CHAPTER V

THE change that was coming over English society in India was less remarkable in Calcutta than in Bombay. That possession, it will be remembered, had been in a minute of 1825 dismissed as " of little Importance to the Company ". But even when that minute was drafted, Bombay was about to become almost as important to the Company as Calcutta. During the eighteenth century Bombay was a frontier outpost under the menacing shadow of the Maratha power. The fall of the Peshwa and the annexation of the chief territories of the Maratha empire promoted Bombay suddenly to be the capital of a great province. The second stage in Bombay's sudden rise was the opening of the overland route through Egypt. The first steamer sailed from Suez to Bombay in 1830 and thereafter the passage round the Cape went gradually out of fashion.

Passages by the Cape route were much cheaper now; a single passage cost about £120 or for a reserved cabin £150. The cabins were not furnished and passengers were informed that " cabin-furniture and fittings-up shall be procured of the Upholsterers at the East India Docks ". Such fittings-up included " a sofa with mattress, a pillow and a chintz covering for the day-time, a Hanging Lamp, a looking-glass with sliding cover; a swing-tray; a chest of drawers in two pieces; foul-clothes Bag; an oil-cloth or carpet (This merely for the sake of Appearances) ". A travellers' Handbook of 1844 gives an interesting list of articles which a gentleman would need on the voyage to India. Among these were

six pairs of loose cotton-drawers, for sleeping or bathing in. A couple of brown Holland blouses. A blue camlet jacket. Two pairs of merino, camlet or gambroon trousers. Two dozen pairs of white jean trowsers. Two dozen white jean jackets. Two dozen white jean waistcoats. A hat, in leathern box. A straw hat. A blue cloth forage-cap. Two black silk stocks or cravats. A dozen pairs of white kid gloves. A couple of morning gowns. A boat-cloak of camlet. A bucket and rope (serviceable in drawing up salt water whenever required).

These, as the Handbook repeats, are "*Actual Necessaries*". For amusement it is suggested the gentleman should equip himself with "scientific instruments, telescopes, cards and an outline map of the route", and for his general comfort "water, brandy, lucifer-matches and raspberry vinegar". A lady's "necessaries" would obviously be greater. There was apparently some difficulty about stays, for Mrs. Wise of 31, Saville Row, advertised that she could "assure to lady passengers some invaluable advice and a description of corset of inestimable utility in a relaxing climate". Otherwise the wardrobe recommended for the voyage is much what we might expect, save that in contrast to the number of other dresses, the item "An ordinary gown and common straw bonnet to wear on deck" suggests that most of the day during the voyage was not to be spent on deck. The following necessaries are more interesting: "Quilling-net and piece-net; hair powder; a good supply of papillote paper; hartshorn, aromatic-vinegar, aperients, and a case of Cologne water." The ladies' recreations are dealt with more summarily than the gentlemen's, and they are advised to occupy themselves with "carpet and crochet work, drawing, knitting and netting (For these purposes silver needles are recommended as the moisture of the fingers at a high temperature is calculated to rust the implement), while musical practice will much depend

upon the presence of a Piano-forte ". But it was obvious considered unnecessary to offer suggestions for trivial amus ments when " there is such perpetual entertainment tracing the progress of the vessel, in observing the practic use of the compass, in taking lunar and solar observation marking the changes of the climate, the phenomena of tl sea's phosphorescence, the uses of the complex machine of a ship, etc ".

The increasingly popular overland route cost about tl same as the voyage round the Cape. Passengers liked arrive a few days before the scheduled time at Alexandr so as to see the sights of that place and of Cairo. Tl only difficulty about this was that it generally meant trave ling to Alexandria by a French boat. Lady Falkland foun it " by no means agreeable " to have to share a cabin wi several other passengers, her maid and the stewardes When she exclaimed at such discomfort the stewarde pointed out that she, the stewardess, was far more serious incommoded by the number of passengers as a result which, " je passerai la nuit à terre ". At Alexandria the were two hotels, the " Orient " and the " Europe ". Tl former was to be avoided, for in it " the style of living French and not conducted upon English principles " Having obtained accommodation, then, at the Europ one visited Pompey's Pillar, Cleopatra's Needle and tl Pasha's palace. On the whole Alexandria was disappoin ing for those who had looked forward to their first glimp of the romantic East. Cairo was a different matter alt gether. There was the comfortable Shepheard's where, Mr. Stoequeler remarked,[1] " a bath is an *agrément* whic few will deny themselves ". There were one or two detai about the hotel baths, however, which needed attentio

[1] Article in the *Asiatic Journal*, entitled " Overland Trip ".

" The soft coir or fibrous matter ", Mr. Stoequeler complained, " which is used instead of flannel or the hair-glove, is not by any means so efficacious as the latter in removing the sodden matter, or *papier maché*, which covers the human cuticle. Then there is neither shampooing, nor joint-cracking, nor moustachio-dying." Nevertheless he was refreshed by his bath and ready for sightseeing. " A journey to the Pyramids ", he observed, " is particularly good fun, apart from the antiquarian enthusiasm which a man insensibly *gets up* on these occasions." On the other hand the Sphinx was disappointing.

> It is certain that age, or that neglect which imparts, in time, a vinegar aspect to the countenance of the most comely belle, has bereft the Sphinx of all her benignity. To my perception the colossal head (all that now remains) very closely resembles, when seen in profile, a cynical doctor of laws, with wig awry, suffering strangulation per tight cravat.

Nor was the Pasha's palace really impressive. Its " rich damask curtains and satin hangings *à la Française* are associated with coarse arabesques and wretched attempts at Perspective by a Greek, and divans and sofas *à la Turque* ", and in the garden " myrtles under severe restraint, box disciplined to represent ships and peacocks, and pavilions built in humble imitation of the Trianons, remind one of the French gardens siècle Louis XIV ".

Mr. Stoequeler does not seem to have penetrated to the Shoobra Kiosk ; but it was as well, for he would have found here the mingling of styles even more outrageous than anywhere in Cairo. The ceilings of its colonnades had been decorated by Italian artists with paintings of Hellenic deities in romantic attitudes ; and in the central courtyard was a large portrait of Mehemet Ali with a double representation of the Virgin Mary on either side

of him. In those days, when an Albanian adventurer seemed to have restored some propriety to the name of Egypt's capital (Al Kahira meaning "The Victorious") Egyptians were inclined to be insolent with European visitors. The dragoman at the Shoobra Kiosk would wave a contemptuous hand at the figures of the Virgin and remark, "Look at Joseph's wife whom you Christians worship!" This was especially annoying for English visitors who were at pains to point out that members of the Anglican Church did *not* worship the Virgin, and that it was really rather tiresome to be confused with Papists.

From Cairo the passengers for India were driven to Suez in vans "very strong and capable of bearing, without damage, the violent collisions with lumps of stone and rock". At intervals of ten or twelve miles the horses were changed; and at these stations there were generally inns where you could get "good bottled ale". But after sixteen hours of continuous travelling it was a relief to arrive on board ship again at Suez. There, if you were bound for Madras or Calcutta you embarked on a steamer of nearly 2,000 tons, "with a magnificent saloon or cuddy where eighty persons can dine with comfort in cool weather", and even in hot weather, too, if only the Company had thought of having some port-holes in the saloon instead of "fanciful pictures of the Nile". Passengers for Bombay had, however, to content themselves with the steamers of the East India Company which were "neither so commodious nor so expeditious as those belonging to the Oriental and Peninsular Company".

It was not till 1870 that the first P. & O. steamer passed through the Suez Canal. She was towed by her lascars and tied up at night; and a passenger was heard to observe that it must be a pleasant change for the lascars to

go out into the sunlight and have some strengthening exercise.

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The social atmosphere of Bombay was almost from the beginning of the century different from that of Calcutta. The latter city in the great days of the Nabobs offers a sufficiently exact comparison to Republican Rome after the acquisition of the Levant; Plassey and Magnesia; Buxar and the fall of Mithridates. A vast territory, long famous both for its wealth and for the unwarlike character of its inhabitants, fell into the hands of an oligarchy of merchant-administrators. Numbers of worthless princelings, without national sentiments or the devotion of subjects to inspire them, conspired with Brutuses and Potts to loot the country on condition of keeping their thrones. The hordes of thievish servants, the tasteless luxury, the legal confusion, the rhetoric and ostentation and furious factions of eighteenth-century Calcutta are reminiscent of the Rome of Clodius. But the territories of which Bombay now became the capital were either barren by nature or ruined by continuous war; the people were sensitive, proud and warlike. There were no courts like those of Benares or Murshidabad where a Company man with influence might be appointed Resident and retire after three years with a fortune. Consequently influential circles in London were not interested in Bombay appointments; here was no place of honourable and profitable exile for the bankrupt son of a bishop or a wild young gentleman on the fringe of political society. Not only therefore were there few men who made fortunes in the Company's service but new arrivals were seldom quite so raffish and unsuitable as those whom Clive proposed to buy out on their first arrival. Fortunes there were, of

course, but these were chiefly in shipping and connected enterprises. And in these enterprises Indian firms were early the rivals of the English. The shipbuilding firm of the Wadias soon established a great reputation ; in their dockyards was built Codrington's flagship that went into action at Navarino. These Indian merchants were mostly Parsis. And if English visitors found them less attractive than many other Indians (Mrs. Graham described them as " in general a handsome large people but they have a more vulgar air than other natives ") there could be no doubt about their industry and energy. Their traditions and way of life offered an extreme contrast to those of rich Indians in Bengal ; which province had been regarded by the Mogul authorities as a suitable place of exile for the unscrupulous and rapacious ; it was referred to in court circles as " the hell well-stocked with bread " ; that is to say, the province whose fearful climate was mitigated by its easily garnered wealth and its opportunities for luxury and debauch.

A foreigner, but not of a European community, was soon to rival the Parsis for application and business acumen. In 1832 a quiet middle-aged man landed in Bombay. He was interested in the China trade and he bought a house, which he used both for office and dwelling, in Tamarind Lane. He never came out of doors till the evening, and then he padded along in the shadows dressed in a long Arab gown. He would hover for a moment near the bandstand or watch the fireworks on days of festival. He had only one friend in Bombay, the missionary, Dr. Wilson, and he was fond of visiting him to discuss a question that greatly interested him, the possibility of reconciling the teachings of Moses and the Prophets with the pantheism of the Sanskrit doctors. Many Indians visited Dr. Wilson,

but they were chiefly Parsis in elaborate coaches built from designs of the London Lord Mayor's coach, wearing tall hats and scarlet stockings. The quiet man in the Arab gown would hang about till these grand coaches had gone and then knock gently, standing with arms folded in the wide sleeves of his gown, his head bowed under a big untidy striped turban. His name was Sassoon.

The atmosphere of Bombay, long regarded as a backwater, was hardly changed by a suddenly enhanced prestige, or by the acquisition of wide territories. Most of its English inhabitants continued to be functionaries and officers. They moved in circles not unlike those of a county town in contemporary England. Some of their pastimes would, however, have shocked their friends in England. In 1800, for instance, most of the ladies and gentlemen of the station attended a circus where a wild boar was baited by a leopard. The leopard was nervous of the boar and crouched in a corner. The audience was not to be disappointed and some gentlemen sent their servants to buy squibs and crackers with which they incited the leopard to show a more worthy spirit. The leopard responded by jumping the palisade which separated him from the audience; there was a sad moment of panic and an undignified scramble, during which, as a local newspaper remarked "each waived all ceremony in the order of his going". Fortunately someone had a gun and despatched the savage brute.

In the following year there was an entertaining legal decision which interested all travellers. A new arrival, Mr. Maw, brought an action against the captain of his ship for having permitted those ceremonies known as "Neptune's Rites" which even now have to be submitted to on some English liners by passengers crossing the Line

for the first time—ceremonies now sanctified by photographs in the press of Royalty joining in the lathering and ducking with boyish zest. Mr. Maw was evidently a cross-grained creature for he had objected strongly; but the Bombay justices upheld his objections and fined the captain £400. Other suits of interest generally arose out of local quarrels. Tempers were as short as ever in Bombay. The testy English judiciary had already become a subject for Indian caricature and in 1830 the most successful "turn" at an Indian theatre was a burlesque sketch of the High Court during a trial for murder. The judge, red-faced and deaf, shouts and swears in chronic ill-temper. At last a servant enters and whispers that lunch is ready. "Oh," says the judge and springs to his feet. The Clerk of the Court nervously asks, "What is to be done with the prisoner?" "The prisoner!" exclaims the judge in a new transport of rage. "Damn his eyes, hang him."

The English theatre was less topical. Amateurs produced plays that had been successful in London some years before, such as "The Road to Ruin" "The Wheel of Fortune" and most popular of all, "Miss in her Teens and the Padlock". But as the century advanced a new Puritanism frowned on these amusements. The theatre was gradually deserted, on account, said a local journal approvingly, of "the march of morality and the progress of fastidiousness". There were dances but not on the scale of Calcutta, nor so frequent; and it was noticed by the Press as an item of unusual interest that the ball given to welcome General Abercrombie "continued to a late hour, nor did the brilliancy of the scene lose any effect, until the rising sun began to eclipse the minor artificial illumination of the night".

One of the gayest spirits of the Bombay of the Maratha wars had been Malcolm. Corpulent and merry, as famous

for his drinking as for his quarrels—so that the term " Malcolm row " passed into Bombay proverb—he had campaigned with the Duke in India, heard him cursing " the cloimate " and met him again in Paris where the Duke said, " Ha ! Delighted to see you ", and told him how at Waterloo it had been " hard pounding on both sides but we pounded the hardest ". And then they went out riding and Malcolm chaffed the Duke in Hindustani, calling him a *lootie-wala*, and they joked about Talleyrand, comparing him to some of the equally crafty diplomats they had met at Maratha courts. And presently Malcolm " became quite fluent in French after a bottle and a half of champagne ". But when he came out to Bombay as Governor in 1825 it was to an India already grown strange to him, an India where civilians and soldiers alike missed the old incentives of excitement, plunder and rapid advancement. They were often bored. And Malcolm was so unlike the old Malcolm that he had become a teetotaller. He missed the earlier amenity of life in Bombay. As the Recorder, Sir James Mackintosh, wrote, " There is a langour and a lethargy in the Society here to which I never elsewhere saw any approach. It is all a cheat. If ever I rise from the dead I shall be very glad to travel for the sake of seeing clever men. . . ." Interests were becoming local and provincial. In the 'forties Lady Falkland was almost in despair for subjects of conversation. She mentioned to an officer " a great event which had lately taken place in Europe. He stared at me and said, ' I know nothing at all about it.' Not discouraged I started another topic connected with public affairs in England when I received a decided check by his answering, ' I take no interest at all in it.' I still hoped to rouse him from such a state of apathy and spoke of the admirable speech of some well-

known politician, when to this he calmly replied, ' I know nothing at all about him.' "

The cosmopolitan culture of eighteenth-century Calcutta was in part due to the conditions of service and the connections of many of the Company's servants with political circles in England ; they neither desired nor expected to stay long in India ; their interests therefore remained those of the richer classes in London. But when fortunes could no longer be picked up in five years and a return to Europe was the final reward of long service, narrowness of outlook and a philistine suspicion of culture became the rule, not only in Bombay but, presently, in Calcutta also. Captain Bellew's Griffin, caught quoting poetry by his seniors, was asked for an explanation of such eccentricity. He stammered out that he supposed that it was his nature to quote poetry. " Huh," said the senior, " philosophising, eh ? That is worse still." An interest in religion was preferred to philosophising. The religious revival in England and the eclipse of aristocratic agnosticism was reflected in Anglo-Indian society. Ladies writing to their relations in England referred constantly to their hopes of seeing all India converted. " It is very near," they would prophesy, pointing to the interest of certain Indians in Western education. Stout majors began to discuss the state of their colonel's soul. When Elphinstone became Governor of Bombay his habits awoke suspicion. He never slept in a bed but on the floor, and he rose at 4 a.m. to read Sophocles. It was whispered that he must be " a doubter, sceptic and unbeliever " ; which libel continued until Bishop Heber announced that he had stayed with the Governor and found that " on all essential points " his views were " doctrinally correct ". Professor Toynbee has found extraordinary the progress of Anglo-Indian character from a Jos Sedley to a

THEATRICALS

Nicholson. The Sedleys have been continuous and many of the attributes of a Nicholson were inherent in earlier characters. Clive could be as ruthless and as complacent; but he had no religious prejudices in the matter of self-reward; and he was not interested in the state of anybody's soul. With Elphinstone we begin to notice what I might call the Mutiny accent. When he had ordered a number of Brahmins whom he suspected of disaffection to be blown from guns, and his friends in some anxiety suggested his applying for an Act of Indemnity he replied, "If I have done wrong I ought to be punished. If I have done right I do not want any Acts of Indemnity." But he was a man of an earlier generation in his scholarship, his knowledge of Persian, Urdu, French, Italian and Latin.

Meanwhile there were evident signs of nineteenth-century progress in Bombay. In 1819 a Scotch kirk had been opened, and the circular inviting worshippers to its service pointed out that the Psalms were rendered in a manner "more plain, smooth and agreeable than any heretofore allowed". Two years later the first dentist was announced. A Mr. Rainitz had set up as an interior decorator. His lady,[1] Clara, describing herself as "of Cairo and Constantinople", advertised her skill in "cleering the teeth and playing them up, extracting and fixing new ones".

A Mr. Schulhof opened a Family Hotel, advertising the attractions of private bathing-places with tents and of a separate bungalow where smoking was allowed. Schulhof's was considered by an approving journal to be a place "where people must stand on their dignity; but if Convenience be preferred above Fashion, there is the New English Hotel in the Fort". But Schulhof's had other attractions besides Fashion. On gala nights the guests

[1] The term "wife" was not used in polite circles till the 'forties.

would be entertained by a comedian " who extracts a yellow handkerchief from his white jacket and sings ".

Cricket had appeared and won immediate popularity, the authorities smiling on the game as " an amusement tending to counteract the effects of this enervating climate by raising the spirits from apathy ". Many of the younger men were fond of jackal-hunting at which Qui Hi, the hero of Quiz's poem " Grand Master ", tried his hand.

Qui Hi, on his *Arab horse*
Sets off to find Byculla Course ;
Where, 'twas determined, ev'ry man
Should meet before the hunt began.
Their breakfast now the sportsmen take,
Merely a " *plug* of malt " and steak,
The bugle's signal now, of course,
Summoned the bobbery to horse ;
They get the word and off they move
In all directions, to Love-Grove.
A jackass, buff'lo or tattoo
The sportsmen anxiously pursue.
A loud " *view-hollo* " now is given
" A dog ! a Paria, by heaven !
Surround him—there he goes, ahead :
Put all your horses to their speed."
But *Qui Hi*, disregarding care,
Fell headlong on a prickly pear.

But was consoled when after the hunt—

" he found the party met
Were all for tiffin sharply set.
What rounds of beef, hampers of beer,
What jumping-powder they had here,
It is impossible to tell—
To *hint at them* will do as well.
It therefore, must suffice to say,
That *Qui Hi* spent a *pleasant day* " and so on.

There were quieter ways of visiting the beautiful country around Bombay than a hunt with the Bobbery Pack. Picnics had been popular during the eighteenth century, when a few hours' riding brought one to the Maratha

frontier. At first they were stately, formal affairs, the Governor riding out with a squadron of horse. "Being arrived and alighted a curious cold collation is orderly set forth on large Persian carpets, under the spreading shade of lofty trees where variety of wine and musick exhilerate the spirits to a cherful livelyness and render every object divertive." Even when more ordinary persons made a trip to the country they did so in considerable pomp. Macdonald, that literary footman, describes how his master, Colonel Dow

> set off in a large boat, with sails . . . and a vessel following us with all the necessaries for an empty house, servants, two havaldars or sepoy sergeants, twelve sepoys with their arms, four planakins, with eight men for each, four saddle horses, with their keepers. We had plenty of provisions for us for two days in the boats. I was greatly delighted and thought it was a pleasant thing to live under the East India Company.

As the boat sailed up the wide creek towards Thana, the gentlemen drank punch together while two musicians played French horns. In those quiet backwaters, where an occasional dhow moved softly over the smooth, white water and a warm sea-wind sighed over the reeds stirring the landward-leaning palms and sending the white egrets flapping slowly over the terraced paddy fields, it was delightful to recline on cushions while servants filled and refilled one's glass; the gentlemen's spirits rose and they burst into song; but after a few more rounds of punch they fell asleep. When they reached Bhiwandi the gentlemen drank the waters, dressed, played at cards, and after dinner slept an hour or two; then in the afternoon they rode out on horseback and in the evening played at cards again.

With the turn of the century wines and French horns were less in evidence at picnics and everyone talked of leaving the stuffy city for the rest and refreshment of natural

scenery, or the profound reflections inspired by interesting ruins. When Lady West and Mrs. Heber visited Bassein Lady West noted in her journal : " It really fills one with melancholy when one reflects that this once magnificent place is now a perfect desert with not one single inhabitant. . . . We were much pleased with it." People no longer scoffed at " the mouldering antiquities of the Hindoos ". As long as the antiquity was sufficiently mouldering it became an occasion for romantic reverie. Sir James Mackintosh was, in 1808, disappointed to find that the antiquities of Bijapur did not excite in him those interesting emotions that one would have expected.

> I felt nothing of the usual sentiments inspired by ruins in contemplating those of Bijapur. We in general, on such occasions, feel a reverential melancholy and are lifted above the present time and circumstances. But here we see the triumph of force and the buildings of which we behold the ruins were never the scenes of any other qualities than those of debauchery and of war without science.

He could not foresee a time when men would find a charm in the artillery of Bijapur ; in the fantastic cannon executed in the shape of dragons, with jewelled ear-rings and painted tongues that had once been shaded from the dew by purple carpets and from the sun by umbrellas of state. The buildings were too competent, too obstinate in resistance to the ravages of time, the evidence of pride and luxury too painfully clear, to admit of a " reverential melancholy ". One could only feel a sober elation at the doom of that dissolute city. There should be some pathos, a passive decline, a ruin almost unrecognisable in decay. The time should be evening. Young ladies expressed these sentiments in numerous poems beginning " 'Tis Eve ! " or " 'Tis Night the temple-gongs proclaim ! " Added to the fashionable appreciation of nature and of antiquities was a sham Orien-

talism that, long current in Europe, only spread to Anglo-Indian circles when the Scindias and Tipus were no longer to be feared, had, indeed, become romantic figures of the past. And, of course, every young lady on a picnic had her painting materials with her. There was now no excuse for ignorance of drawing and painting, for in 1822 Signor Constantino Augusto had set up a School of Art for Ladies in Bombay, the proprietor advertising himself as "well versed in the doctrine of the angles of animo-anatomic proportion, and peculiarly correct in his treatment of landscape with chaste colouring and perspective". And it was landscape that every lady wanted to paint. A sketch of quiet river with high banks lined with casuarinas: the jagged and pleasantly "awful" ghats; a temple embowered in mango-grove—the easel would be set up and servants despatched to fetch clean water for the brushes. A tall Brahmin would stroll out of the temple courtyard. Suspicious of all this foreign activity, he would be reassured by smiles and gestures of approbation directed towards the temple and perhaps flattered by a promise to include him also in the picture, that was to give one's friends and relations in England some idea of the wild romantic country that was India. The temple would not be rendered very exactly; in fact those writhing gods and goddesses only spoilt the general grand effect and could safely be omitted. In the end the architecture of the temple seemed, in the picture, to have developed into a blend of Gothic and Grecian; early English arches sprouting from Corinthian columns with just a touch of Egyptian or Chinese decoration. One then darkened the scene considerably to show that it was evening and finished off the picture by adding, in the corner, a tall graceful maiden in white robes drawing water from a well.

Picnics required " arranging " ; servants had to be sent ahead with tents and provisions ; and the weather might turn suddenly hot, making riding fatiguing. So the ladies more often spent the early evenings in their gardens. These were no longer laid out in the formal open manner of earlier taste. Romantic tastes required winding avenues between palms or mango-trees round whose trunks convolvulus, morning-glory, moon-flower and passion-flower were encouraged to creep. There are fewer varieties of song-bird in India than in England ; of these few had yet received their modern titles, and anyway the names were difficult to remember. So one commented on " the *mina*, the *kokeela*, and other birds of song ". Seats of chunam were set at the end of these avenues and having on either side beds of jasmine and tuberose and shrubs of oleander, whose crumpled flowers give a deliciously spicy perfume. The paths were covered with small sea-shells which not only dried quickly after the drenching rain of the monsoon but were supposed to afford an uncomfortable passage to snakes.

Or if the afternoon wind died down, as it so often does in the hot weather in Bombay, at the approach of evening, the garden was too warm for comfort and it was better to recline in a long chair on the veranda. The typical Anglo-Indian bungalow was now being built in Bombay. It was very different from the great mansions of Calcutta which had been constructed with the single hope of imitating and even surpassing the Palladian palaces of the rich at home. These had a façade adorned with heavy Corinthian columns, with a railed balcony behind them far too small for general use. The great windows had to be shuttered most of the day, and the narrow flat roof and the wide expanse of the walls made the buildings, however splendid in appearance,

as unsuitable as possible for the Indian climate. The more sensible bungalows of Bombay seemed at first rather humble. One new-comer to India whose " imagination had been excited to a pitch of enthusiasm by English notions of Oriental pomp and magnificence " was bitterly disappointed at the first view of her host's home which was " a long one-storied building, with an overhanging thatched roof, and looking, for all the world, like a comfortable English cow-house ! " However, the interior was much more prepossessing. " We stepped direct, without any intervening hall or passage, into a large and elegant drawing-room, supported on pillars of faultless proportion. A large screen of red silk divided this apartment from a spacious dining-room." And the vast shady veranda, with its palms and ferns, seemed " an agreeable family resort " suitable " for a delightful *reunion* ". On the other hand, after a visitor had seen one bungalow, he had seen all in Bombay, so alike was the furniture and fittings of each room.

> The houses of the richer classes may contain better chairs and couches than those of their less affluent fellow-citizens, mahogany instead of imitative teak, jackwood or blackwood, while the silk or damask of his couches may parade itself somewhat more finely than the chintz of the inferior. The wall-shades, too, may be better by having drops to them,

but these were only details and the dead level of taste was noteworthy.

If the late evening were cooler the ladies would venture out for a drive. Palanquins were still used, but very few people kept their own ; they were hired by the hour. The palanquin-bearers had a bad reputation for insubordination, and for their continual strikes for higher wages. They would put the palanquin down in the middle of the road and scamper off, or crowd round their anxious " fare "

shouting and gesticulating. This was annoying enough if one were bound for a dinner-party ; but if one were a juror unpunctuality might be visited with a fine or even a conviction for contempt of court. The palanquin-bearers knew this well enough and as soon as they guessed their fare was a juror they were certain to blackmail him for double the ordinary wage. At last the harassed members of a Grand Jury refused to listen to the case until they had uttered a solemn remonstrance in open court, drawing the attention of the authorities to " the ill-regulated condition " of the palanquin trade. Palanquins were not finally ousted by buggies till the 'sixties ; and the buggy-drivers inherited all the blackmailing practices of their predecessors. There was no lack of variety in the carriages that succeeded palanquins in popular favour. There were chariots, shigrampos, curricles, sociables, britzkas and clarences ; if one could not afford to buy these conveyances one could hire them for £20 a month and in them the ladies, reclining under coloured parasols and gentlemen in dark blue or bottle-green coats drove down the Esplanade. It was interesting to note and comment on the other carriages on the Esplanade.

> There [as Mrs. Postans wrote in 1838] may be seen the English landau fresh from Long-acre ; the smart dennet of the military aspirant marked by its high cushions ; the roomy buggy of the mercantile Parsee, adorned with green and gold ; the richly gilt chariot of a high cast Hindoo, with its silken reins and emblazoned panels.

However smart the carriages, the horses were disappointing after English carriage-horses and Mrs. Postans considered them

> deficient in size, ragged, thin and altogether illproportioned. Neither [she added] is the general effect improved by the

singular attire of the coloured menials. The coachmen and grooms wear a coarse cloth dress, of whatever colour may have been selected for the family livery, with a cummerband and flat turban of the form of a plate, consisting of entwined folds of orange, blue, or crimson broadcloth, adorned with crossed bands of gold or silver lace. This costume, combined with bare legs and native slippers, appears incongruous.

The warm and unrefreshing sea-wind set the palms rasping and rattling, blew dead leaves in gusty spirals, and bore over the city the regrettable smells of the beach which was used by the fishermen not only for purposes of natural relief but as a convenient dumping ground for the carcases of their buffaloes and the skulls of their ancestors. Every visitor to Bombay commented on the " olfactory horrors " of an evening drive. And behind the boats and mounds of decomposing cattle lurked packs of savage dogs who would rush out to attack anyone who left his carriage for a stroll on the sands. Gradually, however, these inconveniences were mitigated and towards the end of the 'thirties the Esplanade was, during the hot weather, lined with " pretty cool, temporary residences ; their chuppered roofs and rustic porches half concealed by the flowering creepers and luxuriant shade . . . and the whole is enclosed with a pretty compound, filled with fine plants, arrayed in tubs, around the trellised verandahs ". Their interior decoration was a relief after the heavy crowded furniture of the bigger bungalows with their musty carpets and huge carved sideboards and multitude of tables. " The clean smooth China matting which covers the floors ", a few basket chairs, and " a fine-toned piano and a good billiard-table " were sufficient furniture. And as you sat on the veranda you could hear the distant strains of the band and watch the carriages passing down the Esplanade. It was becoming a subject for comment that the gentlemen smoked as they

drove, but this roused a great deal of criticism. A hookah after dinner or in the seclusion of a box at the theatre was permitted, but the smoking of cheroots in public provoked a journal to protest angrily against the young men who could be "seen lolling in their buggies, puffing away with the greatest *nonchalance* possible". Even in 1856 a newspaper critic was disgusted to note that "several young men light their cheroots as soon as the dark of evening is sufficient to prevent a full recognition of their persons and veil their impertinence". But criticism failed to check this practice. The young men hung round the bandstand at twilight, lurking in the shadows of great mango-trees; and the more respectable citizens were so incensed at sight of the glowing pinpoints of light that evidenced a group of open-air smokers that there was some demand for police action.

As an alternative to the esplanade, one might visit the menagerie at Colaha. This was not, however, well stocked with animals. But there were "a great many *tame* asses, of the Zebra description, being *mostly striped* or *spotted*". That they were tame at all was their most remarkable quality, for they were supposed to be quite untamable. Nevertheless, they apparently yielded under the discipline favoured at the menagerie, which was "severe to excess, their noses being generally bored. Many die under the operation; while others, more restive, are seldom or never brought under restriction. The menagerie was lately under the superintendence of a blacksmith."

Men's dress had undergone a welcome change to greater simplicity, though the tight trousers and heavy rolled collars must have been uncomfortable in the hot weather. Hats still retained an elaborate variety of style. A hatter advertised a new supply of "superfine cocked hats, waterloo

shape, trimmed to the Prince Regent's order, bound with black-figured lace, embroidered with silver and cord star loops, rich cockades with very rich bullion tassels, feathers and Saxon plumes complete", costing £14 each. The last queue was seen in Bombay in 1799; and thereafter a certain manly carelessness in grooming one's tousled hair was fashionable. Men were clean-shaven till Napier, "The Bearded Vision", brought beards into favour. A relic of the eighteenth century was the fashion still prevailing among men of wearing Musulman trousers in the house on informal occasions. Mr. Stoequeler describes the average young man starting out for his ride before sunrise and returning about eight when "he usually undresses, puts on his loose Turkish trousers, drinks iced soda water, lies down on the couch, novel or newspaper in hand, and in all probability, goes to sleep, in spite of the cawing of crows". Breakfast was at ten and was as lavish then as now in Anglo-Indian houses. "The said meal", to quote Mr. Stoequeler again, "consisting at all seasons, of rice, fried fish, eggs, omelette, preserves, tea, coffee, etc., more in the fashion of a Scotch than an English matutinal recreation". Tiffin, however, seems to have been, for those days, a smallish meal, and Mrs. Postans congratulates the refined taste of her contemporaries in having exchanged the former "hecatombs of slaughtered animals" for "Perigord pies and preserved meats". While the men went to work the married women either visited each other, or settled down to the traditional Anglo-Indian posture of writing *chits* to each other, which Mr. Stoequeler noticed were "neatly written, neatly folded, on pretty paper, and either sealed with all the discretion of Donna Julia's own, or else so cunningly implicated into cocked hats, twists and other sacred involutions, that to make wax itself *render up its trust* would be far less trouble

than the unfolding of such missives by unpractised fingers ". Gentlemen paying informal calls were supposed to visit in the mornings, but they had to content themselves with conversation, for it was " considered an act of glaring impropriety in a lady to invite any gentleman to stay and partake of tiffin who is not either a relative or an intimate friend of the family ".

The ladies generally did their shopping in the mornings. There were a number of Parsi provision shops and grocers' stores. Of these the most favoured was Jangerjee Nasserawanjee; and there were few things you could not buy there.

> The walls [Mrs. Postans discovered, were] surrounded with glass cases, filled with fine French china, bijouterie, gold lace, sauces, brandied fruits, riding whips. . . . A central avenue is flanked with cases containing jewellery, French clocks, and all descriptions of knicknackery. On the floor have subsided Cheshire and Gruyère cheeses, hams, cases of sardine, salmon and other edibles; and from the ceiling depend bird cages, lamps, and coloured French lithographs in handsome frames.

If there was no shopping to be done, one could always call on the Governor's Lady (whom Mrs. Postans calls " the Lady President ") between eleven and two " on days advertised for reception ". Government House was at Parell, and after a long drive under the sun of April or May the callers generally arrived too exhausted for much animation. They sat round in a circle and made languid conversation. Lady Falkland complained that the talk " was almost always of illness or the weather ".

It was only in the evenings that the ladies seemed to revive and to show signs of animation, either at some dance in one of those vast Anglo-Indian rooms of which " the floor was covered with a white cloth stretched tight over the boards and rubbed with a kind of steatite or French chalk " or at

one of the formal dinners which had superseded the light-hearted suppers of thirty years before. These dinner-parties had already developed a formidable ritual. First came an invitation written by the daughter of the house on dainty rose- or violet-coloured paper, with an appropriate motto—" *qui me néglige me perd* " for instance—on the back of the envelope. The nature of the entertainment would be indicated and *soirées musicales* were coming into favour.[1] The soldiers cut enviable figures in the drawing-room with their " raggies " and " Swiss-jackets " and " Cossack trowsers " ; the civilians had to be content with concentrating on the neat cut of their coats and on the skilful tying of their cravats. The gentlemen stood about in groups, smoothing their moustaches, discussing the ladies' charms (" how lovely Mrs. Brown looks this evening with her tiara of white roses ! "), and exchanging comments on the flirtation going on in the corner between a girl lately arrived from England and an elderly amorous major.—" As dead a case of splice as I ever saw in my life." The hostess addressed each of the ladies in turn, " You both play and sing, do you not ? " and each replied, " Very little," and explained that she had left her music at home and at the moment had a sore throat. Finally one would be persuaded to perform. She sat down at the piano, drew off her long gloves with a flourish and sang " Those Evening Bells " while the other guests sat round and sighed and agreed that Mr. Moore was an incomparable poet and that Erin, for all her faults, was as remarkable for her melancholy yet uplifting melodies as for the humorous anecdotes and comical turns of phrase of her simple sons of toil. Presently the ladies of the house brought refreshments ; sandwiches and

[1] For description of such a *soirée* see Captain Bellew's *Memoirs of a Griffin.*

" acidulous drinks " for the ladies, cake and negus for the gentlemen. The party would break up before eleven. The compliments and thanks of the last guests to leave were generally drowned by the shouts and threats of those who had left earlier and who were now running the gauntlet of the palanquin bearers who always gathered outside any house where there was a party and pestered the home-going guests, refusing to let them pass and even dragging at their elbows. The gentlemen soon exhausted their stock of Hindustani abuse, which was small, so small indeed that from constantly hearing the words repeated the ladies picked up certain indecorous phrases—particularly " Jow Jehannum " [1] . . . which was a favourite expletive with the gentlemen. What could it mean, the ladies sometimes cautiously inquired ; but their curiosity generally remained ungratified ; though on one occasion a hint was thrown out by a languid youth who, pushing back the pomaded curls from his forehead, countered the inquiry by referring darkly to a place " whose vulgar name could hardly be heard with satisfaction by polite ears ".

These parties were generally more animated if the guests included unmarried ladies recently arrived from England. As Lady Falkland noted—

> The arrival of a cargo (if I dare term it so) of young damsels from England is one of the exciting events that mark the advent of the *cold season.* It can be well imagined that their age, height, features, dress, and manners become topics of conversation, and as they bring the latest fashions from Europe, they are objects of interest to their own sex.

While everyone was anxious to inspect, and the gentlemen to make the acquaintance of, the new arrival, acid comments on the mercenary motives of these visitors were

[1] Anglicé, " Go to hell."

already frequent. Hood's verses sum up the general impression of a girl's reasons for a trip to India.

My heart is full—my trunks as well;
My mind and caps made up,
My corsets shap'd by Mrs. Bell,
Are promised ere I sup;
With boots and shoes, Rivarta's best,
And dresses by Ducé,
And a special licence in my chest—
I'm going to Bombay!

Though the motives of the trip to India were no longer as honestly announced as in the eighteenth century when "Mrs. Anne Miller", as a friend wrote to the Governor of Madras, sailed for "your parts to make her fortune; her father is a Vigntner and an honest man but has many children"—nevertheless the young woman was generally schooled carefully by her parents to concentrate on making a good marriage and therefore to look with scorn on the young and penniless and encourage the advances of the elderly rich. Above all she must set her cap at members of the Civil Service. Thus Miss Arabella Green,[1] asked by her parents to repeat the lessons they had been teaching her before launching her on the Anglo-Indian marriage-market obliged with—

I do believe entirely in
The Civil Service ranks:
The best are worth a deal of tin,
And none exactly blanks.
But I do believe that marrying
An *acting* man is fudge;
And do not fancy anything
Below a *pucka* Judge.

The civil servants were called "three-hundred-a-year-dead-or-alive men" from the fact that their pay when they joined the service was £300 a year, and if they had put in sufficient

[1] Aliph Cheem, *The Lays of Ind.*

me after dinner they talk about suckling their babies, the disadvantage of scandal, " the officers " and " the Regiment ", and when the gentlemen come into the drawing-room, they invariably flirt with them most furiously.

But if the civil servants had better *ton* their conversation was limited—

As soon as three or four of them get together they speak about nothing but employment and promotion. Whatever subject may be started they contrive to twist it, drag it, clip it and pinch it, till they bring it round to that and if left to themselves they sit and conjugate the verb " to collect " ! " I am a Collector [1] —He was a Collector—We shall be Collectors—You ought to be a Collector—They would have been Collectors."

They were, on the whole—

rather grand, dull and silent, tired out with the heat and the office. The houses are greatly infested by mosquitoes, which are in themselves enough to lower one's spirits and stop conversation. People talk a little in a very low voice to those next to them. After dinner the company all sit round in the middle of the great gallery-like room, talk in whispers and scratch their mosquito-bites . . . India is the paradise of middle-aged gentlemen. When they are young they are thought nothing of; but at about forty when they are " high in the service ", rather yellow and somewhat grey, they begin to be taken notice of and called " young men ". These respectable persons do all the flirtation too in a solemn sort of way, while the young ones sit by, looking on.

It is further to be assumed that the young men had no great desire to flirt: for all visitors to Bombay refer, almost with awe, to the good morals of the young. Partly this was due, no doubt, to the very public manner of life in Bombay and to the lack of opportunity for dissipation. As Mr. Stoequeler pointed out—

In our Oriental city there are none of those lures and haunts which prove so attractive and fatal to the young Londoner.

[1] Head of a District.

> His Indian contemporary almost *must* spend his evenings in a decorous manner, for not only would he soon become marked if he frequented such scenes of debauchery as there are, which are of the very lowest description, and where common soldiers, sailors and such absolute blackguards resort ; but there is not that field for *lark* which tempts the spruce London apprentice, and youths of higher degree, to take to the streets in search of such adventures. Drinking, too, is a practice not at all encouraged or countenanced in the Anglo-Indian community. It used to be so, but its pernicious day has long gone by, and the very, very few who are still victims to its brutifying power are looked upon with mingled pity and contempt by all other classes of their fellow citizens.

As a result Bombay Society, if neither intellectual nor quick-witted, was at least excessively refined. And a visitor was pleased to note

> the absence of all approach to broad vulgarity in the circles of an Indian salon. Startling as this fact may appear it is clearly deducible from, firstly, the circumstance that we have neither *Parvenus* nor *nouveaux riches* among us to shock one with their upstart airs ; and secondly, that with very few exceptions no one comes to this country without having either laid the foundation, or completed the accomplishment, of a gentleman's education. . . . The man of cultivated mind will perhaps meet with less to shock his fastidious tastes than in the necessarily mixed society of England.