passed on to Mysore, whose Maharaja "dresses beautifully. When he came to the station he had a sort of loose kincob coat and turban." They had tea with him "and then we saw his sitting-room with its more modern arrangements, writing-table, etc.". Prince after prince appears for a moment. There are notes on his turban, his jewels, the respectful way he talked to the Viceroy, the illuminations to greet the viceregal party, the expensive dinners, the Prince's nervous children in their amusing clothes. One passes an encampment of Indian troops and the viceregal party comment on the bravery of Indian soldiers in Egypt; it was satisfactory to note that the men "looked very fine and soldier-like". The Vicereine began learning Hindustani, in which language she was able to read "a series of tracts and little moral stories". She did not, however, apparently learn enough to interpret for her husband and Lord Dufferin was, on occasion, ill-served by his interpreter. He remarked to an Indian guest that he liked Indian music, especially for its melodies in the minor key. The translation was that what His Excellency really liked about Indian music was that it possessed a small key (of a box). Occasionally there

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are references to the odd superstitions of the Hindus. Mr. Broughton, Administrator-General, while discoursing on local topics, mentioned casually that he was trustee for an idol, to which he paid 250 rupees a month. "This idol is a sacred stone and can perhaps scarcely be dignified with the title of god." But it was more interesting to revert to the costume of the Maharaja of Jaipur who had just called and who wore "a pink moiré frock-coat . . . white satin waist-coat, diamond and emerald necklace, and a turban made of red silk cord. . . . His manners were quite as beautiful as my own and he made his exit most gracefully." There is a note of pleased surprise if a prince can speak English or a princess wears English shoes. It is difficult to realise that the Indian National Congress had already held its first meeting. There were other things of greater immediate moment. The punkahs, for instance :

Our bonnets were perpetually swept by the punkahs. They are dreadful things, I think. There is a sort of confusion which is bewildering. Some swing across you, and some to and fro from you, and they are pulled by different men, who keep different time, and one feels as if one never could get accustomed to the unsteady appearance of everything overhead.

But sometimes the sermon compensated for these hardships. On one Sunday there were two sermons by the Archdeacon, of which everyone was talking.

The first was upon the observance of Sunday and the second upon our lives of dissipation. It is quite true that the atmosphere of the place is one of pleasure-seeking. As the Archdeacon said . . . He speaks so very well and earnestly, without any exaggeration or want of liberality, that his exhortations ought to do good.

Anglo-Indians of the eighteenth, and even of the first two decades of the nineteenth, century could hardly escape a close, often an uncomfortably close, acquaintance with the

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Indian world. A factor or cadet in Madras could not until 1799 be absolutely certain that he would end his life as a subject of King George and not of Tipu Sultan. During the first half of the nineteenth century while there was no longer any doubt about English hegemony, there were still many survivals of an earlier age. There was, for instance, still a titular Emperor, regarded by many as the rightful ruler of India. Though harassed at intervals by the Company, he maintained till the Mutiny the traditional pomp of his station. The ceremony of the Mogul court was almost unchanged. Contests of poetry between the two most famous of Urdu poets were the theme of popular talk. The Imperial elephants were exercised almost daily amid the acclamation of the people. The Chandni Chowk was a tree-shaded boulevard down which the nobles rode at evening, dressed as though for a durbar of Akbar. And when the Emperor himself appeared, often in order to recite his own verses, he was greeted with the obeisances due to a reigning monarch.<sup>1</sup> Till 1849 there was to the north-west the formidable kingdom of the Sikhs, iron-braceleted, long-haired fanatics possessed of admirable artillery and commanded by Europeans who had seen service under Napoleon. You might disapprove of Ranjit Singh's low humour and his habit of misconducting himself in public on an elephant, but you could not ignore him. And then there was, as always, a regrettable Nawab at Lucknow. This ruler was now dignified with the title of King of Oudh, but the increased honour never inspired him to greater dignity. Though the territories of Oudh were large there was no administration worth the name, and taxes were collected by cavalry employed as gangsters. The chief

<sup>1</sup> But after the capture of Delhi he was tried for rebellion and sentenced to life exile in Burma.

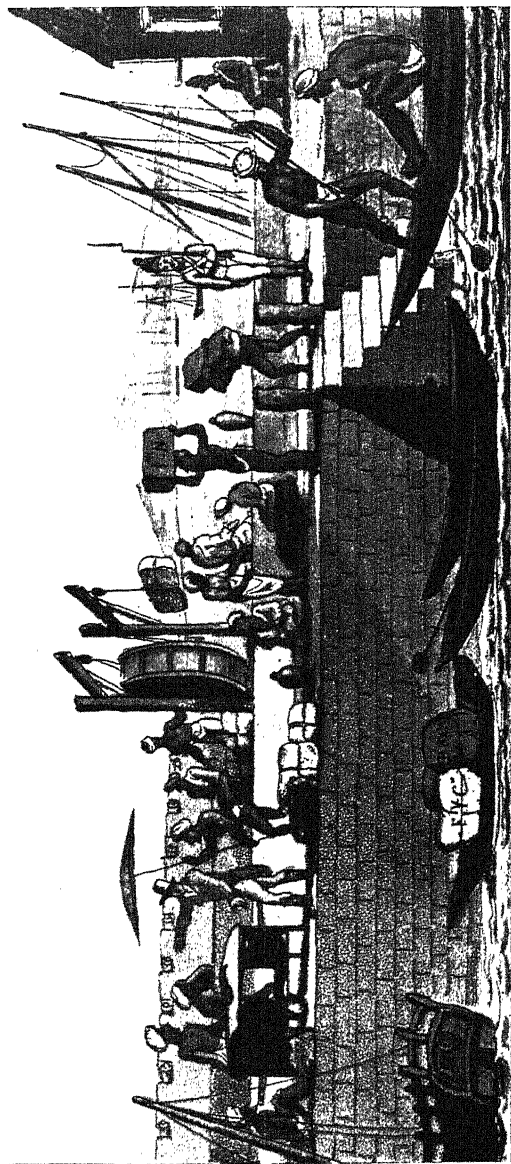
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interest of the ruling family was in animals and in the parks "elephants in scores, tigers, rhinoceroses, antelopes, cheetahs or hunting-leopards, lynxes, Persian cats, Chinese dogs, might all be seen sunning themselves, either in their cages, or stretched listlessly on the grass, as commonly as sheep and cows in an English meadow". The king was an unassuming man, whose only wish was to become "the best drummer, dancer, and poet of the day". This was, perhaps, better than a predecessor's unnatural devotion to a barber which must have been inexpressibly distasteful to a generation of Anglo-Indians who were horrified at Monsieur de Jacquemont's confession that he made use of an enema in preference to pills.

But in the second half of the century all these survivals of an older India had vanished, lingering only in the sad memory of Indians who, as Henry Lawrence noted, seemed to have been much happier under the governance of their crazy kings than under the careful and conscientious rule of English Commissioners. The deposed King of Oudh still lived on and on,

utterly devoid of every moral sense. He never does any good to anybody, and he spends his monthly lac of rupees in keeping 25,000 pigeons . . . who fly in flocks and are pretty, and there are whole fleets of pelicans sailing about on tanks, and long-legged birds with decidedly light fantastic toes who hop about ridiculously, and peacocks perching in the trees.

The Government did not mind his keeping so many birds, but the consciences of senior officials were worried about the numbers of his women. They sent him finally an order to reduce his household to decent proportions. Instead of submitting to this reasonable demand, the king, with a levity that one can only regret, not only tore up the letter but added ninety more women to his harem that same day.



QUI HI ARRIVES AT THE BUNDER HEAD

*after Roslandson*



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This intransigent old man was, however, forgotten even by most Indians. And to Anglo-Indians Lucknow was thought of as the city of the heroic siege and not as the capital of one of the oddest of Indian kingdoms.

The general feeling in the districts where the Mutiny struggle had raged most fiercely was first an immense relief when the storm had passed, and then a curious reaction of regret for the excitement and glamour of battle. Alfred Lyall was writing home in 1859, "Life in India is just now very dull. There is a sort of reaction after the excitement of the last two years." And a year later, "I sit alone in the evening and long for something to happen. The whole country is hopelessly quiet; there is not even a murder or a highway robbery. . . . Life in peace times is completely stagnant." While the Press was fulminating ceaselessly against the late rebels, Lyall, like many who had actually been under fire, had a certain respect for the fighting qualities of the enemy. He had sympathised with Indian emotion over the annexation of Oudh, complaining to his mother about "the scandalous cant with which we tried to whitewash" that transaction; and now he confessed to sympathy for the medieval world that had gone down in the ruin of the rebel cause and writes with appreciative humour of one of the Barons of Oudh who escaped with his life as "a sturdy rebel, who has now surrendered, received back his lands, and dwells sulkily in a small town about five miles off, no doubt cursing the Feringhis night and morning".

The new generation that arrived in India after the Mutiny, the "Competition-Wallahs" as they were at first called by the old hands who had had to undergo no such humiliating experiences as a competitive examination, had no such equivocal sympathies. They knew nothing of pre-Mutiny life and they were already imbued with a busy imperialism.

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In 1862 a new recruit to the civil service wrote to his fiancée on his first voyage out—

The political value of Aden is not to be underrated. It is one of the keys of our Indian Empire. . . . You understand our position in the Mediterranean? The French have Toulon, with divers other fortified harbours on their coast. . . . Now for the *points d'appui* of England. Gibraltar, Malta and Corfu, at the entrance, middle and extreme east of the Mediterranean—these are our strategic points.

Their training and an increasing competition strengthened the sense of caste. Young William Hunter was writing :

It is easy to be a Company-man and yet to be superior to the common run in an intellectual aspect but it is impossible to be first-class—I mean the very first, one of a set of men picked out from the whole country for their talents, and fritter your evenings away in walking quadrilles and consuming ices. I aspire to a circle far above the circle of fashion. I mean the circle of Power. . . . Until I can earn a position in that circle I do not choose to waste my time filling up a lady's drawing-room or eating people's corner-dishes.

Let us follow for a while the opening stages of this promising young man's career. The competition, he knew, was severe. But this did not alarm him ; he had accustomed himself to a discipline of study which was certain to produce good results. "Whenever I read up a subject I become so interested in it that I go into the minutest points rather as if I intended to write a book than to stand a general examination. Never do I attack a subject without writing what would make a bulky pamphlet."

His diligence was rewarded and on July 16, 1861, he was able to congratulate his examiners. "I have found the papers rational, well considered, and easily enough answered if you have read extensively, and above all, thought carefully over what you have read." Not all of the 207 candidates were so well prepared and in that long fusty hall of

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old Burlington House with its feather-padded, red morocco seats, its sad green walls hung with 150 portraits of half-forgotten statesmen, there were many anxious faces bent over the desks. Some of them "turn black in the face as soon as they see the questions, and vanish, others sit looking suicidal for half an hour and then disappear also". Some of them could hardly afford to fail; they were "the sons of clergymen who have staked a long and expensive education on the chance of success: younger sons of country gentlemen who have fallen into decay and just succeeded in giving their lads two or three years at Oxford, and then a 15-guinea-a-month cram with some private coach". As a rule, however—

it is comforting to find the candidates seem wealthy swells, always coming in a cab and sojourning at Morley's at a daily expense of two or three guineas. It is wonderful to see with what resignation even twenty-two-year-old fellows, who have been plucked last year and have this as a last chance, take their discomfiture. After eyeing their papers with a blank, dreary gaze, they slowly take out a cigar case, examine its contents, smell its Russia delicacy, extract a cigar, put on their hats and march out. 'Cabby, drive to Morley's.' And this is repeated twice daily; meanwhile they eat like prize fighters to support the waste of the body and of the mind.

Hunter was naturally one of the last to leave and when he stepped out of Burlington House it was not to drive round to Morley's but to journey to 11 Maismore Square, Peckham. He passed out first in the final examination and sailed for India, leaving as a farewell present to Miss Murray, to whom he had proposed, six books including Prior's *Life of Burke* in two volumes and splendidly bound in "peach-coloured calf" and also his "gold Albert chain" which, as he told Miss Murray, "will make a nice chain for you, or you can have the key taken off, and use it with a locket of my hair as a bracelet or necklace".

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He found Calcutta in the 'sixties a decidedly pleasant place after Peckham. "Imagine everything that is glorious in nature combined with all that is beautiful in architecture, and you can faintly picture to yourself what Calcutta is". But here again he had to criticise the irregular lives led by some of his contemporaries.

This morning half-a-dozen of my set had a more or less severe attack of dysentery. They are all cursing the climate, and no doubt will write home by this mail saying that they feel so horribly seedy in this city that they are going up-country immediately. Now what is the plain English of all this? Simply that after a tiffin, consisting of soup, two or three kinds of meat with an immense heap of curry, no end of fruit, with beer and sherry *ad lib*, they went to the cricket ground and played for three hours in the burning sun. Dinner lasted from 7.30 till nearly midnight—ice-pudding with champagne. Then, till 2 a.m. they played a wild game of loo.

He settled down in a boarding-house in Midleton Street and started to study languages ; but

three days a week I drive out to make calls at 11-30 and return at one. No one is received after two o'clock ; people have tiffin at that hour and are invisible till they appear on the Course between five and six. All my friends live in and around Chowringhee, and our house is in the very centre of that fashionable quarter, so that with the aid of my quick-paced mare I can make six or eight visits in one and a half hours.

His prospects seemed fair enough ; for, as he wrote to Miss Murray, "If God gives us health and long life together we shall be rich, very rich, before we are fifty. I mean three or four thousand a year from our savings and my pension. Let us be thankful to Heaven for its mercies." And the more he saw of India the prouder he became of his own caste.

Here we Englishmen stand on the face of the broad earth, a scanty pale-faced band in the midst of three hundred millions

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of unfriendly vassals. On their side is a congenial climate and all the advantages which home and birthplace can give ; on ours long years of exile, a burning sun which dries up the Saxon energies, home sickenings, thankless labour, disease and oftentimes death far from wife, child, friend or kinsman. How is it that these pale-cheeked exiles give security to a race of another hue, other tongues, other religions which rulers of their own people have ever failed to give ? Dearest, there are unseen moral causes which I need not point out. . . .

Towards the end of his first cold weather he was invited to a State Ball at Government House. It was an elaborate affair.

As four to five months' notice had been given most people got their fancy-dresses from London, Paris or Madrid. Some came from Rome, one from Petersburg and several from America. . . . For some time past Calcutta has been a big milliner's shop, and all the ladies have been little else than modistes. It is quite unsafe for a man to enter female society unless he was able to tell whether green looked well upon purple, or whether in "our" quadrille the ladies were to go in powder or not.

He had chosen as his fancy dress the costume of "a Spanish courtier of high rank", though of what century does not appear, but one can be pretty confident that there were no anachronisms for "Major Burke looked me over and saw that all was *Comme il faut*". He arrived at Government House in good time and

at a quarter to ten the band played "God save the Queen", the drawing-room doors were thrown open, a procession was formed, and we all filed in at one door, passing Lord and Lady Elgin on their dais, each one making the bow suitable to his costume and out by the other door. . . . Of all the Calcutta ladies [he adds rather abruptly] I admire Mrs. O. most. She is by far the most intellectual woman I know here, and has that strong, confiding ambition for her husband which is the chief charm of a high-bred English lady. . . . I was leaning over her chair, and apropos of some satirical remark she had made about mature matrons of five-and-forty still insisting upon dancing, I was asking her to prescribe some lotion for my arm

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which I had a moment ago sprained in whirling a particularly plump and aged partner round the room when suddenly I saw her face become grave. She rose majestically, and, raising my head, I saw that His Excellency had come up and was shaking hands with her. I fell back a pace or two and stood respectfully silent till the interview was over.

The Viceroy was in a good temper and began "making such surmises about the mosquitoes coming in at the window and eating up the ladies at supper", and added, as a capital joke, that "Lady Elgin got so fearfully bitten that even on the morning of the ball she did not know if she could appear". Young Hunter listened with admiring attention to these pleasantries and noted how the Viceroy was "smiling from ear to ear at something funny he has just said", and wondering if perhaps it was quite in keeping that the "ruler of the most extensive Empire that ever obeyed one man" should so far unbend, when the interview was suddenly over. "There—he has made his bow, the stars and decorations turn away, Mrs. O. sits down, the lancers strike up, and she and I hurry to the next room before our *vis-à-vis* gets into despair and takes in a new couple. Then there is that most charming of all dances—the fifth set." Meanwhile the Viceroy had pattered off and cornered another lady and began "talking again about the mosquitoes coming in at the open windows".

But after recounting the dissipations of this great ball he felt it wise to sound a warning note to Miss Murray. "Why do not the various Secretaries do something lasting? Because they are married, my dear. The lady is tired of the long day's idleness, and her husband must amuse her by conversation or backgammon all the evening. . . . It is a dreadful fate—that of a woman who takes away her husband's chance of greatness." Such greatness could be achieved only by avoidance of conversation and backgam-

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mon and by unremitting study. He was continually buying new books. "It is useless talking of the poverty of a country's literature unless you do your best to encourage men of letters by buying their works. I have impressed this on my chum, Gribble."

Next year Miss Murray was to sail to join him in India and the last letter she received before embarking contained much advice as to her conduct on board ship. "When you hear anything said, any story told, any word approaching a scoff at religion, or the least attempt at indelicate wit or allusion, show by your manner that you are not pleased." They were married in Calcutta Cathedral and Hunter was posted as Assistant Collector of Suri. The cold weather passed in furnishing their new bungalow, which cost £140, and in bearing "their full share of station hospitalities". Suri, like most of the smaller Indian stations, had its Mutton Club, managed by an honorary secretary, who kept a sufficient stock of sheep, bought at less than two shillings a head, and fattened them for the table on a diet of pulse. One was killed every week, and the meat divided among the five members. The hostess on whom devolved the succulent saddle was expected to ask the other members to dinner, followed generally by a modest game at loo, and such music as her much-tried piano afforded. But the short cold weather of Bengal was soon over and then

the hot winds set in like a consuming fire. The large double-doors which form the windows of an Anglo-Indian house stood open at night and were shut up tight in early morning. The public offices opened at seven and closed for the day at noon. Then each man drove swiftly through the furnace of shimmering air to his darkened and silent home. A lingering bath and a languid breakfast brought the hot hours to one o'clock. The slow combustion of the suffocating afternoon was endured somehow under the punkah. . . . About six we all met at

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the racket court whose high wall by that time cast a sufficient shadow. A couple of four-handed games (the doctor was too stout to play) left us steaming at every pore and making at each step a damp foot-print through our white canvas shoes on the pavement. Then the delicious plunge in the swimming bath in the Judge's garden—the one moment of freshness looked forward to throughout the exhausting day. A cheroot and an iced drink as we lay fanned by the servants on long chairs . . . and the blinding glare of day gave place to the stifling stillness of night.

The heat, the bouts of malaria, snakes and noxious insects—all these are a recurring theme in Anglo-Indian letters and reminiscences. But there were many compensations. The native population was submissive and devoted to their masters. Their ways were not, of course, Western ways; and many a memsahib echoed the *cri de cœur* of Miss Mabel Hunter, "Oh! They are queer kittle-kattle, these natives, their depth past finding out." But a kick or cuff often helped them to better, wiser standards of conduct, though, as Miss Hunter hurriedly added, "Let not the idea take root that castigation is the common lot of the native—the safety-valve of the Englishman, and least of all, of a little Miss Sahib, howsoever tempted. You do want to break the law and the prophets, and the native would much rather have a kick or cuff than an angry word, but that kick must come from the Sahib." In fact, "it is best to treat them all like children who know no better, but . . . they are proud of their lies and the innate goodness of the European is not understood by them."

And if there was a military cantonment near, life was cheerful enough, for the young officers were determined to enjoy themselves in spite of the rigour of the climate. The ladies enjoyed their unsophisticated flatteries at the big dinner-parties and would confide in each other how pleasant their "rights" and "lefts" at dinner had been. For the

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men too it was always pleasant to be asked to dine at the Mess. On these guest-nights the traditional decorum of the Anglo-Indian was laid aside. Lord Baden Powell, recounting his Indian experiences, confesses with a chuckle, "we were capable of being pretty frivolous". And he gives some interesting examples of the military amusements of those days. Chief among this was the ragging of one officer by all the rest. This "breaks the monotony of existence, especially for the victim. A fellow", he adds, "seldom gets ragged without having given some cause for it; either he is dirty and wants washing, or he has got some characteristic which needs toning down." A favourite form of ragging was known as the Fire Alarm. The ragers were divided into two parties, of which one went outside the Mess building and waited, while the other hung about inside the Mess until the victim was "comfortably settled down to whist". They then raised a cry of "Fire!" followed by shouts of "Smith (or whatever the victim's name was) is afire!" They rushed at him, tore him from the card-table and threw him out of the window to be caught by the other band of ragers, stationed there to break his fall. Sometimes, however, an amusing mistake in the plans occurred and the victim would be thrown out of the wrong window. Another game was known as "The Bounding Brothers of the Bosphorus". This had been introduced by the Colonel's brother, "a quiet harmless planter from Behar". They piled all the furniture in the middle of the room with the writing-desk in front of this pyramid. Each member of the Mess in turn then clapped his hands three times, "three times" insists the Chief Scout, "that was the etiquette of the game", rushed forward shouting "I am a bounding brother of the Bosphorus", turned head over heels on the writing-desk and landed on

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his back on the upturned legs of the chairs and tables, which hurt a good deal.

But, alas, the military were not always there to enliven the station. Wars broke out and there would be a grand send-off as the regiment left for Afghanistan or South Africa. The ladies clustered round the officers and asked them if they were not full of "joyous ardour" and they would reply, "Oh! it is grand to be a soldier!" and the band would strike up "Home, dearie Home" or "When the boys come marching home again" (if it were a Sepoy regiment the band would play "We don't want to fight but, by Jingo, if we do", which tune had been found to appeal to native troops and so long continued to be played by their bands), and remembering the bishop's stirring address on the glories of rest after victory the men marched off with heads held high, while handkerchiefs fluttered and the pretty new parasols and flowered hats of the ladies, ordered down from Calcutta especially for this exciting occasion, made a bright pattern against the whitewashed walls of the cantonment.

Everyone missed the brave fellows. Dinner-parties were seldom so successful now. And young bachelors found that Christmas without the festivities in the Mess was a melancholy occasion. As a poet wrote,

One feels, now one hasn't a regular Mess  
It's a bore to go out and a nuisance to dress ;  
And a feed at the commandant's bungalow  
Is a dreary attempt at Christmas, you know.  
The punkah, instead of the Christmas fire !  
The colonel, instead of the dear old squire !  
The lizard and withering noon-day glow  
Instead of the robin and frost and snow !

And letters from home but added to the melancholy of the whiskered and moustachio'd administrator as he leant back

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in his long basket-chair so that the light from the smoky oil-lamp (set as far from his chair as possible because of its attraction for night-flies and other insects) might dimly illumine the slanting handwriting, crossing and recrossing the thin grey note paper.

My mother's writing ! my hide is tough,  
And the road of life has been somewhat rough.  
The fount of my tears, one would think, was dry,  
But it always brings a tear to my eye.

\* \* \* \* \*

Meanwhile the news from the war areas was often more than disappointing. Lord Lytton's Afghan war, undertaken in order to dissuade the Amir from an "alliance with the ambitious, energetic, not over-scrupulous Government of such a military empire as Russia, rather than in alliance with a Power so essentially pacific and sensitively scrupulous as our own", was particularly inglorious. But while the apostles of the forward school were disappointed, there was a sub-current of satisfaction in certain Anglo-Indian circles at Lytton's failure. His strange appearance, as of a well-groomed conjurer in a society drawing-room, his exaggerated manners and mannerisms (an apocryphal story went the round of the clubs that he had embraced a Persian envoy on the grounds that he, too, was a poet) and the undoubted fact that he had literary tastes did not endear him to the "heavies" in backwater stations. Nor could Lytton's scheme for an Indian Peerage and Heralds' College for the Princes seriously commend itself to less baroque imaginations. The Viceroy had even caused coats-of-arms to be designed for each of the Princes by a Mr. Robert Taylor, "a Bengal civilian who possessed some heraldic knowledge, and who travelled round the country

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and invented for each Chief an escutcheon with supporters and a motto in the most approved Heralds' College style ". With great pomp and solemnity they had been presented to each Chief " being brought in (they were very top-heavy) by stalwart Highlanders and conferred by Lord Lytton with a suitable exhortation. Since then they have reposed in the Durbar rooms or Treasuries, where I (Lord Curzon) have sometimes come across them during my tours, dusty, faded and torn ". Moreover, he earned a certain unpopularity by censuring the Judge of Agra, Mr. Leeds, for passing a nominal sentence on an English lawyer named Fuller who had killed his servant. A civilian wit circulated the following poetic comment on this incident :

Robert Lord Lytton  
Had little to sit on,  
Being slender of body and limb,  
Till he heard of the deeds  
Of the lenient Leeds,  
And proceeded to sit upon him.

The whole case excited much bitter comment in the United Provinces, the Local Government and the High Court taking opposite sides. But when, some time after, the Viceroy visited the capital of the United Provinces the still-lingering dispute was forgotten in the solemnity of the occasion. For Lytton had come to open the Memorial Hall at Allahabad, erected to the memory of a previous Viceroy, Lord Mayo. An enormous crowd had gathered for the occasion. " An amateur chorus of all the best and most cultivated gentlemen and lady singers of that part of India . . . accompanied by an admirably touched organ <sup>1</sup> sang to the tune of " Dal tuo stellato soglio " from *Mose in Egitto*, the following ode to the murdered Viceroy :

<sup>1</sup> H. C. Keene, *A Servant of John Company*.

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On thee, great Shade! we call—  
Unseen, though still at hand—  
To consecrate this Hall  
In Thine adopted land :  
Long may that honoured name  
Bestow its favouring fame,

Mayo !

While Jumna's water pours  
Her tribute to the sea,  
Still may these votive towers  
Proclaim our love for thee ;  
Thy noble life laid low  
By treason's felon blow,

Mayo !

For thou wert of the few  
Who conquer Destiny ;  
Brave, merciful and true,  
All that a chief should be.  
Hail to the mighty dead  
Whose life for us was sped,

Mayo !

A viceregal visit was a rare excitement in up-country stations. To see the Viceroy and Vicereine in person, to shake hands with them and perhaps even exchange a few comments on the uncommonly hot weather for the time of year—what more could one desire? If the dutiful official revered the Viceroy as the head of the administration, the unofficials were excited by contact with a peer and peeress.

I flatter myself [wrote one lady, recalling, in the melancholy of retirement, such a glamorous occasion] that intercourse with my fellow-men is good for them as it is for me ; and when, as in India, it was my happy lot to revel with our English lords and ladies of high degree, so unapproachable in this dull, cold, cheerless country, with military celebrities as well and, oh ! best of all, Royal Princes and Princesses the Most Gracious—God bless them—then was my cup of happiness quite full.

She recalls in particular a viceregal visit to her little station in Assam and relates that

Crowds had assembled to welcome the Lord and the Lady.

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Every honour possible had been prepared for their reception. The station band was playing its best. A fine bodyguard of Volunteers was in attendance under (*en passant*) an old Eton boy's command. . . . There was the great hum of native chatter ; but how one always misses the British cheer ! There was the little group of English ladies in their pretty frocks, topees and sunshades, all white, so symmetrical and pleasing, a characteristic of the Indian plains . . . with picturesque effect and dignity unimpaired, the Queen's proud representative landed, followed by his suite in glittering array. It was a better setting they wanted than rough sand banks and bare shadeless country ; yet was ever scene more impressive, more loyal and quaintly grand ! and was ever the National Anthem played with greater effect !

There would be a round of entertainments. Viceroy and Vicereine would express interest in the jail and hospital, and the turn-out of the Volunteers. An eminent Indian landowner, or a Raja if the district could raise one, would give a dinner ; and the local monuments would be visited ceremoniously. Most of those monuments were subsiding into drab decay before the advent of Curzon ; but his interest in ancient buildings made his viceregal visits uncomfortable work for the local officials, for he dealt severely with the philistines among them. But an earlier Viceroy had favoured the dismemberment of the Taj Mahal and the use of its fine marble for the adornment of Government House.

\* \* \* \* \*

If Viceroys came but rarely, a Lieutenant-Governor might be expected to visit the station every now and then. There followed the same round of festivities though perhaps on not quite so regal a scale. Every hostess in the station hoped to be able to entertain the august visitor. Nevertheless there were agonising moments at these dinners. Questions of precedence became increasingly intricate. They

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were nothing then to the inextricable maze that they have since become. Only members of the Imperial Services had any precedence at all ; and engineers and such-like were not even considered. My grandfather resigned from his club when he heard of a proposal to admit engineers and forest-officers. Nor did the Civil List in those days envisage such difficult questions as the status of a Nominated Member of the Council of State *vis-à-vis* an Army dentist holding the rank of captain ; or whether the sister of a Bishop preceded the wife of an M.B.E., or whether an Honorary A.D.C. to the Nizam would sit on the right or the left of the hostess when the Siamese consul had also been invited ; or what on earth one did with all these cold-weather tourists who had no conceivable status and yet hated being sent in to dinner after a black Jesuit physiologist. Nevertheless even in the last century questions of precedence were baffling enough. A single instance will show how vitally these questions affected people's lives.

The Lieutenant-Governor of the United Province visited a certain station in his province. The chaplain held rehearsals of the welcoming service in the station church, the choir consisting of the Collector's wife and the Judge's wife and a few nonentities. There was great rivalry between these two leading ladies of the station. The former, Mrs. Crawford, could claim that her husband was a "pukka collector" while the wretched Hamilton was only "officiating". This was no comfort to Mrs. Hamilton. Mrs. Crawford was High Church and wanted an anthem to be sung during the Governor's service. Mrs. Hamilton was Low Church, and was even against hymns. However, she consented to sing "From Greenland's Icy Mountains", to which, it being a missionary hymn, she had less objection than to any other kind of hymn—though the wits of the

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station said that her weakness for this hymn was by way of a hint to her husband who would not let her go up to Simla sufficiently often or for sufficiently long. The service went off without a hitch and, after it, the whole station had been invited to dine with the Governor. The occasion was as solemn as was fitting. A local barrister, Mr. Ilterdus Prichard, describes how when he arrived—

the ladies were sitting in a semi-circle, the gentlemen standing about in groups, no one saying a word. His Honour was standing with his back to a stove, conversing slowly, as if anxious not to exhaust the subject too rapidly, upon the weather, with Colonel Surgeon. No one else spoke a word. . . . It was a great relief when dinner was announced. But I doubt whether if an earthquake had set all the tables and chairs dancing, there would have been as much consternation as now took possession of the Budgepore monde. For His Honour, on dinner being announced, walked slowly and with dignified mien up to where the ladies were sitting, passed quite close to Mrs. Hamilton and offering his arm to Mrs. Crawford, led her off. Then thousand thunders! . . . For a whole month after that, whenever any two of the residents of Budgepore met together, that event formed the sole topic of discourse. Every conceivable motive and many inconceivable motives were ascribed to the Lieutenant-Governor.

The honour of the judiciary was at stake and the Hamiltons were determined not to let the matter rest. That summer Mrs. Crawford went to Mussoorie to escape the heat, and the Hamiltons followed her. They watched Mrs. Crawford carefully and wrote long letters to all their friends in Budgepore, relating fearful tales of her debauched conduct. These stories "reached Crawford's ear and he was exceedingly indignant. He refused all explanation, he would not ask for any. His wife, conscious of her innocence, resented his unworthy suspicions, and an angry altercation ensued between husband and wife, who had hitherto lived together on the most affectionate terms." Their letters

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became more and more violent. Mrs. Crawford refused to return to Budgepore and went straight down from Mussoorie to Calcutta, sailed for England and never met her husband again. He, a promising officer, though "lacking in religious principle", consoled himself for her loss by heavy drinking, became a dipsomaniac and exceedingly unchaste.

As there was no Collector's wife in the station when the Lieutenant-Governor next paid a visit Mrs. Hamilton did not again have cause for complaint.

In the larger stations matins on Sunday mornings was the chief weekly reunion of the European community. A typical service is described by the journalist Knighton :

In all directions the large fans, called punkahs, were hanging by ropes from the lofty roof, and were pulled rigorously to and fro by natives who attended church for that purpose. With the turbans on, and bare feet—their symbols of respect—they moved noiselessly over the vacant spaces by the sides of the rows of pews, each holding the end of a rope in his hand, and as the large canvas fan fixed on a wooden frame swung from him he followed it a few steps, and then, with a rigorous tug and a few steps backward, brought it back again to the side. A long line of natives so employed stretched down either side of the sacred edifice, whilst similar functionaries lined the galleries above, all busily and noiselessly plying their vocation, their ordinary every-day vocation on this day of rest, in the very House of God. It looked strange, but, as Mr. Lollipop (the chaplain) assured me, it was absolutely necessary; the heat would be otherwise intolerable, and people would not go to church; and besides, they were heathen, those punkah-pullers, and might possibly be improved by some word in season by their attendance—which, as I found they were ignorant of English, did not appear to me to be very probable. A similar fan moved over the head of the junior chaplain in the reading desk, as he read the prayers, another over the venerable Mr. Lollipop at the communion table. . . . What with watching . . . the angry looks cast by indignant elderly gentlemen, at the unfortunate punkah-pullers when they relaxed in

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the slightest degree from the orthodox strength with which the punkah *should* be pulled, I found it utterly impossible to give my usual attention to the service. . . . At length, Mr. Lollipops mounted the pulpit stairs, and, with a bland, benignant aspect, surveyed the congregation beneath him. . . . He was one of those men who, without being fluent, insist on preaching *ex tempore*. He explained to us that light and darkness were opposed to each other, that the one was considered the contrary to the other. He was proceeding to enforce the truth that darkness was symbolical of evil, light of good, when my attention was directed from him by a low smothered sound, like bare wet feet pattering over a slippery pavement, which was evident in my immediate vicinity. . . .

It appeared that the senior I.C.S. official Mr. Ducklet had fallen asleep and was beginning to snore.

a rustling of stiff muslins and ribands convinced me that Mrs. Ducklet's elbow was making its way forcibly into her husband's side . . . the rumblings and rattlings of the offending nasal organ ceased at once, and turning towards his better half abruptly, Mr. Ducklet sharply asked, "What are you about?"

"Hush!" said the lady, fixing her eyes on the preacher, "you have been snoring."

"What's that you say?" asked Ducklet, louder than was consistent with the place and time.

"You were snoring—snoring," said Mrs. Ducklet, tartly, in his ear.

"I wasn't snoring," said Ducklet pertinaciously. "I wasn't snoring. You shouldn't poke a man in that sort of style."

As the clergyman closed the large Bible and squared it before him, a signal that his remarks were at length coming to a conclusion, there was a general rustling amongst the congregation, that indicated preparation for the finale. . . . A general buzz of preparation for departure pervaded the congregation—active ladies who had slept comfortably with one eye partially open, proceeded to urge their children and spouses to wakefulness and alertness by kicks, pushes and nudges—only gentlemen, who had been dreaming of inflicting summary vengeance on offending punkah-pullers, rubbed their heads energetically with their handkerchiefs, and then slightly fanned themselves in the hope of aiding the punkah—while fast young men who had come to church to please their uncles or their

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inamoratas, seized their hats, and brushed from them imaginary particles of dust.<sup>1</sup>

Outside, on the veranda of the church there would be a babel of conversation, the ladies discussing the sermon, complimenting each other on their children and enjoying each other's dresses. The well-to-do would pretend that they ordered everything "out from home", even their parasols and the trimmings of their hats; but the less prosperous could always refer to "a wonderful little man I know in the bazaar. Quite a genius in his own way. This skirt, for instance, with the violet flounces, he ran it up with no assistance from me; just by copying a fashion plate which I had received from my cousin Agatha who is always up to all the latest fashions. Yes, I found him myself, but I could send him along to your bungalow if you liked." And the bandy-legged little tailor would turn up next day with his chit, bowing and smiling and ready for the terrific bargaining at which memsahibs were so expert; and he would sit cross-legged behind a screen on the veranda, his spectacles far down his thin nose, while the memsahib pounced on him at intervals to see if he was working or to give him another length of stuff to be worked into the dress.

While the ladies smiled and nodded together on the church veranda, the gentlemen stood apart in more serious groups. They wore morning coats and grey trousers, curiously domed white topis and heavy gold watch-chains. They would talk shop in a vague disguised manner or discuss the news from Europe as revealed in the last mail's batch of newspapers, a weighty speech in Parliament, the Russian menace, or the perennial impudence of the French. But one part of the congregation—the Eurasians—took little

<sup>1</sup> Knighton, *Tropical Sketches*.

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share in this almost family-gathering. Their menfolk would appear as smart as any, perhaps smarter with their large signet rings and gold-headed canes. The women's dresses were, however, rather *outré*. They had started well enough in the current fashion but their wearers could not resist an extra rose here, another purple bow there, a love-knot, several gold chains and two or three huge brooches. But these little solecisms were not the cause of the constraint which fell on other members of the congregation when they appeared, of the almost masochistic obsequiousness of the Eurasian men or of the nervous giggles and gawky bows of the Eurasian women. They were as painfully aware of their colour as of their whiter neighbours' disdain, which they, hating as they did all even darker than themselves with pathological ferocity, could not but acknowledge in their heart of hearts to be justified. They bowed, giggled and grinned their way past the True Whites and settled themselves in overflowing numbers in shabby carriages whose coachmen were attired in compensatory glory and drove off to their houses furnished in unconscious caricature of English taste, with even more occasional tables, silk cushions, brassware and potted ferns than in the bungalow of the Collector. In the crowded drawing-room an occasional blushing subaltern, having met one of the daughters at a dance, would be entertained with stifling hospitality, while the rest of the station sneered and quoted Mr. Kipling's apt description of the wiles of such people and the snares that they set for the young unmarried officer. . . . One by one the carriages drove under the porch. There were elaborate good-byes, for some would not meet again till the same place next Sunday, the ladies smiling and bowing, clutching children or manipulating parasols, the gentlemen monosyllabic and gruff. The carriages left in

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strict order of precedence, and inside each carriage there was a sudden liveliness, a return to natural behaviour after the stilted dialogues on the church veranda where, in front of the whole European community one had to be so guarded—and Indians standing about in the sun, too, watching and listening, and so many of them able to speak English, what with the missionaries and all this education. For missionaries were not as popular as before, even among earnest officials' wives. They spoilt the servants and put about subversive egalitarian ideas.

And now as the carriages rattled down the Mall in the blinding sunshine, red-coated peons majestic on the box, a cloud of white dust springing up under the wheels, the ladies eagerly criticised Mrs. Brown's extraordinary hat and the very unbecoming colours which Mrs. Smith saw fit to wear at her age. And the gentlemen sat back and thought with pleasure of a bottle of iced beer and the Sunday lunch of roast beef and Yorkshire pudding, horse-radish sauce and baked potatoes, and a long sleep afterwards with the heavy punkah stirring overhead, the glare of Indian noon shut out by bamboo-splinter curtains.

When they arrived at the bungalow there would be a barking of dogs to welcome them. For no Anglo-Indian household was complete without fox terriers, bull-terriers or spaniels. Bull-terriers were perhaps more popular with young army officers, for they were not the modern neat slim breed but great gross animals afraid of nothing and difficult to tame. Their masters would sometimes pit them against pariah-dogs from the bazaar. You could not call it fighting, for the pariahs were almost helpless against practised gladiators; but it kept the bull-terriers in fighting trim. The dogs would be looked after by dog-boys, the sons probably of some of the other servants; and of an

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evening when the family had gone out for a carriage drive the Mall would be full of dog-boys gossiping together while their dogs panted or rolled in the dust or growled at each other—a sight still typical of an Indian station, though it is in Bombay that the sight is commonest, for almost every anglicised Indian family has followed this practice, save that there the dogs are generally dingier but the dog-boys much more smartly uniformed in smart tight white coats with brass buttons.

It was pleasant to step out of the dusty carriage into the cool of the veranda with its geraniums and lobelias in pots and maidenhair ferns in wire baskets hanging from the roof. And pleasanter still, while peons held the coloured glass-bead curtains aside, to come into the darkened drawing-room; a real English room; comfortable chairs with coloured cushions, numerous brass tables with flowers or flowering-plants in brass bowls; a china cupboard and on the shelves a collection of the quaint brass gods and goddesses that were such useful presents for people “at home”; a rug before the fireplace, a brass fire-guard and brass fire-irons and a pot of ferns in the empty fireplace; a piece of pretty Chinese cloth hanging in careful folds from the mantelpiece on which were more brass ornaments and flowers. On the floor tiger-skins or panther-skins and heads on the walls, (“Yes, I got that brute year before last. Did a lot of damage in the villages round and the villagers came in a deputation asking me to kill the brute. Had to wait up night after night. When I got him the villagers had a dance, regular Irish reel.” But those were days when tigers were shot in circumstances of great danger, not as in more recent times when the more notable shoots are carefully staged for the amusement of eminent visitors) and in between the heads some of cousin Ada’s water-colours of the

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Nile or of bluebells in an English woodland or hollyhocks against a sunny wall.

Lunch on Sundays always began with mulligatawny soup. In every Anglo-Indian household this was an unalterable rite, a rite that has continued to be observed for over sixty years. There would be more desultory conversation about the church service and feeling references to the heat. "It will soon", the master of the house would say, "be time to think of the hills." For though he himself would seldom be able to get away for long, he would like to send his wife and children ("get back the English roses to their cheeks") for a holiday in the hills. Which hill-station, then? Simla, if one could afford it. But rents were high there, and lodgings expensive. And if one were a district officer, one often felt out of it, not knowing anyone in the exclusive "Simla set". As *Vanity Fair* put it—

The Collector never ventures to approach Simla when on leave. At Simla people would stare and raise their eyebrows if they heard that a Collector was on the hill. . . . So the clod-hopping Collector goes to Nainital or Darjiling, where he is known either as Ellenborough Higgins, or Higgins of Gharitpur in territorial fashion. Here he is understood. Here he can babble of his Bandobast, his Balbacha and his Bawarchi khana ; and here he can speak in familiar accents of his neighbours, Dalhousie Smith and Cornwallis Jones. All day long he strides up and down the club veranda with his old Haileybury chum, Teignmouth Tompkins ; and they compare experiences of the hunting-field and office, and denounce in unmeasured terms of Oriental vituperation the new sort of civilian who moves about with the Penal Code under his arm and measures his authority by statute, clause and section.

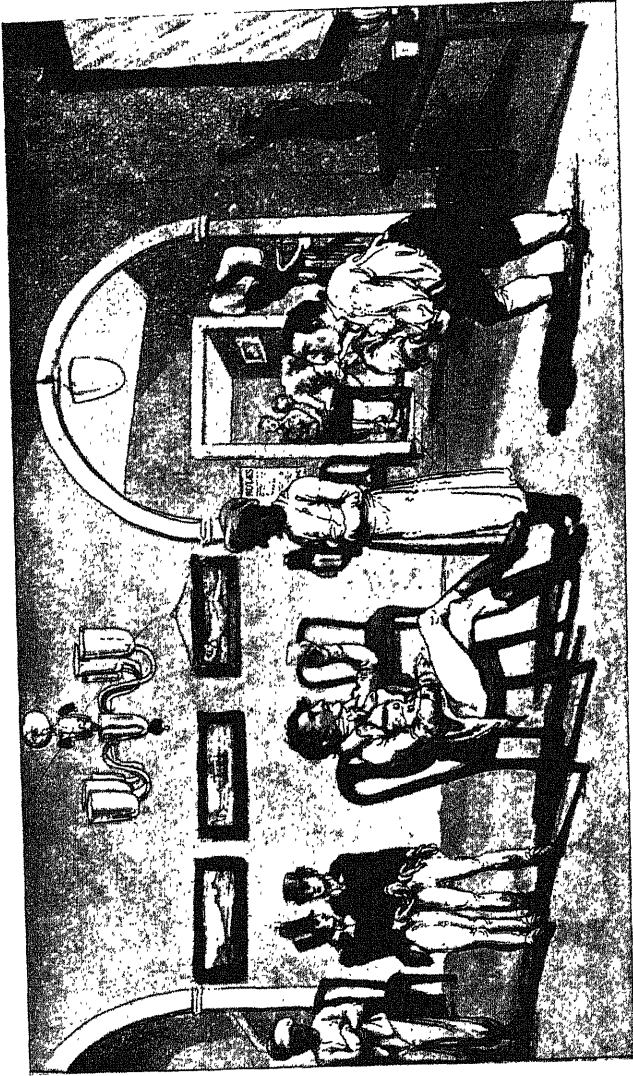
It cannot be denied that the ambitious youth aimed generally at a Secretariat career. But while no one now knows who was secretary of what department in any given year, the names of the district officers of that generation

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have lived on in Indian memories. Through the mist of time the figures of earlier administrators loom in almost Homeric grandeur. The racial exclusiveness which in their successors was resented is in them viewed by Indians as the natural reserve of royalty ; the higher scale of European living, in recent years the subject of so many diatribes, in former administrators seems but the pleasing display of megalopsychic qualities. " He lived like a raja " you hear Indians in reminiscent mood say with smiling approval. Almost every district has one such traditional figure of an Administrator. Collectors remained for a long period in one station. They regarded themselves as fathers of their people and were so regarded by the people. They planted trees, endowed schools, knew the language well and many of their subjects by names. Parents drew the attention of small awestruck children to the tall lean figure in riding breeches, Norfolk jacket and Terai hat discussing the state of the crops with a cultivator or the need of a new site for a cemetery with the village Mullah. As a recent Anglo-Indian poet expressed it—

When Thomson ruled in Thomsonpore,  
Somewhere round eighteen eighty,  
From end to end his District wore  
An aspect warmly matey.  
No deep division severed then  
The Powers that Be from other men ;  
But all was friendly to the core  
When Thomson ruled in Thomsonpore.

When out on tour, a word or jest  
He'd have for every ryot,  
And oft by kindly souls be pressed  
To taste their humble diet ;  
Or Mrs. T, with playful spank,  
Would bathe the children in the tank  
And all would laugh with merry roar—  
When Thomson ruled in Thomsonpore.



THE BOMBAY TAVERN  
*after Rowlandson.*