CHAPTER IV

EVEN if the voyage was only from Madras to Calcutta it was as well to prepare for a long sojourn on board. That journey might take six weeks and contrary winds might blow one all over the Bay of Bengal. Travellers must in that century have been less easily bored than to-day, for if the Madras–Calcutta route could take so long what of the journey from England?

An East Indiaman was romantic enough seen dimly in the murk at Gravesend, with its great masts and the cargo going aboard and the merchants standing on the quay muffled in their cloaks, talking of distant lands and strange people. There were guns along the ship's bulwarks and grizzled sailors with gold rings in their ears tramped down the rain-sleek cobbles. The captain was a tremendous figure, more majestic than the commander of a warship and quite as autocratic with his passengers as with his crew ;[1] but he stood there greeting his guests with the affable condescension of a rich relative welcoming his cousins at his country-house. And after the first buffetings of the Channel it was romantic to stroll on deck, to watch with one's spy-glass for the first glimpse of Madeira, while the gulls flashed overhead and the great sails swelled in the wind and the rigging sang. Dinner was generally served on the second deck and a band played while the passengers drank loyal toasts and the claret went round briskly. Presently the ladies adjourned to the round-house, where coffee or tea

[1] As late as 1818 the commander of an East Indiaman clapped in irons a lieutenant in the army for whistling in his presence.

was served. The rigging was hung with coloured lanterns, and when the fiddles struck up enthusiastic dancers hurried to the upper deck. Serious drinkers gathered in the round-house and between great draughts of Burgundy and champagne sang catches and glees till one in the morning, when supper was served. It was below deck that impressions were less favourable. Cabins were represented by canvas partitions. If there was a storm these partitions offered no obstacle to the furniture which rolled from one end of the ship to the other. Not only furniture; for when Mirza Abutakt, a cultivated Muhammadan gentleman, was travelling—

> Mr. Grand, who was of enormous size, and whose cabin was separated from mine only by a canvas partition, fell with all his weight upon my breast and hurt me exceedingly. What rendered this circumstance more provoking was that if, by any accident, the smallest noise was made in my apartment, he would call out, with all the overbearing insolence which characterises the vulgar part of the English in their conduct to Orientals, "What are you about? You don't let me get a wink of sleep" and other such rude expressions.

There was only one state-cabin under the round-house. But this was reserved for men, as the ship's officers had to pass through it to take soundings even at night. But while it provided the only spacious accommodation, the round-house had several disadvantages. Sailors stamped about overhead at all hours "performing the necessary manœuvres with the sails attached to the mizen-mast, specially that of working the spanker-boom". Moreover, the poultry were kept in cages in the round-house and "the feeding with the consequent pecking twice a day" became an increasing irritation. It was lucky if there were not several goats tied in there as well. Still, one had the compensation of fresh air; for though the Company prided

itself on the regulation requiring every ship to be thoroughly washed twice a week the smells seem to have been formidable. A storm caused everyone the series of discomforts that Warren Hastings catalogued : " The Want of Rest, the violent Agitation of the ship, the Vexation of seeing and hearing all the Moveables of your cabin tumble about you, the Pain in your Back, Days of Unquiet and Apprehension, and above all the dreadful Fall of the Globe Lantern."

The pleasant sensations of novelty at sight of land waned as the ship followed the endless coast-line of Africa where savage " Caffres " lay in wait for stranded vessels. Scurvy soon appeared among the crew and there were frequent funerals. At first the passengers were pleasantly impressed by the solemnity of these occasions, filled their diaries with melancholy and philosophical reflections and commended the sober and reverent demeanour of the crew during the service ; indeed, these deaths and dramatic funerals might well be the Almighty's method of recalling to a serious and godly life those poor rough sailors who, as Mr. Forbes hoped,[1] might now examine their consciences and live more virtuously in future. The ship's officers, being hardened to such occasions, were often somewhat casual in their conduct, and a poet describes how, when

> The passengers and crew around,
> With gravest faces, look profound,
> The *service* is begun, when, lo !
> The captain's eye glanc'd down below ;
> An error in the compass spies :
> He *d——ns* the *stupid helmsman's* eyes !
> Assures him he'll be flogged, and then,
> The purser adds his own, " *Amen* ".
> The pious *pair* again go on,
> Conclude the service, and—*'tis done.*[1]

Often enough the crew was so reduced by scurvy that the

[1] *Oriental Memoirs.*

gentlemen had to work like common sailors, and then there were fewer laudatory references to the Almighty's methods.

The Cape was a welcome break in the tedium of the voyage. There was fresh food of every kind ; in particular delicious vegetables and the Cape grapes that the older passengers declared were the best in the world. It was curious that Cape wine was so execrable and so expensive. As the ship often stayed some time at anchor the passengers took lodgings in the town (the Dutch housewives welcoming the chance of letting rooms to the opulent English), and went for expeditions into the surrounding country. Word would be sent on ahead to the little Dutch inns and the travellers would find awaiting them a breakfast of eggs and bacon and cheese, washed down with Constantia wine. A favourite expedition was, as always, to the summit of Table Mountain ; the climb was tiring but its ardours were mitigated by the music of flute-players who trudged ahead, their notes often echoing strangely in narrow clefts or under overarching cliffs ; and near the summit a table would be spread in a cool cave and for refreshment there was tea and coffee, cold ham and chicken and great baskets of fruit. Every traveller admired the zoological gardens in Cape Town, reported then the best in the world ; it was pleasant to stroll down the shady arcades under tropic trees and stare at the extraordinary animals of Africa, to drink a glass of wine on a blossom-hung terrace, and then as the day grew warm retire to the cool shadow of a billiard-room and challenge and chaff the stolid Dutch farmers. The Dutch were not so stolid as never to find occasions for laughter at their guests. The London fashions especially amused them. A number of English ladies bound for Calcutta appeared at a dance at Cape Town all wearing the waistless dresses then in fashion, and the Dutch thought that these dresses made

their wearers' figures laughably ugly. One humourless old farmer, however, was seriously disturbed : " Ah ! God help their poor parents," he exclaimed, " how miserable must they be upon perceiving the situation their daughters are in ! " And when a friend asked him why, he muttered, " Is it not apparent they are all with child ? "

It was a sad disappointment to the passengers if a favouring wind decided the captain to push on past the Cape. But there was always hope of an anchorage at Johanna Island ; and there the " Caffres " swarmed round the ship in their tiny craft made of single tree-trunks offering for sale fresh eggs and poultry and a wonderful variety of fruit, pineapples, oranges, guavas and bananas. They scrambled about over the piles of fruit and waved and laughed and shouted, " Englishman man very good man, drinkee de punch, fire de gun, beatee de French, very good fun." It was considered unhealthy to sleep ashore ; but if the ship had missed the Cape, there were generally affairs of honour to be settled between the gentlemen, who in the tedium of the voyage, had found many occasions to quarrel. By the time they stepped ashore, however, they had often entirely forgotten their resentment and often the cause of offence. But contemporary prejudice obliged them to make a show of a duel. Two young cadets who accompanied Hickey on his first voyage having boxed each other's ears were both terrified at the prospect of a duel. The other passengers, however, insisted ; but took the precaution of removing ball from the pistol of each combatant. There was a long discussion between the duellists and the seconds about the distance, the former suggesting thirty yards, the seconds proposing six paces. They compromised on twelve paces (despite the anguished sighs of the duellists who proclaimed such proximity " absolute butchery ") but the duellists

insisted on the Fourth Mate, who had the longest legs on the ship, measuring the paces. They were about to fire when suddenly one duellist shouted that the other owed him forty dollars and that it was a little hard that he should lose his money as well as his life. When this was settled, the signal was given, both fired, and to the consternation of the seconds one of the duellists fell down. They hurried up fearful lest the pistol had, after all, been loaded with ball; but they found the duellist alive and indeed uninjured, but full of the conviction that a ball had whizzed so close to his ear as to cause his collapse.

Once in the Indian Ocean passengers and crew alike were haunted by the fear of French privateers. At the first sign of hostile craft the canvas partitions of the cabins were removed; all furniture, beds and luggage were swept from the decks; women and children were hurried down to the hold, where they shuddered in unsavoury darkness while on deck the gentlemen tried out cutlasses and sketched a few defensive manœuvres and were then brushed aside by the hurrying sailors who now had more urgent duties than deference to the quality.[1] Capture by the French entailed a number of inconveniences. The French were polite enough in their way but it was regrettable that their officers dressed so shabbily; Admiral de Suffren who looked, as Hickey contemptuously observed, "like a little fat, vulgar English butcher" received his English captives in slippers, blue cloth breeches unbuttoned at the knees and a coarse linen shirt open at the neck, with sleeves rolled above his elbows. Moreover, the French had nowhere to send their captives; their ports were often in the hands of the English and their allies on the Indian continent were unreliable and

[1] See Mrs. Sherwood's *Autobiography* for an account of such an encounter.

disreputable. The hundreds of prisoners sent by de Suffren to safe custody with Tipu Sultan were, in spite of the latter's promises to the French, treated with great cruelty. That dark squat prince whose chief amusements were designing dresses to be compulsorily worn by his female subjects, studying and interpreting dreams, and watching a mechanical lion mangle a doll dressed in European costume, would suddenly awaken to a stern realisation of his duties as a Muslim sovereign and issue orders for the forcible circumcision of the Englishmen in his prisons. . . .

Even after arrival at the mouth of the Hooghly adventures were not all over. The passengers disembarked in a tender which sailed only by day and was tied up at night to one or other of the islands in the Gangetic delta ; but the islands had to be chosen carefully, for they abounded in tigers and, as happened on the tender which carried my grandfather to Calcutta, a tiger would occasionally be found on board in the morning and a passenger or two missing.

After the long months on board ship it must have been delightful at last to reach Calcutta, then the greatest and gayest of Anglo-Indian cities. It was the city that Clive described as

> one of the most wicked Places in the Universe. Corruption, Licentiousness and a want of Principle seem to have possessed the Minds of all the Civil Servants, by frequent bad examples they have grown callous, Rapacious and Luxurious beyond Conception, and the Incapacity and Iniquity of some and the Youth of others. . . .

It was here that Mrs. Sherwood found the material for her descriptions of

> the splendid sloth and the languid debauchery of European Society in those days—English gentlemen, overwhelmed with the consequences of extravagance, hampered by Hindoo women and by crowds of olive-coloured children, without

> either the will or the power to leave the shores of India. . . . Great men rode about in State coaches, with a dozen servants running before and behind them to bawl out their titles; and little men lounged in palanquins or drove a chariot for which they never intended to pay, drawn by horses which they had bullied or cajoled out of the stables of wealthy Baboos . . .

It was here that were made many of the vast fortunes that aroused so much jealousy and envy in England and here that the traditional Nabob flourished. The origin of many legends, General Richard Smith, was in the seventies still lording it in Calcutta society. As Sir Mathew Mite he was pilloried in Forbes's play "The Nabob" and Macaulay described this character as

> an Anglo-Indian chief, dissolute, ungenerous, and tyrannical, ashamed of the humble friends of his youth, hating the aristocracy yet childishly eager to be numbered among them, squandering his wealth on pandars and flatterers, tricking out his chairmen with the most costly hothouse flowers, and astounding the ignorant with jargon about rupees, lacs and jaghires.

For once Macaulay is guilty of no exaggeration. Smith was referred to by contemporary Calcutta in terms appropriate to a Grand Chamberlain of Byzantium. People ridiculed his manners but were terrified of his power. The most extravagant compliments were paid him by men who, when his back was turned, jeered at his "low origin". A similar deference was paid to Mrs. Smith by most of the married ladies. Dr. Hancock wrote anxiously to his wife begging her to call on Mrs. Smith the moment she returned to Calcutta to congratulate her on her safe arrival, for "the Omission might be of Consequence to me, as he is a man of great Power. You perfectly well know his Vanity and my Necessity." In spite of his extraordinary style of living, Smith always loudly professed an attachment to Stoic prin-

ciples and a horror of all corruption and excessive wealth. He was one of Francis's greatest friends and people were edified by his stern denunciations of Hastings' extravagance.

It was not only General Smith's circle who were remarkable for their style of living. Fortunes were made in a few years and lost in a night at cards. There was a whist club at which stakes were very heavy, but it was crowded every night and gentlemen were disappointed if they missed a visit. A chaplain, who had looked forward to a pleasant evening at cards, was extremely irritated when he had to postpone his game "because he had a d——d soldier to bury". Francis at a single sitting there won £20,000 and on another occasion Barwell lost £40,000. "Oh," runs an entry in Mackrabie's diary for March 9, 1776, "I lost seven rubbers running. Oh sad, sad, sad." Very few were averse to considering the most blatant forms of bribery. Hastings once made up his mind to end the whole dreary squabble with his opponents in Council by buying them up for £100,000 apiece; and Clive, vexed by the incompetents for whom influential relatives in England had secured comfortable berths with the Company, had suggested buying them out as soon as they landed in Calcutta. When a certain new-comer presented himself at Government House, Clive looked him up and down and said, "Oh well, how much will you take?" Yet everyone affected to know and care nothing about money. A gentleman left his finances to his *sircar* or broker, generally a money-lender of considerable wealth but whose humble address and abject demeanour were very flattering. The *sircar* hired the servants and arranged for the daily expenses of the house, and a favourite subject for contemporary satirists was that of the lordly European lolling in a long chair, the mouth-piece of a hookah in his hand, a glass of Madeira at his elbow, while

standing with bent head before him the *sircar*, ragged and servile, read out from an enormous roll of parchment the various expenses unavoidably incurred by him on behalf of his employer; and, concluding with an account which showed he had not one penny left, he would venture to advise that the honourable gentleman should again summon that kind money-lender, who, being the *sircar's* cousin, would oblige the gentleman at a most reasonable rate.

Similarly a gentleman's house had to be stocked with an army of servants. Hickey, not a wealthy man by Calcutta standards, employed sixty-three, including eight whose only duty was to wait at table, three to cut the grass in the garden, four grooms and one coachman, two bakers, two cooks, a hairdresser and nine valets. The richer merchants employed upwards of a hundred servants and some of them were styled by most outlandish names. The wig-barber (as opposed to that superior employee, the hairdresser) was as inevitable in every fashionable house as the hookaburdar, who not only tended the gentlemen's hookahs at home, kept the silver chains and rosettes brightly polished, blew on the charcoal and renewed the rose water, but also accompanied his master abroad even to dinners at Government House, at which, after the ladies had withdrawn, the hookah-bearers entered in solemn procession, each taking up his position near his master, to whom he handed the ivory mouthpiece after unwinding the enormous coil of piping from round the neck of the hookah. It was important to arrange the hookahs properly, for it was considered an insult to step over another's hookah-snake. It was as dangerous to get between a gentleman and his hookah-bowl as it is reputed to be to-day to walk between a Mexican bull-puncher and his drink. A duel was inevitable.

Many ladies began to favour the hookah.

> The gentlemen [we read in Price's *Tracts*] introduce their hookahs and smoak in the company of ladies and . . . the mixture of sweet-scented Persian tobacco, sweet herbs, coarse sugar, spice etc., which they inhale, comes through clean water and is so very pleasant that many ladies take the tube and draw a little of the smoak into their mouths.

At receptions they sat in carefully posed attitudes with the coils of the hookah encircling their waists like Cretan snake-goddesses ; and it was a very flattering gesture for a lady to offer a gentleman the mouthpiece of her hookah for a refreshing puff.

Nor was it only the civilians in their great houses in Calcutta who required so many servants. Officers who went on active service were equally well-attended. Forced marches and rapid strategic moves were not easy when an army included so many non-combatants, but the servants were never left behind. In that perilous year 1780, when the Company's rule seemed to many to be doomed, a captain, throughout the Mysore campaign, was accompanied by his steward, his cook, his valet, a groom and groom's assistant, a barber, a washerman and " other officers " besides fifteen coolies to carry his luggage, his wine, brandy and tea, his live poultry and milch-goats.

It was often difficult to keep all these servants in order. Fortunately the law showed little favour to insubordinate employees. Records of magisterial courts are full of entries such as the following : " A slave girl of Mr. Anderson called Piggy, having run away from her master—*Order.* five strokes with a rattan and she to be sent to her master." For petty misdemeanours such as theft and drunkenness the master of the house was generally unwilling to invoke the aid of the law and would wield the rod himself. If the author of some theft was unknown a priest would be called and the servants put through the rice ordeal which continues in Indian

villages to-day. The priest first delivers a homily on the enormity of theft, the torments of hell, the weary procession of rebirth in a lower life consequent on a man's dying with a sin on his conscience. He then calls for dry rice over which he mumbles mysteriously. Then each man is required to hold a small amount of this rice in his mouth for a few minutes, and the priest solemnly assures them that the rice in the mouths of the innocent will, at the end of the ordeal be found to be wet, while that in the mouth of the thief will be dry. That there is a natural and obvious explanation for the frequent success of this ordeal in revealing a malefactor does not detract from its value as a test among simple people.

But in spite of the rattans of the magistrates and the threat of the rice ordeal, many servants, especially of bachelors, looted their employers joyously. When Mr. Hickey had embarked on a ship in the Hooghly his servant Chaund, to whom he was devoted—

> —invited Gregg (the captain's English servant) to go on shore with him and get a girl, which he declined, and Chaund went by himself, but within two hours returned on board attended by *three* whores. Gregg enquiring what he could mean by such conduct which must ruin him with his master if he heard of it, as was most likely the case, he laughed at him, observing that his master would not be at all angry about the matter which, however, there was no occasion for him to know anything of. He then added that he had brought three nice girls, one of whom was for himself, one for him (Gregg), and the other for Deenoo—who was only thirteen years of age—and that he had engaged them to go down to the ship and to land them at Fulta on their way back to Calcutta. Gregg again remonstrated, but being in the prime of life and full vigour of health he could not resist the temptation thus offered, and he at last yielded to Chaund's persuasions and example, as he also did to that of participating in the good fare which the profligate Chaund produced. The evening's entertainment concluded with the whole party, male and female, getting abominably

drunk, in which state Chaund retired with two of the girls to my bed.

Not only was an army of servants considered necessary for comfort, the wages of each being little lower than that of a similar servant in India to-day, but rents were, by contemporary standards, very high. There were no hotels till 1780 when Sir Elijah Impey's late steward opened an hotel where, as the advertisement stated, " turtles are dressed, gentlemen boarded and families supplied with pastry " ; but we do not know what the charges were. Francis paid £1,200 a year for his house ; and Mrs. Fay for a small villa " in a part of the town not esteemed " was charged over £200 a year. Furniture was expensive. It cost Hickey £1,000 to make his house fit, as he considered, for human habitation. The prices of other amenities were in proportion. Admission to the pit at the theatre cost £1 and the better seats were £2 each. It cost £10 to christen a child and £40 to be married. The minimum fee for a doctor was £2. Commodities imported from Europe were sold at a fantastic rate ; ham and cheese being priced at twelve-and-six a pound. In such circumstances everyone grumbled endlessly at the difficulty of saving money. Francis angrily lamented, " If I carry home £25,000 by the severest parsimony of five years it will be the most I can accomplish." And soon he raised his ambition to a saving of " forty thousand secure ". As little of this could be honestly come by and as he was prepared to lose thousands nightly at whist there is a certain verrine magnificence in such anticipation.

The daily round of life in Calcutta resembled that in Madras. The young factor was awakened by a posse of respectful servants. A barber shaved him, cut his fingernails and cleaned his ears. For breakfast he had tea and toast and as he sat at table the hairdresser attended to his

wig. When he had finished his tea his " houccaburdar softly slips the upper end of the snake or tube of the hucca into his hand ". When he drove or rode to office he was " preceded by eight to twelve chubdars, harcarrahs and peons, with the insignia of their professions and their livery distinguished by the colour of their turbans ". The hours of work were light, nine to twelve in the hot weather and ten to one-thirty in the cold. For it cannot be said that the methods of the Company's employees were very business-like. It is difficult not to sympathise with the indignation of the Directors when they learnt that some most important documents which had been lost " were picked up in a Publick Necessary House ". But every lapse was blamed on the heat. There were no fans. A drowsy servant waved a fly-whisk without appreciably stirring the air. Robes and wigs were worn in court by judges and counsel alike all through the hot weather. Nuncomar's long trial was held in June, the worst month of all, and the judges rose four times a day to retire to their chambers and change their linen.

Ladies went for an early ride or drive and then waited for callers till dinner at two. For dinner, Mrs. Fay who considered she was living cheap and was in addition obliged, as an invalid, to be content with a spare diet, sat down every day to soup ; roast fowl ; curry and rice ; mutton pie ; lamb, rice pudding ; tarts and cheese. The satirist who wrote under the pseudonym of Quiz was shocked at " the indelicate method both ladies and gentlemen eat, both at tiffen and dinner ". He was absolutely disgusted at seeing " one of the *prettiest girls* in Calcutta eat about two pounds of mutton-chops at one sitting ! " And he hurried into verse to describe his distaste for the appetites of the officers who

March to barracks where with joy,
Their *masticators* they employ,
On curry, rice, and beef and goat,
Voraciously they cram each throat.

By each plate were two glasses " one pyramidal (like hob-nob glasses in England) for loll shrub ; the other a common-sized wineglass for whatever beverage is most agreeable ". Wine was, during dinner, generally diluted with water. When dessert had been served and a few loyal healths drunk the ladies withdrew and the gentlemen sat down to the serious business of disposing of three bottles of claret each. It would have seemed oddly unsocial for a gentleman to drink less when, as Mrs. Fay wrote " every lady (even your humble servant) drinks at least a bottle ".

In spite of so much drinking, however, there were very few connoisseurs of wine in Calcutta ; as Mr. Hickey found when, to do honour to a distinguished company of guests he was able to cajole three dozen of the best claret from Baxter and Joy's " Europe Shop ". These were to be reserved until dessert had been set on the table and the servants were instructed to serve claret " of the Danish batch " during dinner. But when the good claret was introduced the only comment from the guests was " Zounds ! They have changed the wine upon us." " Well," replied Mr. Hickey, " I trust it is for the better." " No, by God ! " exclaimed some of the guests. " Quite the contrary, it is from the most delicious to execrable stuff." In spite of Hickey's remonstrances, his pleading that they should give the wine a fair trial—

—the party unanimously decided that what they had drunk during dinner was infinitely the best, it being uncommonly high-flavoured, delicious wine, whereas the other was abominable, not fit to be drunk. Finding this opinion general, I told them I rejoiced to find they had such correct taste, especially

as I could indulge them upon very easy terms, the wine they admired having cost me no more than eighteen rupees a dozen, while that they abused and rejected was at the enormous price of sixty-five rupees a dozen. The moment I declared the vast difference in the prices several of the party began to change their tone, some of them observing, " There certainly is a delicacy and a flavour in the English wine which the other wants." . . .

In a mess drinking would be less haphazard. There would be Madeira before dinner, and claret with the turkey which was the favourite and almost regular dish, with ham and curries and rice. When the cloths were removed each man drank with his neighbour. Then followed the toasts, each honoured by a suitable tune from the band. Thus for the Ladies the band would strike up " Kiss my lady " and for the Honourable Company " Money in both Pockets ". When the colonel left, there would be a course of savouries and drinking would recommence. And if any officer left before the rest he would be followed with shouts of " Shabby Fellow ", " Milk Sop " or " Cock Tail ".

After dinner everyone slept till the evening, when the hairdresser paid a second visit to powder and trim the gentlemen's hair and build up, for the evening *sortie*, the ladies' turban-like coiffures, heavy with bows, ribbons and bunches of flowers. The two most fashionable hairdressers were Frenchmen and their charges were fantastically high ; eight rupees for a gentleman's hair-cut and four rupees for hairdressing. After the coiffure, " everybody dressed splendidly, being covered with lace, spangles and foil " and then set out for an airing. The sedate or nervous kept to their palanquins, a slow and unexhilarating method of conveyance ; though the Court of Directors had, in the 'fifties, censured the practice of palanquin riding as though it were evidence of raffish luxury. " We very well know ", they

THE BURRA KHANAH—" A GRAND FEED "

wrote, " that the indulging writers with palankeens has not a little contributed to the neglect of business we complain of, by affording them opportunities of rambling." Newcomers to the country were often distressed by the odd noises the palanquin bearers made as they trudged along, supposing that these grunts, groans and hollow whispers indicated that the bearers were on the point of fainting from fatigue. A Mr. Cleveland was so much alarmed that he hopped out of his palanquin and was surprised to see that

> thereupon they set the palankeen down and immediately began to converse very cheerfully. . . . But Colonel Watson told him that it was a custom amongst bearers when carrying a palankeen to make that moaning noise, which did not at all indicate fatigue, and that the front bearer always noticed the sort of road they were passing over, pointing out any impediments as " Here's a hole ", " Here's a puddle of water ", " Here's long grass ", " Here's a parcel of bricks ".

But by the younger members of society a palanquin was voted odiously slow ; they preferred a phaeton and pair of Arabs. Francis could be seen every evening driving furiously his four handsome Arabs. Ladies often drove unattended by gentlemen, showing off their skill with the reins, an umbrella nodding over their heads, their horses " finely set out with silver nets to guard their necks from insects ".

No gentleman could hope to win a young lady's favour unless he had a smart carriage. A Mr. Calvert, having been refused by a Miss Philpott, tried to increase his value in her eyes by purchasing an English post-chaise, the four horses being driven by postillions in very rich liveries. He appeared on the racecourse one evening and drove up close to Miss Philpott's phaeton. As she never commented on his sudden splendour he said, " What do you think of my love trap ? " " Elegant, upon my word," said Miss Philpott, " quite *magnifique.*"—" And what do you think of the

bait within it?" "Do you mean to speak in French or English?" But in spite of her pert reply, which made Mr. Calvert the joke of Calcutta, Miss Philpott was deeply moved by the dashing equipage and became engaged to Mr. Calvert in a month.

Another evening recreation was boating. Pinnaces flitted down the river to return after nightfall with a coloured lantern at the prow. Families were rowed sedately in barges hung with brocades and attended by musicians. But there was no craft to compare with Mr. Hickey's, which was forty-eight feet long with a crew of fourteen, all dressed alike "in white linen jackets and trousers, with bright red-and-green turbans, cumberbands (a large roll round the bottom of their bodies) of the same".[1] Other gentlemen of means were rowed by teams of black slaves, especially imported from Bourbon or Mauritius, notable for their strength and huge physique and dressed in fantastic costumes. They were often attended by tiny negro slaves in vast turbans who blew gaily on French horns, whose resonant music mingled with the clamour of conches from Hindu temples lining the river where, as darkness gathered in the dust-laden air, the gods were saluted with gongs and offerings of heavy-petalled flowers.

If most people got drunk at dinner, supper was equally hilarious. At a party on November 3, 1775, at the Claverings all the ladies drank themselves silly on cherry-brandy and pelted each other with bread pellets. This rough game became suddenly fashionable and Barwell was hailed as Bread-pellet Champion of Calcutta, since he could snuff out a candle at a distance of four yards with a pellet. The craze came to an equally sudden end when a Captain Morrison, losing his temper at receiving a pellet unexpectedly in the

[1] Mackrabie's *Diary*.

face, threw a leg of mutton at the offender. A duel followed in which the pellet-thrower was nearly killed; and the practice fell into disfavour.

One was often surprised by a party of guests descending on one unexpectedly. But Colonel Auchmuty had the unusual foible of inviting people to supper and then forgetting all about it. When the guests arrived, he would be blunt but hospitable. He would explain that as he was not expecting them there was little to eat, but that the cellar was fortunately full. But when they took him at his word and continually asked for fresh supplies of wine he would exclaim, " By Jesus, my choice ones, I am apt to think you have been for some time without a taste of the true stuff. The Devil burn me, but I belave you imagine yourselves in a wine merchant's cellar." But as he drank with his guests his earlier reserve would vanish. He would leap up from the table and shout to his wife, who prudently remained upstairs when guests called on the colonel, " Shela ! My Jewel, why Shela, I say, take care I say of the spoons and silver forks, count them up carefully, my honey, for by the holy Jesus we have got some tight boys to-night."

If there was a ball or reception, people generally supped first in their own houses with the result that they arrived in uproarious groups, the gentlemen often touselled and dusty from a spill which they would indignantly attribute to the press of carriages on the road, the bad lighting of the streets or their earnest endeavour to make way for a lady driving her own phaeton which had caused them to collide with a tree. Mr. Hickey arrived at a party with all skin scraped off one side of his face which spoiled the effect of his " bright blue silk domino ". This party was a *fête champêtre* given by Mr. Edward Fenwick during the month of May, when the heat of Calcutta is so intense that almost any exertion

is exhausting. Mr. Fenwick's guests, in fancy dress and masked, continued dancing till seven in the morning. Perhaps they were inspired by the " many thousand coloured lamps ", by the feats of " an eminent operator in fireworks ", and by the fact that several bands played simultaneously different tunes. This *fête champêtre* was of unusual magnificence ; but even through the hot weather and the rains hardly a week passed without some dance. In rooms without fans, lit by candle light, the exertions required for a cotillion reduced some of the dancers to a sad condition.

> Imagine to yourself [wrote *Asiaticus*] the lovely object of your affections ready to expire with heat, every limb trembling and every feature distorted with fatigue, and her partner, with a muslin handkerchief in each hand, employed in the delightful office of wiping down her face, while the big drops stand impearled upon her forehead.

But few were as fastidious as Asiaticus and when the fiddles struck up the ballrooms were crowded with dancers. The jolliest balls were given by Colonel Gallier, who was devoted to Frenchwomen and danced cotillions with remarkable energy. A constant guest at the Colonel's was Dr. Campbell who was quite startlingly bald and never wore a wig, but who was always to be seen " capering about and gallanting the ladies ".

On Sunday mornings the ladies were carried in palanquins (whose slow progress, however tiresome at other times, was considered appropriate to a solemn occasion) to divine service. There was no church yet in Calcutta and morning prayer was said in the customs office. All the gentlemen of the station, even if racked with bile and indigestion after their Saturday night festivities, rode early to the customs office and waited in a crowd round the door jostling each other in rivalry to escort the ladies to their seats. Etiquette

allowed this gallant gesture even among strangers and it was the usual method of introducing oneself to a lady whose acquaintance one wished to make. In consequence there were generally frayed tempers and torn coats among the gentlemen on the first Sunday after the arrival of a ship from England, setting rumours flying round Calcutta of a youthful charmer or an amiable heiress.

There were many more ladies in Calcutta than at the other settlements and much space in the local newspapers was taken up with allusions to prevalent gossip. Two quotations will be sufficient. The first refers to the effect of a Miss Wrangham's charms on a susceptible member of the Government, " Counseller Feeble now constantly drinks a sort of cordial dram which he calls W-g-h eye-water and of which he drinks so freely that he, d'ye see, retires tipsy—he, he ! " " *March 1781—Lost* on the Course, last Monday evening, Buxey Clumsey's heart whilst he stood simpering at the footstep of Hooka Turban's carriage."

The most constant in attendance at the steps of the customs office on Sunday mornings were the senior merchants and officials old enough to be sentimental over fresh English complexions and rich enough to be certain of admiration. As Miss Goldborne exclaimed, " They are chiefly old fellows ! " But it was these old fellows whose courtship was thought especially suitable by the parents or guardians of young ladies ; and income, position in the Government, hopes of further appointments, were the qualities in a suitor most eagerly canvassed in the boudoir. One young lady, however, the niece of Mr. Justice Russel, seemed strangely indifferent to the wealth and position of these elderly gallants. She had been recently come to Calcutta, to

Those proud halls, for youth unfit
Where Princes stand and Judges sit,

and she spent most of her time day-dreaming about a young poet called Mr. Landor whom she had met in the Circulating Library at Swansea. But she gave the Calcutta gossips little sport, for soon after her arrival, while still only twenty, she contracted " a most severe bowel complaint, brought on entirely by indulging too much with that mischievous and dangerous fruit, the pineapple " and " at the end of a few days this lovely young girl fell a martyr to the obstinacy of the malady ". Her monument with its dedication, " To the Memory of the Honourable Miss Rose Aylmer " is one of the most striking in Calcutta Cemetery. One of her admirers in Calcutta had been Mr. Ricketts, a cousin of the Earl of Liverpool, and he was so much upset by her death that he " sought comfort for himself in the arms of a vulgar, huge, coarse, Irish slammerkin, Miss Prendergast ".

Having escorted the ladies to their seats the gentlemen lounged against the walls or pillars, whispering and ogling. The local clergy were not such as to inspire respect and attention during the service. " One parson ", notes Mackrabie,[1] " rivals Nimrod in hunting, a second supplies bullocks for the Army, another is a perfect connoisseur in Chinese gardening." And then there was the army chaplain Mr. Blunt.

> This incomprehensible young man [records Hickey] got abominably drunk and in that disgraceful condition exposed himself to both soldiers and sailors, running out stark naked into the midst of them, talking all sort of bawdy and ribaldry, and singing scraps of the most blackguard and indecent songs, so as to render himself a common laughing-stock.

Next morning, however, his remorse was so great that his friends feared for his health and Colonel Wellesley had to

[1] *Diary.*

be requested to deal with the situation. The Colonel " told him that what had passed was not of the least consequence as no one would think the worse of him for the little irregularities committed in a moment of forgetfulness ; that the most correct and cautious men were liable to be led astray by convivial society and no blame ought to be attached to a cursory debauch ". In spite of this advice, however, Mr. Blunt was so depressed by the memory of his escapade that he fretted himself to death within ten days.

In 1787 a new church was consecrated. Some dissatisfaction was caused among the ladies because whereas they formerly sat in a pew in a line with that of the Governor-General, they now could not occupy pews more advanced than those of the Judges. As a wit put it,

> The Ladies on the *Lord* relied
> To dignify their forms divine,
> But now, forsaken by their pride,
> To *court* the praying maidens join.

That all the ladies likely to attend church could be accommodated, as this new regulation suggests, in one pew does not argue a very regular attendance at Matins ; which is confirmed by the popularity of the catch-phrase, " Is it Sunday ? Yes ; for I see the flag is hoisted." The new church was endowed with an altarpiece by Sir John Zoffany representing " The Last Supper " and the chaplain warmly thanked him for " so capital a painting that would adorn the first church in Europe, and should excite in the breasts of its spectators those sentiments of virtue and piety so happily portrayed in the figures ".

There had been a Catholic church in Calcutta since 1700. Its founder was a Mrs. Margaret Trench, but most of its parishioners were Portuguese on whose piety every visitor commented. Perhaps they were inspired by the example

of one of the first of their co-religionists to visit the Hooghly. Captured by Mogul forces, he was brought before Shah Jahan who " ordered him to be cast in an arena to a furious Elephant. The Elephant at sight of the friar, lost his native ferocity and gently caressed him with his Proboscis."

There were in Calcutta few unmarried men without a mistress. They often kept Indian women, though modern authors like Mr. Norman Douglas, who congratulate Hickey's contemporaries on their freedom from colour prejudice, overlook Hickey's own admitted " horror at the thoughts of a connection with black women ". On the whole it seems that this prejudice was as pronounced as to-day ; but Hickey's contemporaries were seldom able to find any but Indian or half-caste mistresses in Calcutta ; and being of an " amorous disposition " mistresses they had to have. But if these youths had to overcome a colour-prejudice, they often ended by becoming genuinely attached to their dark mistresses. The latter, however, were generally mercenary and reserved their real affection for men of their own race. Many a youth, after worrying over the extra-ordinary darkness of the children his mistress attributed to him, returned home from office earlier than expected and found the lady sharing his bed with a servant.

That such irregular unions were seldom a secret may be gathered from the account of the birth of *Qui Hi's* son in the satiric poem " The Grand Master ".

> Poor *Gulab* now was in *that* way,
> That those who " love their lords " should be ;
> And in a week, to *Qui Hi's* joy,
> Produced our youth a chopping boy.
> The deuce ! said *Qui Hi* with a curse ;
> It's well, however, it's no worse ;
> For what the d——l could he do,
> If he had manufactur'd two,
> Like other ladies that he knew ?

Our hero now, without pretence,
Thought himself of *some consequence* ;
A child he'd got, and what was curious,
He knew the infant was not spurious ;
For though *Qui Hi* was never tied
By licence to his Indian bride,
Yet he was confident that she
Had acted with fidelity,
But now he finds he must submit
To European damsels' wit.
Wherever *Qui Hi* did appear,
The spinsters titter, chat and jeer.
" O dear, Miss *Pinchback*, have you heard,
La ! what a scandal—on my word."
" What ", (said Miss Pinchback) " prithe say ?
Tell us the scandal of the day ? "
" The fellow ! but we'll send him out
Of our society, no doubt ;
There is sweet Miss *Wabina Stocking*,
She can repeat it—*'tis so shocking* ;
That *Qui Hi*'s creature, it is said,
The other day was brought to bed."
" Oh heaven ! " exclaimed Miss Indigo,
" And could he then have us'd me so ?
And with a *black one* too connected—
A precious precedent's begun,
A mistress first, and then a son."

There were few bachelors as fortunate as Francis who installed his French mistress in a great house at Hooghly to which he would drive out from Calcutta either with a party of friends, or alone for a quiet week-end. There, with his discreet cousin, Baggs, who acted as dragoman, and with the enchanting Madame Grand he would rest after the ardours, intrigues and faction-violence of Calcutta. These pleasant hours could be recorded with brief sighs of satisfaction in his diary. " Sunday. At Hughely. *Ridet hoc inquam Venus ipsa, rident simplices nymphae.*"

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Mr. Jones welcomed him brusquely on his arrival, " and asked me if I had brought him any cheese, which being answered, seemed to work a happy change ". Nevertheless he made Grand sleep in the same bed with a footman and crop his hair in order that " people might not take him for a French monkey ". Luckily his aunt, who had influence at India House, procured for him a cadetship in Bengal. He stayed with Hastings who took some interest in him and despatched him to Chandernagore with a letter of introduction to the French authorities. There he met Mdlle Werlee, whose " fine blue eyes with black eyelashes and brows gave her countenance a most piquant singularity ". He married her and brought her to Calcutta where her beauty caused a sensation. Francis met her at a ball and wrote in his diary : " *Omnia vincit amor.* Job for Wood, the salt agent." A month later Francis tried to break into Mr. Grand's house while the husband was at supper with Mr. Barwell. A servant broke in upon the supper-party and whispered in agitation to Grand that Francis had been caught in his garden apparently trying to break into Madame Grand's bedroom. Grand burst into tears and raced home to find in his garden not Francis as he had expected but Mr. George Shee, a relation of the noble Burke, held down by a posse of servants. The servants explained that while they were holding Francis a rescue party had scaled the wall and set Francis free. They had, however, managed to secure a member of the rescue party.

Francis pretended to be astonished at the uproar that followed. He dismissed his escapade as a " wretched business " as though it was as ordinary a nuisance to find a Member of Council attempting an assault on one's wife as to discover a grass-snake in the bathroom. But Grand was out for blood. He filed a suit against Francis, claiming

1,500,000 sicca rupees[1] as damages. His counsel was Sir John Day, whose knighthood, bestowed by the King shortly before he sailed for India, had inspired George Selwyn to a typical quip. "By God, this is out-heroding Herod. I have long heard of the extraordinary power His Majesty exercised, but until this moment could not have believed that he could turn Day into Knight and make a Lady Day at Michaelmas." Francis was defended by Tilghman, of whom he remarked, enthusiastically, "His principles are truly patriotic, especially when in liquor." But the evidence was black against Francis. Miran, a table-servant, deposed to the discovery of a bamboo-ladder against the house-wall. He called the other servants. While they were talking Francis emerged from the house. He was startled at seeing the servants and said hastily, "I will give you money. I'll make you all great men." They closed round him whereon he began to bluster, "Don't you know that I am Mr. Francis? Why, I am the Great Sahib." But in spite of this they seized him. The servants corroborated each other with remarkable accuracy. Tilghman's cross-examination was singularly feeble. He tried to confuse the servants by searching questions about the exact hour of the offence—a favourite trick of English lawyers in India which, as a matter of fact, never impresses a court favourably, since judges know well enough that Indian witnesses have little sense of time—and often no acquaintance at all with the English hours. Unshaken by Tilghman's inquisition, the servants described the arrival of the rescue party, Francis's escape and their capture of Shee. They nearly captured another rescuer but he managed to free himself. This rescuer turned out to be Ducarel, another of Francis's parasites. Everybody began wondering how he could have

[1] This was then equivalent to £160,000.

escaped while Shee remained prisoner. For Ducarel, a serious-minded person interested in science and in the problem of personal immortality, was a dwarf. He was treated as a jester and buffoon by Francis who once addressed a letter to him beginning "You d——d old fool". So when this unfortunate creature appeared in the witness-box one of the first questions addressed to him was how he escaped. The dwarf drew himself and replied, "Finding myself pressed, I offered, amongst other expedients, three gold mohurs." In other respects, however, he was driven to admit the whole of the prosecution case; and even acknowledged that he had watched Francis creeping down the lane outside Mr. Grand's house, carrying the very same ladder that was found in Mr. Grand's garden and was now produced in court.

During the hearing there occurred the continual wrangles over the spelling of witnesses' names that seem to have been inseparable from the procedure of British courts of that period. There were lengthy discussions on law, for one of the three judges, Sir Robert Chambers, never missed an occasion for eager but largely irrelevant legal disquisitions. He was a sharp-tempered judge and during the hearing of an earlier case had referred to the plaintiff's attorney as "a gentleman probably heated with wine". Whereupon the attorney, as though to prove his sobriety, leapt to his feet and shouted at the judge, "You are a contemptible animal." No such incidents marked the hearing of the Grand case but the interminable discussions, the citing of rulings, the hitches and interruptions, must have been exasperating to Francis who was notorious for his contempt of lawyers, and could hardly utter the word "attorney" without an insolent and wounding sneer. In this he only followed the fashion of the day. For lawyers were perhaps

the most unpopular members of the English community in Calcutta, and the papers were full of gibes at them, such as the following " Epitaph " :

God works wonders now and then
Here lies a lawyer and an honest man.

Answered.

This is a mere law quibble, not a wonder,
Here lies a lawyer and his client under.

or this epigram : " The attornies of Calcutta may be said to be to lawyers what apothecaries are to physicians, only that they do not deal in *scruples.*" Nor was even the Advocate-General spared ; for when he quarrelled with his assistant and nearly fought a duel, the failure to meet in accordance with the tradition of gentlemen was satirised in this couplet.

If the astonishing account is true,
They met, they talked, they drew—and they withdrew.

The trouble was that while many of them were respectable citizens their numbers were swelled by persons of dubious antecedents, dismissed surgeons or officers convicted of " an error of judgment "—such as the notorious Hall of Madras who, in the war with Hyder Ali was responsible for the loss of 500 men and three guns, which loss caused his commanding officer to succumb to a bilious attack " which prevents me being so explicit as I otherwise should have been ".

The day of the Grand trial, however, the men of law had their revenge on their most violent critic, Francis, for not only did the examination of witnesses drag on and on, but when all the evidence had been heard the judges differed ; which necessitated each giving his separate opinion. Mr. Justice Hyde as junior spoke first and treated the matter as one concerned solely with appreciation of evidence and gave it as his opinion that the plaintiff had established his case.

Sir Robert Chambers then spoke at enormous length, confining himself to the legal aspects of the suit. He was at last interrupted by the Chief Justice, Sir Elijah Impey, who "petulantly observed that he was not prepared to comment upon such a mass of learning in Ecclesiastical Law as had been, he thought unnecessarily and inapplicably, introduced by his brother Chambers, not a particle of which applied to the present case". He agreed with his brother Hyde and entered judgment for the plaintiff, the suitable damages being, in his opinion, 50,000 rupees. Mr. Justice Hyde had fallen asleep during Sir Robert Chambers' remarks, but as the Chief Justice announced these damages he woke up with a start and said anxiously "Sicca rupees, brother Impey, siccas." "Aye", said the Chief Justice with relish, "Let them be siccas, brother Hyde."

The Chief Justice's censures on the conduct of Francis and his rescuer Shee inspired a number of pasquinades, of which the following is typical:

> Psha! what a Fuss, 'twixt SHEE and 'twixt her!
> What abuse of a dear little creature,
> A GRAND and a mighty affair to be sure,
> Just to give a light PHILIP (fillip) to nature.
> How can you, ye prudes, blame a luscious young wench;
> Who so fond is of Love and romances,
> Whose customs and manners are *tout à fait* French,
> For admiring whatever from FRANCE-IS!

But Madame Grand retired from the curious glances of Calcutta drawing-rooms to Francis's house at Hooghly. After some time, she visited England and stayed at Fitzroy Square with a Mr. Lewin. She had saved a comfortable sum which she invested in English banks; and when she finally returned to France she was careful to leave her money behind in England. The Revolution thus caused her little concern. But when she learnt of Napoleon's proposed in-

vasion of England she was filled with horror. She visited the Foreign Minister and implored him to promise that the London banks should not be pillaged. M. de Talleyrand was fond of pretty women and presently Francis's mistress became Madame de Talleyrande and Princess of Benevento. Thereafter she seems to have lived prudently and the only whisper of her former glamour that survived her marriage was Napoleon's confidence that she would seduce the Prince of the Asturias at Valengay.

The chief wealth of the Company and of its servants was drawn from the inland districts then under the Company's control, and it was the ambition of every young civil servant to be appointed Resident at the courts of one or other of the princes of Bengal or Oudh. These rulers, sinking under the burden of their continually increasing obligations to the Company and grown careless of the interests of their decrepit kingdoms, had only one concern, to conciliate and appease every new European who descended on their capitals. And so when Hickey's friend Bob Pott was appointed Resident at the Durbar of the Nawab of Bengal he rejoiced, for not only did " the whole stipend allowed by Government to the Nabob pass through the Resident's hands, in which channel a considerable portion of it always stuck to his fingers ", but " he had likewise the further advantage of purchasing and paying for every European article the Nabob wished to have ". The Residency was at Afzulbag, four miles from the Nabob's capital, Murshidabad ; and in happy anticipation of his future profits Pott spent 30,000 rupees on furnishing this building. Then he invited Hickey and Major Russel to come and stay with him ; and they embarked in " a noble pinnace " stored with " abundance of provisions and liquors " and arrived at Afzulbag a week later. They were impressed by the splendour of Pott's

surroundings, Hickey being especially pleased with his apartments " of the completest kind, with warm and cold baths belonging exclusively to them and every other luxury of the East ". Next morning Pott suggested a drive in his phaeton. They descended the grand staircase between a double file of servants who bowed like Mogul courtiers at their approach. Grouped round the phaeton in the courtyard was a detachment of light horse, the troopers, gorgeously uniformed, saluting the guests with their drawn sabres. They called on the other Europeans in the neighbourhood and during the following week were invited to a round of dinners. Of these one was at the Nabob's palace and of this entertainment Hickey remarks condescendingly that it was " quite in the English taste ". The Prince was evidently less anglicised in his resources of hospitality than the Nawab of Oudh to whom " an Englishman introduced the elegant European diversion of a race in sacks by old women ". It occurred to very few of the Calcutta gentry, who patronised a local prince by accepting his invitations, what hours of anxiety preceded the despatch of the invitation, what alternating moods of gratitude and panic succeeded its acceptance; what expense to procure the materials of European food from Calcutta, to engage cooks skilled in the mysteries of the European kitchen; what shedding of religious prejudices to provide the guests with beef and wine. Dancing-girls ordered from Lucknow and Delhi—surely Rahema Bibi with her incredibly graceful gestures, surely Zebunissa with her delightful wit and the wonderful memory that enabled her to cap appropriately any Persian quotation—surely these would be to the taste of the scornful strangers, so that they would give a good account of the host to authorities in Calcutta? While in the earlier eighteenth century, many of the English mer-

chants became half-Indianised, enjoyed a nautch and, from the frequent references to " country music " did not dislike Indian music, towards the end of the century, with the increase of wealth, the shorter periods of residence in India, and greater opportunities for enjoying their own varieties of dancing and hearing their own music, few Englishmen would admit to a liking for the " barbarous arts " of the East ; and at these parties the guests generally rewarded their hosts' forethought with sneers at the " horrid screeching ", with requests to terminate " this disgusting caterwauling " and with jokes at the restrained and formalised gestures of the Indian dances—how could they compare with the lively gaiety of a cotillion ? The usual Anglo-Indian reaction to such an entertainment remained fairly constant, and the following verses, though written in the next century, are typical of a guest's impressions :

The Rajah he bowed and he bowed and he bowed,
Shaking hands as they came with the whole of the crowd ;
And he led to a couch the Commissioner's wife,
And said 'twas the happiest hour of his life.
Then suddenly sounded a loud-clanging gong,
And there burst on the eyes of the wondering throng
A bevy of girls
Dressed in bangles and pearls
And other rich gems,
With fat podgy limbs . . .
And sang a wild air
Which affected your hair
While behind them a circle of men and of boys,
With tomtoms and pipes, made a terrible noise.

Very few guests were as sympathetic as Mrs. Graham who noted the courtesy and sensitive charm of the host, who " was pleased with the attention the Rajah paid to his guests, whether Hindoos, Christians or Musulmans ; there was not one to whom he did not speak kindly, or pay some compliment on their entrance ; and he walked round

the assembly repeatedly to see that all were properly accommodated".

Nevertheless, in spite of the brusque manners of the English guests there was a greater friendliness between the two races at such parties than there was ever to be during the nineteenth century. They neither understood nor liked each other as a general rule; but the Indian nobles had learnt their manners in the Mogul court and the English residents or soldiers were men of the world with something of the cynical tolerance and outward polish of that century. Some of the famous breakfasts given by the Nawab of Lucknow, that charming and futile prince, were evidently enjoyed by everyone; and between the almost endless courses there would be animal-fights or processions of rare beasts such as "a greyish elephant". But that strange society of Lucknow, with its Europeanised Musulmans and Indianised Europeans was not typical of India. The younger factors met few of the Indian gentry; their contacts were chiefly with the money-lenders and traders of the capital, whom they would only meet in business hours or at an occasional, inevitable nautch.

If the young factors found little pleasure at these entertainments, their hosts, for all the satisfaction they would at other times have derived from Raji's grace and Kaliani's wit, were too uneasy to enjoy their own party till the guests had gone. Then followed an entertainment of which few English guests were aware. The doors would be shut, and the dancing-girls, excellent mimics like all Indians, would give an imitation of the bored guests who had just left, and the uncomfortable tension of the last hour would be dispelled in bursts of happy laughter. And while the English phaetons clattered home Raji and Kaliani would be dressing up to caricature English costume and executing with

indecent exaggeration an Orientalised version of English dances, those minuets and country dances which seemed so innocent and natural to English eyes, so different from the provocative posturing of Indian nautch-girls, but which to Indians appeared utterly scandalous. Maria Graham might be " Sorry I could not go to the nautch the next night, where I hear there was a masquerade when several Pariahs appeared as Europeans and imitated our dances, music and manners ". But her attitude was not general, and Flora Annie Steel's reaction to such a mime was perhaps more typical :

> Two white-masked figures, clasped waist to waist, were waltzing about tipsily. One had a curled flaxen wig, a muslin dress distended by an all-too-visible crinoline giving full play to a pair of prancing brown legs. The other wore an old staff uniform, cocked hat and feather complete. . . . It was a vile travesty.

If the general impression of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Calcutta is one of ostentation and extravagance it must be remembered that there were more serious circles than those in which Francis and Hickey moved. Many of Hastings' friends amused themselves by composing Latin verses and translating Tasso and Horace. Hastings was regarded as an arbiter of literary taste and these verses would be sent to him for his approval. He himself made translations from the Indian epics. They were rough-and-ready versions without poetic fire ; he would compose them in his palanquin as he jolted over the plains of Bihar or the steaming paddy-fields of Bengal. He sent them to his wife with a modest little preface. " If you read this with a Composed Mind and admire it only as a Production of mere poetical Merit (for so much I am sure of from the Partiality of your Judgment) burn it ; for it is good

for nothing." But if these more solemn poems had little value, there is no doubt that Hastings could turn a skilful epigram when he chose, as his lines on Burke prove.

> Oft have I wonder'd that, on Irish Ground
> No poisonous reptiles ever yet were found :
> Reveal'd the secret stands, of Nature's Work !
> She saved her venom, to create a Burke.

When weary of versifying he would take up a book of extracts from the Mahabharata and the lean disdainful face of the Governor-General would soften with emotion as he read of the old chivalrous heroes of the Hindus, of Arjun the charioteer and Prince Yudishthra who would not enter heaven unless his dog accompanied him. At last he arrived at Benares and the books had to be laid aside. There was always trouble for the Governor-General in that teeming city, whether due to the " clamours of the discontented inhabitants ", the intrigues of the Rajah, or the incompetence of the Resident, Mr. Markham, whom Hastings had appointed to this post at the age of twenty-one to oblige his father, the Archbishop of York. Paternal gratitude moved the Archbishop to become " an active and steady friend " and actually to use " intemperate language in defence of Warren Hastings, which was brought to the notice of Parliament ".[1] The Archbishop did well to be grateful for his son was making £30,000 a year in bribes. But once the situation had been surveyed, the populace quietened or the Rajah relieved of some more treasure, Hastings reverted to intellectual pursuits and his entourage were surprised at the Governor-General's interest in Hindu philosophy, his undignified " Pundit-hunting ". At Benares

[1] *D.N.B.*, quoted in Thompson and Garrett, *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India.*

too, he met Scindia's minister Beneram, and mentioned him in a letter to his wife as one " whom you know I reckon among my first friends ". He studied Persian (which he considered should be promoted to a serious study in English Universities as a companion classical language to Latin) and a Persian lady, Panna Begum, the wife of Colonel Pearse, Hastings' second in the duel with Francis, used to write to him long letters in her own language. Colonel Pearse was now dead and his widow's chief concern was to interest Hastings in her son whom she refers to as " Mr. Tommy ". It is not known whether this was the same son who was afterwards sent to school in England ; but if so he soon shed that Anglicised pet-name, for he was entered at Harrow as " Muhammad ". Hastings' interest in Indian culture led him to an affectionate respect for many Indians such as was uncommon in his time. Perhaps the Indian whom he most esteemed was Ali Ibrahim Khan, Chief Judge of Benares, whom Cornwallis afterwards praised as " a man of great talent and universally respected ". The occasion of Cornwallis's encomium was a request by the Prince of Wales to hand over to the very young son of a gentleman who had financially obliged him [1] the Benares judgeship which as his Royal Highness pointed out was at present only held by " black cann " . . .

Of a part with his studious habits was Hastings' oddly Spartan life. " I eat sparingly," he wrote, " I never sup ; and am generally abed by ten. I breakfast at six ; I bathe with cold water daily." And, in that age most eccentric of all, he practised, " total Abstinence from Wine from which I have already experienced Benefit ". Nor were his clothes appropriate to his station. He only ordered two suits a year and one frock-coat " merely for fashion ".

[1] Basu, *Rise of the Christian Power.*

He was almost happiest when pottering about a garden in the shabbiest of clothes. From his first arrival in India he had been trying to acclimatise English plants, and, as Governor-General, we find him writing to England for seeds of honeysuckle and sweet-brier, to be packed for the voyage "in small bottles with ground-glass stoppers". And on one occasion he records delightedly the arrival of a consignment of "Troffles, Morrelles and Artichoke Bottomes". He bought eagerly rare Asian plants from the Himalaya and the upland frontiers of Burma. He was never tired of experimenting, and was proud of a hybrid grain he had produced which he called "barley-wheat". With animals he was less fortunate; some shawl-goats he had ordered from England died on the way; and he had to content himself with ordinary Indian cattle. It was perhaps from his readings in Hindu literature that he caught an almost Hindu feeling for cows; he describes how they run after him when they hear his voice, and in a letter to Imhoff he confesses his devotion to his cows "on account of their accomplishments and moral virtues".

He found time to interest himself in each new fashion from England. The style of carriages was changing about 1780 and he and his wife were anxious to obtain one of the newest coaches. Mrs. Hastings was excited by an advertisement which appeared in the *Bengal Gazette* of July 16: "Just Imported. A very elegant Crane Neck Coach made entirely in the present taste with a genteel Rutland Rooff, the pannels painted a pleasing Laylock colour, with a handsome Gold Sprig Mosaic." She would have liked to acquire it at once, but the Governor-General pursed his lips and went down alone to inspect the carriage. His report was discouraging. "It is ill shaped, has a Patch in this Form (ovalshaped) behind, and a Crack all across.

I judge it to be old and vamped ; and besides I do not like it." [1]

Mrs. Hastings rising from the uncomfortable situation of a Franconian baroness awaiting divorce to be the wife of the first Governor-General, set a number of problems in etiquette to the ladies of Calcutta. To begin with what was the Governor-General's wife to be called ? The foreigners, for whom in spite of her English marriage she continued to confess so unfortunate a preference, had no difficulties about this ; they called her " milady Hastings " or even " Lady Hastings ". The English seem gradually to have adopted the title of " Lady Governess " whose origin, pleasantly typical of the antiquarianism of that age, is supposed to have been due to some obviously inapposite comparison with Margaret of Parma. Gradually the procedure of etiquette became settled. When the Lady Governess entered a drawing-room she was welcomed by a general cry of greeting from all the ladies. Then each lady set herself to catch the Lady Governess's eye. As Mrs. Jackson told Mrs. Fay, " You must fix your eyes on her and never take them off till she notices you." So they sat round in a circle, staring. The Lady Governess would select one lady and acknowledge her stare with a " complacent glance " to which the lady replied with a " respectful bend ".[2] A brief conversation followed, of almost royal banality ; while the other ladies continued their purposeful stares, each expecting to be the next honoured with notice. But where there were no precedents for such a lofty situation, it was inevitable that Mrs. Hastings, a foreigner, should offend many. Moreover, her every action was spied on and criticised by the faction opposed to her husband. Acceptance of an invitation was sneered at, a refusal caused mortal offence.

[1] Hastings' *Letters to His Wife.* [2] Mrs. Fay.

Even in the Lady Governess's relations with her personal friends the critics insisted on unearthing extravagant motives. Thus when Mrs. Hastings sat talking for some time with Lady Impey, Francis was revolted and scribbled in his diary: "*Vulgo.* Toad-eating." Then Lady Impey invited Mrs. Hastings to supper to meet Mrs. Wheler who had recently arrived from England. Mrs. Hastings, pleading an indisposition, begged to be excused. But no one believed in the indisposition. Mrs. Wheler had brought some new clothes with her from London, in particular a hoop of astounding size concerning which all the drawing-rooms had been agog. It was to be assumed, therefore, that in any ordinary circumstance, Mrs. Hastings would be as anxious as anyone to see Mrs. Wheler's wardrobe. There must be some sinister reason for the letter of refusal. Had she quarrelled with Lady Impey? Francis put it about that she had and exclaimed in his diary that Mrs. Hastings' letter was "an intended slight".

Probably the real reason, apart from her indisposition, was that Mrs. Hastings was disappointingly uninterested in Calcutta fashions. She dressed to please herself; but her knowledge of Paris styles was far in advance of the Calcutta ladies. She had many correspondents in England and France who regularly reported to her each new fad and fashion. A friend wrote to her that smart women in London "are grown so Young as not only to appear in their Sashes but their Shifts". And presently the Lady Governess startled Calcutta by the juvenile air of her clothes. Mrs. Fay tittered at this "infantile simplicity" and breathlessly complained of "her whole dress being at variance with our present modes which are certainly not so, perhaps for that reason she has chosen to depart from them". But when Mrs. Hastings appeared at a ball without powder, her

beautiful hair brushed back in artfully calculated disorder like a Greuze milkmaid's, the contrast with the toppling head-dresses of the other guests was so remarkable that Mrs. Fay could only grumble that Mrs. Hastings' "rank sets her above the necessity of studying anything but the whim of the moment".

At Hastings' table there were often foreigners among the guests. Chief among these was the Counte de Boigne, noblest of all the adventurers who hired their swords to Indian princes in that age of anarchy. He had had a varied career. Born in 1751 at Chambery, which was then in the dominions of the King of Sardinia, he had had to escape into France at the age of seventeen to avoid the consequences of having killed a Piedmontese noble in a duel. Arrived at Paris he enlisted in the Clare Regiment of the Irish Brigade. After five years' service, realising that he could never rise beyond the rank of lieutenant in a regiment where Irish nationality was the first qualification for superior rank, he resigned and journeyed to Russia where he became the lover of the Great Catherine. But she tired of him, as she did of all her lovers, made him a captain in her army and despatched him to the Turkish War. He was captured at Tenedos and sold as a slave in Constantinople. Liberated at the end of the war he wandered down to Smyrna where he met some English merchants who had made a fortune in India. His imagination took fire and he set out for Alexandria *en route* to the East. His ship foundered off the coast of Palestine and passengers and crew were captured by Arabs. De Boigne's manners, however, were so pleasant that the Arabs not only released him but paid his passage to Alexandria. There he met a son of the Duke of Northumberland who gave him a letter to Warren Hastings. He stayed for some while at Government House and then

Hastings sent him with letters to the Nawab of Oudh. The Nawab loaded his fascinating guest with gifts, but unfortunately on his return de Boigne was waylaid by Marathas and robbed of all his new acquisitions. Meanwhile the opposition in the Calcutta Council, led by Francis, had got wind of de Boigne's visit to Lucknow and demanded that de Boigne should account for everything he had received from the Nawab. It seemed as if the wretched Frenchman was ruined; for Francis would not have accepted the story that the disappearance of all those valuables was due to a Maratha raid. But when de Boigne arrived in Calcutta, Francis was on his way home and Hastings was supreme. Explanations were waved aside and de Boigne was given letters to another prince, the great Scindia, the effective Regent of the Mogul Empire. Scindia not only greatly admired Hastings and so was glad enough to oblige one of his friends; he was busy building up an army drilled and armed in European style. He was delighted with de Boigne, and gave him command of two battalions of infantry, and presently of ten. These were uniformed like French troops and on their banners shone the white cross of Savoy. At the head of these forces de Boigne destroyed the Rajput armies and made his master the most powerful chieftain in India. He married a Persian princess who became a Catholic and called herself Catherine. He lived in great state at Alighar, and entertained in his palace any Europeans who passed that way. When Mr. Twining stayed with him—

> Dinner was served at four. It was much in the Indian style; pillaws and curries, variously prepared, in abundance; fish, poultry and kid. The dishes were spread over the large table fixed in the middle of the hall, and were, in fact, a banquet for a dozen persons, although there was no one to partake of it but the General and myself.

After dinner de Boigne's hookah was brought in. It was so magnificent that Mr. Twining exclaimed, " What a mean and vulgar thing does the tobacco pipe seem, when compared with this, even in the mouth of its great patron, Dr. Parr ! "

His only rival in local society was the British resident, Colonel Collins, who had an escort which included a brigade of artillery, and " a noble suite of tents which might have served for the Great Mogul ". But whereas de Boigne was a man of fine presence and magnificent physique (his connection with the Empress of Russia offering sufficient evidence for that) Colonel Collins was

> an insignificant, little, odd-looking man, dressed in an old-fashioned military coat, white breeches, sky-blue silk stockings, and large glaring buckles to his shoes, having his highly powdered wig, from which depended a pigtail of no ordinary dimensions, surmounted by a small round black silk hat, ornamented with a single black ostrich feather, looking altogether not unlike a monkey dressed for Bartholomew Fair.

However, there were times when Colonel Collins had the field to himself, for Scindia would quarrel with his great general and then (aware that he would soon be recalled with apologies) de Boigne would retire to Lucknow and stay with his friend General Martin, who was in charge of the Nawab's arsenals. Martin lived in great comfort with four concubines, a number of eunuchs and a host of slaves. His library was famous ; he had collected 4,000 volumes of Latin, French, Italian, English, Persian and Sanskrit works. In his gallery were hung 150 oil-paintings including pictures by Zoffany and Daniel. His house was

> built on the bank of the R. Goomty, and boats passed under the room, in which he dined. He has underground apartments, even with the edge of the water, the most comfortable in the

> world in the hot weather, and the most elegantly decorated. As the water rises he ascends; the lower storey is always flooded in the rains, and the second generally; when the water subsides they are repaired and redecorated. . . . He had a pair of glasses ten feet in length and proportionately wide. It would require a week at least to examine the contents of his house.

He had certain little eccentricities such as interlarding his conversation with explosive cries of "Do you see? Do you see?" But it was difficult not to be eccentric in Lucknow. The court was crowded with raffish adventurers who, wrote Mr. Twining, "lived in a style far exceeding the expense and luxuriousness of Calcutta; they dined alternately with each other and kept a band to play who had learnt English and Scotch airs". And the Nawab himself surpassed all his subjects in eccentricity. He was devoted to a large English dray-horse which he fed on such rich and succulent food that the wretched animal became too fat to move. He liked wearing Western costume, though like most Indians he was "prejudiced against the wigs"; and he would surprise new-comers by appearing dressed as a British admiral or as a clergyman of the Church of England.

From Lucknow de Boigne would travel down to Calcutta to visit his benefactor Hastings; and as he sat at the Governor-General's table, a silent square-headed man with pleasant manners and a prim smile, it must have been difficult to believe he had had so strange a life. He seemed a typical country gentleman of provincial France.

If Calcutta society grumbled at the Hastingses' greater interest in de Boigne's conversation than in that of the richest merchant prince, the tremendous pride, the imperious aloofness of the Marquess Wellesley filled people with a certain awe. He lived, as he described it, "in this magnificent solitude, where I stalk about like a Royal Tiger

without even a friendly jackal to soothe the severity of my thoughts ", attributing his reserve to the fact that, " in the evening I have no alternative but the society of my subjects or solitude. The former is so vulgar, ignorant, rude, familiar and stupid as to be disgusting and intolerable ; especially the ladies, not one of whom by the eye is even decently good-looking." He consoled himself with an almost Mogul pomp, withdrew from the gaze of the vulgar behind rank upon rank of courtiers and guards. When he went upon the river it was in a boat as magnificent as a Manchu's. Even in the private apartments of his palace he was attended by a troupe of servants as he moved from room to room. As Mr. Hickey noted, with (one feels) a touch of jealousy, " His Lordship's own establishment of servants, equipages, etc., were extravagant in the superlative degree, not only in point of number but splendour of dress, the whole being put to the account of the chaste managers of Leadenhall Street." Moreover, not content with Government House at Calcutta " he commenced a second palace at Barrackpore, almost rivalling in magnificence the Calcutta one . . . the grounds which of themselves were very pretty, he laid out with extraordinary taste and elegance, upon different parts of which he erected a theatre, a riding-house with probably the finest aviary and menagerie in the world ". Distant with Europeans, Wellesley was frankly contemptuous of Indians. As General Palmer wrote to Hastings—

> little or no attention is paid to the Vakils (ministers) of the Native Courts by Lord Wellesley. They are not permitted to pay their respects to him oftener than two or three times a year, which I think is as impolitic as it is ungracious. . . . I observe with great concern the system of depressing them adopted by the present government and imitated in the manners of almost every European. They . . . are treated

> in society with mortifying hauteur and reserve. In fact they have hardly any social intercourse with us.

It was no longer fashionable in Government House circles to profess an interest in Persian poetry or Hindu metaphysics. The deterioration in relations between the two races was very rapid and in 1810 Captain Williamson noted that "Europeans have little connexion with natives of either religion" and in the same year Mrs. Graham regretted that "Every Briton (in Calcutta) appears to pride himself on being outrageously a John Bull".

Towards the end of the century there was a decline in the general extravagance and licence. Some credit for this must go to Cornwallis. Hickey gives a charming picture of Cornwallis's return.

> Lord Wellesley . . . sent down all his carriages, servants, staff officers, and general establishment to receive his noble supercessor at the waterside. Lord Cornwallis upon landing looked surprised and vexed at the amazing cavalcade that was drawn up, and turning to Mr. George Abercrombie Robinson . . . he said "What! What! What is all this, Robinson, hey?" Mr. Robinson answered "My Lord, the Marquis Wellesley has sent his equipages and attendants as a mark of respect and to accompany your Lordship to the Government House." To this Lord Cornwallis replied, "Too civil, too civil by half. Too many people. I don't want them, I don't want one of them, I have not yet lost the use of my legs, Robinson, hey? Thank God I can walk, walk very well, Robinson, hey; don't want a score carriages to convey me a quarter of a mile; certainly shall not use them", and he accordingly did walk. . . . Lord Wellesley received the new Governor-General at the foot of the stairs of the Government House, where the two Marquises embraced, then going up hand in hand to the second floor, where a splendid breakfast was set out, Lord Wellesley's band of music playing martial airs, Lord Cornwallis seemed much struck with the magnificence of the apartment, and while walking up to the head of the breakfast table, said, "Upon my word, Wellesley, you have shown much taste

here, much taste indeed, Wellesley ; it is very handsome, very handsome, indeed, Wellesley."

Later on, however, Cornwallis unburdened himself to Dr. Fleming who asked him if he liked the new place, and Cornwallis replied, " Like it, Fleming ! Not at all ! Not at all ! I shall never be able to find my way about it without a guide, nor can I divest myself of the idea of being in a prison, for if I show my head outside a door, a fellow with a musket and fixed bayonet presents himself before me. I will not have this continued, I won't indeed, Fleming." Even after Wellesley had handed over charge to Cornwallis he continued to drive about Calcutta in a " coach and six, preceded, and followed, by a party of Dragoons and a number of outriders ", while the new Governor-General drove himself " in a phaeton with a pair of steady old jog-trot horses, accompanied by his Secretary, Mr. Robinson, and without a single attendant of any description whatsoever ". But while Cornwallis dropped all Wellesley's newfangled modes of address to the Governor-General such as " Excellency " and " Most Noble " the pomp of Government House was little affected by his desire that " I will not be pestered, and must have quiet and retirement " ; and his successor, Minto, complained that " the first night I went to bed in Calcutta I was followed by fourteen persons in white muslin gowns into the dressing-room. One might have hoped that some of these were ladies ; but on finding that there were as many turbans and black beards as gowns, I was very desirous that these bearded housemaids should leave me . . . which with some trouble and perseverance I accomplished, and in that one room I enjoy a degree of privacy, but far from perfect."

When Cornwallis succeeded Wellesley he had but a short time to live, but during his first period of office the effect

on Calcutta society of his modest and sensible way of life was very noticeable. As an enthusiastic clergyman, named Tennant, wrote, "A reformation, highly commendable, has been effected, partly from necessity, but more by the example of the Governor-General, whose elevated rank and noble birth gave him in a great measure the guidance of fashion." And, his enthusiasm triumphing over his grammar, he added, "Regular hours and sobriety of conduct became as decidedly the test of a man of fashion as they were formerly of irregularity." This was, of course, parsonic hyperbole. Lord Cornwallis was as fond of a bottle of wine as any man of that age. Indeed the two worst offences at his table were to delay passing the bottle and to pass it without replacing the cork. At intervals his voice would rap out, "Pass the wine," or "Fie, fie! Sir, how can you omit to put the cork in the bottle before you pass it?" These two sentences became so regular a feature of a dinner at Government House that when Mr. Auriol (whom Hickey called "a foolish, weak, chattering blockhead", but who, in Zoffany's portrait appears as a staid and stolid paterfamilias) exclaimed, after his first dinner at Government House, that he had liked Cornwallis "vastly indeed. I never saw so well-bred a man in my life. He was exceedingly polite and attentive, and during dinner spoke to me at least thirty times", Auriol's brother-in-law Dashwood said, "Did he? Then I dare conjecture that fifteen of those times were to pass the bottle and fifteen to pass the cork."

Cornwallis's method of reform was simple; to insist on his guests dancing at his dances, instead of only drinking. As Kaye observed, "Before the coming of Cornwallis there had seldom been much if any dancing after supper. The gentlemen-dancers were commonly too far gone in drink to venture upon any experiments of activity demanding the

preservation of the perpendicular." But now the local newspapers piqued themselves on reports of the minuets at Government House and their dancers. At the New Year ball of 1788 we read that

> Lady Chambers and Colonel Pearse danced the first minuet, and the succeeding ones continued till about half-after eleven o'clock, when the supper tables presented every requisite to gratify the most refined epicurean. The ladies soon resumed the pleasures of the dance, and knit the rural braid, in emulation of the poet's sister graces, till four in the morning.

When he had no guests Cornwallis preferred to retire early. As he wrote to Lord Brome, " I sit down at nine, with two or three officers of my family, to some fruit and a biscuit, and go to bed soon after the clock strikes ten. I don't think the greatest sap at Eton can lead a duller life than this."

One by one the older generation of Nabobs disappeared from the racecourse and the Assembly-Rooms. They called for their accounts from their *sircars*, and were generally disappointed at what they thought the unexpectedly meagre sum left to them after numerous deductions for commissions, interest on loans and debts to tradesmen. But there was generally enough to their credit to enable them to cut a dash in England, to purchase pocket-boroughs for their nephews, and swagger down Jermyn Street even if people laughed at their " gay India coats " and the tasteless display of jewellery. But first accommodation had to be reserved on a home-going ship ; and the East Indiamen captains, having the common estimate of a Nabob's resources would charge fantastic prices. Colonel Champion had to pay 2,000 rupees for a section of the " great cabin " ; Mrs. Barclay £400 for a passage, and Colonel Wood £1,000, having paid which he died before setting foot on board ship.

Of all the departures that of Mr. Hickey must have most made people realise that an age was ending, for he had been so constant a figure at every party, always on the race-course of an evening in his chariot, the noisiest at every supper, trotting down the law-court corridors every morning, wracked with headache but still bubbling with gossip. And now on December 24, 1807, they read in the *Calcutta Gazette* : " To be sold by public auction by Tullon & Company, on Monday, the 25th January, 1808, at his house adjoining the Supreme Court the truly elegant property of William Hickey, Esq., returning to Europe." His effects included furniture, plate, jewellery, paintings and engravings, books, a billiard table, an organ,

> a full pannel buggy, finished in the finest style with a very handsome steady going good Bay Acheen poney and plated harness ; a very handsome showy fine tempered Bay saddled horse with saddle and bridle. A ditto bay Buggy poney. A ditto bay saddle poney and a grey carriage horse formerly one of a pair and full 14 hands high. A very elegant chair finished in the first style. A fashionable mehanna as good as new.

Most of his pictures he took with him, having entrusted them to Mr. Chinnery to be packed. The latter described his method of packing them thus : " The pictures are rolled on a hollow cylinder, and between each is put a piece of green silk to prevent their sticking to each other. You will be careful to have them gently warmed by a fire as you unroll them." Mr. Hickey kept postponing the time of his departure in spite of the advice of " Doctor Hare, Junior ", who warned him that his " frame was so debilitated from a long residence in a sultry climate that a change was become indispensably requisite ". But it was flattering that the new Governor-General had remarked soon after his arrival that " Mr. Hickey is a gentleman I much want to see, having

a message to deliver . . . from Mrs. Burke". And he hated leaving behind his billiard table "which was an excellent one made by the famous Seddons". In fact—

> as the time approached for my departure my spirits became depressed to the greatest degree. . . . I was about to quit a country wherein every wish was in a great measure anticipated, by being gratified before announced, arising from my having a multitude of servants, most of whom had lived with me upwards of twenty years.

He was distressed at the thought of throwing so many of his employees out of work and wished he could afford to pension them all. Even his dog Tiger "seemed to understand that something extraordinary was on foot and appeared as melancholy as myself. . . . During the last three days the animal would never quit my side for a moment. He, in fact, did everything to express his sorrow except speak, and his piteous looks and cries occasioned me many a real pang." It was disappointing that the sale of his effects only realised 18,300 rupees, and some of his pictures fetched almost nothing, although they were "capital performances". But it was a pleasant surprise to find that his friend Peter Speke had sent to await him on board ship "a few dozen of some incomparable Madeira, which will prove very comfortable as a cordial" and also "four beautiful views of the new London docks" which must have been a pleasant adornment to the "little dirty hole of a cabin". But he was still depressed and could not eat anything at his first meal on board and "had recourse to my old remedy Lol Shrob (red wine) though without producing the intended effect. . . . I was restless, uneasy in mind as in body, and completely miserable." His ship set sail on the 18th of February and in the incidents of the voyage he soon forgot his sorrow. It was August when the ship sighted England

but Hickey and the Bengali servant, Munnoo, he had brought with him, found the wind disagreeably cold as they were rowed away from the ship in the pilot-boat. But there were comforts at the inn, a feather bed and fresh food, though English cherries and peaches seemed insipid and sour after the luxurious fruits of the East. His luggage had been detained at the Customs, and the Customs officials of those days were as stupid and rude as English Customs officials have always been. They tore his pictures to pieces in their eagerness to unroll them, their curiosity obviously having been excited by the description "foreign pictures", and having damaged them irretrievably charged him £40 duty on them.

Hickey had been looking forward to his servant's astonishment at the first sight of London, but unfortunately, although it was August, there was a fog when they arrived and so neither of them could see anything. He did not stay long in London but bought a pleasant house at Beaconsfield, where his Indian servant was baptised and his heathen name of Munnoo changed to "William Munnew". Hickey suffered from liver headaches, and took to "exercise both by riding and walking, to the great surprise of my Indian friends, who knew that in Bengal I took little or no exercise". The exercise having little effect on his headaches, he followed "the fashion of the time for all those recently returned from the East Indies to take an early trip to Cheltenham, with a view of getting quit of all lurking bile". It was pleasant to meet a number of Calcutta acquaintances in the Pump Room. They all tried the water, though Hickey did so only once, the taste disgusting him, and his friend Mr. Turner found that so far from curing his rheumatism it gave him a headache which he had never had before. Miss Hickey, on the other hand, "gave it a very fair trial, drink-

ing it regularly, and in proper quantities, but without deriving any advantage". Still it was pleasant to chat under the palms and complain about the irregularity with which one's dividends arrived from India. He was quite a personage in genteel circles at that watering-place, and *The Cheltenham Chronicle and Gloucestershire General Advertiser* was careful to announce the arrival of " Mr. and Miss Hickey " ; and the third member of the party was sure to be " my faithful Munnew ".