CHAPTER VI

ANGLO-INDIAN life in the inland towns had changed considerably from the days of Hickey, when Company's servants were mostly Residents of the courts of native princes who were still responsible for the main administration of the country. Now, over half of India it was the Company's servants who administered. Before the fall of the Maratha Empire, a voyage inland from Bombay was a considerable adventure. It was not uncommon to travel up to Poona while Elphinstone was Resident there. But the visitors were pleasantly thrilled to compare the security and comfort of the Resident's " bunglo ",[1] with the uneasy murmur of the Indian city, then in its last agony of anarchy and sedition. One heard wild tales of intrigue and cruelty : one was aware of a mounting frenzy that must some time break out in open war ; and yet when one met the Peshwa, the last head of the old Maratha federation, Bajirao II, it was difficult not to believe that Poona city was as tranquil as a suburb of Bombay, so extraordinary was the charm of that prince (Malcolm considered him the most charming ruler in India or Europe), so plausible his manner. Still it was a relief to return to the Residency, with its wide veranda overlooking the junction of the rivers Mula and Muta, the garden descending on both sides of the house in terraces to the edge of the water, the groves of mango trees on the far bank and in the distance the violet-shadowed hills. The Residency itself was comfortable enough. Elphinstone himself described it as " a tiled palace on wooden posts

[1] Mrs. Graham.

twelve feet high " ; but he added that to equip it for entertainments he had only " six plated dishes ; six dozen silver spoons ; two little union flags carried by the gardeners on high days or holidays ". But he was less interested in the traditional magnificence of a Resident than in his hobbies and studies ; and after reading a page of his diary one wonders that he had any time at all to devote to his guests.

> April 4th. Read three hundred lines of the " Antigone ". Breakfasted. Put my papers in order. Set off in my palanquin for the Hall. On the way, finished Mackintosh. He is eloquent and acute, but inexperienced and enthusiastic. Also read some of Page. At the Hall ordered repairs. Read an Idyll of Theocritus and Jenkins read aloud almost the whole fifth book of Homer. At five rode back. Dined. In bed, read Locke on Liberty and Necessity. April 5th. Finished " Antigone ". I perceive this to be a very affecting play.

He was also engaged on his work *Account of the Kingdom of Canbue*. Nevertheless he found time to play " round games of cards " with his guests. One such party was in progress when Mr. Briggs arrived with news of the Peshwa's decision to attack the English. Elphinstone had long been afraid of this and guessed that Briggs brought bad news, but he continued the game without apparent concern, " handed the last lady of the party into her palanquin " and sauntered up to Briggs " rubbing his hands, and said, ' Well, what is it ? ' " [1] Although he knew that the Residency was incapable of defence he refused to leave it until shortly before the Maratha attack so " that we had only time to leave with the clothes on our backs ", abandoning the Residency to destruction.[2] In spite of the danger he could not resist turning, once he had crossed the river, and watching the Maratha forces advancing from the city.

[1] Colebrook's *Memoir*.
[2] It was subsequently rebuilt and is now the Judge's bungalow.

> It was towards the afternoon of a very sultry day, there was a dead calm, and no sound was heard except the rushing, the trampling, and the neighing of horses and the rumbling of gun-wheels. The effect was heightened by seeing the peaceful peasantry flying from their work in the fields, the bullocks breaking from their yoke, the wild antelopes, startled from sleep, bounding off, and then turning for a moment to gaze on this tremendous inundation which swept all before it, levelled the hedges and standing corn and completely overwhelmed every ordinary barrier as it moved.[1]

The whole thing reminded Elphinstone of the battles in Vergil; he quoted "*quadrupedante putrem sonitu*" and called for some tea and bread and butter.

The English abandonment of Poona did not last long: the Peshwa collapsed, and Poona, famous for so long as a centre of Hindu orthodoxy and the capital of the Maratha confederacy, became in an extraordinarily short time the Poona of Anglo-Indian saga. Six years after the conquest Lady West found "the city of Poona much in decay since we have had it, and the Peshwa's Palaces miserable Places. We saw his Pagodas and were allowed a peep at his Gods Vishnu etc. to Christians a most disgusting spectacle." She was staying with Sir Lionel Smith whom she considered "a very gentlemanlike, agreeable Man" but for others in Poona she had little praise.

> The Society here [she noted in her journal] is very formal, and the Ladies very self-sufficient and consequential, thinking of little but their fine pearls and *local* rank. . . . We are terribly observed, and of course I doubt not pulled to pieces, but thank God we are still quite English, and domestic taking our walk together every evening, our tea and bath afterwards, none of the indolence and finery of an Indian Lady.

In the rains a number of visitors arrived and presently

[1] Grant Duff.

there were dances given by the Governor at Dapoore, to which the guests drove in their buggies for eight miles, often in monsoon storms and gales. There were other discomforts, too ; the Poona blister-flies which often arrived in swarms and quite spoilt a ball. Lady Falkland related how

> some of these little tormentors climbed up into flannels, hid themselves in folds of net, visited the mysterious recesses of complicated trimmings ; some crept up gentlemen's sleeves, others conceived themselves in a jungle of a whisker. One heard little else all evening but " Allow me, Sir, to take off this blister-fly that is disappearing into your neckcloth " or " Permit me, Ma'am, to remove this one from your arm."

Even after the pacification of the Deccan, travelling was troublesome to a degree. The usual conveyance for a long journey was the palanquin or later " palkee-garry . . . with its two wretched ponies, rope harness, nearly naked driver, and wheels whose sinuous motions impress one with the idea that they must come off at the next revolution ". The journey could not be begun without a considerable correspondence with the postmasters of the various stages where the traveller proposed to halt. Everything could be provided for him provided that he was prepared both to wait and to pay ; at even the most remote villages beer could, by previous arrangement, be bought, but at a price relative to the honesty of the postmaster and the urgency of the traveller's need. It was useless to complain of discomfort, of damage and loss, of the desertion of one's servants and the theft of one's money, for the Government had expressly announced that " neither Government nor any of their officers are responsible for the misfortunes and disappointments which are inseparable from dak travelling ". English District officers were still comparatively few. Isolated by vast tracts of country they lived alone in half-Oriental state.

At Sholapur ruled Meadows Taylor, enormous and benign, relishing the devotion and gratitude of a province and the various pleasures of a well-stocked harem. He sat at his ease in a great cane chair, puffing at his hookah, fanned by chowries and thought of Lady Blessington's salon and the evening when he met that odd Louis Napoleon and Nesselrode was so impressed to hear of the efficiency of the Sepoy Army.[1] He enjoyed his visits to England, he liked gratifying the ladies with new and ever-stranger stories of India, and he was flattered by the astonishment and awe with which his white topi hung with gold braid was greeted in the streets of Europe. But he was happy to be back again in his kingdom, surrounded by his subjects and his girls, all rivals for his favour. When my grandfather stayed with him the old gentleman was particularly satisfied with the newest recruit to his household, a fifteen-year-old Maratha girl who was uncommonly skilful at "mulling" his eyebrows.

In districts less remote than Sholapur then was, the traditional Anglo-Indian "Stations" were springing up. The lordly mansions of eighteenth-century Bengal were but faintly recalled by the square white bungalows with high thatched roof; the unrailed verandah, white unornamented pillars, the doorways hung with screens of khus-khus grass (and presently curtains of jingling coloured beads); and the low white wall enclosing the compound. This curious word, compound, supposedly derived from the Malay *Kampong*, had come into early use to denote any walled place; though no one knew its origin and new-comers were puzzled by it as one of the oddest words in the new vocabulary with which they had to familiarise themselves. As a poet complained,

[1] *Memoirs.*

THE COFFEE-SHOP

In common usage here a *chit*
Serves for our business or our wit.
Bankshal's a place to lodge our ropes,
And Mango orchards all are *Topes*.
Godown usurps the warehouse place,
Compound denotes each walled space.

While formerly applied as commonly to a factory or square, the word was now generally used to denote the enclosed courtyard of a bungalow. Of this the garden formed but a small part. But that garden was the pride of each bungalow-owner. Water was drawn from a step-well in some corner of the compound, and all day long the yoked bullocks trudged up and down an inclined path drawing up from the dark abyss of the well a skinful of water which was caught by an under-gardener, the contents emptied into a channel leading to the flower-beds, the skin released, and the bullocks stumbled slowly backwards up towards the well-wall again. The bullocks were urged, expostulated with, beaten and sung to, by a wrinkled peasant in red turban and grey loincloth, and if the lords of the bungalow woke hours before dawn they heard his melancholy chant begin, " Ah-ee-oh-ay ", followed by the rattle of the pulley, and the creaking of the ropes. It was unfortunate that the trees had to be mostly palm and plantain, which gave rather a wild and unhomelike aspect to the garden, but you could always grow roses which, arrayed in big silver bowls, gave an English touch to the desolate drawing-room. The water from the well, led by narrow channels to every part of the garden, served each flower-bed by a series of little sluice-gates of mud, patted into place by the nimble fingers of the gardener, removed when more water was required or raised a few inches higher when the bed had been sufficiently watered and might rest under its square soaking sheet of muddy water, a convenient breeding-place for mosquitoes.

The larger part of the compound, however, offered no opportunities for the gardener. An expanse of grey earth, little mounds of stones, an occasional deciduous oleander-tree, and the inevitable dumps of rubbish thrust against the wall and awaiting the sweeper's attention. And then along the back-wall, the " servants' quarters ", flat-roofed white-washed buildings of baked mud in which the servants swarmed—the senior ones with a whole room to themselves in which their dozen or so children might have proper room, the juniors herded together, not only with other servants but with distant connections, friends and acquaintances of the senior servants, who for a tiny monthly rental were allowed to enjoy the protection of a roof and the prestige of a good address. Long before daybreak the servants' quarters would be astir, for the Sahib had to be awakened for his morning ride. Exercise was already a fetish and the early hours of the morning were, in the hot weather, the only time when riding was not unpleasant. The head-servant—butler, bearer or boy according to your province —advanced towards the bungalow, stalked along the veranda where the punkah coolies squatted, reclining against a pillar and pulling the punkah-rope with drowsy jerks or lying flat on their backs, the punkah-rope tied to their big toe, while with one leg they made the kicking motions as of a man learning to swim. They relieved each other at intervals and those whose turn was over or had not yet come lay about on the veranda in touselled groups. The butler reached the doorway of his master's bedroom and looked into the gloom. There were basket-chairs, woven in the bazaar, ranged round the walls. Tin boxes (which could resist both white ant and moth) contained his master's wardrobe. There was no carpet, for during the heat of the day it would be necessary to splash cool water over the floor.

The bed was an Indian "string-cot" (the Anglo-Indian word cot for a bed was used as early as the seventeenth century when Fryer wrote "There did sit the King in State on a Cot or Bed"), and since a mattress would not only be unpleasantly hot but might breed fleas, a couple of cotton carpets were stretched over the knotted ropes. There with the flapping fringe of the punkah but a foot or so off his face lay the master of the house, exhausted by a tiring night during which he had had continuously to shout at the punkah-coolies, who, falling asleep, had let go of the punkah-rope. Then, to quote Edwarde's account of the ritual of his rising in the 'forties,

> A black rascal makes an oration by my bed every morning. I wake, and see him salaaming with a cup of hot coffee in his hand. I sit on a chair and wash the teaspoon till the spoon is hot and the fluid cold (others less delicate, or perhaps disdaining even so trifling an effort, would hand the cup to the butler who blew vigorously on it till the coffee was cool enough to drink) while he introduces me gradually into an ambush of pantaloons and wellingtons. I am shut up in a red coat and a glazed lid set upon my head, and thus, carefully packed, exhibit my reluctance to what I am going to do—to wit, my *duty*—by *riding*.

A number of servants gathered round the porch to watch him mount his pony. He swore at them in duty bound—for did not every Anglo-Indian do so? Was it not a pleasure in Lahore to watch John Lawrence emerge from morning prayer at the new church and, refreshed by his devotions, fall with furious blows upon the servants awaiting him at the church door? And then he trotted down the straight wide roads of the station, the grey dust rising under the horse's roofs, past dozens of whitewashed bungalows, looking sadly alike—for all Mrs. Forsyth's much advertised garden and the major's vine terrace—past the church with

its dignified white façade, pillars, square windows, like a London parish church—but there were some fanatics who talked of pulling it down and building a church in the new-fangled Gothic style, all fidgety decoration and red-and-yellow brick. Luckily the padre had set his face against any innovation. He liked the services short, did the padre, and always had a servant with a cigar and a glass of beer ready for him in the vestry to refresh him immediately after the service.

While the gentlemen rode, the ladies began their day more quietly. A long day ahead, it was good to take one's ease, to recline in a long basket-chair while the ayah brushed one's hair endlessly—it was pleasantly soothing that brushing, and one's hair stiff from the dry heat crackled excitingly under the hard bristles. It was the ayah's duty to provide all the gossip of the station. It was particularly important to know what was eaten or said at dinner-parties at which one had not been present. There were some houses which, owing to distinctions of rank it was impossible to visit; but it was all the more important to know if the scandalous stories one heard of Mrs. X could be true, and whether Mrs. Y really got all those flashy dresses from Europe as she pretended—and if so, how could her husband afford it, for one knew what his pay was?—and if not was it true, as one had all along suspected, she had fashion-plates copied by the bazaar dressmaker? All these things the ayah was expected to find out. She also had to flatter her lady, exclaim with clasped hands and upturned eyes over a new dress or water-colour sketch of the military cemetery with its shady trees and with crowned tombs. When at last she was dressed the lady of the house would review the provision-cupboards to forestall the servants' pilfering, would inspect the pencil-strokes she had drawn on her husband's bottles

after dinner to mark last night's level of brandy, would visit the various rooms of the bungalow to see that they were dusted, the silver cleaned, the paper, pencils, pens ready on the drawing-room table for her morning letters to her friends in England—those immense letters with long accounts of local feuds, of Hindu customs and Indian plant-life, of the sickness of pets and the daily perils from snakes, of the number of recent conversions and the wickedness of the Government in not supporting the missionaries more strongly—for the women then as now were the fiercest advocates of Strong Measures on all political occasions. The books too would be generally arranged on the thick, carpet-like tablecloth of the drawing-room's blackwood centre-table ; if left in a bookshelf the servants did not dust them properly and those odious little " fish-insects " crept in between the leaves. In any case there were few in the station who owned many books. They were expensive. A novel (but there were three volumes to it) cost a guinea. Collections of sermons and Lives of Bishops were popular ; they were full of elevating sentiments and thoughtful passages. The change in taste is noteworthy. We seldom hear now of Theocritus or Euripides. While Elphinstone would discuss with Jenkins the ethical problems of the *Antigone*, Nicholson was now writing, " I am just finishing a most interesting work, which, if you have not already read, I strongly recommend you to do so ; it is Faber's *Fulfilment of the Scriptural Prophecies*." Henry Lawrence, hearing that a colleague had taken offence at some action of his, copied out from the *Memoirs of Bishop Sandford* this passage, which he despatched to his colleague as a rebuke for harbouring vengeful thoughts : " My fears for those who retain a spirit of unforgiveness are overpowering. I will sincerely declare to you that I could not myself pray to God, or ask His

Pardon for my many transgressions, before I go to bed at night, with any comfort, or with any hope of being heard unless I were conscious that I did from my heart forgive as I ask to be forgiven." The brooding in lonely places over obscure texts of the Old Testament and even obscurer commentaries thereon, the ever-present sense of sin, the consciousness that one was a member of the elect and that all round were millions of doomed heathen led to a strange tension in the minds of these men, so that even in their most heroic moments is evident a mental condition that seems occasionally unbalanced and almost hysterical. Tears and groans, terrible outbursts of anger and sad moods of remorse, the temper of seventeenth-century covenanters (and it is to be remarked, how many of that generation came from North Ireland) alternating with a more modern sensibility were common at a crisis. It is impossible to read of the long death-agony of Henry Lawrence without being moved ; but the atmosphere is oddly rarefied and remote. He called all the garrison to his bedside and begged them to forgive him and to kiss him ; he spoke of his wife and burst into tears and when he mentioned his daughter his weeping became uncontrollable for some time ; he urged each of the soldiers to read their Bibles and at once " those seemingly hard rough men were sobbing like children ". He died " with the most beautiful expression of calm joy on his face ".

If books of commentaries and sermons were read by the men, there would also be in most drawing-rooms a book or two of poetry, and a book of pressed wild flowers—though Indian wild flowers were so different from those of English hedgerows, they were often so large and unwieldy, the magnolia, for instance, and the leathery petals of the yellow champak. There might even be a case or two of " insects ". Collections of coleoptera were quite fashionable

for a time, and several ladies, finding on their arrival in India that their fellow Anglo-Indians could not tell them the names of any beetles or butterflies and that Indians (putting on enormous spectacles, pursing their lips, tilting their heads to one side as though really interested in the problem) asserted that this was a particularly rare species till now unnamed, formed sudden resolves to be naturalists. But the making of a collection was always a difficulty; for one could not go hunting beetles oneself—one's husband would have been sadly distressed at such undignified conduct—which meant that one had to delegate this duty to servants; who, in spite of professing enthusiastic interest in their mistress's hobby were dreadfully stupid, continually producing with an air of triumph cockroaches and other horrors, instead of the beautiful winged insects, metallic-glistening and many-coloured, that whirred past one's lamp in the evening.

Lacking other occupation the ladies amused themselves by writing each other endless *chits* in which they excused themselves for not calling in person but the heat or a headache made rest essential for that day. If they dropped a handkerchief they would "just lower their voices and say 'Boy!' in a very gentle tone and then creeps in some wizened, skinny brownie looking like a superannuated thread-paper who twiddles after them for a little while and then creeps out again as softly as a black cat".

Of course the drawing-room and the books had often to be left when the official had to tour in the districts; and the women of that age seem, on occasions of duty, to have been as physically hardy as indifferent to discomfort and danger. The admirable Honoria Lawrence accompanied her husband on his most trying journeys. As Revenue Surveyor he had once to visit

a dense jungle at the foot of the Nepaul hills, intersected with

> belts of forest trees—a famous tiger tract. The dews were so heavy, that my bed under a small tent was wet through. Fires were kept constantly lighted to keep off the tigers and wild elephants, which gave an unmistakable indication of their proximity, and it was not till eleven or twelve o'clock that the fog cleared sufficiently to permit our laying of a theodolite. It was in such a tract that, after three or four days, we[1] connected our survey, and when we met, to my surprise I found Mrs. Lawrence with him. She was seated on the bank of a nullah, her feet overhanging the den of some wild animal. While she, with a portfolio in her lap, was writing overland letters, her husband, at no great distance, was laying his theodolite.

And after hours in the sun Mrs. Lawrence had no quiet bungalow to return to. They lived in one tent under a mango-tree.

> The tent was of the ordinary size prescribed for a subaltern with a marching regiment, about twelve feet square ; but it is not so easy to describe the interior. A charpoy in one corner, an iron stove in another, a couple of tables and three or four chairs, but every superficial inch of each was taken up with papers, plans or maps.

Some of those Spartan women found real pleasure in the wild scenery amid which they journeyed. They were serious-minded and reflective and their emotions before noble landscapes were appropriately religious. Their letters home often contain as many verses as sketches and Mrs. Edwardes, though bitterly disappointed at her husband's transfer from comparatively civilised Jullundur to savage Hazara on the North-West Frontier, was consoled by the gloomy magnificence of the views at their new station. The River Nynsook inspired her to composition :

> Well may the stranger, shudd'ring, look
> Down on the torrent of Nynsook.
> Yet should it be his mood to find
> A moral in each whispering wind,

[1] The story is told by an unnamed fellow-Surveyor of Lawrence's quoted in Kaye's *Lives of Indian Officers*.

An angel-face in every gleam
Which lights the earth, in every stream
A nook which overflows with love
To men below from Heaven above—
Then will he view Nynsook aright,
And own 'tis well called Eye's Delight.

But for others in less remote districts it was a pleasure and relief to return to the house which one had spent so much trouble over. It is pathetic to read of Mrs. Lushington's joy at seeing her and her husband's books lying under a lamp on the centre-table when they returned from a visit to a strange bazaar and a walk round the local temple. The temple alone was exhausting enough, for Mrs. Lushington had never been inside one before, and the whole experience affected her like some wild dream. Even the witty Miss Eden confessed, " I shall always respect marching for making me like Calcutta, and making me feel the advantage of a quiet room, with books and tables and chairs all clean and in the same place every day." In spite of the absence of so many amenities they soon became attached not only to their houses but to the even monotonous life of the " station " ; indeed, when they visited England they felt as though they were in an unfamiliar country in which they found much to criticise and little to approve. As Lady Lawrence wrote to John Nicholson who was then on furlough—

I must not forget to say that we were *delighted* with your verdict on the Opera. In like manner, when we were in town, we went *once*, and, like you, said, " We have nothing so bad in India ! " Did not London fill you with the bewildering sight of such luxury and profusion as we in the jungles had forgotten could exist, and of vice and misery which unless in a year of war or famine, could not be equalled here ?

It was only those who were temporary residents in India

who now regarded India with the irritation and nostalgia of Miss Eden who scribbled acidly—

> Miss Fane is again laid up with mosquito-bites. Mrs. Fane and Mrs. Beresford were part of Sir Henry's party, and the most conversable of the ladies we have seen—a slight tinge of London topics about them, or at least of London readiness to talk. After dinner all the ladies sit in a complete circle round the room, and the gentlemen stand at the farther end of it. I do not suppose they would have anything to say if they met but it would look better. . . . There are five long years before us.

The days passed uneventfully. After their morning ride the gentlemen usually gathered at the station " Coffee Shop ". There in their gaiters and topis of fanciful and varied design, with their dogs and their servants, they sat round at bare deal tables and between steaming cups of coffee discussed the gossip of the station. They would tell each other, with many guffaws—

> that Nicaldo, the itinerant dentist, had arrived and that Mrs. McGhee, whose teeth, numerically as well as positively, had dwindled to their shortest span, had had the balance summarily extracted, and that Nicaldo is engaged to supply new ones, which have already been designated " Mother McGhee's new dinner-set ". This circumstance naturally led to the extravagance of the lady implicated, inasmuch as old McGhee had been seen that morning at the auction-sale of poor Sergeant Trail, and that he purchased for the sum of two rupees eleven annas, three flannel waistcoats, five pair of socks, and an old toothbrush—all of which he carried home in his hat; and that he frowned so hard at the bugler boys that they were afraid to bid against him—sufficiently proving his character is favourable to economy. Then we hear the opinions that are expressed relative to the last night's " feed " at the Gander's; how the ham, professedly a " prime York " had been distinctly traced as having had its origin in the ravine that skirts the lovely Kabob; and that fellow Garlic insists upon it that he saw, with his own naked eye, the native vendor of swine disposing of his produce to Mrs. Gander in her verandah. More-

> over, we discover that the turkey was the leanest old bird in creation, and that its breast was puffed out by the ingenious introduction of a tough old fowl, but which the keen eye of Pullow detected. Then we are told of the hop last night at the Guddurs', which was pronounced to be " deadly lively " ; that the heat was so great that Mrs. Chunam, who, as it is declared, has eleven pence out of the shilling of Hindoo blood floating in her veins, and who delights to veneer as much of herself as is exposed to public view, for the purpose of the whitening of her otherwise shady complexion—the heat, we understand, was so great that the veneer cracked and peeled off in flakes ; and further, that her dress happening to subside from off her shoulders, a lovely olive rim, where the veneer had not been applied, became visible, for the general edification. Guddur then relates his adventure in the dance with Barbara, who travelled about the room like a paviour's rammer, to the detriment of his feet and knees ; and we also ascertain that Miss Goley favoured the company with a song all about " a bonnie coo "—which Guddur declares was a hymn, or at any rate a roundelay, while Pullow bets him a new hat that it was a Caledonian melody of an agricultural character.

These dinners were usually even more animated when a stranger, probably an official passing through on his way to a new appointment, passed a few nights in the station. If the visitor were someone of rank there would be brisk competition for the honour of entertaining him between the District Magistrate and the Judge ; for each of them

> delighted in welcoming within his portals the great ones of the land ; he (the District Magistrate) has ensnared several mighty men of renown. A Governor was once entrapped in his snare, to his unlimited satisfaction ; while last year, he skilfully made capture of a bishop, but for whose appropriation popular rumour avows that he betokened symptoms of repentance.

Sometimes it would only be a party of common soldiers passing through. They would spend the night under some trees, and the District Magistrate would visit them to inquire

if they had their Bibles with them. One party, thus interrogated by Mr. Lushington, had the presence of mind to say that of course they had their Bibles but they valued them so much that they did not want to expose them to the ravages of the climate as they travelled, and that therefore they had kept them neatly and carefully wrapped up at the bottom of their trunks. The Magistrate was so much impressed by these noble sentiments coming from rough privates that he not only gave them some cheap Bibles to use on the way, but some tracts as well. There was, indeed, a very general preoccupation with the morals of poorer Europeans. A Governor-General, Lord Auckland, spoke very seriously to some sailors and advised them not to drink more than was good for them. Lord Dalhousie wrung his hands over the soldiers' taste for beer. A chaplain refused to visit soldiers in the Calcutta Hospital suffering from diseases aggravated by alcohol; the very fact that they were ill was evidence of divine displeasure at their conduct and it was not for him to endanger his salvation by consorting with those lost souls. Even the indulgence of soldiers in theatricals was viewed with suspicion; and when a party of the Cameronians acted a play to raise money for the European Orphan Asylum (to which were despatched the children of their fallen comrades) the money was refused on the grounds that it had been gained in so "unchristian a manner" as theatricals, which must "hurt the feelings and principles" of the orphans.

Generally the visitors to the station would be young officers and there would be some competition to secure their presence at dinner-parties. A letter would arrive: "My dear Captain Quiz—*Do* induce your newly arrived friend to accompany you to-night and give us the pleasure of his company at dinner; we shall be *so* delighted to see him.

Believe me always *very* sincerely yours, Isabella Byle." At dinner,

> the host and hostess occupy their respective centres of the table, while the top and bottom, with their appalling concomitant consequences of turkey and ham to carve, are studiously shunned, and become the refuge for the Griff (most junior officer present) who in this sphere of action imbibes his earliest lessons in carving. He dissects the turkey, but consigns a pound and a half of stuffing into the velvet lap of the adjoining Mrs. Koofter ; the flounce of the punkah becomes partly disengaged, and, after flapping about remorselessly like an unreefed sail in a gale of wind, succeeds in whisking off the protecting wire-gauze top of the lamp, and launching it on the apex of Miss Goley's head, occasioning the blowing-out of the lamp, and the consequent oleaginous effluvium that proceeds from the expiring wick, to the general discomposure of the nasal organs. Then the punkah has to be stopped to undergo reparation; and frantic and awful is the heat that is engendered thereby. Then, after an interregnum of considerable duration, the second course is produced, succeeded by a pause " more fearful than before ". The sweets have vanished and at last the dessert, indicative of a concluding climax ; the decanters are circulated, and the fair hostess telegraphs to the " Burra Beebee " the signal for departure. . . . Then the gentlemen are doomed to a further session, which terminates in the production of coffee, when the gong tells its tale of midnight. The piano is heard in the adjoining room ; some faint voice warbles a doleful strain, the " Burra Beebee " rises and a general dispersion ensues.

Such dinners were, however, a treat and generally the day closed with the husband reading alone and the wife sewing.

Such a régime may not seem exciting ; but it did not differ greatly from that of the Governor-General and his ladies in their palace at Calcutta. This is how Miss Eden describes her day—

> We breakfast at nine. . . . I throw a great deal of sentiment into my eating, always having watercresses for breakfast,

> because they are so English. . . . We dawdle about the hall for a quarter of an hour, reading the papers, and doing a little civility to the household ; then Fanny and I go to the drawing-room and work and write till twelve, when I go up to my own room, and read and write till two. Fanny stays downstairs, as she likes it better than her own room. I do my shopping, too, at this hour : the natives come with work, and silks, and anything they think they have a chance of selling, and sometimes one picks up a tempting article in the way of work. At two we all meet for luncheon and George (Lord Auckland) brings with him anybody who may happen to be doing business with him at the time. Then I go up to my own room, and have three hours and a half comfortably by myself. I draw a great amount, and was making a lovely set of costumes, but my own pursuits have been cut in upon by other people. One person wants a picture of a sister she has lost touched up, and in fact renewed, as the damp has utterly destroyed it. There are no professional artists in Calcutta, except one who paints a second-rate sort of sign-post, and though I cannot make much of all these likenesses, yet it feels like a duty to help anybody to a likeness of a friend at home, and it is one of the very few good-natured things it is possible to do here, so I have been very busy the last ten days making copies of these pictures. To finish our day : at six we go out. George and I ride every day now ; Fanny about once in three days. At 7.30 we dress ; dine at night, and at ten go off to bed.

Miss Eden's chief hobby was her menagerie. The inmates of this included—

> a goat that is too handsome—an immense creature with white silk hair half a yard and more long. It stalks upstairs and into my room and is a nice good-humoured animal ; two young bears, two fawns and a very young mouse-deer. One fawn died but the other and the mouse-deer I am trying to rear by means of a teapot and some milk.

Miss Eden found some amusement in the foibles and oddities of the people she met in Calcutta ; and in a small station, the characteristics of the officials and their wives were not very different from those of residents in the capital.

The figures of each local hierarchy emerge with recognisable regularity from the verses of satirists.

> There's McCaul the Collector our biggest gun
> A capital hand at whist.
> And passable company, when he's done
> Prosing over "The List".[1]
> And Jones, his clever conceited sub.,
> The "competition-elect".
> A youth into whom I should like to rub
> A lineament of respect.
> There's Tomkins, our Civil and Sessions Judge,
> A pompous, ponderous Beak,
> Who sneers at McCaul's decisions as fudge—
> *We* know it's professional pique.
> There's little Sharp, the Surgeon, in charge
> Of the Central Sudder Jail,
> He's a habit of taking very large
> Potions of Bass's Ale.
> There's the padre, the Reverend Michael Whine.
> The sorrowfullest of men,
> Who tells you he's crushed with his children nine,
> And What'll he do with ten?

And so on.

If there were a regiment at the station the social round would be more varied. Amateur theatricals (in spite of the frowns of the pious) were popular among the young subalterns. Performances would be given in the local assembly room where there was usually some old scenery which had done duty in countless earlier dramas.

> The back scenes are a corresponding trio, that roll up—one a wood for the romantic and the perpetration of horrible murders with a circular cut in a dab of sky for the addition of a gentle moon when requisite. Then we have an interior, which by a judicious arrangement of properties, duly set in order by the momentary introduction of a John, whose livery consists of a strip of yellow paper tucked to his collar and cuffs, can equally represent the boudoir for interviews with unfavouring papas

[1] The Civil List; Bible of all those interested in promotion, then as now.

> or the drawing-room where scenes in connection with bended knees are enacted. Lastly, we have a dungeon, for the express benefit of enchained gentlemen who have got solos to communicate. Great, however, as is the artistic excellence of these scenes, the drop is incomparably superb. Some ambitious individual, overflowing with perspective on a novel design, has poured it forth on canvas in the shape of columns ingeniously receding to the front and approaching to the rear.

There was a natural rivalry for the chief parts: and three short plays were generally given to accommodate all the officers and their ladies, the privates forming the audience, and an occasional sergeant being allowed to sing a comic song in the intervals while the better-bred performers tittered, as they changed for the next play, at the way the sergeant "exasperates his *h*'s and is apt to hear futsteps a comin' when he will be hoff to claim the 'ands of his Hevelina for his bride!" Edwardes, whose later letters are so regrettably burdened with references to the favour of the Almighty and the villainy of Asiatics, was as a junior anxious to acquaint his friends in England with his success and popularity as an amateur actor.

> They may talk [he wrote to Cowley Fowles] of Lord Grey's exertions, but think of a small ensign being slapped on the back with a side-scene, and desired to rise up Grand Duke Alexander brother of the Emperor! Oh, dear me! this is a bad time of the year to have honour thrust upon me! Already has one letter informed you of my theatrical triumphs in the asthmatic and crutch-line as Sir Anthony Absolute; and now while I stand upright, I unroll the seven and twenty towels which gave people to understand that there is gout in the neighbourhood, take off servitude in fact and don the iron youth of a *Russian Autocrat*!

Not content with acting Edwardes painted some new scenery (as he was careful to explain "for the amusement of the men") and on one occasion "stood six hours a day depicting cottage scenes and lordly castles of the land we still call

MISERIES OF THE FIRST OF THE MONTH

after Rowlandson

'home' on immense sheets of canvas". Unfortunately the effort exhausted him; he fell ill and had to take a holiday at Simla. This depressed him and on the journey he wrote some verses on a popular Anglo-Indian theme, that of exile.

> And are my days all happy now?
> Youth's dream is life's reality?
> Are there no clouds upon my brow
> Because there are none in the sky?
>
> And do I love the matin screen
> Of gaudy parrots in the glade?
> Or nightly mingling in my dream
> The little bul-bul's serenade?
>
> Sing not to me thou merry bird;
> Thy song is but an Eastern tale,
> I'd give it for the simplest word
> Of England's gentle nightingale.

And as he journeyed he was displeased at the Hindu ritual of cremation. "These disgusting obsequies" he exclaimed, "I have watched them with my glass throughout the whole process and seldom indeed have I seen anything which betrayed that sort of love which *we* feel for the dead, which shrinks from familiarity with the object."

The increase of Puritan intolerance of other religions and contempt for their followers, the middle-class suspicion of foreigners and their customs, had an inevitable effect on the relations between Englishmen and Indians. When Mrs. Lushington asked a senior lady what she had seen of the country and its people since her first coming to India, the latter replied, "Oh nothing, thank goodness. I know nothing at all about them, nor I don't wish to. Really I think the less one knows of them the better." But each station had its pet Raja or Nawab, and there was some cordiality between them and the senior officials. A Collector

would even dine with a big landowner; after all there would be plenty of champagne, even if there was some confusion in the service and in the order of the dishes so that "Lobsters and tart fruits commingle, while truffled sausages and sugared almonds share mutually the same dish. Nor is it for want of cookery as dishes and plates, and vessels even of the most domestic character, grace the board, side by side with silver plate and glittering ormolu, to the unsmotherable amusement of the guests." [1] And the Collector's wife would pay little compliments to the Rani and send her "twopenny handkerchiefs with alphabets and pictures on them" [2] and even herself paint for them Christmas cards with views of Vesuvius in eruption and underneath, in Gothic lettering, an appropriate quotation from Lord Byron illustrating the impressive effect of wild natural scenery. The Collector and his wife would be invited to tea at the Raja's house and as they wandered through the rooms of their host's palace, they smiled at the lumber in each room, the "pianos by the dozen; harps, babies' cots, four-post bedsteads, ladies' wardrobes, marble-topped round tables; billiard-tables, with caverns for pockets, and a prevailing irregularity of surface, engendered by the curling up of the wood". These rooms were thus furnished to display the Raja's attachment to Western taste. In some recess of the building would be a few rooms reserved for himself and his family furnished in the traditional Indian manner; and from these he would bring, with an apologetic smile, the old pictures that court-artists had painted for his ancestors a century or so ago. The modern taste for Mogul or Rajput art was still undreamt of, and the Raja would listen, agreeing politely, while the Collector's wife pointed out how sadly lacking in all knowledge of Per-

[1] Atkinson. [2] Mrs. Lushington.

spective and Anatomy those old painters were. Indeed, on one occasion, a Collector's wife was good enough to send for her paint-box and with a few skilful brush-strokes restored certain patches where damp or rough usage had smudged the original paint; then, warming to the good work, she spread over the surface of all her host's pictures a thin wash of vandyke brown, so that the horrid glaring colours were subdued to an even tone and the whole effect was now that of a respectable Old Master.

Sometimes there would be not only pictures to show, but also old letters or documents of historic interest; and when Lady Falkland visited the widow of Nana Farnavis she was shown some letters from the Duke of Wellington. The widow was now an old woman, but once she had been a great lady, the wife of the Indian Metternich. Lord Valentia had noted that she was "really a very pretty girl, fair, round-faced", and the Duke, then plain Arthur Wellesley, called on her and offered her his escort, finding her to be "very fair and very handsome". Now Lady Falkland

> beheld, sitting in the small doorway, and as if in a frame, a little old woman; there she remained motionless, reminding me somewhat of one of the Hindu deities in its shrine. She was covered from head to foot with a large red shawl. When I advanced to her, she gave me her hand, and was very silent at first, so I had time to observe her. She is very old, but still traces of great beauty are visible, the features small and delicate, and her eyes large and bright for her age; her little naked feet peeped out from under the folds of her shawl, and I remarked her hands were well formed.

But if there still remained traces of former beauty, there were no traces of former splendour. "Between the pillars hung very shabby curtains: an old bit of carpet and two ricketty-looking chairs were all the furniture of the apartment."

There was, however, one prince whose wealth, hospitality and pleasant manners extorted a certain envious admiration from the residents of an Upper India station. This was Dhondu Pant. He was born in obscurity and poverty and concerning the manner, place and date of his death nothing is known. But for a brief period he was to the English the best known and best hated of Indian princes. He passed his childhood in Venegaon, a small village near the Bhor Ghat between Bombay and Poona. His father was the local priest. The village has scarcely changed and one may still see the old earth-brown temple shaded by a giant peepul-tree whose silvery leaves keep up a busy whispering and trinkling through the quiet of morning and the hush of noon. Under its shadow Dhondu played or watched his father enter and leave the shrine with trays of offerings and tall brass lamps. Then one day the child left his humble village and was taken north to be adopted by the last of the Peshwas, Bajirao II, who lived in luxurious exile at Bithur near Cawnpore, and who, more than all his riches, desired a son. As in all Hindu families of rank, the boy had now to take a " household title " and he chose that of Nana Sahib in imitation of the greatest of the Peshwas. The adoptive father died and the Government refused to continue paying to Nana Sahib the liberal pension that had been granted to the deposed Peshwa. But, if he smarted under the implied refusal to recognise his succession as titular Peshwa, he was wealthy enough even without the pension. He apparently enjoyed the society of Europeans and officers of the Cawnpore garrison were often at his table. One of the guests described dinner in the palace :

> I sat down to a table twenty feet long (it had originally been the mess-table of a cavalry-regiment) which was covered with a damask tablecloth of European manufacture, but instead of

> a dinner napkin there was a bedroom towel. The soup—for the steward had everything ready—was served up in a trifle-dish which had formed part of a dessert service belonging to the Ninth Lancers—at all events the arms of that regiment were upon it ; but the plate into which I ladled it with a broken tea-cup was of the old willow pattern. The pilau which followed the soup was served upon a huge plated dish, but the plate from which I ate it was of the very commonest description. . . . The cool claret I drank out of a richly cut champagne glass, and the beer out of an American tumbler of the very worst quality.

As time went on the Nana's parties became more sophisticated. He had sent to England to argue his case his secretary Azimullah Khan, a plausible Musulman, who having been footman in an Anglo-Indian household had acquired a mastery of English. This person was lionised in Mayfair, voted charming and witty and, though he failed to impress the directors in Leadenhall Street, continued to correspond with titled ladies even after his return to India. Indeed, if we may believe his own account, personal experience of the easy morals of ladies in the great houses of London confirmed his opinion of the wisdom of the veil and the eunuch-guarded harems of the East. " They are all the same," he said to Mr. Russel. " Like moths in candlelight they will fly and get burned." In any case, he now knew enough of the West to advise his master in English etiquette and the balls given by Nana Sahib were the talk of Cawnpore. Everyone in the station hoped to be asked. The host was self-assured and his manners charming. He " inquired after the health of the Major's lady ; congratulated the judge on his rumoured promotion to the Sudder Court ; joked the assistant magistrate about his last mishap in the hunting-field ; and complimented the belle of the evening on the colour she had brought down from Simla ". He " played billiards admirably while he

was yet slim enough to bend over the table without inconvenience". The officers and their wives flattered him, gaped at his carriages and his jewellery, and when their envious hints led him to offer them whatever they had especially admired they made no difficulty about accepting jewels, silks and shawls, or using his carriages as their own. He had the added fascination of a reputation for secret orgies on a Neronian scale. While the ladies of the station strolled through the Westernised reception rooms in Nana Sahib's palace they whispered together about the secret inner apartments whose walls were covered by European artists with paintings that were "vicious with deeper than Parisian immorality".

Save for the intriguing figure of the Nana Cawnpore was much like any other station with its carefully regulated hierarchy, its formal dinners, its evening parade of carriages in the Mall. "Whose buggy is that", asks Mr. Russel, "preceded by two native troopers and followed by five or six armed natives running on foot?" "That is the magistrate and collector."—"What does he do?"—"He is the burra Sahib or big man of the station."—"Who is in the smart gharry with servants in livery?"—"That is the chaplain of the station who marries and baptises and performs service for the Europeans."—"Does he go among the natives?"—"Not he; he leaves that to the missionaries. . . ."—"Well; and who comes next along the drive, in that very smart buggy with the bay mare?"—"That is the doctor of the station. He attends the sick Europeans. He also gets, under certain circumstances, head-money for every native soldier in garrison."—"Does he attend them?"—"I should think not."—"But why is he paid for them?"—"Ah, that is another matter. You must understand our system better before you can comprehend things of this

sort." "And who is this jolly-looking fellow on the grey Arab?"—"That is the judge of the station; a very good fellow. All judges are rather slow coaches, you know." At that time of the evening they would all be bound for the Bandstand and later for the Assembly Rooms, for the Cawnpore Assembly Rooms were the gayest in North India; a handsome building with "pillars of the Roman Doric order".

There were more lavish parties than ever at the Nana's palace as 1856 drew to a close. There seemed to be more money in Cawnpore than in most up-country stations and a visitor noted with approval that "many of the Cawnpore houses are now handsomely furnished, the chairs, tables, and sofas, being of valuable wood, richly carved, with cushions and coverings of damask, or of Bareilly manufacture, black, with gold flowers, resembling the japanned chairs, fashionable in England forty years ago". The gardens, too, were a fine sight that winter in Cawnpore; and though there was some complaint that the broad beans had not done well, the grapes and peaches were unusually "luxuriant". It was in most stations a pleasant cold weather. In Calcutta an amusing play "Cockneys in California" drew crowded houses. In the newspapers there was an unusually brisk exchange of letters from civilians and soldiers each accusing the other's service of a tendency to snobbery and to "giving themselves airs". The races in Calcutta were well attended, though people grumbled that the Municipal Board would not water the course sufficiently. The following spring was unexpectedly cool and in the Punjab no punkahs were used before May. At Sialkot a new church was consecrated, "the most chaste and beautiful structure of Modern Gothic in India", and the *Englishman's* correspondent, after describing the con-

secration ceremony, added, " The future historian will love to dwell upon a picture like the present—a few score strangers dedicating their churches to be set apart from all profane uses for ever with such fixity of purpose—and this in the midst of millions distinct from them in race, religion and feeling." There were a few odd rumours of unrest among these " millions " but there had been such rumours before and no one paid much attention to a story that from January maize-cakes had been circulating in the villages, had been passed from hand to hand with the whisper " All shall become red ". More interesting to most stations was the extraordinarily fine crop of strawberries that year. At Lucknow, in May, they were " having large plates of strawberries every morning ". In Delhi everyone was talking about the quarrel at a dance between the colonel and a conceited young civilian. The latter refused to apologise whereon the colonel (whose regiment had provided the music) not only left the dance himself but ordered the band to follow him, thus bringing the dance to a sudden end. People felt that the colonel, though no doubt justified in feeling some irritation, ought not to have incommoded all the guests on account of the fault of one guest ; hasty, they said, and thoughtless. A Delhi newspaper intrigued its readers by a paragraph in the gossip column. " A wedding is talked of as likely to take place soon, but the names of the aspirants to hymeneal bliss I will refrain from mentioning just yet, lest anything should occur to lesson [*sic*] their affection for each other before the knot is tied." Alas, this arch allusiveness was wasted. A few days later the " aspirants to hymeneal bliss ", the writer of the paragraph and most of its readers were dead. The wind of revolt was blowing down the Ganges valley. The ladies who had shuddered deliciously at gossip of the Nana's

sensual pleasures were now to find a far more sinister side to his character.

The last letter that left Cawnpore was one from Miss Ewart.

> My dear child is looking very delicate. My prayer is that she may be spared much suffering . . . My companion, Mrs. Hillersdon, is delightful. Poor young thing, she has such a gentle spirit, so unmurmuring, so desirous to meet the trial rightly, unselfish and sweet in every way. . . . If these are my last words to you, you will remember them lovingly and always bear in mind that your affection and the love we have ever had for each other is an ingredient of comfort in these bitter times.

The horrors that followed are summarised most poignantly by the last entries in Miss Lindray's diary: "May 21. Entered the barracks. June 5th. Cavalry left. June 6th. First shot fired. June 17th. Aunt Lilly died. June 18th. Uncle Willy died. June 22nd. Left barracks. George died. July 9th. Alice died. July 12th. Mamma died", and there the diary ends, for Miss Lindray herself perished in the final revolting massacre. Another book found in the débris was a Bible with this entry on the flyleaf "For darling Mamma, from her affectionate daughter Isabella Bell. 27th June. Went to the boats. 29th. Taken out of the boats. 30th. Taken to Sevadah Kottri. Fatal day." And there was a prayer-book open at the Litany, the pages stained with blood.

The story of Lucknow is as well known as that of Cawnpore and there is no need here to describe the extraordinary heroism and endurance of the besieged. But it is interesting to recall that even at the most perilous moment of the siege the etiquette of Anglo-Indian life remained as rigid as in time of peace. People still referred to the "upper ten" and the rules of visiting and speaking were not

relaxed for a day. Presumably if class-distinctions were divinely ordered, no situation could justify abandoning them. According to *The Times'* special correspondent,[1] " whilst some (of the garrison) were starving, half-fed on unwholesome food, and drinking the most unpleasant beverages, others were living on the good things of the land and were drinking Champagne and Moselle, which were stored up in such profusion that there were cart-loads remaining when the garrison marched out." But, I suppose, the lower ranks would themselves have thought it strange to be invited to share the champagne of the " upper ten ".

The reaction in Calcutta clubs to the news of the outbreaks and disasters up-country was remarkable. The most peaceful and charitable gentlemen fell into convulsions of race-hatred. Everywhere retributive torture was advocated. Subalterns sat on billiard-tables discussing till the early hours of the morning suitable punishments of rebel leaders. The walls of Mess dining-rooms were covered with charcoal drawings of a crowd of torturers applying their skill to the prostrate body of Nana Sahib, and with a series of vengeful verses in which " wife and daughter " rhymed meritably with " slaughter ". The English Press discussed the situation with a ferocious hysteria compared to which General Goering's most unbalanced outbursts would seem polite commonplaces. Hymns of Hate usurped the Poet's Corner of the *Englishman*.

> Barring [cried one poet] humanity-pretenders,
> To hell of none are we the willing senders.
> But, if to Sepoys entrance must be given,
> Locate them, Lord, in the back-slums of Heaven.

Smiles went out of fashion, even in portraiture. The

[1] W. H. Russel. See *My Diary of India*, p. 119.

noblest expression for a "sitter" was a cold ferocity. Art criticism followed the fashion and a journal drew favourable attention to the

> Portrait of Captain Hazlewood which may be seen in Thacker and Spink's Gallery. The friends of the gallant officer will at once recognise the likeness, and feel confident that no undue lenity on his part will be shown to the murderers of women and children, for he has a stern expression of countenance as if he had just given an order to hang them and their favourers.

Favourers, here, means the small minority, chiefly civil servants, who, though advocating tremendous reprisals, were yet suggesting that it might be as well to avoid indiscriminate massacres, in which a far greater number of innocent than guilty must obviously suffer. This point of view seemed so wrong, so unmanly and unhealthy, that those who held it were denounced as agents of Nana Sahib and there were serious proposals that a number of European officials should be executed as a warning to the others.

Troops were pouring into Calcutta, but, while the ardour of the soldiers was inflamed by numerous and often untrue atrocity-stories, no one seems to have thought it necessary to tell the soldiers that the war was against certain rebels and not against the population of India. In consequence of this omission there were some regrettable incidents in the streets of the capital. A soldier had just landed when "I seed two Moors talking in a cart. Presently I heard one of 'em say 'Cawnpore'. I knowed what that meant; so I fetched Tom Walker, and he heard 'em say 'Cawnpore', and he knowed what that meant. So we polished 'em both off." On the other hand the arrival for the first time in a strange country of so many British troops gave rise to as many jokes among the civilian population as in the early months of the last war. Foremost among the heroes of

these amusing stories was, of course, the Irish soldier, or " worthy son of Erin ", who is shocked to find in the Indians a race as loquacious as his own. At last in exasperation he addresses the crowded street, " with an unmistakable Hibernian Brogue ; ' Silence ! silence there, boys ! Don't have so much *tarlking* wid ye. Bedad ! When a man opens his mouth, sure half his strength just pops out of it.' " And the cream of the joke, of course, was " that this apophthegm (a piece of barrack-yard chaff), uttered as it was in the vernacular, fell unappreciated upon the ears of his present audience ". But the strangeness of a foreign country soon passed off and officers were alarmed to see how quickly their hardy privates adopted Asiatic comforts. They were particularly annoyed at the way the soldiers would pay a few annas to the regimental sweepers to help them keep their kit clean. This was felt to be bad for the soldier's moral fibre, and Lieutenant Majendie exclaimed, " It is not, it cannot be necessary or judicious to pamper him as though he were some indolent rajah, and to *wink at* his procuring natives to clean his boots or appointments." But worse was to follow. When the troops were marching over the Gangetic plain in the fantastic heat of Indian summer—

> as regards the appearance of the troops, the less said the better. Under any circumstances, the wicker helmet used by the men is by no means a becoming head-dress, giving an appearance to the wearer of being extinguished ; but to this is added that the greater part of the troops marched . . . actually in their shirt-sleeves like a lot of insurrectionary haymakers !

In command of soldiers so informally attired Havelock was advancing on Cawnpore. The ramshackle kingdom of Nana Sahib collapsed without serious resistance, for it had little support in the town. Nanekchand, a Cawnpore

lawyer, had noted in his diary, " The shopkeepers and the citizens curse the mutineers from morning till evening. The people and the workmen starve, and widows cry in their huts." Some days later he

> was sitting in an orchard when I observed a shopkeeper running up. He came, and seated himself under a tree near me and told me he was hastening to pack up his wife and children, as the Europeans would arrive shortly and would spare nobody. I thought to myself this must be true, and the gentlemen must be very savage. I returned to the city and saw several villagers with their dresses changed coming along the banks of the Ganges and I joined them. The terror in the hearts of all was so great that they asked each other no questions.

The terror was justified, for the wretched inhabitants who would gladly have welcomed back their former rulers were indiscriminately massacred here, as at Delhi, where, as a Bombay newspaper exulted, " All the city people found within the walls when our troops entered were bayoneted on the spot ; and the number was considerable, as you may suppose when I tell you that in some houses forty or fifty persons were hiding ",[1] and at Lucknow where Lieutenant Majendie noticed hundreds of pariah dogs gorging themselves on the slain and cracked a neat pun over it. " A sort of cannibalism. For no one can dispute my right (with the assistance of a little *dog*-latin) to designate the taste as *cani*-balic."

There were wild scenes at the plunder of the palaces. In the Kaiserbag at Lucknow Russel saw

> lying amid the orange-groves dead and dying sepoys ; and the white statues are reddened with blood. Leaning against a

[1] It is worth noting that when the Nawab of Farukabad, who happened to be innocent of any seditious activity, was put to death in a " most disgusting " manner a chaplain was among the interested spectators.

> Venus is a British soldier shot through the neck. . . . From the broken portals issue soldiers laden with loot or plunder. The men are wild with fury and lust of gold—literally drunk with plunder. Some come out with china vases or mirrors, dash them to pieces on the ground and return to seek more valuable booty. Some swathe their bodies in stuffs crusted with precious metals and gems.

Mr. Russel, with more refined taste, went in search of the priceless porcelain known to be stored in the palace.

> Stewart and myself and one or two other officers, selected a few pieces and put them aside near the well. It was well we did so, for, just as we had put them aside, the shadow of a man fell across the court from the gateway; a bayonet was advanced cautiously, raised evidently to the level of the eye, then came the Enfield, and finally the head of a British soldier. "None here but friends," shouted he. "Come along, Bill, there's only some officers, and here's a lot of places no one has bin to!" Enter three or four banditti of H.M.'s Regiment. Faces black with powder; cross belts specked with blood; coats stuffed out with all sorts of valuables. And now commenced the work of plunder under our very eyes. . . . One fellow, having burst open a leaden-looking lid, which was in reality of solid silver, drew out an armlet of emeralds, diamonds and pearls . . . "What will your honour give me for these?" said he. "I'll take a hundred rupees on chance!" Oh, wretched fate! I had not a penny in my pocket.

He promised to send the money that same night. But the soldier was a fatalist. "Oh! faith an your honour how do I know where I'd be this blissed night? It's may be dead I'd be, wid a bullet in the body. I'll take two gold mores and a bottle of rum on the spot. But shure it's not safe to have any but reddy money transactions these times." But Mr. Russel had no bottle of rum on him at the moment and so, as he sighed, "I saw my fortune vanish."

The typhoon left a vast desolation in its track. All along the main roads of the north "bungalows, police stations, tehseels, were all burned down, blackened and in ruins".

When *The Times* correspondent entered Delhi, he found himself

> in the ruined streets of a deserted city, in which every house bore the marks of cannon, or musket-shell, or the traces of the hand of the spoiler. . . . As the gharry rattled along at the foot of the huge red wall, not a creature was to be seen, except a hungry pariah, or an impudent cow. . . . To some of the houses doors of matting and rude jalousies were put up and chubby-faced English children looked out of the glassless windows as the gharry drove by. A few natives of the lower order slunk through the wide street.

But the new English commissioner was already installed in "a fine mansion, with turrets and clock-towers, something like a French chateau of the last century. . . . The comfort and luxury of the house itself were a positive gratification to the senses. Large lofty rooms—soft carpets, sofas, easy-chairs, books, pictures." There were two breakfasts, one at 8, the other at 3 o'clock. As an evening amusement the commissioner would take his guests to see the captive Mogul Emperor.

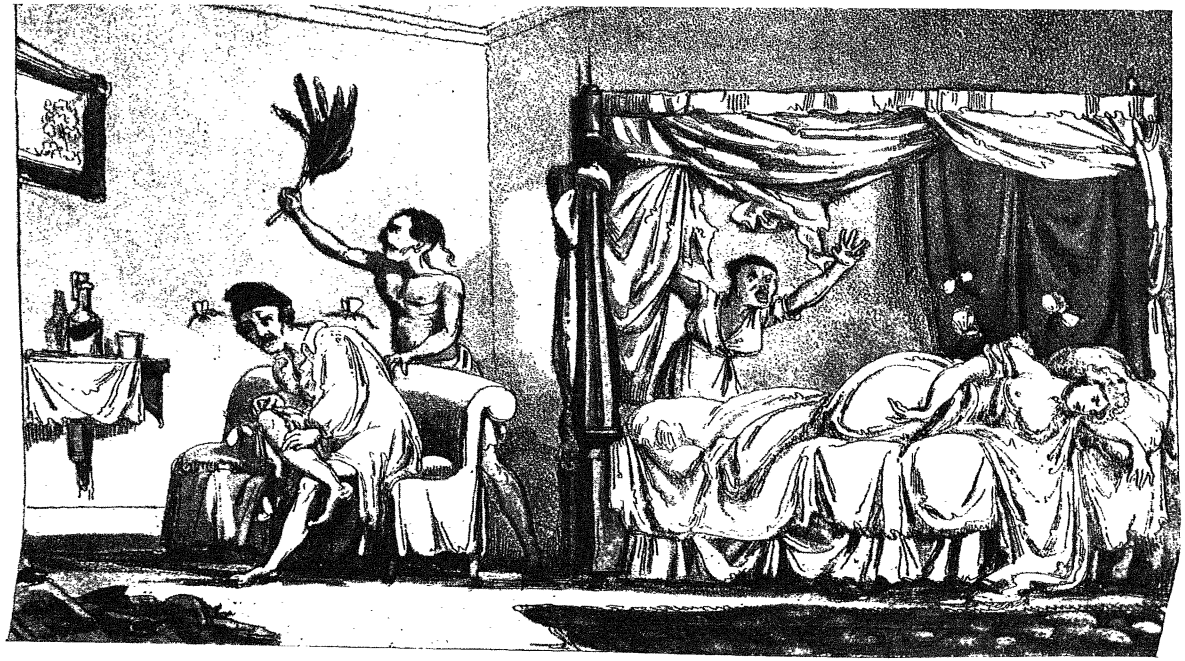
> In a dingy, dark passage, leading from the open court or terrace in which we stood to a darker room beyond, there sat, crouched on his haunches, a diminutive, attenuated old man, dressed in an ordinary and rather dirty muslin tunic, his small lean feet bare, his head covered by a small thin cambric skull-cap. It was the descendant of Tamurlane.

The day of Mr. Russel's visit the Emperor was ill. "With bent body he seemed nearly prostrate over a brass basin, into which he was retching violently." It was really quite a relief to return to the commissioner's bungalow and enjoy "a civilised evening. Mr. Egerton, the magistrate of the city, came in, and several other gentlemen, who, with the guests, formed a large and agreeable party, not unmusical or unvocal either, and not so much given to piano and song as to be tiresome."

The ravages of the siege were soon repaired ; and when Lieutenant Majendie visited it a few months later he was pleasantly surprised by the " clusters of bungalows ", and an English hotel known as " Lewis' " had already opened. It was disappointing as an hotel, for one would have thought that as nothing can have survived the siege, the furniture and provisions of the hotel would be fairly new. But it is interesting to find that even in such promising circumstances Lewis' Hotel was from the moment of its opening faithful to the traditional appearance of an up-country " European " hotel in India. In the Coffee-Room was

> a dingy appearance of chaos, more singular than pleasing, furniture new and old and not a small quantity antediluvian ; potted meats and treatises on astronomy ; faded neckties and bloater-paste ; preserved soup and books without backs ; glass lamp-shades and rusty knives ; rakish old chairs on three legs, making love to young book-cases with no books in them.

So Lieutenant Majendie was glad to leave the Coffee-Room after toying with " altogether exceedingly uninviting a display of *eatables*, . . . tasting unpleasantly strong of the smell of a *cow*-house ", and wander amid the splendours of the Mogul palace where, reflecting on fallen might, he ejaculated (will you be surprised to hear it ?) " *Sic transit gloria mundi !* "



MISERIES IN INDIA

after Rowlandson