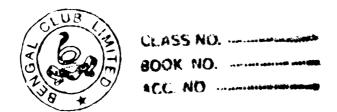


The Bengal Club



The Bengal Club 1827-1970

Reprint in May 1997



Introduction

The history of The Bengal Club was last written in 1970. This was a kind of a second edition, which was published at the time when, according to the author – "The Club has been passing through a crisis". Of course, we are not passing through any crisis now, but we decided that we shall re-print this book, as we are down to the last one or two copies.

Why re-print?

Many members have spoken to me about their keen interest in the past history of the Club. Not many members know that the dinner given in this Club on 13th July, 1827 by the then Chief Justice of the Supreme Court – Charles Grey to celebrate the acquisition of the Club premises (at a rent of Rs. 800/- per month!) where the culinary skill of the Chef was applauded by all the members. We do hope that there is some similarity, at least, as far as the culinary skills are concerned with our present kitchen staff as well!

Do we all know that bedrooms were rented in this club during that period for Rs. 4/- per week? There are also examples given of the Club's activities such as that of "leisurely Friday lunches with pre and post-prandial spirited comforts"! It would also be very interesting for the members to know that Mr. Macaulay and his associates discussed affairs of the state in breakfast meeting ("Power Breakfast" apparently was also known at that time) which continued upto late afternoon until they were stricken by conscience at the thoughts of the pending files in the office!

Do you also know that there was a "Dirty Dining Room" in the Club, where there were no dress codes! And, of course, members will definitely be quite interested to know about the history of the portraits, prints and works of art, etc. which have been donated to the Club or acquired by the Club from 1827 onwards.

All in all, we thought this book is worth re-printing and that is why we have taken up this venture. Our efforts will be considered as worthwhile if the members find it interesting.

The history of the Club from 1970 onwards is being written separately and hopefully, during the next re-printing of this book, we shall be able to include that.

HAPPY READING!

Calcutta, 25th May, 1997 Aloke Mookherjea President



"Gordon's Buildings" – The first Club House 1827–circa 1830

FOREWORD

S I write this there is but a small pile of rubble on the site at 33, Chowringhee, on which there stood the building which was the home of the Bengal Club for nearly 60 years; longer than any other period in the Club's history.

It was in 1969 that the Committee minuted its decision to retreat into the Russell Street wing and to sell the Chowringhee site. As a member of the Committee, I became responsible for the rebuilding and rehabilitation operation which is now all but completed.

Inevitably much of the past would have to be swept away—familiar surrounding would be demolished, and with them a way of life which perhaps belonged more to the nineteenth than the late twentieth Century.

The only recorded history of the Bengal Club was the one written for the Centenary in 1927 by Sir H. R. Panckridge. There was an urgent need to bridge the gap from then to 1970 but the problem was to find any one who could and would make time to undertake such a task. One morning , I bumped into one,R. I. Macalpine, who at that time was immersed in the job of overseeing the pruning and moving of the Club's Library – a task which few people could have undertaken so thoroughly and successfully. I said, I want you to write the story of the Club from 1927 to the present day so that history is not demolished with 33 Chowringhee. In spite of his modest rejection of the proposal at the time, I was delighted to find a few days later that he had started to consult old records and minutes; it was not long before his interest was fully aroused and I knew I had asked the right person.

How many hours he spent in reading dull and uncommunicative records and minutes is anybody's guess, but the fact that the history of the Club is now recorded from the day of its formation owes much to his perseverance and dedication.

It is fitting that this volume should be published at a moment in the Club's history when it has, we all hope, weathered one of the worst crises in its life. To me, it has been a matter of pride to have been associated with the Club's affairs during this period of change from looking back to looking ahead.

By the time this goes to print, I shall have left India. I take this opportunity of thanking all those who have helped in innumerable ways during my term of office, and especially to Bob Macalpine for keeping the history alive.

The Club never closed, may it never have to in the years ahead.

M. G. SATOW President

Calcutta,1970

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One of the Club's Old Geysers

PART I

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BENGAL CLUB

(1827-1927)

BY

H. R. PANCKRIDGE

CALCUTTA

1927

PREFACE

HIS work was begun last June in response to a request made by the Committee. My task was greatly lightened by the fact that much of the material had already been collected by the Secretary, Colonel A. L. Barrett, D. S. O.

I have to thank Sir Evan Cotton, C.I.E., who has given me much valuable advice and freely placed his unrivalled knowledge of Calcutta history at my disposal. The biographical notes of the civilians in the list of Original Members are almost entirely his work. Major V.C. Hodson, late 10th D.C.O. Lancers (Hodson's Horse), whose knowledge of the old Bengal Army is exhaustive, has very kindly supplied the notes of the Military Members.

I am also indebted to the Registrar of the Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood, St. James's Palace, for the details of Lord Combernere's career.

Among books the most useful have been Sir Evan's "Calcutta Old and New", and the Dictionary of Indian Biography, edited by Mr. C.E. Buckland, C.I.E.

H. R. PANCKRIDGE.

Calcutta, November, 1927.

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE BENGAL CLUB

It is the practice of European peoples to reproduce as far as possible in their settlements and colonies in other continents the characteristic social features of their national lives.

Thus it is that the footsteps of France are marked by the cafe', those of Germany by the beergarden.

For more than a century no institution has been more peculiarly British than the social club. Transplanted to the continent clubs have a slightly exotic air; they exist in considerable numbers, but usually with some specific object, such as racing, or baccarat, and not as ends in themselves. "Were I a foreign visitor," writes Max Beerbohm,(a) "taking cursory glances, I should doubtless be delighted with the clubs of London. Had I the honour to be an Englishman, I should doubtless love them. But being a foreign resident I am somewhat oppressed by them". On the soil of Great Britain clubs have long flourished, and the prophecy that the Great War, with the resulting diminution of the incomes of the leisured and professional classes, would force many of them to close their doors has not been fulfilled.

In the tropical possessions of the British Crown the idea of the club makes a special appeal to the large number of men, who are compelled by circumstances to be separated from their wives and families for longer or shorter periods. To these clubs afford some consolation for the pains of exile and loneliness, while at the same time they offer a welcome solution of a difficult problem to the many bachelors with a distaste for housekeeping.

It is thus only natural that social clubs in India are numerous, and of the better known among them, the Bengal Club, founded in 1827, appears to be oldest; its most formidable rivals in point of age being the Madras Club (1831), The Byculla Club (1833), and the Western India Turf Club (1837).

Even when judged by the more exacting standard of London, the

Bengal Club can fairly claim a respectable antiquity. With the exception of those clubs—such as White's (1697)(a), the Cocoa Tree (1746), Boodle's(1762), and Arthur's (1765), which are descended from seventeenth and eighteenth century coffee-houses, and often bear the names of the original proprietors, the clubs of London are for the most part children of the nineteenth century. The following may be noticed as of approximately equal age with the Bengal Club—the Athenaeum (1824), the Oxford and Cambridge(1830), the Garrick(1831), the Carlton(1832), and the Reform(1837).

The Oriental Club (1824) merits special mention, since its constitution served in some degree for a model of our own, and the two clubs have always maintained a close and very cordial association. The other great London Club directly connected with India is the East India United Service Club, founded in 1849.

The idea of the establishment of the Bengal Club, or of the Calcutta United Service Club, as it was originally intended to Christen it, was apparently first conceived in the beginning of the cold weather 1826-27, and an informal meeting of those interested in the project was held under the presidency of Lt.-Col. the Hon. J. Finch, C.B., afterwards first President of the Club, on November 29th, 1826, in the Calcutta Town Hall. This was the present building in Esplanade West, which had been erected in 1813, a large part of the necessary funds having been raised by the then popular method of a lottery.

Colonel Finch is reported to have explained the respective advantages that the proposed Club would confer on the resident in Calcutta and in the Mofussil in the following words:—"A plan is under consideration for the establishment of a club in Calcutta similar to those instituted in London such as the United Service Club and others which have proved there so successful. It can scarcely be necessary to observe, that if such associations have been found beneficial in London, where so many and such various resources offer themselves, they will be infinitely more serviceable in Calcutta, where nothing like a respectable hotel or coffee-house has ever existed. To form such an institution on a liberal scale demandsan

⁽a) "White's" is the anglicized form of the sumame of Francisco Bianco, an Italian exile and restaurateur, who established a coffee-house in Pall Mall, migrating to St. James Street in 1697.

outlay of capital which few persons of the class of tavern-keepers possess, and to make the resort of company, even reasonably select, requires a command of character and friends, which they cannot be expected to enjoy. At the same time, the want of some such place is sensibly felt, as whilst those who constitute the society of Calcutta have no place where they can spend an idle half hour agreeably, those who are occasional visitants only too often find themselves utter strangers and forlorn. To both classes, therefore, some one building which shall be always open to them, which they may securely and pleasurably visit, where, on reasonable terms, they may procure the accommodation they require, and where they may have a chance of meeting with old friends and acquaintances, without the trouble of searching for them perhaps in vain, and where the formality of interchanging cards may be substituted for more cordial greeting, will, I conceive, be an arrangement of such obvious advantage that to be successful it needs only to be known. I am, therfore, satisfied that the following sketch of the principles of which the Club is to be established, will be considered with interest."

The details of the scheme can be more appropriately dealt with when we come to consider the first rules of the Club.

It was decided that a meeting should be held on February 1st, 1827, at the Town Hall "of all persons eligible on the above principles as Original Members and desirous of joining the Association, when the Club will be formed, the limitation of members fixed, and a Committee elected, for the purpose of framing rules and regulations for the management of the Club".

Mr. Paul Marriot Wynch of the Bengal Civil Service consented to act as interim Secretary and to receive all communications that might be made on the subject of the proposed Club.

The Club was duly established on February 1st,1827, and perhaps this notable event is most fittingly recorded in the unemotional phraseology of the issues of the Government Gazette of February 5th and 8th,1827.

"On Thursday last a meeting took place at the Town Hall to

consider the institution of the United Service Club, when it was determined to form the association proposed on as wide a scale as might be practicable, leaving its full development to a subsequent period. On the 2nd, the deputation consisting of Col. Stevenson, Mr. Trower, Col. Wilson and Col. Cunliffe waited upon Lord Combermere and requested his Lordship's Patronage to the proposed institution. His Lordship readily accepted the office of Patron and was pleased to express himself much interested in the success of the project".

"At a meeting held at the Town Hall, on the 1st of February, 1827, in pursuance of the Resolutions of the 29th November last.

Present.— C.Trower, Esq., Hon'ble Lt.-Col. Finch, Lt.-Col. Bryant, Lt.-Col. Stevenson, Lt.-Col. Watson, Col.Hodgson, Col. Cunliffe, Major Maling, Captain Jackson, Captain Oliphant, Captain Baker, Mr. Wynch.

Resolved.- That the Club be considered to be formed from this day and that the Gentlemen now present as well as those who attended the meeting of the 29th November last and other Gentlemen the Right Hon'ble Stapleton Lord Combernere, G.C.B., Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., Brigadier O'Halloran, Lt.-Col. Anbury, Brigadier Major Honeywood, Lt.Col. Dawkins, Lieut.-Col. D.G.Baddeley, Lt.-Col. Parkes, Captain G.C. Mundy, Captain J. Cheape, Captain W. Burlton, Captain Mackinly, Captain F. Jenkins, Captain White, Captain C.M.Cox, Lt. Dougan, Lt. J.N.Forbes, Lt. P.J. Macdougall, Lt. W. Hislop, Lt. J.Mackenzie, Messrs. D. Scott, G.T. Metcalfe, R.N.Hamilton, H.Moore, Briscoe, Woollen and P.Y.Lindsay, and Dr. James Ranken, Messrs. Forbes and Watson, Medical Service, Civil Service, who have signified their wish to belong to the Club may be considered original Members of it.

That His Excellency Lord Combermere, be requested by a deputation from the Club, to become the Patron of it.

That the number of Members (for the present) be limited to five hundred, one hundred of whom be eligible from Gentlemen not in the service of His Majesty or the Hon'ble Company.

That Messrs. Mackintosh & Co., be requested to accept office of Treasurers to the Club.

That the following Gentlemen be appointed a Committee Sir C. Metcalfe, Bart., C. Trower, Esq., H. T. Prinsep, Esq., The Hon'ble J. Elliott, Hon'ble Lt.-Col. Finch, Lt.-Col. Stevenson, Lt.-Col. Watson, Lt.-Col.Bryant, Col. Cunliffe, Captain Oliphant, Captain Jackson, E. Molony, Esq., P. Wynch, Esq., for the purpose of framing Rules and Regulations for the management of the Club. The same to be submitted on the 1st of March next, to a General Meeting to be held at the Town Hall for that purpose."

Acting Secretary, P. Wynch.

Some account must now be given of Sir Stapleton Cotton, sixth Baronet and first Viscount Combermere, original member and first Patron of the Club.

He came of an old Shropshire family, being born in 1773; he was educated at Westminster and obtained a commission in 1799. These were the spacious days of Purchase, and after serving with the 6th Carabiniers in France and the Low Countries he became Lieutenant Colonel of the newly raised 25th Light Dragons, (Gwyn's Hussars) at the early age of twenty-one. His first connection with India was in 1796, when we find him commanding his regiment at Madras. After taking part in the campaign against Tippoo Sahib including the siege of Seringapatam (1799), he exchanged home in 1800, obtaining command of the 16th Light Dragons. He became a Major General in 1805 and was elected Member of Parliament for Newark in 1807.

In 1808 began the most distinguished period of his military service,

for in that year he sailed for Lisbon in command of a cavalry brigade, which formed part of Sir John Moore's forces, and was present at the battle of Talayera.

His father's death and his consequent succession to the baronetcy caused his return to England in 1810, but he was back in the Peninsula before the end of the year with the rank of Lieutenant General.

He was Wellington's second-in-command at Salamanca (1812), and at that battle led the cavalry charge of Le Marchant's and Anson's heavy brigades. After the battle he was severely wounded as the result of a chance volley from an allied picket. He was invalided home, and Wellington who, though an Irishman, appears to have shared the Englishman's mistrust of "cleverness" writes:— "Sir Stapleton Cotton is gone home. He commands our cavalry very well—indeed much better than some that might be sent us and might be supposed to be cleverer than he is."

After recovering from his wound Sir Stapleton rejoined Wellington's forces and served with them in Spain and Southern France until the peace (a).

On his return he received the thanks of both Houses of Parliament and the Red Ribbon of the Bath, and was raised to the peerage as Baron Combermere of Combermere Abbey.

Napoleon's return from Elba recalled him to arms. The Duke who fully realized that the coming conflict would be as critical as he afterwards, *more suo*, described it (b), wished the command of the cavalry in Belgium for Combermere, but to his chagrin it was given to Uxbridge, and thus it was that Combermere was not present at Waterloo. After the occupation of Paris however he was given command of the allied cavalry in France.

⁽a) Sir Stapleton Cotton's service in the Peninsula belongs not only to history but to fiction. It is General Cotton's hunter on which Brigadier Gerard makes his escape, and from whose back he sabres the hunted fox, in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's entertaining story—"The Crime of the Brigadier".

⁽b) "It has been a damned nice thing-the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life. By God, I don't think it would have done if I had not been there".

See "Book and Characters". Lytton Strachey, London, 1922. p. 298.

He was subsequently Governor of Barbadoes (1817-1820), and Commander-in-Chief in Ireland (1822-1825). He became Commander-in-Chief in India in 1825 and directed the operations that ended in the fall of the Jat Fortress of Bhurtpore. He was made a Viscount (a) in 1827 and returned to England in 1830. The remaining thirty five years of his life were largely occupied by his parliamentary duties. His political views were of the bluest Tory complexion, and he could be relied to record his vote against such menaces to the established order as Parliamentary Reform, Catholic Emancipation, and the Repeal of the Corn Laws. However, the memory of his distinguished services and his amiable temper obtained for him the respect and affection of his political opponents.

On the death of the Duke of Wellington he became Constable of the Tower of London and was made a Field Marshal in 1865. His last public duty was that of attending in 1863 as Gold Stick in Waiting at the marriage of the future King Edward VII, the great-grandson of the Sovereign under whom he had been born and in whose service he had spent his youth and early manhood.

The curse ordained by Scripture for those who "take the sword" was remitted in the case, for he died peacefully at Clifton in 1865, aged ninety-one. How long his life was can be realized when we recollect that although born before the Declaration of Independence he died in the year of the birth of his Majesty King George V. He left issue and the present Viscount Combermere is his great-grandson. His portrait hangs in the Club Reading Room, and a reproduction of it faces this page. Lord Combermere is wearing full dress uniform, the red ribbon of the Bath, and the blue ribbon of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order (b).

The portrait indeed presents something of a problem. The following is from a contemporary account:-

"We understand that at a general meeting of the Bengal Club, lately held at the Club House, Mr. Charles Trower in the Chair, it was determined as a mark of respect to the noble Founder

⁽a) His full title was Viscount Combermere of Bhurtpore in the East Indies and of Combermere in the County Palatine of Chester.

⁽b) The inscription is inaccurate. Lord Combermere is described as K.C.S.L., K.S.L. is correct; he was created one of the original Knights of the Order in 1861 before its enlargement in 1866.

of the Club, that a Committee should be appointed to wait up on his Excellency, Lord Combermere, to solicit that his Lordship would sit for his picture, which, when finished, is to be put up in the Club House. A Committee accordingly was formed which waited upon his Lordship who, in suitable terms, acknowledged the compliment paid by the Club and expressed the satisfaction it would give him to comply with their request. The picture, we understand, is already in a state of great Forwardness."

This is tantalizingly meagre, since it is not stated to whom this important work was entrusted. Moreover in 1829 Lord Combermere was fifty six, yet the features appear to be those of a much younger man. It may be that the portrait is a copy of an earlier original, or it is possible that the courtly painter has reduced the General's years, as he has certainly augmented his inches; for the tall figure, with the right arm non-chalantly resting on the charger's withers, could never have belonged to one who was known to his brother Carabiniers as "little" Cotton.

The courtesy of Mr. C.W.E. Cotton, C.I.E., a member of the Club, who belongs to a collateral branch of the family, has enabled us to reproduce, opposite this page a photograph of Lord Combermere, taken shortly before his death: though at least thirty-five years intervene between the portrait and the photograph, it is agreeably easy to recognize in the latter the lineaments of the debonair cavalry leader of the Regency.(a)

The first President, Lieut-Col. the Hon. J. Finch, C. B., was Military Secretary to Lord Combermere both in India and elsewhere. He was a son of the fourth Earl of Aylesford and his regiment was the Blues; after his service in India he was promoted to the rank of Major General; he died in 1861.

The Committee seems to have held its first meeting on February 22nd,1827, a week earlier than had been contemplated.

The Resolution passed at the meeting, the list of original members, with biographical notes and the Rules, as approved and confirmed, are



Lord Combermere - First Patron 1827

set out in the Appendices.

It may be noticed that though the meeting is described as a meeting of the Committee of the United Service Club, the rules are the "Rules of the Bengal Club," the name by which the Club has always thereafter been known.

When we consider the subsequent development of the Club, it is a little surprising to observe that if the language of Rule 2 be strictly construed, it was not at first apparently intended that those engaged in Commerce should be eligible for membership.

Of the five hundred members contemplated, one hundred can belong to the Bench,Bar, or Clergy, the rest being Service members. Members of professions other than the Law and the Church would therefore be ineligible, as also men of business. It is evident, however, that this could not have been the draftsman's intention. Even to-day the Bench, Bar, and Clergy of Calcutta can hardly number a hundred, a century ago their numbers must have been a mere handful.

Further we can trace in the list of original members the names of many who presided over the destinies of mercantile houses now forgotten. (a)

The Rules also indicate certain differences between old and modern practice. The Club now derived a modest but welcome revenue from the sale of wines to members for consumption in their own houses. This was not contemplated by the framers of the original Rules, as Rule 8 sub-rule 7 lays down that "no provisions cooked in the Club House or wines or other Liquors are to be sent out of the house on any pretence whatsoever."

The next sub-rule is evidence that our ancestors took an austere view of the "chit" system. Members are required to pay in ready money, or by a draft on a House of Agency, their Bills and every expense they

⁽a) Messrs. Larruleta. Roberts, Gordon (a partner in the firm of Messrs. Mackintosh & Co., the Club's treasurers). Calder, Bracken, Alexander, Young, Bryce, Palmer, Melville, Fergusson, and Patrick. Sir Evan Cotton has furnished the information given above.

incur before they leave the house: moreover the Steward has positive orders not to open accounts with any individuals.

One of the first tasks before the Committee was the acquisition of a local habitation for the newly formed Club, and by July, 1827, we find it established in a large four storeyed block in Esplanade East, known as Gordon's Buildings. For a rent of Rs. 800/- per mensem the Club obtained the tenancy of the ground and first floors, and was able to provide not only public rooms, but also bedrooms at the moderate rent of Rs. 4/- per week. Gordon's Buildings have long since been demolished and the site is now occupied by the block in which the Imperial Library is housed.

There hangs in the Club a print of Esplanade East, the most prominent feature of which is the Club's first home. The print was produced about 1830 by William Wood Junior, and displays Gordon's towering against a threatening monsoon sky, and overlooking a waste of maidan and puddle, given over to cattle and pariah dogs, which is now replaced by the neat paths and ordered flowerbeds of the Curzon Gardens.

The acquisition of the Club premises was appropriately celebrated by a dinner held on July 13th, 1827. Over a hundred members attended, including the Patron, the President, and Sir Charles Grey, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, with his two Puisnes. A Contemporary account tells us that the venison was most excellent. We are not however given any clue as to the animal from which the delicacy, now a stranger to Calcutta dinner tables, was obtained.

We learn moreover from the same source that the meal "did much credit to the culinary talents of Mr. Payne, the Steward, who is likely to turn out a most formidable rival to Messrs. Gunter and Hooper."

Thomas Payne, the first Steward, was apparently permitted to conduct an ice manufacturing business of his own, for we find a notice issued in May, 1831, to the following effects:-

"Ice-Thomas Payne (Bengal Club House) will continue to supply Families with Ice during the Hot Season and Rains at the following

rates:-

Ice for cooling wine, etc., at 8 annas per seer, creams of all kinds at 1-8-0 rupee mould (coolpee).

N.B.—The Ice will be delivered from a Godown next to the Club House in Mission Row (a) at from 6 to 7 o'clock in the morning and at the same hour in the evening.

It is requested that orders for the Ice may be sent the day previous."

In the days before the invention of refrigerating machines the manufacture of artificial ice was uncertain and expensive, and if Mr. Payne was able to guarantee a regular supply, his profits should have been handsome. The business could not however have long survived, since 1834 saw the beginning of the system of the importation from America of natural ice, which was stored in the Ice House in the neighbourhood of Hare Street (b). The natural ice by reason of its cheapness rapidly ousted its artificial rival from the market, only to be in its turn superseded by machine-made ice. The Ice House was demolished in 1882.

In August 1827 Colonel Finch retired from the presidency of the Club, though the fact that he was Vice-President in the following year testifies to his continuing interest in its management.

He was succeeded by Sir Charles Metcalfe who remained President for eleven years until his retirement from India in 1838.

Charles Theophilus Metcalfe was born in Calcutta in 1785, his father being then a Major in the Bengal Army. He was educated at Eton, and returned to India as a writer in the Company's service in 1801. His employment was chiefly what is now called "political."

He was appointed Resident at Delhi in 1811, and at Hyderabad in 1820. Through the death of his elder brother he succeeded to the family baronetcy in 1822. In 1827, when he became President of the Club, he

 ⁽a) By 1831, the Club had removed from Gordon's Buildings to Tank Square.
 (b) For an interesting account of the introduction of Wenhern Lake Ice into Calcutta see Cotton's "Calcutta Old and New".
 P 186-190

had recently been nominated a member of the Supreme Council which then consisted of the Governor-General, the Commander-in-Chief, and two members of the Civil Service. In November, 1833 he was appointed Governor of Agra but did not leave Calcutta until December, 1834. He was recalled early in the following year to act as Provisional Governor-General during the interval between departure of Lord William Bentinck and the arrival of Lord Auckland (March, 1835-March, 1836).

His name is chiefly remembered for the action of his Government in passing Act XI of 1835, without reference to the Home Authorities. By this enactment the modified form of literary censorship which then existed was abolished.

Though Metcalfe was hailed as "Liberator of the India Press", a title which posterity may have sometimes considered as dubious, his policy met with the strongest disapproval in Leadenhall Street, and to this Metcalfe was wont to attribute the fact that he was passed over by the Directors when the Governorship of Madras fell vacant in 1838. A characteristic minute of Macaulay's advocating the contentious measure is to be found in Chapter VI of his "Life and Letters". Whatever Macaulay's defects may have been in the appreciation of historical characters, he was seldom at fault in his judgment of contemporaries, and for Metcalfe he had the warmest admiration. One of his last speeches in the House of Commons was made in support of the proposal that the Civil Service of India should be recruited by competitive examination. In justification of the view that men who distinguish themselves in their youth almost always keep to the end of their lives the start that they gained, he said: "The ablest man who ever governed India was Warren Hastings, and was he not in the first rank at Westminster? The ablest Civil Servant I ever knew in India was Sir Charles Metcalfe, and was he not of the first standing at Eton?"

On the arrival of Lord Auckland, Metcalfe was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of the North Western Provinces; this post he resigned in 1838 as a protest against being passed over for the Governorship of Madras and retired from the Service.

His leisure was brief, for he was made Governor of Jamaica in

1839 and resigned in 1842, only to be appointed Governor-General of Canada in 1843, a stormy period in the history of the Dominion. Metcalfe's health was now failing: he was created Baron Metcalfe of Fern Hill in the County of Berks in 1845, and returned to England a dying man in December of that year. He died in 1846. He never married, (a) and on his death the barony became extinct, his younger brother Thomas Theophilus succeeding to the baronetcy.

Metcalfe's memory is kept green in Calcutta by the Metcalfe Hall at the junction of Hare Street and Strand Road. This Building was erected by public subscription, the foundation stone being laid by Lord Auckland in 1840. During Lord Curzon's Viceroyalty Metcalfe Hall became the home of the Imperial Library, but the removal of that institution to the Esplanade has left it free for the necessary but unpopular activities of the Commissioner of Income Tax.

On Lord Combermere's departure from India in 1830, Lord William Bentinck, last Governor-General of Bengal and first Governor-General of India, became the second Patron of the Club.

Lord William Bentinck, second son of the third Duke of Portland, governed India from 1828 to 1835, and was another object of Macaulay's worship, as the inscription from his pen on the base of Bentinck's statue near the Town Hall bears witness: "To William Cavendish Bentinck who during eleven years ruled India with eminent prudence, integrity and benevolence; who, placed at the head of a great empire, never laid aside the simplicity and moderation of a private citizen; who infused into oriental despotism the spirit of British freedom; who never forgot that the end of Government is the happiness of the governed; who abolished cruel rites; who gave liberty to the expression of public opinion; whose constant study it was to elevate the intellectual and moral character of the nations committed to his charge, this monument was erected by men, who differing in race, in manners, in language, and in religion, cherish with equal veneration and gratitude, the memory of his wise, upright, and paternal administration". Like the majority of panegyrics, this one produces the unfortunate impression of being too good to be true, and substitues for a human

⁽a) His natural son, Colonel James Metcalfe (1817-1888) of the Bengal Army, to whom he left a fortune of \pounds 50,000, was Aide de Camp to Lord Dalhousie and to Sir Colin Campbell during the Mutiny.

personality a collection of abstract virtues; but this should not obscure the fact that among those who have governed India there is none whose rule has been inspired by more lofty or more unselfish principles.

A contemporary French observer writes of Bentinck "The man who perhaps dose most honour to Europe in Asia is he who governs it. You may easily imagine that there are people who talk loudly of the dissolution of the Empire, and the World's end, when they be hold their temporary ruler riding on horseback plainly dressed, and without escort, or on his way to the country with his umbrella under his arm."

It seems to have been Sir Charles Metcalfe's destiny in life to be on the bridge in dirty weather, and we are therfore not surprised when we find that his presidency of the Club coincided with the financial crisis of 1830 and the following years. In these days of joint-stock banking, audited balance sheets, and Trustee Acts, when the few private banks that remain are patiently awaiting the inevitable hour of absorption by one of the "big five," it is not easy to realize the confidence which the ordinary citizen was formerly compelled to place in the solvency and honour of individuals whose financial position he had no means to investigate.

There being no public loans upon the market, nor registered companies issuing amply secured debentures, the Indian official's only choice lay between tying up his savings in a stocking and placing them on deposit with one of the Agency Houses. Allured by an unjustifiably high rate of interest he usually took the latter course, which meant that his future was entirely dependent on the personal security of the partners of the particular House he had selected.

For some time past the position of the Agency Houses had been precarious; loans long since irrecoverable were being counted as assets, and Trust Funds were being mixed with the moneys of the firms. Under such a system the Houses might struggle along if times remained good, but even a moderate financial crisis was certain to bring them to ruin. Such a crisis occurred in 1830 and before three years has passed many of the most respected men of business in Calcutta were in the Insolvency Court.

As was said thirty years later of the Overend-Gurney directors,- these

men had been the Caesars of the financial world, "now none so poor to do them reverence."

As was to be expected the insolvent bankers were bitterly attacked in the Press by the pens of those to whom their failure had brought ruin. Probably in so far as these attacks imputed actual fraud they were unjustified, for the insolvents were the unfortunate inheritors of a fundamentally vicious system, and like most men in similar positions they continued to hope for better times when the disease was past curing. Colonel Finch and Lord Combermere were both sufferers, and the following extract from Lady Combermere's reminiscences is of interest:

"About this time Lord Combermere began to be seriously apprehensive as to the safety of his Bhurtpore prize-money. It amounted to no less than £60,000, and he had placed the whole of it, together with the savings from his handsome pay as Commander-in-Chief, in the hands of Alexander & Co., Bankers of Calcutta. After he had done so, he was warned of the risk he ran, but having promised the friends and relations of Mr. Alexander in England that he would give the firm his custom, he allowed his money to remain in their hands. After a time, several failures occurred in banking houses with which Alexander & Co., were connected, and their credit thereby suffered. On this, Lord Combernere directed his money to be remitted to England, but was induced to change his mind on it being represented to him by the firm, that his withdrawal of confidence at a time when all Calcutta Banks were regarded with suspicion, would occasion a run upon the house which must infallibly cause its ruin. Alarmed by subsequent reports he repeatedly asked that his money should be transferred to England, but each time was persuaded to relent by the urgent entreaties of the firm and strong representations that their credit was unimpaired. At length just before his departure for home he insisted on the entire amount being remitted to England, and received a promise that it should be paid into the London branch of the firm. When he embarked, Mr. Alexander accompanied him down the river, repeating this assurance. Not long after, Alexander & Co. failed and Lord Combermere lost nearly the whole sum, receiving a certain portion only in the shape of a consignment of indigo, which

of indigo which gave him a great deal of trouble, and deteriorated to half its original value waiting in store for the market to recover from a sudden depreciation.

The intelligence of Alexander's failure reached Lord Combermere just before the commencement of a play in which he was to act with his children for the amusement of the tenants at Combermere. He made no sign, nor communicated the unpleasant intelligence just received till the next morning at breakfast, when his family and the guests assembled were annoyed and distressed at the tidings, and equally astonished on learning that one who was such a sufferer by this disaster should have been able to control his feel ings so successfully, that not one of the party perceived any change in his usual cheerful manner."

Among the well known firms that were compelled to close their doors were the Club Treasurers, Messrs. Mackintosh & Co., who failed for Rs.26,00,000. Their liabilities included a sum of over forty thousand rupees held on deposit from the Club, which was of course lost. This awful warning of the dangers attending the possession of a credit balance has not been disregarded, and there appears no likelihood that the Club will ever again find itself in a similar predicament.

The effect of these calamities upon the social life of Calcutta, though profound, was not altogether mischievous, for the straitened means of everybody put an end to the tradition of dull and ostentatious hospitality that had come down from the days of the "Nabobs".

Macaulay, by nature the most hospitable of men, writes in 1836 :-

"That tremendous crash of the great commercial houses which took place a few years ago had produced a revolution in fashions. It ruined one half of the English society in Bengal and seriously injured the other half. A large proportion of the most important function aries here are deeply in debt, and accordingly, the mode of living is now exceedingly quiet and modest. Those immense subscriptions, those public tables, those costly equipages and entertainments of which Heber, and others who saw Calcutta a few years back, say so

much, are never heard of. Speaking for myself, it was a great piece of good fortune that I came hither just at the time when the general distress had forced everybody to adopt a moderate way of living. Owing very much to that circumstance, (while keeping house, I think more handsomely than any other member of Council) I have saved what will enable me to do my part towards making my family comfortable; and I shall have a competency for myself, small indeed, but quite sufficient to render me as perfectly independent as if I were the possessor of Burleigh or Chatsworth."

During these gloomy years nothing is heard of Club banquets or other festivities: indeed when we remember that the majority of members had lost a lifetime's savings through misplaced confidence in the soundness of institutions owned and directed by fellow-members, we can realize how severe was the strain on the amenities of club life caused by the financial situation.

Moreover there were other rifts in the lute, one of which came near to silencing the music for ever. This was the now forgotten Stocqueler-Lumley controversy, which in 1836 occupied columns of the Indian Press, and was conducted by the disputants with an astonishing lack of taste and good judgment.

Perhaps however some allowances should be made for the irascibility of men forced to endure the discomforts of successive hot weathers, with only a scanty supply of ice and no electric fans (a) to alleviate their sufferings.

Joachin Hayward Stocqueler, the founder of the "Englishman", published in his newly established journal a series of attacks upon certain measures taken by Colonel Lumley, the Adjutant-General. The tone of these attacks may be judged by the fact that Stocqueler, in reply to the accusation that they amounted to "wanton defamation," could only answer—"suppose they were-what is that to the purpose." The position of a journalist, who conceives it his duty to critisize adversely the official actions of a fellow member of his Club, must of necessity raise nice

⁽a) The swinging punkah was an old established institution by 1830, for it seems to have come into general use between 1780 and 1790. Formerly a hand fan manipulated by an attendant was the only method of obtaining an artificial breeze.

questions of ethics. To Colonel Lumley's friends Stocqueler's transgressions appeared heinous, and led by Mr. Longuevelle Clarke, of whom more hereafter, they proposed the expulsion of Stocqueler from the Club.

With an amazing disregard for the proprieties both sides rushed into print, and for many months the Press was filled with comments on the schism that was bringing the Club near dissolution. The controversy was not confined to local newspapers. In military circles Stocqueler's views obtained considerable support, and the editor of the "Meerut Universal Magazin," Captain Harvey Tuckett, had no difficulties in demonstrating that when it came to vituperation the mofussil could hold its own with Calcutta. With elephantine sarcasm and queer flair for prophecy (a), he observed in a leading article that gentlemen have a way of settling their difficulties "by that description of short-hand that may be termed Pistolography." Metcalfe's tact finally saved the situation. Stocqueler was induced to resign his membership, but not before some members had withdrawn in disgust at this public washing of dirty linen, and a proposal to dissolve the Club had been put forward at a general meeting.

Among the now forgotten figures of Calcutta a century back none was better known in his day than Longueville Clarke, who took prominent part in the Stocqueler controversy. He was a leading barrister, and a man of terrific energy combined with great public spirit. To his enterprise institutions as dissimilar as the Calcutta Bar Library, the Metcalfe Hall, and the Ice House, owed their existence. Unhappily his virtues were marred by a hot head, an unbridled tongue, and a temper that it would not be unjust to describe as cantankerous.

Macaulay during his period in India had the misfortune to fall foul of Clarke. It was proposed by a Bill that had Macaulay's support to take away from European British subjects resident in the mofussil the right they had previously enjoyed of having their civil appeals heard by the

ta) Captain Harvey Tuckett will live in History by reason of his connection with the fire-eating Earl of Cardigan of Balaclava fame. Incensed at an article from Tuckett's pen Cardigan challenged him to a duel, which was fought on Wimbledon Common in September, 1840. The weapons were pistols, and at the second exchange of shots Tuckett was wounded. Cardigan was tried before the House of Peers, and acquitted on a technicality. Popular feeling was represented by the Duke of Cleveland, who for the customary declaration "not guilty upon my honour", substituted "not guilty legally upon my honour."

Supreme Court, and to substitute for this system a right of appeal to the Sudder Dewani Adalat. The European mofussil residents, who were the only persons directly interested, viewed the proposed change with equanimity, but the barristers of Calcutta, who had the sole right of audience in the Supreme Court, assumed the burden of saving the complacent victims of the obnoxious measure from the inferior brand of justice dispensed south of the Maidan by the Company's Judges (a). Clarke was in the van of the opposition, and indicated pretty clearly what Macaulay might expect if Government persisted in its proposals, reminding him that:—

"There yawns the sack and yonder rolls the Sea".

One member of Clarke's own profession supported the Bill, and was promptly called a liar to his face. He replied by challenging Clarke to a duel, but Clarke refused to fight on the irrelevant plea that his opponent had been guilty of hugging attorneys. Macaulay writing in the summer of 1836 says- "The Bengal Club accordingly blackballed Longueville." This can not be strictly accurate, for it is beyond question that Clarke was already a member of the Club. Unhappily our records do not inform us whether the Club took any collective action to mark its disapproval of Clarke's disinclination to face his learned enemy's pistol (b). It may be added that the Bill passed into Law without Macaulay's immersion, and parliament declined to interface with the action of the Indian Government. Time seems to have done nothing to mellow Clarke's intractability; with him as with King Tarquin.

"If the lance shook in his grip 'Twas more with hate than age."

Years after we find him resigning the Calcutta Bar Library Club, which he himself founded, in a fit of pique, and being coaxed back after sulking in his tent for some months. He died in 1863.

⁽a) The Supreme Court stood on the western portion of the site of the present High Court, the Sudder Court occupied the site of the present Station Hospital.

⁽b) Perhaps Clarke felt he was entitled to disregard aspersions on his courage, since he himself challenged Dr. Alexander Duff, the missionary, to a duel for daring to differ from him on the comparative merits of Easter and Western learning.

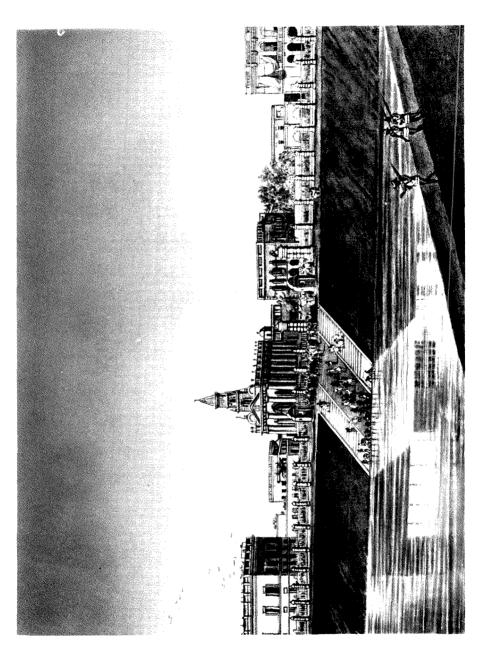
The early days of Metcalfe's presidency saw the removal of the Club from its original home in Gordon's Buildings, "to that capital upper roomed brick built messuage tenement of Dwelling House, lately in the occupation of Messieurs Allport, Ashburner & Company, situate, lying and being in Tank Square in the Town of Calcutta (a). Tank Square is of course the modern Dalhousie Square, and the premises taken by the Club were after-wards No. 4, Dalhousie Square. They were very recently demolished and must have been familiar to most of the present members of the Club, as the place of business of Messrs. W. Newman & Co., the publishers, who occupied them from 1880 until their demolition. After the removal of the Club to Chowringhee they were for some time occupied by an institution bearing the alluring name of "Bodelio's Emporium of Fashion."

A resolution of 1838 to reciprocate with the Byculla Club, established in 1833, marks the beginning of a cordial connection ever since maintained between the foremost Clubs of Eastern and Western India (b). In this year there is evidence that members were growing dissatisfied with Tank Square in the appointment of a special sub-committee " to consider proposals to provide a suitable Club House." A further suggestion was put forward in favour of the formation of a Library, but this came to nothing for the familiar reasons of lack of funds.

At the close of Metcalfe's long presidency Major-General Sir Willoughby Cotton, C.B., was elected President and held office from 1838 to 1841, during which period he was promoted Lieutenant-General. Sir Willoughby was kinsman of Lord Combermere being the son of Admiral Rowland Cotton, Lord Combermere's first cousin. In 1797 while at Rugby he led a school rebellion culminating in the public burning of the Headmaster's desk. For such a boy there was but one career possible, and Cotton was appointed an Ensign in the Foot Guards in the following year. He served with distinction in the Peninsula, Burma, and also in Afghanistan where he had as his aide-de-camp the future Sir Henry Havelock. In 1839 he obtained command of the Bengal Presidency. After retirement on the outbreak of the Crimean War he endeavoured to obtain further employment but was unsuccessful. This disappointment is

⁽a) This description is taken from an advertisement of 1829.

⁽b) The Bengal Club also reciprocates with the Madras, the Shanghai, and the Hong Kong Clubs.



The Club House at Tank Square 1830-1845

attributed by his biographer to his "advancing years and unwieldly figure." The latter disability may be in some measure an indirect compliment to the table kept by the Bengal Club.

Though not attaining to his cousin's patriarchal years, Sir Willoughby died in 1860 at the ripe old age of seventy five.

In 1840 the Club presented a Cup "intended for an ice pail or wine cooler, and holding three bottles,—the centre one for either champagne or burgundy," for the Calcutta Races.

The elegance of this trophy moved the Press to positive rhapsody.

"The form is that of the ancient galley which is supported by two spiritedly modelled sea horses. On the prow appears Victoria with her trumpets in one hand, the other holding forth the crown for the successful candidate. At the stern stands Neptune with his trident. The centres are decorated with the head of a Satyr, whose temples are bound with ivy, and above them are seated little playful Bachquals (sic) pressing bunches of grapes, the whole placed within an elegantly embossed salver. The horses are modelled by Messrs. Hamilton & Co., and possess great spirit and vigour; they appear to us to be very accurate and beautiful in their figures, form, development of muscles, etc., and are, we believe, unrivalled in their size and execution by anything before attempted in India, the hair and manes of the horses are soft and silky.

The Race was run on Junuary 9th,1840 and the conditions were a trifle severe, being two heats of two miles at eight and a half stone. Both heats were won by the favourite, Mr.Allan's grey Arab horse "Glendower," (Gash up).

On Sir Willoughby's departure the Club had the signal honour of having as its President the Governor General, Lord Ellenborough. Presumably His Excellency's presidential duties were performed to a large extent by deputy; for during this period of his tempestuous Viceroyalty he was but rarely in his capital. He was eldest son of Edward Law, first

Baron Ellenborough, the famous advocate and Lord Chief Justice of England. Early in life he obtained from his father the sinecure office of joint chief clerk of the pleas in the King's Bench worth seven thousand pounds a year, and this he held till his death in 1871. He entered Parliament as a young man and before coming to India he had been President of the Board of Control. He was quarter of a century ahead of his time in advocating the transfer of the Government of India from the Company to the Crown. As Governor-General he was always in hot water. His conduct of the Afghan War and the annexation of Scinde were both adversely criticized, and his preference for the employment of military men in political posts obtained him the hostility of the Civil Service. He was recalled in 1844 and permitted to solace his wounded feelings with an Earldom. His talents both as an orator and as an administrator were remarkable but theatricality, love of display, and an overbearing temper prevented him from doing full justice to his great qualities. His name is preserved in Calcutta in the Ellenborough Course, that part of the Maidan which lies between Fort William and the Race Course.

Hitherto the Club had sought its Presidents either from the profession of Arms or from the Executive. In 1844 however, there begins a dynasty of Supreme Court Judges lasting fourteen years. The first of these was Sir John Peter Grant (a) who came to India in 1827 as a Puisne Judge at Bombay. He was appointed to the Calcutta Supreme Court in 1833 and died on his voyage home after retirement in 1848. His son, John Peter Grant the Second, was Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal from 1859 to 1862. It is possible that the meeting of Grant and his predecessor, Lord Ellenborough, may have been embarrassing, for in 1829 certain judgments delivered by Grant in Bombay incurred the displeasure of the Governor Sir John Malcolm, who complained to the Directors. Ellenborough was then at the Board of Control and wrote privately to Malcolm suggesting that Grant should sit with two other Judges whom the Board would appoint for the purpose of keeping him in check "like a wild elephant between two tame ones." Malcolm's secretary treated the letter as a despatch and it was published, all the world including Grant being thereby made acquainted with Ellenborough's irreverent simile.

⁽a) The Grants of Rothiemurchus are a very ancient race. A Scottish compositor's slip once transformed Genesis VI, 4. "There were Giants in the earth in those days" "into". "There were Grants in the earth in those days". To the members of the family the error only appeared to furnish the authority of Scripture for an opinion they had always entertained.

It is to be doubted whether the tame elephants viewed the offending sentence with any greater approbation than the wild one, the wound to whose dignity was so severe that he resigned, and migrated to Calcutta to practise at the Bar. A certain Lord Chancellor in reply to criticisms on his methods of patronage is reported to have observed that *ceteris paribus* he appointed his own relations, and " *ceteris* generally are *paribus*." Grant's views were similar, and the appointment of one of his sons, immediately on his call to the Bar, to the office of Master in Equity was regarded as a scandalous piece of nepotism.

In 1845, the long contemplated plan of the removal of the Club, from Tank Square was accomplished. The building chosen was that occupied by Macaulay during his residence in India as Law Member of Supreme Council from 1834 to 1838. The owner of the property was Babu Kali Prasanna Singh, a wealthy resident of Jorasanko, who won the gratitude of his countrymen by his Bengali translation of the Mahabharat. A lease of the premises for thirty years was arranged on satisfactory terms, and in addition No. 1, Park Street and Nos. 1 and 1/1, Russell Street were taken as accommodation for resident members.

It is deplorable that the candidates' books were not carefully preserved from the foundation of the Club, since in their absence it is not possible to say with certainty whether we are privileged to number Macaulay among our members. It is indeed almost incredible that Macaulay should not have sought the membership of the only institution in Calcutta where the London periodicals were regularly to be seen, and of which his greatest friend in Calcutta, Ryan,was a member. But this is conjecture, and we can only hope that documentary evidence will one day come to light which will resolve our doubts. In either event the fact that for over sixty years the Club House was Macaulay's former residence is an interesting link with one of the most remarkable men that ever came to India.

The recent Victorian revival has not as yet succeeded in restoring Macaulay to the position he held in the eyes of his contemporaries.

His cocksureness, his literary tricks of antithesis, and reiteration,

and his love of the "purple patch" are all faults which modern taste finds it difficult to pardon. Moreover, the laissez-faire radicalism of the man who wrote that "the primary end of Government is the protection of the persons and property of men" has few disciples to-day.

But whatever Macaulay's limitations, his short stay in India had considerable results. Had personal knowledge of the country not directed his attention to the history of the English occupation of Bengal, it is probable that the famous essays on Lord Clive and Warren Hastings would not have been written, and it was from these essays that at least two generations of English people derived their conception of India. Their influence is still profound, for a single reading leaves behind it pictures of Clive, Hastings, Impey, and Francis, that no amount of subsequent research seems wholly able to correct. The treatment is by no means unprejudice: in Impey's case at any rate it is positively unjust (a). Fitzjames Stephen's learned and careful book (b)is the work of a trained jurist of impartial mind; but as a vindication of Impey it has proved powerless to dispel the impression created by Macaulay's vivid and partisan writing. No one realizes this better than the author. "I believe him", he writes of Impey "to have been quite innocent; but this book will be read by hardly anyone, and Macaulay's paragraphs will be read with delighted covictions by several generations."

In India Macaulay's name will always be linked with the decision taken in 1835 to adopt English as the medium of higher instruction. Macaulay became President of a Committee of Public Instruction evenly divided on the question whether education should aim at developing Indian culture on its own lines or at giving as many students as possible the opportunity of drinking at the spring of Western learning. Macaulay threw all his weight on the side of the "Westerners", and his views carried the day with the Government (c). A torrent of controversial ink has flowed

⁽a) Even the conventional innocence of childhood is denied to little Elijah. Referring to their Westminster days, Macaulay writes; "But we think we may safely venture to guess that whenever Hastings wished to play any trick more than usually naughty, he hired Impey with a tart or a ball to act as fag in the worst part of the prank".

⁽b) "The Story of Nuncomar and the Impeachment of Sir Elijah Impey" by the late Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, K.C.S.I., Law Member of the Governor- General's Council 1869-1872, Judge of the Queen's Bench Division and father of Sir Harry Lushington Stephen, a former Judge of the Calcutta High Court. Sir James Stephen died in 1894.

⁽c) Macaulay's famous Minute is a good example of the merits and defects of his style. Nothing could be more fucid; but the same nail is hit so often on the head, that the noise of the blows jars the nerves. It seems strange that it never struckMacaulay that his slapdash manner of disposing of Indian poetry, history and science might appear in some quarters atrifle offensive.



The Club House, 33 Chowringhee in 1867

unceasingly ever since, and there are those who attribute the greater part of India's ills to the policy that Macaulay so vigorously supported; but this is not the place to weigh the truth of their opinions.

Perhaps however the most lasting monument to Macaulay's abilities is the Indian Penal Code, the first draft of which appeared in 1837. It did not actually become law until 1860 after revision by Sir Barnes Peacock; but in the main Macaulay's scheme was accepted, and the Code, which Macaulay's biographer asserts younger Civilians carry in their saddle bags and older Civilians carry in their heads, has always been recognised as a model of what a Code should be, which has to be administered largely by those who are not trained lawyers.

Though Macaulay was only thirty two when he came to India he had already established his reputation as a coming man, and, as was to be expected, his heart remained in London. He was proud of his house which he pronounces as "the best in Calcutta," and of his cook, whom a 'chit' from Lord Dalhousie, a former Commander-in-Chief and the father of the future Viceroy described as "decidedly the first artist in Bengal."

It may interest members to-day, as they drive in their cars through the Club compound, to know how its most illustrious tenant depicted it ninety years ago. "I have a very pretty garden not unlike our little grassplot at Clapham but larger. It consists of a fine sheet of turf, with a gravel walk round it, and flower-beds scattered over it. It looks beautiful just now after the rains, and I hear it keeps its verdure during a great part of the year. A flight of steps leads down from my library into the garden and it is so well shaded, that you may walk in it till ten o'clock in the morning."

Moreover in an age when cockney highbrows are constantly sneering at the "narrowness" of Anglo-Indian Society, it is refreshing to find that the intellectual and conversational gifts of many Calcutta exiles were warmly admired by one whose talents and richly stored mind were the delight of Holland House. But though cheerful, Macaulay was often homesick. "Banishment,"he writes "is no light matter. I feel as if I had no other wish than to see my country and die." The climate too came in for its share of abuse: "we are annually baked four months, boiled four more, and

allowed the remaining four to become cool in if we can. Insects and undertakers are the only living creatures which seem to enjoy the climate." "All the fruits of the tropics"he would declare "are not worth a pottle of Covent Garden strawberries and a lodging up three pairs of stairs in London is better than a palace in a compound of Chowringhee."

As chatelain of Macaulay's palace, he had brought with him his sister Hannah (Nancy), but within the first year of his stay she fell in love with and shortly afterwards married Charles Edward Trevelyan, then a rising junior Civilian and afterwards Governor of Madras. The second child of this marriage is the veteran author Sir George Otto Trevelyan, O.M., who though born in 1838 is happily still among us, and to whom we owe the delightful "Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay," first published in 1876.

In 1848, Grant retired from India, and from 1849 until 1855 our President was Sir James Colville. Colville came to Calcutta as Advocate General in 1845. He was raised to the Bench of the Supreme Court in 1848, and was Chief Justice from 1855 to 1859. After his retirement Colville sat on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, First as Indian Assessor and afterwards as one of the four salaried Judges appointed under the Act of 1871. He died in 1880.

At the mature age of forty seven, he took to wife the daughter of John Peter Grant the Second, the Lieutenant-Governor. In 1848 both Colville and John Peter Grant the First had been on the Bench of the Supreme Court. Can the annals of the law furnish another instance of a Judge's espousing the grand-daughter of one his learned brothers?

Colville's successor, Sir Arthur William Buller, was one of the Bullers of Morval, Cornwall, a family with a hereditary aptitude for the Bench. Not only had Sir Anthony Buller been an ornament of the Supreme Court a generation before, but Sir Francis Buller, who was made a Puisne Judge of the King's Bench in 1778 at the age of thirty two, was, it is said, the youngest Judge ever appointed in England. Sir Francis was something of an eccentric and it may be that his early advancement made him overbearing. The great Erskine was among his pupils.

He was only fifty four when he died. It is permissible to doubt if the other side of the Styx conformed to his peculiar ideals. "My idea of Heaven," he was wont to say "is to sit at Nisi Prius all day and play whist all night."

Arthur Buller was born in Calcutta in 1808, the son of Charles Buller of the Bengal Civil Service, whose wife the daughter of Colonel William Kirkpatrick, the Orientalist, was in her youth one of the belles of Calcutta. In 1811 John Leydon, the poet, on seeing her in Highland dress at a Calcutta ball, was moved to song:

That bonnets' pride, that Tartan's flow, My soul with wild emotion fills; Methinks I see in Fancy's glow A princess from the land of the hills. Her brilliant eye, her streaming hair, Her skins soft splendours do display The finest pencil must despair, Till it can paint the solar ray.

The Bullers after retirement from India settled first in London and then in Edinburgh. Being anxious for the education of their sons, Arthur and his elder brother Charles, they sought a private tutor and obtained the services of Thomas Carlyle, then a man of twenty seven.

Carlyle, though often irritated by the caprices of Mrs. Buller, retained to the end of his life grateful memories of the family's kindness. Of his pupils, Charles was by far the more brilliant; Arthur's good qualities inspired only moderate enthusiasm. Carlyle describes him in 1831 as a "goodish youth, affectionate, at least attached; not so handsome as I had expected though more so than enough." Arthur, was called to the Bar and went to Ceylon as Queen's Advocate; he was appointed a Judge of the Calcutta Supreme Court in 1848 and retired in 1859. He died in England in 1869, having represented Devonport in the House of Commons from 1859 to 1865. Charles Buller, his senior by a year may be described as the young Marcellus of the post-Reform Bill Liberals. He represented Liskeard from 1832 until his comparatively early death in 1848. He held many posts of importance and was everywhere regarded as a man of

exceptional promise. Thackeray lamented him in some affecting lines beginning.

"Why should your mother, Charles, not mine, be weeping at her darling's grave."

Arthur Buller's presidency of the Club was contemporaneous with the Mutiny. There is unfortunately no reference in the Club records to the incidents of those critical times but it is permissible to surmise that on Panic Sunday the resident members had reason to congratulate themselves on the proximity of Fort William.

The events of that day (June 14th, 1857) have been described somewhat acidly by Kaye and Malleson. There were at the time a regiment of Sepoys in the Fort and three and a half regiments of Sepoys at Barrackpore. All were known to be seething with disaffection and to cope with a possible outbreak there were only a wing of the 53rd Foot in the Fort, and the 78th Highlanders at Chinsurah. Shortly after morning service it was rumoured that the regiments at Barrackpore had mutinied and were in full march on Calcutta. The European and Indian Christian inhabitants at once sought refuge in the Fort and on the ships lying at anchor in the river. The pens of the soldierly historians of the Mutiny describe the conduct of the civilian population as pusillanimous, but it is difficult to see what other course was possible for unarmed citizens. Though the rumour was in fact unfounded, and the Barrackpore regiments were successfully disarmed, nothing could have appeared more plausible at the time. Mutiny was raging throughout the whole countryside from Meerut to Benares, and the early successes of the outbreak were largely due to the misplaced confidence of European Officers, and their reluctance to give an impression of cowardice by taking proper measures for their security. For each man to have awaited in his house and with his family the musket balls and bayonets of the mutineers would have been not heroism but folly. An eyewitness describes the flight across the maidan as, "what might have been if a modern Herculaneum had been evacuated in broad daylight on the approach of a visible eruption from a neighbouring volcano, "and indeed the predicament of the civilians was not unlike that of men who see an advancing stream of lava approaching them.

That they were unarmed was not their fault. In May the civilian community had offered to raise a Volunteer Corps, whose formation might enable the regular British troops to be despatched to the North. Lord Canning at first declined the offer, but finally accepted it on June 13th, and thereafter the Calcutta Volunteer Guards came into being. It is a matter for regret that no roll exists of the members of the Club who shouldered musket or rifle in this valuable force.

The Club however possesses one link with the India of 1856 and 1857 to which the overworked adjective "unique" can be for once appropriately applied.

This is the "Last term Haileybury Club Cup" presented to the Club in 1913 by Sir James Lyall (a) and Colonel Rivett-Carnac (b). Its history is best told in Colonel Rivett-Carnac's own words: "Before the India Bill of 1858 all appointments to the Indian Civil Service were valuable patronage in the hand of the Directors, who gave the appointments to their friends and others. Those nominated had to go through a two years' course at the East Indian College at Haileybury. In 1858 the appointments were thrown open to competition (c). But some young men who had already been appointed by the Directors were passed through Haileybury, which was kept open for the purpose. These sixty, or thereabouts, composed the 'Last Term'at the College (1855-57). There, eleven of us formed ourselves into a Club, 'The Last Term Club'. They were mostly Public School, and leading men, two of them being from the Universities. The members of the Club kept together, dined and supped together once a week, and kept up the friendship thus formed, not only during College time, but in after days. The Cup which you have been good enough to accept for the Bengal Club, was the Loving Cup passed round at those Meetings

At the close of Haileybury, the Cup fell by lot to Mr. Nugent Daniell

⁽a) Sir James Broadwood Lyall, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.L. arrived 1858. Chief Commissioner of Coorg 1883. Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab 1887-1892.

⁽b) John Henry Rivett-Carnac, C.I.E., A.D.C., F.S.A., arrived in 1858, retired 1894 Colonel Commanding the Ghazipore Light House

⁽c) Macaulay made one of his last and most effective Parliamentary speeches in support of the change. If the House of Commons could have foreseen the events of 1857, would it, one wonders, have sanctioned the abolition of a system, however theoretically indefensible, which gave India such servants as John Lawrence and Robert Montgomery.

of the Bombay Civil Service, on whose decease it passed to James Lyall, formerly Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab.

As I was the youngest of the Members, and, alas, the only other surviving Member, he wished me to accept it. But he was good enough to accept my suggestion that we should offer it to the Bengal Club, of ,to us, 'many happy memories'."

Colonel Rivett-Carnac's "Many Memories" helps us to construct a picture of Club life in Calcutta at the time of his arrival in 1858. The Bengal Club, he informs us, was affected by the Haileybury civilian of those days, the United Service Club (a) being more in favour with some of the military and the new group of what were termed "Competition Wallahs" or "Wallahs", the Civil Servants who were now taking the place of Haileybury men. The writer became a resident in the Club and he points out the unwisdom of keeping a young civilian in Calcutta for the ostensible purpose of language study. "There was cricket, racing, paper chases, and the tent club, later in the year, and one could play sufficiently high at the Bengal Club, and sit up very late and eat heavy suppers there if so inclined."

The later hour of dining prescribed by modern fashion has put an end to the last mentioned variety of self-indulgence.

Sir Arthur Buller was succeeded by Henry Ricketts, Member of the Board of Revenue, who after retirement received the honour of K.C.S.I., having refused the appointment of Lieutenant-Governor of the North Western Provinces on the ground of failing health. He survived until 1886. From 1835 to 1839 he was Commissioner of the Cuttack Division and a memorial tablet in Balasore cemetery records that he "never forgot Balasore or the Ooryahs." His portrait hangs in the Town Hall.

In 1860 General Sir James Outram was elected President. Outram is without question the most romantic figure in the Club's history. With some men and those not always of the highest talents there is found an indefinable quality that appeals to the imagination of their followers as

something superhuman. The Indian Mutiny was fruitful in such characters and Outram is among them. Inferior to John Lawrence in ability, and lacking the demoniac force of Nicholson, he was pre-eminent in inspiring loyalty and affection—" a very perfect and gentle Knight".

In 1842 when Outram was thirty nine years old, Sir Charles Napier, the head of the military and civil administration of Scinde and Baluchistan, proposed his health at a public banquet in the words: "Gentlemen, I give you the Bayard of India Sans peur and Sans reproche, Major James Outram of the Bombay Army." His own and succeeding generations have acknowledged the justice of the compliment. His body lies in Westminster Abbey, where his resting place, near the centre of the nave, is marked by a marble slab bearing the inscription "The Bayard of India".

His father was Benjamin Outram, a Civil Engineer erroneously supposed to be the eponymous inventor of the "Tramway"(a). James Outram joined the Bombay Army in 1819 and for the following forty years he was actively employed almost without a break. Such leisure as he had was devoted to the pursuit of big game: alike on the battlefield and in the chase his sagacity and courage were remarkable, so that it became a proverb on the Bombay side –"A fox is a fool and a lion a coward compared with James Outram."

This is not the place for a detailed account of his eminent services in Western India, the most picturesque of which was the subjugation of the Bhils. Outram, then a subaltern of twenty three, not only quelled these turbulent people, but enlisted them in corps raised by himself with such success that the tribes quickly furnished over six hundred well behaved and efficient soldiers.

He seems never to have visited Calcutta until July 31st, 1857, when, as Sir James Outram lately decorated with the Grand Cross of the Bath for his services in the Persian War, he arrived to take command of the two divisions of the Bengal Army occupying the country from Calcutta to Cawnpore.

In addition to his military command, he was appointed Chief

ta) Tram is the Scandinavian for "plank" or "beam, and is found in the sense of a plankway as corfy as 1555. Smiles: "Life of George Stephenson" is responsible for the Outram mydi.

Commissioner of Oude in succession to Sir Henry Lawrence killed in the defence of Lucknow. Outram at once pushed forward and joined Havelock at Cawnpore, that scene of "fruitless courage and unutterable woe." The immediate task before Outram was the relief of Lucknow. He was an ambitious man, and the eyes of India and the world were anxiously fixed upon the sorely beleaguered garrison, but with rare unselfishness he made over military command of the operations to Havelock, so that the General who had borne the burden and responsibility of the earlier operations should not be deprived of the credit of their ultimate success. The final words of the Order ran as follows:-"The Major General, therefore, in gratitude for, and admiration of, the brilliant deeds of the Arms achieved by General Havelock and his gallant troops, will cheerfully waive his rank on the occasion, and will accompany the force to Lucknow in his civil capacity - as Chief Commissioner of Oude - tendering his military services to General Havelock as a volunteer. On the relief of Lucknow, the Major General will resume his position at the head of the Force."

It should be added that Sir Colin Campbell approved of, and confirmed this temporary transfer of command, which from a strictly official point of view it might be difficult to justify.

On September 19th the relieving column 3000 strong consisting of English, Scottish (a), and Sikh troops set out on the forty miles march to Lucknow. The siege was raised on September 25th, Outram being wounded in the arm by a musket ball in the attack. Havelock's force was not strong enough for the complete defeat of the rebels, and was itself beleaguered until relieved by Sir Colin Campbell.

Outram did not again see active service, and in April 1858 was appointed Military Member of the Governor General's Council. The Queen showed her appreciation of his services by conferring a baronetcy upon him, and Parliament granted him an annuity of £ 1000 to be continued to his immediate successor. By this time the years of strenuous labour were making themselves felt even upon Outram's magnificent physique. Condemned in Calcutta to office work he grew stout and was compelled to

⁽a) The 78th Highlanders. "Is it true what is told by the scout Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers? Surely the pibroch of Europe is rising again in our ears," - Tennyson, "The Defence of Lucknow."

give up riding. Colonel Rivett-Carnac has given us a delightful picture of the veteran general.

Outram was at the time in receipt of a handsome salary, and he was morbidly anxious that his entertaining should not fall short of what custom demanded. Thus it was that the youngest civilian or last-joined subaltern who called at Garden Reach, was sure to receive an invitation to dine at the hero's table.

Nothing was more characteristic of Outram than that, though an officer of the Indian Army, one of his chief interests was the well-being of the British soldier in India.

The ideas of Wellington who described his soldiers as "the scum of the earth" still lingered, and for more than twenty years longer the lash was considered essential for the preservation of discipline. Little was done by the authorities for the material, and nothing for the moral welfare of the troops. Outram on the contrary maintained that the soldier would respond to decent treatment, and that if he was addicted to drink and debauchery it was because no effort was made to provide him with reasonable recreation.

Until the closing years of his life Outram was a poor man, but after the Scinde campaign in 1843, he declined his share of the prize money amounting to£3000 and arranged for its distribution among military and civil charities. Throughout his life he spent considerable sums on the purchase of books for regimental libraries and the Outram Institute in Dum Dum Cantonment was the first "Soldiers Club" established in India on modern lines.

In 1860 while President of the Club, he was compelled by ill-health to leave for England. Though the Club re-elected him in the following year (a), it must have been evident to most that this was Outram's final farewell to India. A public address presented to him drew attention in its concluding words to his kindly and chivalrous nature:-

"But, Sir, it is not as the successful General, nor as the Trusted statesman, that you will be best remembered by us, who have mixed with the companions of your Toils and Triumphs, and who, some of us, have had the honour to serve with and under you."

There follows this final and breathless sentence:-

"It is as a man whom no success could harden or render selfish, who could surrender to an heroic comrade the honour of success which fortune had placed in his own grasp, who in the excitement of battle and in the midst of triumph never forgot the claims and wants of the humblest of his followers, who loved his fellow soldiers better than his own fame and aggrandizement, and has devoted himself with his whole heart to improve the Soldier's moral and intellectual as well as physical condition,-it is as one who would not only sacrifice life and fortune to duty, but who never allowed either fear or favour to weigh for a moment against what his heartfold him was right and true;-it is as our noble and disinterested fellow-countryman, who has preserved all his chivalrous feeling unchilled through the wear and tear of a laborious life, and who will ever be emphatically remembered as "the Soldier's friend,"that we would wish to testify our admiration and affectionate respect and to preserve the memory of your career as an example to ourselves and to those who come after us."

The misgivings of his friends were justified, for his health was failing rapidly. In June 1862, the University of Oxford conferred the degree of D.C.L. upon Outrani and Lord Palmerston.

Surely the walls of Sheldonian have never looked upon a more curiously contrasted pair of eminent men-the single-minded soldier, whom his labours had made an old man before his time, and the sprightly cynic of seventy eight whose indiscretions and apparent lack of principles had so violently perturbed Queen Victoria and her Consort.

In the same month, supporting his now bowed and feeble frame in the arm of Lord Clyde, Outram attended the funeral of his former chief, Lord Canning, in Westminster Abbey. He died at Pau on March 11th, 1863.

No object is more familiar to the citizens of Calcutta than the spirited equestrian statue by J.H.Foley, R.A., that faces the Maidan west of the junction of Park Street and Chowringhee. It was unveiled by Lord Napier of Magdala in 1874: Outram is reining back his charger as turning in his saddle with drawn sword he rallies his followers. Through the generosity of Mr. O.S.Martin (President 1927) the Club now possesses a portraite of Sir James Outram.

For the year 1862 and 1863 the Club had as its President that distinguished Indian and Colonial Administrator, Sir Henry Bartle Edward Frere, K.C.S.I., commonly known as Sir Bartle Frere. Like Outram he won his first laurels on the Bombay side, and he was the first Indian Civil Servant outside the Bengal cadre to be appointed to the Council of the Governor-General.

He had previously held the Chief Commissionership of Scinde since 1850, So successful was his administration that on the outbreak of the Mutiny he was able to send his only English regiment to join Lawrence in the Punjab, while for the Government of a territory equal in area to England and Wales he was content to rely on Indian Troops supported by one hundred and seventy eight British bayonets.

"From the first commencement of the Mutiny," wrote John Lawrence. "until the final triumph, Frere has rendered assistance to the Punjab Administration, just as if he had been one of its own commissioners.

"After his service in Calcutta, he was appointed Governor of Bombay. His term of office there coincided with the financial crisis due to the collapse of the first Back Bay Reclamation Scheme and the consequent liquidation of the Bank of Bombay.

Frere arrived in Bombay at a time of unexampled but artificial prosperity. Lincoln's blockade of the Confederate harbours had deprived

the world of its principal source of cotton supply and in consequence of the scarcity, prices on the Bombay cotton market soared. The close of the Civil War in 1865 produced the inevitable slump and many were ruined.

Frere retired from India in 1867. His subsequent career was concerned with South Africa, where his conduct in connection with the Zulu War was bitterly attacked by Mr. Gladstone in the Midlotham campaign. He died in 1884. He was buried in St. Paul's Cathedral and his statue stands on the Thames Embankment.

For the years 1864 to 1870 all the Presidents of the Club, were closely connected with the newly established High Court. This Court was established by Letters Patent in 1862, and its practical effect was to amalgamate the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court deriving its authority from its Charter of 1774 and of the two principal "Company's" courts, namely the Sudder Dewanny Adalat and the Sudder Nizamat Adalat. According to the Act of Parliament, in pursuance of which the Letters Patent were granted, the existing Judges of the Supreme Court and of the Sudder Dewanny Adalat became Judges of the High Court.

Sir Mordaunt Lewis Wells had been Judge of the Supreme Court since 1859 and became Judge of the High Court on its establishment. He was president of the Club in 1864.

He is chiefly memorable for having tried with the assistance of a special Jury the last *cause celebre* ever heard by the Supreme Court. This was the trial of the Rev. James Long, the translator of the vernacular play "Nil Darpan" (a). Mr. Long was prosecuted on the ground that his preface to the play was a libel on "The Englishman" and "The Bengal Harkaru".

and the play itself a libel on "the general body of planters." At the time the planting community was violently incensed against the Government, the chief object of their wrath being the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir John Peter Grant. The Press warmly supported the Planters.

Mr. Long's trial resulted in a conviction and he was sentenced to a

⁽a) "Nil Darpan" ("The Mirror of Indigo") was an exposure of the abuses of the system of Indigo Cultivation in Bengal.

month's imprisonment and a fine of a thousand rupees, which was immediately paid by a wealthy Hindoo sympathizer.

Sir Mordaunt's charge to the Jury was bitterly attacked for its alleged partiality. A public meeting of Indian inhabitants demanded his recall, but Government, although probably holding similar views, was sensible enough to take no notice, and the storm; as usually happens in such cases, subsided in due course.

C.B. Trevor of the Civil Service, who was President in 1865, 1867, and 1868 was also a Judge of the High Court, having been, prior to 1862, one of the Judges of the Sudder Dewanny Adalat. A portrait of him is to be found in the Registrar's Room of the High Court.

T. H. Cowie, President in 1866, 1869 and 1870 was Advocate General.

A Portrait of Charles Marten, President 1871, 1872 and 1873, hangs in the Club Reading Room. Charles Marten is of interest as being the first President of the Club who was a member neither of the services nor of one of the learned professions. Though private trading had long been forbidden to the servants of the Government, the prejudice against " the interlopers," as the unofficial mercantile and planting communities were called, died heard, nor was its death hastened by the various commercial crises through which Calcutta passed during the first half of the nineteenth century. Mr.Marten's election, therefore, may be said to mark the dawn of a new era. He was a prominent broker well known for his interest in racing and sport of every kind. His firm which was practically a one man business has long since been dissolved. We may justifiably regard him as the founder of the line of Presidents of the Chamber and other "rich men furnished with ability" who have from time to time directed the destinies of the Club.

It must be admitted that list of Presidents from 1864 onwards contains no names as celebrated as those of Metcalfe, Outram, or Bartle Frere.

C.T.Buckland, President in 1874 and 1875, was a distinguished Civil

Servant, who retired in 1881 as Member of the Board of Revenue. He came of the same family as Frank Buckland the Naturalist, and was appropriately enough President of the Calcutta Zoological Gardens. His interest in Natural History was transmitted to his descendants. His son, Mr. C. E.Buckland, C. I. E. (a) was in due course President of the Gardens, and the mantle has now fallen on the shoulders of Mr. Justice Buckland of the Calcutta Highcourt, Mr. C. E. Buckland's eldest son.

In Dr. T. Oldham, L.L.D., F.G.S., F.R.S., the Club had in 1876 a President of high scientific attainments.

Oldham who was educated in Trinity College, Dublin, came to India in 1851, as Superintendent of the Geological Survey, and the organization of that department was his work. He was four times President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and the author of a number of learned papers.

In spite of the scientific proclivities of its President the Club appears to have been more frivolous in the seventies than it is to-day. In 1873 the Club gave a Ball on what seems the somewhat unsuitable date of June 28th. Thereafter Balls and Ladies' Dinners appear to have become fairly common. The last mention of a Ball is in 1889, when one was given in honour of His Royal Highness, Prince Albert Victor. After that year it seems that the Muse Terpsichore migrated to more congenial surroundings. In November 1911, Ladies were invited to a Reception to mark the completion of the new Clubhouse and then for close on sixteen years monasticism reigned.

In 1875 the lease was renewed for twenty years with an option of a further twenty years at the expiry of the term. In 1879 the Committee is found sanctioning a Sweepstake on the Derby "provided it is not advertised". The experiment was repeated in the following years and in 1882 a second Sweepstake was held on the St. Leger.

The Sweepstakes showed an increasing tendency to attract more than domestic interest and they were abandoned in 1890. The original barrel used for drawing the tickets is still in the Club which now holds





The Club House, 33 Chowringhee in 1890

Sweepstakes on the King-Emperor's Cup and the Grand National.

In 1878, 1879 and 1880, the Club after an interval of some years had a legal President in J.D.Bell, who was then Standing Counsel and officiated as Advocate General for six months in 1879.

In 1881 the roll contains a name familiar in Bengal in Henry Thoby Prinsep, who was President in that year and again in 1899, 1900, 1901 and 1902. He was the son of Henry Thoby Prinsep of the Civil Service, one of the original members of the Club. James Prinsep (1799-1840), in whose memory "Prinsep's Ghat" was erected by the citizens of Calcutta was the first Henry Thoby Prinsep's brother.

Henry Thoby Prinsep (The President) was born in 1836; after passing through Haileybury, he came to India in 1855, and was Assistant Magistrate at Midnapore during the Mutiny. He was the first Registrar of the High Court, of which he became a Judge in 1877. He retired in 1904 aged sixty eight, having sat on the Bench for the unparalleled period of twenty seven years.(a) He was knighted in 1894 and made K.C.I.E., on retirement. He was a pillar of freemasonry in Bengal, and the last member of the Civil Service educated at Haileybury to be employed in India. He died in 1914.

The presidency of J.J.J. Keswick (1882,1883,1884,1885) recalls the stormy days of Lord Ripon and the Ilbert Bill controversy. In Bengal the struggle to defeat the Government of India's proposals was headed by Keswick who may be regarded as the founder of the European Association which under the name of the "European and Anglo-Indian Defence

Association" was established in 1883 to oppose the Bill. The compromise finally arranged is a matter of history.

No unofficial European has ever enjoyed the unquestioning confidence of his community to the same degree as "King" Keswick. He was in India from 1863 to 1886 and for the last five years of this period he was the head of the firm of Messrs. Jardine Skinner & Co.

His successor, Sir William Macpherson of the Civil Service, was president for no less than nine years, a record surpassed by Sir Charles Metcalfe alone. He was one of the last nurselings of Haileybury entering the service in 1856. He was a Judge of the High Court from 1885 until he retired in 1900. He died in 1909, and there is a portrait of him in the Club Reading Room.

Many members of his family have adopted an Indian career, and his son, Mr. A.G.H.Macpherson, is well known as the owner of the unique collection of Marine prints which it is hoped will be acquired by the Nation.

With the present century a period is reached when the careers and characters of our Presidents are matters of personal knowledge to many members, and it is felt that the time has come to discontinue biographical notes. Mention must however be made, of Sir Alexander Apcar, C.S.I.(President 1896,1897,1898,and1910). SirAlexander was head of the old established firm of Messrs. Apcar & Co., and a man of great public spirit. He was chiefly remarkable however as an enthusiastic support of Calcutta racing, and for many years he might justly have been described as Calcutta's leading owner.

He died in April 1913, and in the following month his brothers, Mr. J.G. and Mr. S.A. Apcar, generously presented to the Club five cups from Sir Alexander's collection of trophies.(a)

In 1895 the expiry of the lease brought the question of new premises into prominence, and it was proposed to acquire a new site to south west of the junction of Camac Street and Theatre Road. As an alternative twas suggested that the site No. 41, Chowringhee, now occupied by the Army and Navy Stores, should be purchased, but neither project proved acceptable and the lease was renewed for a further twenty years. However before this period had elapsed it became evident that the old buildings mustbe replaced, and with a view to the erection of a new Club house the Club in

⁽a) The Cups were -

The Walter Locke Cup 1889-90 won by "Paladin". The Viceroy's Cup, 1891-92, won by "Moor House". The Cooch Behar Cup, 1907, won by "Ballark". The Burdwan Cup, 1909-10, won by "Mayfowl". The Cooch Behar Cup, 1911, won by "Five Crown".

1907 purchased the freehold for a sum of five and a half lakhs of rupees and in the same year formed itself into a registered Company. A competition for a design for the new building was held in which Mr. Vincent Esch, a well-known Calcutta architect, was successful. The contract for the actual work, which was begun in 1908, was entrusted to the Bengal Stone Company, with Mr. Esch as consulting architect.

All the request of the Corporation a Tablet was placed upon the west wall of the house bearing the inscription :

"In the House, which formerly stood on this site, and was dismantled in 1908, resided Thomas Babington Macaulay, Law Member of the Supreme Council 1834-38."

During the building operation the members of the Bengal United Service Club, generously offered their hospitality to the members of the Bengal Club, and thereby considerably alleviated the hardships and inconveniences of the transition period.

The new premises were formally opened on November 17th,1911,when an afternoon "At Home" was given to which ladies were invited. On the same evening an inaugural dinner was held.

Christmas of the same year was the occasion of the visit of Their Imperial Majesties to Calcutta. On the evening of their stay the Club, in common with other buildings in the city was illuminated, as an interesting photograph presented by Mr. A. F. Norman and now in the Guest Room vestibule bears witness. On this occasion His Imperial Majesty was graciously pleased to present the Club with portraits of himself and of the Queen Empress.

In the Great War, as the Club records show, over one hundred members saw active service, and more than forty others were able to serve the Empire in other ways.

Among the many honours and distinctions won by members the most remarkable is the Bar to the Victoria Cross awarded to Lt.-Colonel A. Martin Leake.

Colonel Leake's Victoria Cross was gained in the South African War and a Bar to it was awarded to him for gallantry in the Great War. It is believed every other Bar to a Victoria Cross has been a posthumous honour. Colonel Leake kindly granted the request of the Club that he should sit for his portrait, which now hangs in the Ante-Room. One other member of the Club, Captain J. R. N. Graham, also gained the Victoria Cross.(a)

On March 31st,1921, an occasion at once for sorrow and pride. His Excellency the Earl of Ronaldshay, Governor of Bengal, unveiled a bronze memorial tablet in commemoration of those members who lost their lives and the War.

Below the inscription "For King and Country 1914-1918" the following names are recorded:—

William Lovett Cameron Graham, Captain, Embarkation Staff, Bombay.

Arthur William Hadrill, Lieutenant, 9th Battn., Lincolnshire Regt.

Henry Thoreau Cullis, 2nd. Lieut., 12th Battn., Rifle Brigade and I. C. S.

William Babington Parker-Smith, Lieutenant, 3rd Reserve Scotish Horse.

John Sweetland Dallas, Captain, 6th Gurkha Rifles.

Geoffrey Richard Henry Talbot, Lieutenant, Royal Naval Air Force.

John Archibald Field, Captain, Royal Engineers.

Charles Cox Patterson, Captain, 13th Battn., Cheshire Regt.

John Graves, Captain, M. G. C. Attd., 36th Jacob's Horse.

The Earl of Suffolk and Berkshire, Major, Royal Field Artillery.

Harry Jephson Hilary, 2nd. Lieut., Royal Field Artillery.

⁽a) Other distinctions gained by Members include K.B.E., 3, C.B., 2, C.M.G., 2, C.B.E., 2, D.S.O., 10, M.C., 14, O.B.E., 10, and M.B.E., 1.

Duncan Mackinnon, Lieutenant, Scots Guards.

William Lynedoch Curwen, M. C. and Bar, Lieutenant, Royal Garrison Artillery.

Philip Wellesly Colley, 2nd. Lieut., Royal Field Artillery.

James Charles Jack, D. S. O., M.C. and Bar, Major, Royal Field Artillery.

Beneath the Roll are the words "Their name liveth for evermore."

The post-war years have, as was to be expected, brought with them certain difficulties. Financial problems have not been unknown and the annual balance sheet has at times been gloomy reading. But such maladies are it is hoped temporary and the infant brought to birth in 1827 may to-day be accurately described as a vigorous centenarian with an unlimited expectation of life.

On December 30th 1921, the Club had once again an opportunity of displaying its loyalty to the House of Windsor by entertaining His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales at luncheon. His Royal Highness was graciously pleased to present the Club with his signed photograph, now in the Reading Room, and to accept a silver replica of the Agdans in use at the Club.

Nothing now remains but to chronicle the centenary celebrations.

There was some support for the proposal to honour the occasion by a Costume Ball, but this project appeared too ambitious and the traditional method of a Banquet was decided upon. This was held on Tuesday, February 1st, 1927, Mr. O. S. Martin, the President, being in the Chair. The following telegrams were read by the President and are of permanent interest.

From the Secretary to the Equery in Waiting to H. M. the King.

"The President and Members of the Bengal Club on the occasion of their Centenary celebration beg you to convey to His Majesty an expression of their humble and loyal duty."

From the Private Secretary, Sandringham, to the President, Bengal Club.

"The King sincerely thanks the President and Members of the Bengal Club for the loyal message addressed to His Majesty on the occasion of their Centenary Celebration. His Majesty wishes all success to this Club in the future."

From the Secretary to the Equerry in Waiting to H. R. H. the Prince of Wales.

"The President and Members of the Bengal Club on the occasion of their Centenary celebration beg you to convey to His Royal Highness an expression of their respectful regard."

From the Private Secretary to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to the Secretary.

"Prince of Wales sincerely appreciates Members' telegram and wishes Club a long and prosperous future."

Messages of congratulations were also read from the Madras Club and from Sir Hugh Stephenson, K. C. I. E., C. S. I., who had been elected President the previous year but resigned on his appointment as Governor of Bihar and Orissa.

One hundred and thirty eight members were present at the dinner, and after the loyal toasts had been drunk the President proposed the continued prosperity of the Bengal Club, and asked the Company at the same time to drink to the memory of its first Patron and first President Lord Combermere and Colonel Finch.

The President's health was proposed by Sir George Rankin, the Chief Justice of Bengal.

On the following afternoon, *dies notata candidissimo calculo*, the Club was At Home to the lady guests of members. The entertainment had been the subject of controversy, but the apprehensions of the monastically inclined were allayed by the assurance that in all probability the experiment would not be repeated until 2027. The venture was justified by its success. The fair invaders, rich in suggestions of varying degrees of practicability, submitted the premises to a thorough examination; the domestic offices excited the keenest interest, and it is a matter for regret that the Turtle Tank was at the time but poorly stocked. The unaccustomed sound of treble voices was only hushed at the supreme moment, at which the President cut a birthday cake of unexampled richness bearing a hundred wax candles. Indeed the satisfaction of our guests was such that the bitterest opponent of the project was mollified.

By half past seven the last visitor had departed, and the outraged spirit of Celibacy had resumed his interrupted sway.

APPENDIX A

ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE BENGAL CLUB, FEBRUARY, 1827.

- The Right Hon. Viscount Combermere. See p. 15.
- Lieut.-Col. F. H. Dawkins (1796-1847): Grenadier Guards: 4th son of Henry Dawkins of Over Norton, Oxon.
- Lieut. Robert Frederick Dougan (1801-1829): 10th Light Cavalry: A. D. C. to the Commander-in-Chief. Died at Mussoorie, July 30, 1829.
- Capt.Geoffrey Charles Mundy. H.M. 2nd Foot: A.D.C. to the Commander-in-Chief, Author of the "Journal of a tour in India."
- Philip Yorke Lindsay, B. C. S. Writer 1809: Collector of Patna 1824-1826: Acting Superintendent of Sulkea Salt Golahs. Died December 16, 1833 at the Cape.
- Captain Adam White, 59th Bengal N. I.
- Capt. Henry Chambers Murray (1789-1876), 58th Bengal N.I. Afterwards General. Baptized at Calcutta, August 11,1789: son of Capt. Hiram Cox (1756-1799), Bengal Army, who founded Magh Colony at Cox's Bazar in 1798, and was the author of a "Journal of Residence in the Burman Empire," published by his son in 1821. Died at Burnham, Somerset, July 22nd, 1876.
- George Alexander Bushby, B. C. S. Writer 1818: Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Lower Provinces: appointed Resident at Hyderabad, 1856. Died at Bolarum, December 30, 1856.
- Richard Walpole, B. C. S. Writer 1803: Third Judge of Provincial Court of Appeal and Circuit at Calcutta. Died at the Cape, September 16, 1834.

- Edward Barnett, B. C. S.Writer 1801: Sub-Export Warehouse Keeper. Died at Calcutta, November 12. 1828.
- Capt. Alexander Spiers (1788-1849), 50th Bengal N. I. Political Agent at Sirohi: Afterwards Colonel. Died at Jalna(Deccan), March 18, 1849.
- Capt. Hugh Caldwell (1786-1882), 49th Bengal N. I. Presidency Paymaster: Afterwards Superintendent of the Mysore Princes: A. D. C. to Lord William Bentinck and Colonel, 61st Bengal N. I. Died at Rome, February 21, 1882.
- William Augustus Burke, M. D. (1762-1837): Inspector-General at Hospitals of H. M. Forces in the East Indies since 1825. Died at Calcutta, May 22, 1837. Served 40 years as an Army Surgeon and present at the siege and capture of Bhurtpore.
- Lieut.-Col. Henry S. Pepper, C. B. 6th Bengal N.I.
- Commodore John Hayes (1767-1831), Indian Navy: appointed Master attendant of Calcutta in 1809: received a Commodore's commission of the first class in 1811 for the expedition to Java: knighted. Died July 3,1831, at Cocos Islands where he had gone for the benefit of his health. Commanded Armed Flotilla on Arracan coast during the Burmese War of 1824.
- Francis Pemble Strong, Surgeon, 24 Parganas: Assistant Surgeon, 1815.
- Major William Stuart Beatson (1788-1837). 10th Light Cavalry Deputy Adjutant-General, afterwards, Adjutant-General and Lieut.-Colonel, 7th Light Cavalry. Died at Sea, April 13th, 1837, on board the *Robarts* on his passage to England.
- Francis Seymour Mathews, Civil Surgeon, Balasore, Assistant Surgeon 1818: Died at the Cape of Good Hope, September 2, 1835, served at the siege and storm of Bhurtpore(1826).

- Colonel John Wells Fast, 59th Bengal N. I., afterwards in command of Sirhind division (1841-1845). Major-General and Colonel, 25th Bengal N. I. Died at sea, March 19,1849.
- Major Irwin Maling (1780-1831), 64th Bengal N. I. Agent for Army Clothing: afterwards Presidency Paymaster. Invalided April 18, 1829, and died at Calcutta, November 17, 1831. His sister married the 1st Earl of Mulgrave.
- Lieut.-Col. Henry Hodgson(1781-1855), 1st Bengal N.I., afterwards, Lieut.-General: died at Passy (Paris), March 8, 1855.
- Capt. Hugh Cossart Baker, Bengal Horse Artillery (1792-1862), retired 1835 and died in London, September 21, 1862.
- Andrew Murray, M.D., Assistant Surgeon 1811, Surgeon 1824. Died in Edinburgh, November 24, 1838. Served at the capture of Java(1811) and in the fourth Mahratta (Pindari) War (1817-1818).
- Captain Huge Cochrane, 4th Queen's Own Light Dragoons.
- Charles Trower, B. C. S. Writer, 1796: Collector of Calcutta. Died at Calcutta, November 19, 1842.
- Colonel Robert Henry Cunliffe (1783-1859), Commissary-General, afterwards, General and C.B. Knighted, 1829. Succeeded his Father Sir Foster Cunliffe as fourth baronet in 1834. Died at Acton Park, Wrexham, September 10, 1859. His three sons were in the B.C.S., Robert Ellis Cunliffe (1808-1855), David Cunliffe (1815-1873) and Charles Walter (born 1833) killed by Mutineers at Bahramghat, June 1857.
- Lieut.-Colonel William Larkins Watson (1785-1852), 43rd Bengal N.I. Adjutant-General, afterwards C.B., baptized in Calcutta, March 26, 1785: son of Captain Samuel Watson, Bengal Army, and godson of William Larkins, Accountant General in Cal-

- cutta, the friend of Warren Hastings who presented a portrait of Hastings by Romney to the Directors (now at the India Office) and who also owned the historic portrait by Davis now at Viceregal Lodge, Delhi. Died at Cheltenham, April 6,1852.
- Colonel Robert Stevenson, Q. M. G., afterwards K. C. B. and Colonel of the 1st Bengal N. I. Died at Sea, July 30,1839.
- Captain William Oliphant (1792-1828), Bengal Artillery, Assistant Secretary to the Military Board. Died at Calcutta, August 27,1828.
- Major John Nebbitt Jackson (1788-1823), 45th Bengal N.I., Deputy Quarter-master General, Bengal, afterwards C.B. Baptized, St. John's Church, Calcutta, November 16, 1788. Died at Calcutta, June 8, 1832. Son of William Jackson, Company Attorney and Registrar of the Supreme Court, and godson of George Nesbitt Thomson, Private Secretary to Warren Hastings (ad mitted as an Advocate of the Supreme Court in 1779).
- Henry Thoby Prinsep (1793-1878) B.C.S., Writer 1808, Secretary to Government in the General Department, retired 1840, Director of the East India Company from 1850 to 1858: and afterwards Member & Secretary of State's Council. Died February, 1878. Father of Sir Henry Thoby Prinsep, K.C.I.E., B.C.S. and Judge of the High Court, who was President of the Club 1881: and again from 1899 to 1902.
- Lieut.-Colonel the Hon'ble John Finch (1793-1861). See page 18.
- Major Thomas Fiddes (1786-1863), Assistant Commissary-General. Afterwards Lieut.-General and Colonel of the 42nd Bengal N.I. Died at Cheltenham, April 15, 1863.
- Colonel Jeremiah Bryant (1783-1845), Judge-Advocate-General. Afterwards Major-General and C. B. Knighted 1829. Colonel of the 1st Bengal European Light Infantry. Director of the

- East India Company from 1841 to 1845. Died at Richmond (Surrey), June 10, 1845.
- Paul Marriott Wynch, B.C.S. Writer 1808. Deputy-Secretary to Government in the Judicial Department, retired 1836.
- Thomas Edward Mitchell Turton, Officiating Advocate-General nominated as an Advocate of the Supreme Court, January 7, 1824. Succeeded his father as 2nd Baronet in 1844 and died at Mauritius, April 13, 1854, on the voyage to Europe when baronetcy became extinct. Was Registrar of the Supreme Court and also Administrator-General.
- Robert North Collie Hamilton (1802-1887), B.C.S. Writer 1819: Officiating Judge of Benares, succeeded his father Sir Frederick Hamilton (B.C.S. 1795-1836) as 6th Baronet 1853, A.G.G.Central India 1854, Member of Council 1859, K.C.B. for Mutiny services 1859. Retired 1859 and died, May 31, 1887, the last survivor of the original members.
- Lieut. James MacKenzie (1804-1859). Adjutant, 8th Light Cavalry, afterwards Brevet Colonel and C.B. Died at Simla, August 15, 1859.
- Brigadier Joseph O'Halloran (1763-1843), Commanding 25th Bengal N. I. Afterwards Major-General, General and G.C.B. Colonel 30th Bengal N.I. Took no furlough or leave to Europe for Fifty-three years. Was knighted by William IV upon going to England in 1834, K.C.B. 1837, G.C.B. 1841. Died, November 3, 1843 at Connaught's Square, London, from the effects of a Street accident. Described by William Hickey, (IV, p21) as "a strong backed Irishman."
- Sir Charles Theophilus Metcalfe, Bart. See p.21.
- David Scott, B.C.S.Writer 1807: Collector of Burdwan and Superintendent of the Burdwan Salt Chowkies, retired 1838.

- James Ranken, M.D. (1788-1848), appointed to Indian Medical Service, 1809: Post Master General, N. W. P., 1841-1845, when he retired. Died in Aryshire, May 3, 1848. Served in the Fourth Mahratta (Pindari) War (1817-1818).
- Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe (1795-1853), B.C.S. Writer 1813: afterwards, A.G.G. at Delhi where he died on November 4, 1853. Succeeded his brother Lord Metcalfe as fourth Bart. in 1846. Father of Sir Theophilus John Metcalfe, B.C.S. 5th Bart. Magistrate at Delhi 1857 and C.T. Metcalfe, C.S.I., also of the B.C.S.
- Lieut.-Col. Charles Parker (1783-1837), Bengal Artillery: Died at Simla, April 28, 1837.
- Brigade-Major Edward John Honeywood (1790-1867), 7th Light Cavalry: Governor-General's Bodyguard, retired 1838. Died at Whimple near Exeter, December 12, 1867.
- Henry Moore, B.C.S. Writer 1811: Judge and Magistrate of the 24-Pargannas. Retired 1846, died 1881.
- John Vincent Biscoe, B.C.S. Writer 1810: Collector and Magistrate of Purnea: Died at Purnea, July 23, 1827.
- William Woollen, B.C.S. Writer 1808: Judge and Magistrate of Purnea from 1822 to 1828: retired 1837.
- George Forbes, M.D., Assistant Surgeon, 1826: Died at Hijli, October 23, 1837.
- Lieut. William Hislop, 39th Bengal N.I,son (probably natural) of General Sir Thomas Hislop, 1st Bart., G.C.B. Died at Kotah, Rajputana, August 29, 1829.
- Captain John Cheape (1792-1875), Bengal Engineers, afterwards General: C.B. 1838, K.C.B 1849, G.C.B. 1865. Died at Ventnor, March 30, 1875.

- Captain William Burlton (1793-1870), Assistant Commissary-General: afterwards C.B. and Colonel, 8th Light Cavalry, Died at Oaklands (Middlesex), November 10, 1870. Elder brother of Lieut. Philip Bowles Burlton (1803-1829), Bengal Artillery, who was killed by Khasiahs at Nonghkhlao, Assam, on April 4, 1825, when exploring the sources of the Brahmaputra.
- Captain James Houston Mackinlay, 63rd Bengal N.I. Deputy Assistant Adjutant-General, Cawnpore, afterwards Lieut.-Colonel, retired 1849.
- Lieut.-Col. William Clinton Baddeley (1783-1842),16th Bengal N.I., afterwards commanding 31st Bengal N.I., was in command of 2nd Skinners Horse (known as Baddeley's Frontier Horse), from 1821 to 1824, afterwards brigadier in the Nizam's Army, Major-General and Colonel, 74th Bengal N.I., C.B. 1827. Died at Karnal on December 19th, 1842. Also an original member of the Oriental Club (1824).
- Captain Francis Jenkins (1793-1866), 69th Bengal N.I. Assistant Secretary to the Military Board, afterwards Major-General of the 61st Bengal N.I. Died at Gauhati, August 28, 1866.
- Lieut. William Nairn Forbes (1796-1855), Bengal Engineers: Master of the Calcutta Mint, afterwards Major-General. Died at Sea near Aden, May 1, 1855. He was the Architect of the Mint building and of St. Paul's Cathedral. There is a bust of him by Foley in the Bullion-room at the Mint, and another bust by Thee in the Cathedral.
- Lieut. James Patrick Macdougall (1800-1867), 21st Bengal N.I., retired as Captain 1833: afterwards Chairman of the Church of England Assurance Society. Died at Brixton, July 15, 1867.
- Horace Hayman Wilson (1786-1860), Assistant Surgeon 1808:
 Assay Master, Calcutta Mint, 1816, retired 1832, appointed as Boden Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford, Librarian at the

- Indian House 1836. Was President of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He was Succeeded at the Mint by James Prinsep, brother of H.T. Princep the elder; he married a daughter of George John Siddons, B.C.S., who was a son of Mrs. Siddons, the actress.
- Hon'ble John Edmund Elliot (1788-1862), B.C.S. Writer 1805: Post-master-General, 3rd son of the 1st Earl of Minto (Governor-General from 1807 to 1813), retired 1836. Died 1862.
- Captain William Sage (1793-1864), 48th Bengal N.I., afterwards Major-General and Colonel of the 22nd Bengal N.I.: was brigadier in command at Saugor during the Mutiny. Died at Dawlish (Devon), May 25,1864.
- Captain Edward Smith Ellis, Indian Navy: Marine Paymaster and Naval Store-keeper, Calcutta. Elected a member of the Oriental Club in 1840.
- Lieut.-Colonel Thomas Shubrick (1781-1863), 1st Light Cavalry: afterwards Major-General and Colonel of the 2nd European Light Cavalry. Died in London, January 5, 1863.
- Dr. William Russel, M.D., Presidency Assistant Surgeon 1797: Surgeon 1808, retired 1831, was created a baronet in 1832, and died September 26, 1839. The third baronet died s.p. in 1915.
- Dr. James Mellis, M.D., Presidency and Marine Surgeon: Assistant Surgeon 1806, Surgeon 1818.
- Lieut.-Col. George Swiney (1784-1868), Bengal Artillery. Principal Commissary-General: afterwards General. Died at Cheltenham, on December 10, 1868.
- Major William Battine (1785-1851), Bengal Artillery, Deputy Principal Commissary-General: afterwards Major-General and

- C.B., commanded at Barrackpore and Ambala. Died at Mian Mir on July 21, 1851.
- Captain Henry Lewis White (1790-1850), 36th Bengal N.I. Brigade Major, Barrackpore: afterwards Colonel, 42nd Bengal N.I. Died in London, March 28, 1850.
- Robert Towers, B.C.S. Writer 1824: Assistant to the Collector and Salt Agent of the 24-Parganas.
- M. Laruletta, Director of the Bank Of Bengal, was of Spanish extraction. Owned the bungalow at Snooksagar where Warren Hastings is said to have lived and where his predecessor Joseph Barretto (who used the place as a Sugar Factory) built a Roman Catholic Chapel. Laruletta is said to have converted the chapel into a residence of mahouts and fighting cocks. Both buildings have been swallowed up by the river.
- Browne Roberts, Lieutenant, Bengal Infantry 1803: Captain and Sub-Assistant Commissary-General 1816, resigned in India 1820 in order to join the firm of Mackintosh Fulton and Maclintock (Mackintosh & Co.). Sheriff of Calcutta in 1828.
- James George Gordon, indigo-planter of the firm of Gordon & Co. (J. G. Gordon in list, but more probably George James Gordon of the firm of Mackintosh & Co. Sheriff of Calcutta in 1828 in succession to Browne Roberts). He seems to be identical with George James Gordon appointed to the Indian Medical Service in 1807 and retired in 1820. Died in London on February 10, 1853.
- James Calder, of Mackintosh & Co. Sheriff of Calcutta in 1822 and again in 1829.
- Thomas Bracken (1791-1850), after taking his degree at Queen's College, Oxford, in 1810, went out to India in 1813 as a "free mariner" and joined the Calcutta firm of Alexander & Co.,

was senior partner when the firm failed in 1832 for three million sterling. Subsequently elected Secretary and Treasurer of the Bank of Bengal. Was one of the six original propritors of the Bank of Hindustan. Sheriff of Calcutta in 1830 and again in 1840. Retired in 1847 but returned to Calcutta where he died, December 16, 1850.

- Nathaniel Alexander, Sheriff of Calcutta in 1831: member of the firm of Alexander & Co., Director, Bank of Hindustan.
- David Bryce (1790-1828), in Bengal Army from 1809-1822 and Assistant Professor of Persian at the College of Fort William from 1814-1815, and again from 1818-1822 when he resigned and joined the firm of Cruttenden McKillop & Co.which failed in 1832. Died at sea on July 18, 1828, on board the *Thomas Grenville* on his passage from Bengal.
- James Young, Sheriff of Calcutta in 1838 and again in 1839. Member of the firm of Palmer & Co. Director, Bank of Hindustan.
- Charles Knowles Robison—The persistent misspelling of this surname is shown in "Robinson Street" which is named after him. He was Police Magistrate of Calcutta and was in addition the Architect of the Metcalfe Hall and other public buildings. He died in Calcutta, April 11, 1846.
- John Palmer (1767-1836): "The prince of Merchants": head of the firm of Palmer & Co., which failed in 1830. The creditors to mark their sense of his merits placed his name at the head of the list of assignees, but the nomination was declared to be invalied on legal grounds. Died in Calcutta on January 22, 1836. His tombstone in North Park Street Cemetery describes him as "The Friend of the Poor." A bust by Chantrey was erected to his memory in the Town Hall. Son of Lieutenant-General William Palmer who had been private Secretary to Warren Hastings.

- Capt. James Elliot, H.M., 33rd Regiment, Assistant Adjutant-General, King's Troops.
- John Abraham Francis Hawkins, B.C.S. Writer 1822: Joint-Magistrate of Baraset, was appointed in 1828 to be Government Prosecutor at Murshidabad in the case of W. Wollen, B.C.S., a fellow member. Retired 1848 as a Judge of the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut, Died 1870.
- Edward Marjoribanks, B.C.S. Writer 1807: Died at Calcutta, January 1, 1833.
- Lieut.-Col. Thomas Anbury (1759-1840), Bengal Engineers: Commandant of the newly organised Corps of Bengal Sappers and Miners from 1819-1828. Afterwards Major-General, C.B. 1818, knighted August, 1827, K.C.B. 1838. Died at Saugar (C.P), March 31, 1830.
- William Watson, Surgeon, Western Provinces.
- Lieut. William Dickson (1805-1827)). Bengal Engineers . Died Chittagong, August 31, 1827. Eldest son of Major-General Sir Alexander Dickson, G.C.B., Royal Artillery.
- William Melville, Sheriff of Calcutta in 1832. Member of the firm of Fergusson & Co., came out in 1822.
- William Patrick, member of the firm of James Scott & Co., came out in 1811.
- George Charles Cheap, B.C.S. Writer 1818: Magistrate of Burdwan. Died at Rangoon, December 8, 1855.
- Dr. Simon Nicholson, of the Bengal Medical Service: Assistant Surgeon 1807, Surgeon 1820, enjoyed from 1820-1855 undisputed pre-eminence as the most celebrated doctor in India. He lived in a house at the corner of Kyd Street and Chowringh-

ee which stood in the site of the present United Service Club, and the Avenue leading across the Maidan past the Mayo Statue to Government House is said to have been made to enable him to have direct access to Lord Dalhousie whose physician he was.

Lieut. Thomas Sewell (1798-1862), 11th Bengal N.I., afterwards Major-General, 25th Bengal N.I. Died in London in September, 1862.

Robert Browne, Surgeon, 33rd Bengal N.I.

Major John Drysdale, 50th Regiment, Bengal N.I.

- Lieut. William Hickey (1794-1841), 2nd Bengal N.I. Adjutant of the Calcutta Native Militia. Resigned the service in May,1829, and became a merchant in Calcutta, first in Moore Hickey & Co. and later in Tulloh & Co. Sheriff of Calcutta in 1835. Died of Cholera in Calcutta on November 5th, 1841. His wife was a sister of Sir Walter Raleigh Gilbert. Not to be confused with the author of the Memoirs.
- Charles Renny (1789-1876), Surgeon, 8th Bengal N.I., appointed 1872: served in Second Sikh War (battles of Ramnugger, Chillianwallah and Gujrat, 1840): Surgeon-General 1853, retired 1857. Died at Exmouth, March 25th, 1876.
- Thomas Richardson, B.C.S. Writer 1818: Acting Deputy Collector of Customs at Calcutta. Appointed in 1833 to be Magistrate of the 24-Parganas and Superintendent of the Alipore Central Jail. Killed April 5,1834, by convicts at the Alipore Jail.
- Lieut.-Col. Walter Raleigh Gilbert (1785-1853), Ramgarh Battalion. Afterwards Lieutenant-General. Sir Walter Raleigh Gilbert, Bart.,cadet 1800. Provisional Member, Council of India 1850. War service: Agra, Laswari, Bhurtpore, Mudki, Ferozeghat, Sobraon.Chillianwallah, Gujrat. Colonel of the

- 1st Bengal European Regt. Died in London, May 12, 1853. Created Baronet 1851. His son Francis Hastings Gilbert, and Bart. was Vice-Consul at Scutari and died s.p. 1863.
- Captain James Henry Johnson, of the Steamship Enterprise. Had fought at Trafalgar as a naval officer. The merchants in Calcutta in 1824 offered to present a lakh of rupees to the first steamer which should make the voyage from England to In dia. Johnson won the prize bringing out the Enterprise in 145 days. She reached Calcutta in December 1825. "having put out her fires pretty often and sailed." Johnson became controller of the Company's Steamer Department and died off the Cape of Good Hope on May 5, 1851. There is a tablet in his memory in St. Stephen's Church, Kidderpore.
 - Captain Huge Lyon Playfair (1786-1861), Bengal Artillery, after wards Colonel, Bengal Horse Artillery and knighted. Brother of George Playfair (1782-1814). Inspector-General of Hospitals, Bengal, whose son Lyon was the first Baron Playfair (cr.1892).
 - Lieut. Mathew George White, 66th Bengal N.I. Major 1840. Assistant Commissioner, Assam, 1843: retired as Lieut.-Col. 1844. Died September 3, 1866.
 - Charles Richard Barwell, B.C.S. Writer 1804: Chief Magistrate of Calcutta and Superintendent of Police, Lower Provinces, afterwards Judge of the Sudder Dewanny Adawlut. Died at Calcutta, on December 12,1836.
 - Captain Joseph Taylor (1790-1835), Bengal Engineers: afterwards Lieut.-Colonel. Son of Major Joseph Taylor, Bengal Artillery by "the daughter of an Indian Rajah." He married "an East Indian Lady" (Burke's Landed Gentry) and also two English wives.

The Hon'ble William Henry Leslie Melville (1788-1856), B.C.S.

- Writer 1807: Agent to the Governor-General at Moorshidabad, retired 1838. Director of the East India Company 1845-1855. Interpreter and Quartermaster, 6th Light Cavalry: afterwards Brevet Lieut.-Colonel. Died at sea, on December 24, 1855 on board the *Hindustan* between Calcutta and Madras, on the voyage to England. Commanded 6th Light Cavalry at Chillianwallah and Gujrat (1849).
- Colonel Clements Brown (1765-1838), Bengal Horse Artillery, afterwards Major-General, C.B., and commandant, Bengal Artillery (1831). Died At Benares—when in command of the division, April 24, 1838, at the age of 72. His service commenced in 1784.
- Lieut.-Col. James Fullerton Dundas (1786-1848), Bengal Artillery. Succeeded as 3rd Bart., (title extinct). Afterwards Major General. Died at Richmond, June 16, 1848.
- Lieut. John Peter Wade (1802-1873), 13th Bengal N.I. Then at Dinapore, afterwards Major. Died June 1, 1873.
- Colonel Willam Richards (1778-1861), commanding at Agra, afterwards General Sir William Richards, K.C.B., 26th Bengal N.I. Died at Naini Tal, November 1, 1861. Never went home. Married a sister (an Indian Lady) of Major Hyder Hearsey, and also (in 1831 at Agra) a Miss Henrietta Herd whom the Bengal Herald on September 11, 1836, described as "Mrs. Richards, a native lady of the Jat tribe and wife of General Richards, C.B., now residing at Agra."
- Col. Edmund Cartwright (1778-1853), 15th Bengal N.I., afterwards Lieut.-General and Colonel of the 57th Bengal N.I., was Lt.-Col. in command of 1st Bengal European at siege and capture of Bhurtpore (1826). Commanded Presidency Division, 1843,1844. Died in London, March 31, 1853.
- Captain Thomas Birket (1788-1836), 6th Bengal N.I. Died at Barra-

- ckpore, February 15, 1836.
- Lieut. George Thomson (1799-1886). Bengal Engineers: afterwards Lieut.-Col. and C.B., retired 1841, and died in Dublin, February 10, 1886. Had served in first Burmese War (1825), and at storming of Ghazni (1839). Lord Keane wrote that "much of the credit of this brilliant coup de main (Ghazni) was due to him."
- Captain James Frushard (1785-1847), 58th Bengal N.I.: afterwards Brevet Col. of 1st Bengal Fusiliers. Died at Ambala on November 11, 1847. The son of James Frushard (1745-1807), of the firm Frushard and Laprimaudaye which is mentioned in the memoirs of William Hickey (Vol.IV.).
- Lieut. Ferguharson Tweedale, 8th Light Cavalry: afterwards Lieut.-Col. Retired 1850. The date of his death has not been traced (he was baptized in London in 1802), but his name appears in the Bengal Quarterly Army List down to January, 1884.
- Captain Cherles Hay Campbell, Bengal Artillery (1789-1832). Afterwards Major. Agent for gun carriages at Cossipore, and afterwards at Fatehgarh from 1821 until his death at Fatehgarh, May 19, 1832.
- Captain John Corse Wotherspoon (1791-1839), an Extra N.I., afterwards of 70th B.N.I. Retired 1836. Died July 20, 1839.
- Sir Charles Edward Grey, Chief Justice of Bengal. Called to the Bar 1811. Appointed Puisne Judge at Madras in 1820 and transferred to Calcutta in 1824 in succession to Sir Christopher Puller who died five weeks after taking his seat. On retiring in 1832, he was appointed Commissioner to Canada in 1835 and was M.P. for Tynemouth from 1838 to 1841. In 1841 he became Governor-General of Barbadoes and succeeded the eighth Earl of Elgin (Governor-General of India in 1862) as Governor of Jamaica in 1847. He resigned the office in 1853 and died in 1865.

- William Leycester, B.C. Writer 1790: Chief Judge of the Sudder Dewanny Nizamut Adawlut. Died at Puri, on May 24,1831.
- Captain John Jones (1801-1875), 46th Bengal N.I. attached to Q.M., G.Deptt. Resigned 1835 and died at Tarquaz, April 7, 1875.
- Captain John Persons (1787-1868), 50th Bengal N.I. Deputy Assistant Commissary-General, afterwards Lieutenant-General, C.B. and Colonel of the 50th Bengal N.I., for some time Brigadier in the Gwalior Contingent. Died at Almora, November 9, 1868, after 62 years' continuous residence in India.
- Alexander Cummings, B.C.S. Writer 1818: Deputy Collector of Customs and town duties at Benares and Azimghur. Died January 30, 1840, while on Furlough in England.
- Richard Udny, B.C.S. Writer 1822: Civil Auditor and Sub-Accountant General. Died January 9, 1831, on board the Lotus. Son of Robert George Udny, B.C.S., member of the Supreme Council in 1802, and younger brother of George Udny, B.C.S., 1819-1831.
- Sir John Franks (1770-1852), Judge of the Supreme Court. Called to the Irish Bar (King's Inns), in 1792 and went to the Munster Circuit, K.C. 1823. Succeeded Sir Francis Macnaughten as Judge at Calcutta in 1825, and retired in 1834, when Sir Benjamin Heath Malkin, the friend of Lord Macaulay (who died in Calcutta in 1837), was appointed in his place. Died near Dublin, January 11,1852. An intimate friend of John Philpot Curran whose son was his executor, and who commemorates his "peculiar aboriginal wit, quiet, keen and natural to the occasion, and best of all never malignant." (General Mag. April 1852, p. 408).
- Lieut. Francis Spencer Hawkins (1798-1860), 38th Bengal N.I. Sub-Assistant Commissary-General, afterwards Major-General, C.B., and Colonel of the 2nd Bengal N.I. Died in London,

June 3, 1860.

- Major James Caulfield (1783-1852), 5th Light Cavalry: Political Agent in Haraoti (Rajputana),1822-1832. Afterwards Lieutenant-General, C.B., and Colonel of the 10th Light Cavalry, A.G.G. at Murshidabad, and Resident at Lucknow. Elected a Director of the East India Company in 1848. M.P. for Abingdon, 1852, died at Corpsewood-Limerick, November 4, 1852.
- Edward John Harington (1793-1857), B.C.S. Writer 1809: Judge of Ghazipore, retired 1837. Died October 10, 1857. Son of Sir John Edward Harington, B.C.S. 8th Bart. and brother of Sir James Harington, B.C.S., Writer 1807, who succeeded as 9th Bart. in 1831 and died at Patna, January 5, 1835. Another brother the Rev. Richard Harington, Principal of Brasenose College, Oxford, was grand-father of Sir Richard Harington, 12th Bart., Judge of the High Court, 1899-1913.
- Henry Swan Oldfield, B.C.S. Writer 1816: Magistrate of Ghazipur, retired 1851. Died May 4, 1887.
- John Master, B.C.S. Writer 1809: Judge and Magistrate of the 24-Parganas and Superintendent of the Alipore Jail, retired 1838. Died November 20, 1856.
- Lieut. William Edward (1800-1842), 54th Bengal N.I., afterwards Major. Killed in the retreat from Kabul, 1842. His brother Lt.-Col. John Ewart (1803-1857), of the 1st Bengal N.I. was killed with his wife and daughter by mutineers at Cawnpore on June 27, 1857.
- Lieut.-Col. Richard Collyer Andree (1785-1865), 7th Bengal N.I. Afterwards General and Colonel of the 69th Bengal N.I. Commanded 7th Bengal N.I. till 1838. Died at Stutgart, March 27, 1865.

- Major Duncan Macleod (1780-1856), Bengal Engineers: Superintendent Nizamut Buildings. Afterwards Lieutenant-General and Chairman of Directors of London Agency of the Agra Bank. Died in London, June 8, 1856.
- Captain Thomas Lamb (1789-1841), 12th Bengal N.I. Barrack-master at Berhampore. Died at Leamington, September 15, 1841.
- John Petty Ward (1791-1869), B.C.S. Writer 1807: Collector of Bhagalpur, retired 1837. Died March 23, 1869. Son of Edward Ward, M.P. and grandson of the 1st Viscount Bangor. Father of Sir William Erskine Ward, K.C.S.I. (1838-1916), B.C.S. (1861-1896) and Chief Commissioner of Assam from 1891-1896.
- Captain John Bryan Neufville (1795-1830), 42nd Bengal N.I. Political Agent in Upper Assam. Died at Jorhat, July 26, 1830.
- Colonel Willoughby Cotton, C. B., see p.30.
- Colonel John McCombe: Lieut-Col. of H.M. 14th Foot. Was Brigadier in Burma War in 1824.
- William Twining, M.R.C.S., Surgeon to the Commander-in-Chief, a distinguished Calcutta Doctor. Served as an Army Surgeon throughout the Peninsular War and Waterloo and came to Calcutta in 1823 on the staff of Sir Edward Paget, the Commander-in-Chief. He was first permanent Assistant Surgeon at the General Hospital and had an enormous practice. His death on August 25,1835, at the age of 45 was due to an accident. There is a fine portrait of him at the Town Hall and memorial tablet in St.John's Church.
- John Trotter, B.C.S. Writer 1808: Secretary to the Marine Board, retired 1842 as senior member of the Board of Customs, Salt and Opium and Marine Board.

- Captain Henry Monke (1795-1838), of the 39th Bengal N.I. Lost in the *Protector* off the Sandheads, October 17, 1838.
- James George Bathoe Lawrell, B.C.S. Writer 1825: Assistant to the Export Warehouse-keeper, resigned 1843.
- George Udny (1802-1870), B.C.S. Writer 1819: officiating Import Warehouse-keeper, afterwards Secretary and Treasurer of the Bank of Bengal (1833), retired 1851 and died in 1870. Son of Robert George Udny, B.C.S., Member of the Supreme Council, 1802 and father of Sir Richard Udny, K.C.S.I. Commissioner of Peshawar in 1891, (died 1923).
- Charles Patterson, B.C.S. Writer 1798: Superintendent of the Sulkea Salt Golahs. Died at Calcutta, on January 2, 1831.
- Colonel George Elrington, C.B., King's Service, 14th Foot Ensign, 14th Foot, 1790, afterward commanded 47th Foot in Bombay.
- Sir Edward Ryan, Judge of the Supreme Court: Called to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn on June 23, 1817, appointed in 1827 in place of Sir Antony Buller and succeeded Sir William Ownall Russell (joint author with him of Report on Crown Cases Rescued) as Chief Justice in 1833. Upon his retirement in 1841 he was sworn of the Privy Council and sat on the Judicial Committee until 1862, when he was appointed a salaried member of the Civil Service Commission. Died at Ventnor in 1874 at the age of 81.
- Reger Winter, Barrister-at-Law, admitted as an advocate of the Supreme Court in 1824. Died in Calcutta, in 1828, aged 39.

APPENDIX B LIST OF PRESIDENTS OF THE CLUB

1827	LtCol. the Hon'ble J. Finch, (resigned August, 1827).
1827	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1828	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1829	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1830	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1831	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1832	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1833	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1834	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1835	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1836	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1837	The Rt. Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G.C.B.
1838	Major-General Sir Willoughby Cotton.
1839	Major-General Sir Willoughby Cotton.
1840	Major-General Sir Willoughby Cotton.
1841	Major-General Sir Willoughby Cotton.
1842	The Rt. Hon'ble Earl of Ellenborough.
1843	The Rt. Hon'ble Earl of Ellenborough.
1844	The Rt. Hon'ble Earl of Ellenborough
1845	Sir John Peter Grant.
1846	Sir John Peter Grant.
1847	Sir John Peter Grant.
1848	Sir John Peter Grant.
1849	Sir James Colville.
1850	Sir James Colville.
1851	Sir James Colville.
1852	Sir James Colville.
1853	Sir James Colville.
1854	Sir James Colville.
1855	Sir James Colville.
1856	Sir Arthur Buller.
1857	Sir Arthur Buller.
1858	Sir Arthur Buller.
1859	Henry Ricketts, Esq., C.S.
	-

- 1860 General Sir James Outram, G.C.B.
- 1861 General Sir James Outram, G.C.B.
- 1862 Sir H. B. E. Frere, K.C.S.I.
- 1863 Sir H. B. E. Frere, K.C.S.I.
- 1864 Sir Mordaunt Lewis Wells.
- 1865 C. B. Trevor, Esq., C.S.
- 1866 T. H. Cowie, Esq.
- 1867 C. B. Trevor, Esq., C.S.
- 1868 C. B. Trevor, Esq., C.S.
- 1869 T. H. Cowie, Esq.
- 1870 T. H. Cowie, Esq.
- 1871 Charles Marten, Esq.
- 1872 Charles Marten, Esq.
- 1873 Charles Marten, Esq.
- 1874 C.T. Buckland, Esq., C.S.
- 1875 C.T. Buckland, Esq. C.S.
- 1876 T. Oldham, Esq., L.L.D., F.R.S.
- 1877 E. F. Harrison, Esq., C.S.
- 1878 J.D. Bell, Esq.
- 1879 J.D. Bell, Esq.
- 1880 J.D. Bell, Esq.
- 1881 The Hon'ble Mr. H.T. Prinsep, I.C.S.
- 1882 J.J.J. Keswick, Esq.
- 1883 J.J.J. Keswick, Esq.
- 1884 J.J.J. Keswick, Esq.
- 1885 J.J.J. Keswick, Esq.
- 1886 The Hon'ble Mr. W. Macpherson, I.C.S.
- The Hon'ble Mr. W. Macpherson, I.C.S.
- 1888 The Hon'ble Mr. W. Macpherson, I.C.S.
- 1889 J. T. Woodroffe, Esq.(Resigned 13-6-89).
- 1889 R. Steel Esq. 13-6-89.
- The Hon'ble Mr. W. Macpherson, I.C.S.
- 1896 J. T. Woodroffe, Esq. (unable to accept office).

1896	A. A. Apcar, Esq.
1897	A. A. Apcar, Esq.
1898	A. A. Apcar, Esq.
1899	The Hon'ble Sir H. T. Prinsep, I.C.S.
1900	The Hon'ble Sir H. T. Prinsep, I.C.S.
1901	The Hon'ble Sir H. T. Prinsep, I.C.S.
1902	The Hon'ble Sir H. T. Prinsep, I.C.S.
1903	The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Henderson.
1904	The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Henderson.
1905	The Hon'ble Mr. Justice Henderson.
1906	T. B. G. Overend, Esq.
1907	The Hon'ble Mr. G. H. Sutherland.
1908	T. B. G. Overend, E3q.
1909	T. B. G. Overend, Esq.
1910	The Hon'ble Mr. A. A. Apcar, C.S.I.
1911	W. A. Dring, Esq., C.I.E.
1912	J. C. Shorrock, Esq.
1913	The Hon'ble Mr. J. C. Shorrock.
1914	The Hon'ble Sir H. W. C. Carnduff,
	C.I.E.,I.C.S.(Resigned 3-11-14).
1914	J. C. R. Johnston, Esq., 3-11-14.
1915	R. S. Highet, Esq.
1916	Sir Robert Highet.
1917	H. Collingridge, Esq.
1918	Sir Francis Stewart, C.I.E.
1919	The Hon'ble Sir C. J. Stevenson-More, K.C.I.E., C.V.O.,
	I.C.S.
1920	T. E. T. Upton, Esq.
1921	C. D. M. Hindley, Esq.
1922	C. D. M. Hindley, (Resigned 10-10-22).
1922	J. W. Langford-James, Esq.
1923	J. W. Langford-James, Esq.
1924	Sir George Godfrey.
1925	Sir George Godfrey.
1926	The Hon'ble Sir Hugh Stephenson, K.C.I.E., C.S.I.,
	I.C.S.(Resigned 1-9-26).
1926	O.S. Martin Esq.
1027	O. S. Martin Eco

O.S. Martin Esq.

1926 1927

APPENDIX C

A meeting of the Committee of the United Service Club was held at the Town Hall on Thursday, the 22nd of February, 1827, when, after reading the Rules proposed, the following Resolutions were proposed by Mr. Tower and seconded by Col. Stevenson.

Resolution -

- 1) That the Rules just read are approved and confirmed; and that it may be published in a Government Gazette together with a list of the names of all original Members.
- 2) That one hundred copies of these Rules be printed and placed at the disposal of the Committee that may be appointed.
- That Major Jackson be requested to accept the office of Secretary to the Club and to the Committee of Management.
- 4) That Mr. Barnett be requested to effect the purchase of the plated ware, to be sold to-day at Messrs Tulloh & Co., at a sum not exceeding Sicca Rs.5,000.
- 5) That the Secretary be requested to issue an immediate advertisement requesting gentlemen, who wish to be considered as Original Members of the Club, to send in their names to the Secretary, Major Jackson, on or before Thursday next, the 1st of March, and that until the Club is opened, he will receive the name of any gentleman, whom a Member of the Club may be desirous of proposing as a candidate, under the Rules established.

That the following gentlemen be elected as President, Vice-Presidents and Members of the Committee of Management:—

President – The Hon'ble Lt.-Col. Finch.

Vice-Presidents – Colonel Stevenson and Mr. C. Trower.

Members – Colonel Watson, Mr. H.T.Prinsep, Mr. Barnett, Major
Beatson, Mr. Wynch, Capt. Oliphant, Mr. Walpole, and Lt. Col. Cunliffe.

The remaining Members to be elected hereafter.

J. W. Jackson, Secretary

RULES OF THE BENGAL CLUB

Rule 1– A Club to be established in Calcutta, and called the Bengal Club, the same to consist of 500 Members.

Rule2 – Members to be eligible as follows: –

Civil servants of five years' service. Officers of His Majesty's and Honourable Company's Military Service, Captains of five years' service. Officers of the Medical Department of five years' service.

Captains of the Honourable Company's Marine and regular service.

The Bench, Bar, and Clergy, on their arrival in the Country. One hundred (of the 500) Members, above mentioned, to be eligible from among residents in Calcutta, not in his Majesty's or the Honourable Company's services.

- **Rule 3** The following classes to be admitted as Honorary and occasional Members, not included in the limitation of five hundred.
- 1st. The personal staff of the Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief, not eligible as permanent Members.
- 2nd. The personal staff of the Governors and Commander-in-Chief of the other Presidencies.
- 3rd. Members of the services (mentioned in the preceding rule) of the other Presidencies who would be eligible under the rules established for the Club.
- 4th. All Commissioned Officers of His Majesty's Navy, belonging to the Indian station.
 - 5th. Honorary Members to have all the privileges of permanent

Members, except that of ballot.

- Rule 4–1st. Gentlemen arriving India, on or before the first of March 1828 (if eligible) to have the option of becoming original Members of the club.
- 2nd. Gentlemen now absent from India (similarly eligible) to be allowed the same option, provided their desire to become Members be communicated on or before the 1st of September, 1828.
- 3rd. Members of the United Service Club in London, to have the option of becoming Members (without ballot) on intimating their wish within one month after their arrival in Calcutta.
- Rule 5–1st. An entrance subscription of Sicca Rupees 250 to be paid in advance by every original or other permanent Member besides an annual subscription of one hundred Rupees (also payble in advance) if resident in or within one hundred miles of Calcutta, and one fourth of that amount if resident beyond that limit.
- 2nd. Any Member availing himself of the advantage of the Club if resident in Calcutta for one month in any year, to pay the full rate of subscription for that year.
- 3rd. Members absent in Europe to be exempted from the payment of their subscription during such absence.
- 4th. Honorary and Occasional Members to pay only the amount of annual subscription.
- **Rule 6**—The following to be the rules for the admission of Members, by ballot.
- 1st. Each candidate for admission to be proposed by one Member, and seconded by another—the name of the candidate to be written in the Ballot Book, by the proposer, and seconder by themselves, respectively: the ballot to take place between the hours of 9 a.m and 9 p.m. on days to be specified.

- 2nd. No ballot to be voted unless twelve Members actually ballot, and one black ball in six shall exclude.
- 3rd. A list containing the names of the candidates to be balloted for, on each day, shall be put up in the Club room, one week before the day of ballot. Honorary Members may be balloted for the day they are proposed.
- 4th. On the admission of each new Member, the same to be notified to him, with a copy of the Rules of the Club and a request for an order, for the amount of his Entrance and Annual subscription. All subscription, as before required, to be paid in advance into the hands of Messrs. Mackintosh & Co., Treasurers of the Club.
- 5th. No newly elected Member shall be admissible to participate in any of the advantages or privileges of the Club, until he has paid the amount of his entrance and subscription money.
- 6th. If any newly elected Member do not, in compliance with the preceding clause, pay the sum specified within the space of three months, from the day of his admission to the Club, if he be in India, twelve months, if at the Cape of Good Hope, or St. Helena or at any place to the Eastward of the Cape, and eighteen months if in Europe, his name to be erased from the list of Members.
- 7th. The name of every Member failing to pay his annual subscription due on the 1st of March of each year, shall be placed in a conspicuous part of the Club Room, and if the subscription be not paid on or before the 1st June, he shall cease to be a Member of the Club, and his name shall be erased from the books accordingly.
- 8th. No person who has been dismissed from the King's or Company's service, can become a Member of the Club, unless reinstated.
- Rule 7 1st. All the concerns of the Club, and its internal arrangements, to be managed by a Committee, consisting of a President, two(2) Vice-Presidents, and twelve(12) Members, to be elected annually at the General Meeting of the Club to be held on the 1st of March of every year.

- 2nd. The Committee shall hold an ordinary Meeting on the first and third Monday in every month, at 10 o'clock, to transact current business, to audit the accounts, and to confirm the proceedings of the preceding meeting.
- 3rd. Three of the Committee shall form a quorum upon the days of Meeting.
- 4th. Any infraction of the Club Rules shall be taken immediate cognizance of by the Committee, and it shall be considered the duty of the Committee, in case of the occurrence of any circumstance likely to disturb the order and harmony of the Club, to call a General Meeting, giving due notice thereof, and in the events of its being voted at that Meeting, by two thirds of persons present, that the name of any Member or Members be removed from the Club, their subscriptions for the current year shall, in that case, be returned, and he, or they, shall cease to belong to the Club.
- 5th. The Pecuniary concerns of the Club shall be vested in the Committee, who shall have power to adopt such measures regarding its Funds, as may appear most conductive to the interest of the Club.
- 6th. The Committee may call an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Club giving eight days' notice specifying the object of the Meeting, the discussion to that object only; the Committee shall also call a General Meeting on the written requisition of twelve Members.
- 7th. All notices of Extraordinary General Meetings, to be signed by eight of its Members, and put up in the Club Room, for at least eight days previous to the day of Meeting.
- 8th. No New Rule, or alteration of a General Rule to be made without the sanction of a majority of two thirds of an Extraordinary General Meeting, composed of at least twenty Members.
- 9th. If any Rule or Requisition, or alteration of an old Rule be duly proposed at the Annual Meeting on the 1st March, and approved of at the following Meeting on that day of the week, by two thirds of the Members then present, the same shall be considered as adopted by the Club.

10th. No subject that dose not relate to the concerns of the Club, shall be proposed, or brought forward for public discussion, at any Annual or General Meeting.

Rule 8-1st. The Club House to be opened every day for the reception of Members at seven o'clock in the morning, and closed at twelve o'clock at night, after which no Members shall be admitted. Such Members, however, as may then be within the house, are not to be restricted with respect to their departure by this rule.

2nd. No Member shall take away from the Club, on any pretence whatsoever, any Newspaper, Pamphlet, Book, or other article, the property of the Institution, under the penalty of expulsion.

3rd. The Club House will comprise:-

A Coffee Room and Dinning Rooms.

A Reading Room.

A Billiard Room and Card Room; also sleeping apartments for Members arriving at the Presidency, the number etc. to be determined by the Committee.

4th. A house Steward and Accountant to be appointed for the management of the details of the Club at a salary of one hundred and fifty Rupees per mensem.

5th. A Khansamah and other subordinate servants to be appointed, whose salaries and duties respectively will be fixed by the Committee.

6th. The prices of the Wines, and of every other article, shall be regulated by the Committee, and written up in the Dinning and Coffee Rooms.

7th. No provisions cooked in the Club House or Wines or other Liquors, are to be sent out of the house on any pretence whatsoever. Any defect or fault that may be found with a Dinner, is to be written on the back of the bills, and signed by the Member complaining, which bill and fault

will be concidered on settling the weekly accounts; and any inattention or improper conduct on the part of the servants, is to be stated in writing, to be laid before the Committee at their usual Meeting.

8th. All Members are to pay in ready money or by a draft on a house of Agency, their bills, and every expense they incur before they leave the house; the Steward being under the necessity of accounting to the Committee for all money passing through his hands, and having positive orders not to open accounts with any individuals.

9th. Cards, Chess and Billiards, shall be admitted in the Club. The sum played for shall not exceed gold monur points, and no game shall be commenced in the Club House after the hour of twelve at night.

10th. No Member shall, on any account, bring a dog into the Club House.

11th. The Members of the Club are requested from time to time to make known their addresses, or changes of residence, that the same may be entered in to the Club book accordingly.

PART II

THE BENGAL CLUB

(1927-1970)

BY

R. I. MACALPINE, I. F. S. (Retd.)

CALCUTTA

1970



"That noble landmark of Chowringhee". The Club House 1911–1970

PREFACE

The late Sir H.R. Panckridge's history of the first hundred years of the Club republished as part I, it will be agreed makes fascinating reading, recording as it does the origin of the Club, its objects, and the various buildings it occupied until it came to rest at 33 Chowringhee, the erstwhile residence of Sir Thomas Babbington Macaulay. The original building was demolished and new premises commenced in April 1908 and inaugurated in 1909 on the same site. While therfore the Club had perforce to move to a severely truncated part of the original building in 1970, it will nevertheless perhaps be of some consolation for members to know that it has been possible for the Club to continue to function on a site closely associated with the early history of Calcutta – so well depicted by the numerous prints which decorate the Club, one of which incidentally is of the first building occupied by the Club at its founding in 1827—"Gordons Building" on the Esplanade.

Apart from recording many of the interesting events which occurred during the first hundred years of the Club's existence, the author included biographical notes on the Patrons and Presidents of the Club, many of whom were personalities of considerable note, for among them were men who were involved not only in the development of that Calcutta which was to grow into the "second city of the Empire," but even in the 19th century history of India itself.

Unfortunately, he discontinued these notes with the President who occupied the chair in1902, on the plea that at the time he was compiling his history in 1927 the "careers and personal characters" of those Presidents which followed the Hon'ble Sir H. T. Prinsep, I. C. S. "are matters of personal knowledge to many members."

Though the majority of present, even supernumerary, Members could not make a similar claim in respect of past Presidents of as recent as perhaps even fifteen years ago, precedent will not be followed in this "history" mainly because it would involve biographical notes on no fewer than twenty six of them. Further, it would be plainly unjust to omit from honourable mention those excluded in Sir H. R. Panckridge's history and

this would add another seventeen. To do so would tend to convert this record into a somewhat out-of-date "Who's Who".

Apart from this however, there can be no doubt that much of the interest of the former stems from the romance which attended those early days of Calcutta's history and the personalities who were involved therein. That among past Presidents since then there have been men of stature is undeniable – the honours which so many have received for their services to the community, in spheres of Government administration, the justiciary and Commerce are sufficient proof thereof - but by 1927 Calcutta was already an established and even by present standards, a modern city, and their activities thus do not enjoy the glamorous setting which old history inevitably brings in its train. The fact that the Club continued to maintain its proud position as the premier Club of Calcutta is a monument in itself to them, for it was due to their wise guidance of Club affairs during periods of great difficulty, particularly during recent times, that has made it possible for the Club to survive and enter on a new lease of life, one which it is hoped will lead to yet another centenary celebration in 2027.

Sir H. R. Panckridge's history concludes with a description of the Centenary Celebrations and it is from there that the story is taken up. It will end with the conclusion of the transfer to Russell Street, a few weeks after a "Dinner Dance" on the occasion of relinquishing the premises at "33 Chowringhee" on the 21st February 1970 – the last function to be held there.

It may however be wise to recapitulate a little, for during the period under review great events of importance occured which had an enormous impact not only on the fortunes of the Club but also in many respects its character, namely the War, and shortly after, Indian Independence.

In particular we would refer to Sir H.R. Panckridge's opening remarks wherein he points out that "The Club" is essentially a British Institution and in those early days the Bengal Club and its only slightly younger sister the Bengal United Service Club were typical representatives of

such. By 1927 however, other clubs had sprung into existance, and though not fully residential as in the case of these two, they nevertheless provided facilities for their members to indulge in those social activities which form the way of life of the British expatriate but they were not confined to Britons alone, for expatriates of other nationalities formed their own associations, but what was more important for the future of this form of social activity, Indian nationals had also adopted, and adapted themselves to Club life and there is now a number of thriving clubs in Calcutta of mixed nationalities.

It will be pertinent to note however that the Bengal Club until comparatively recent times has always been a "Burra Sahibs" Club and by consent its members were drawn only from senior executives of Commercial firms and up to Independence, officers of Government Services—those successors to the original founding members, the "Servants of the Company".

This accent on seniority inevitably imposed a somewhat stately and ponderous if not pompous atmosphere, one which was well depicted during the War by a comment from an American Service visitor — "it's a Dook's Palace and the Dook's lying dead upstairs," and its variant the American Colonel on viewing the Reading Room after lunch—"won'erful, just won'erful but in the States we bury our dead."

Independence led immediately to an exodus of the Services element of active members and this together with subsequent comparatively rapid wasting out of senior European executives of commercial firms led to a considerably reduced membership with its impact on the fortunes of the Club, particularly in respect of occupation of chambers. Membership further was, again by consent, restricted to Europeans, a restriction that was not removed till 1959. By 1970 Town and Mofussil membership had dropped to 293 from 357 as at 31st September 1959.

It was therefore inevitable that by 1970 there were few old "Quoi Hais" among active members left in Calcutta. Fortunately however there was one, Dr. Frank McCay, to whom the writer could turn in his search for information. He was of 1934 vintage and had become a hardy perennial on Committees before and after his term as President in 1954-55 and

was thus able to fill not only the gaps, but also to correct what turned out to be erroneous statements based on very inadequate records in the proceedings of Committee.

The writer gratefully acknowledges the assistance he has rendered.

Incidentally it is to Dr. McCay that credit must be given for introducing ladies into the inner fastnesses of the Club, for it was during his reign that the barriers were broken.

Above all however he hereby pays tribute to Mr. C. M. Keddie, also an ex-President (1945), for providing him with a wealth of material without which this part of the history would never have been written, for the writer ploughing his way through masses of extremely pedestrian records from 1928 onwards, (with ever increasing despondency), eventually in 1953 came across a minute referring to a history which Mr. Keddie had compiled from where Sir H. R. Panckridge had left off. After a frenetic search among the archives the draft thereof came to light although the then Pandits had rejected it for publication as being "too uninteresting" in spite of subsequent attempts by an "Editorial Board" to revise it.

Perhaps this is a case where distance has lent enchantment to the view, but to the writer it was a godsend for it provided him with just that material he required, details of interesting incidents and activities never included in official records, but which form such an important element of Club life and the personalities who took part in them.

Mr. Keddie's efforts have happily thus in the event not proved in vain.

And last, but not least, the writer's thanks to Mr. M. G. Satow for donating the photographs which have provided the illustrations of the now completely demolished old Club House on Chowringhee.

The "history" since 1927 appropriately falls into three periods, for each exerted its own impact on both the activities and fortunes of the Club, namely pre-War 1927-1939, the War years up to the transfer of power to

India in 1947 and the post-Independence era to the time of the Club's removal to its new premises.

As in the final analysis it was failing finance that caused the abandonment of the stately Chowringhee Block, and as the Club's fortunes in this respect had been a recurring headache throughout the period, this is discussed in a separate chapter.

Calcutta, November 1971

R. I. MACALPINE



The Central Cupola

The Hall Porter



The Entrance Hall



"I dreamed I dwelt in Marble Halls"-



"A multiplicity of steps & Stairways"

CHAPTER I

PRE-WAR 1927-1939

The lack of interesting items in the records suggest that for some five or six years after the Centenary Celebrations the Club settled down to the even tenor of its way – perhaps members were recovering from the shock of the first intrusion of the gentler sex into its hitherto sacred monastic fastnesses. To at least one member then present the memory thereof lasted for many years, as we shall see later, when a move was made to provide "further amenities for the ladies."

There occurred in 1927 however one important event, namely the purchase on behalf of the Club. of No. 34 Chowringhee, the property adjoining the Club to the south and extending from Chowringhee to Russell Street.

It came to the notice of the management that the owners of No.2 Russell Street were interested in its purchase with a view to constructing a block of residential buildings thereon and it was apprehended that such would severely interfere with the amenities of members, in particular the access of those south winds, which, during the hot weather, provided such welcome relief to a population sweltering in insufferable heat. But to achieve this somewhat altruistic object finances were required and there were none available from Club funds. However thanks to the generosity of Messrs. Jardine Skinner & Co., who were then lessees of the property (and among whose senior executives one suspects there were members of the Club), the property was purchased on its behalf on very favourable terms for Rs. 2,37,000.

To amortize the purchase members' subscription were raised and it was estimated that in 1934, when Messrs. Jardine Skinner's lease terminated, the property would stand in the Club's books at a valuation of Rs. 1,00,000. It was to be a very valuable asset later as its sale provided very much needed funds at a time the Club's fortunes were far from happy.

In the meantime, however, it was decided to lease it as flats and

quarters to members.

Another property, also adjoining the Club, No. 2 Russell Street, came up for sale about the same time but the offer was refused.

In this connection it should perhaps be mentioned that in 1924, after protracted negotiations, six double and two single chambers had been acquired on lease by the Club for occupation by members in what was then known as Galstaun Mansions, later renamed Queens Mansions in honour of Queen Elizabeth II's Coronation in 1953.

By 1929 considerable building activity had been occuring in and around Calcutta, and the demand for residential accommodation in the Club had been reduced materially and the Galstaun Mansion Chambers remained largely unoccupied. Accordingly it was decided to offer vacant chambers in Galstaun Mansions to non-members if possible. While no details are available it would appear from the records of the Annual General Meeting of 1928-29 that this proved a wise decision for apparently a profit was then shown thereon for the first time but this was evidently not to continue and as the years progressed, difficulties in filling them increased and the lease was terminated on 1st January, 1934.

Incidentally it was in Galstaun Mansions that "Heincke's Kitchen" was located and which catered for outside meals. To quote Mr. C. M. Keddie "very good they were but the subsequent discovery of the connection of the Assistant Steward with the "Kitchen" not only caused a considerable furore but provided an explanation for the heavy losses on the Coffee Room account and a vacancy on the Club Staff."

Considerable improvements were effected on No. 34 Chowringhee and the first and second floors converted into five dormitory bedrooms. There is again no record by whom or for what periods these rooms were occupied but it would appear the whole building was leased eventually to Col. Shorten, I. M. S. (Retd.) and Dr. Fetherstonhaugh. In 1934 the disastrous Bihar earthquake occured, resulting in considerable damage to the building, necessitating extensive repairs and some easement to the tenants. Three years later in discussions on the future of No. 34 a number of

members were in favour of demolishing the building and incorporating the land with the Club Garden and providing tennis courts, but the plan was rejected for lack of funds and it remained in occupation by the lessees till well after the War.

Dr. Fetherstonhaugh was the first of his profession to become President, in 1947.

As far as the Club premises itself were concerned, much was required to be, and much was done, during the period under review in connection with improvements not only to the public rooms but also to chambers. Funds however were always a limiting factor for, with the increased availability of outside accommodation many members were now "living out" with the resulting impact on the Club's finances in respect of revenue from "Chambers" as also catering, costs of which in any case were rapidly increasing.

The building itself, constructed between 1908 and 1911, was an imposing edifice built, as was then the fashion, on grandiose lines with high ceilinged rooms, highly ornamented – all very appropriate to the position the members held in society, but costs, even of ordinary maintenance let alone much needed improvements to attract custom, were correspondingly high.

At this point it will perhaps be of interest to comment on the somewhat extraordinary architectural features of the old building. The magnificent, solid looking main Chowringhee Block nevertheless hid a number of curious eccentricities apparently as a result of the "add-a-bit" method of construction adopted. Every floor seemed to have several levels necessitating an astonishing multiplicity of steps and stairways, the ceiling of the Reading Room had several forms of girder work, and the roof of the Coffee Room was, to say the least of it, unique in design.

The East wing to Russell Street does not appear to have been joined to the main block except by a bridge connection with the verandah. But above all it would appear that it was only after plans had been approved and the building was nearing completion that it was discovered there was

no stair way to the first floor – the magnificent marble staircase at the back of the Hall being an after thought. All these little eccentricities not only added to the maintenance costs but also necessitated considerable manipulation when reconstruction works of improvement had to be undertaken. Strangest of all perhaps were the motifs which ornamented the capitals of the pillars in a number of places, notably at the entrance of the Coffee Room, for many of them were alleged to represent the badge of the National Cyclists Union of Great Britain. History does not record who was responsible and it can only be presumed that some member of the Committee had nostalgic memories of his early youth! The Club crest—the "King Cobra" – was subsequently added to most of them.

Successive Committees acted cautiously and wisely to make improvements. In 1929 what proved to be a very welcome amenity for the remainder of its time, the Stewards Room in the East Block was converted into the small Guest Room and further a Cold Storage Room was constructed. Furniture and fittings throughout were improved.

As if there were not enough to cope with, two years later the state of the roofs of various sections and wings started to give trouble and resident members in the top floor were put to considerable inconvenience. Wide differences of opinion appeared to have occurred among "experts" as to what should be done, how long the present roof would last with only temporary patching and so on. Like Omar Khayyam the Committee for some time frequented Doctor and Saint and heard great argument about it but ever more came out by that same door as in it went. Decision were finally arrived at and a five-year plan of repairs was put into operation in 1932. This contretemps with leaky roofs appears to have stung the Committee two years later into action to remove another apparently long standing inconvenience, water pouring into the Lounge downstairs whenever it rained. Closing the gap between the Card Room Bar and the Lounge effectively dealt with this.

Next year another conversion was effected, that of the "Silent Room" into "The Small Dining Room." The Silent Room as its name implies was a Reading and Writing Room in which silence had to be observed. It can be imagined that there must have been considerable, if unvoiced, objec-

tion to this move among post-prandial "nappers" but it was welcomed by those who either were overflows from the main Dinning Room or who required meals outside regular hours. It was the first move for a break in tradition and towards what became later known as the "Dirty Dining Room" where formal dress was not required.

The next item to be tackled was the Club Garden which came under extensive alterations and which included the shifting of the main drive to the south, thus providing the spacious arbour which provided the venue of so many happy entertainments during the cold weather months. Guest Rooms were redecorated and furnished also this year but twoyears later considerable activity occurred with a view to popularising the Club, for concern was being felt over the alarming falling off in membership. Bedrooms were taken in hand, the Small Guest Room floor relaid with marble, and furniture replaced, and the Large Guest Room stripped and redecorated. During this process it was discovered that a fire-place and flue had once existed in the north wall, presumably a relic of the original Macaulay residence. What it served remains a mystery however.

The roof of the Coffee Room and Hall was still giving trouble and had to be completely renewed. An early monsoon caught the contractors napping and considerable ingenuity was exercised by the Staff and Members to cope with the situation, every form of receptacle (except perhaps one) being employed to deal with the torrents of water which poured down the back staircase and into the Coffee Room.

Thus, though by 1939 the Club generally had received an appreciable face-lift, as we shall see later, this way by no means the end as it was essential progressively to match the facilities the Club was in a position to offer with those available elsewhere, particularly perhaps in respect of residential accommodation and "The Table" which latter had for many years maintained a very high standard.

So much then for generalities, but among the various activities there is a number worthy of record. They were not altogether confined to its immediate premises, for in 1928 was instituted an annual Golf match played at Tollygunge Club – the "Duds Handicap" confined to players with a

handicap of 18 or over, for which there was a handsome cup for the winner and a trophy depicting a lamplighter climbing up his ladder to light a lamp for the runner up. These matches were discontinued during the war, resuscitated for a period thereafter but then lapsed.

Members will no doubt have admired the numerous portraits, prints and other works of art which adorn the Club. Many of these were acquired during this period.

That of the Right Hon'ble Sir Charles Metcalfe, Bart., G. C. B., President from 1827 to 1837 was presented by Sir A. R. Murray, C. B. E., and that of General Sir James Outram, G.C.B., President in 1860 and 1861, by Mr. O.S. Martin.

In 1934 a set of nineteen pictures, (variously described as "sketches" or "paintings" in Committee Minutes) was donated to the Club by the Hon'ble Sir H. T. Prinsep, I. C. S., President from 1899 to 1902. As Mr. Keddie puts it, "their custody seems to have proved onerous," for after adorning the walls of the Large Guest Room for about a year only, with the donor's permission they were offered and accepted on loan by the Trustees of the Victoria Memorial, eventually to be gifted outright to them.

The bronze bust of King George V was appropriately presented in 1935, the year of his Silver Jubilee, by Mr. F. S. Harrison. In the same year the colourful portrait of Sir Edward Ryan, Bart., an original member of the Club was presented by his grandson, Brig. C. M. Ryan, C.M.G., D.S.O., C.B.E.

In 1936 the large Burmese gong employed as a tocsin to call members to dinner was donated by Mr. R. Ellis.

1938 saw another most attractive gift, the set of "Tiffin Club" pig sticking coloured prints presented by Sir George Campbell, which, with those of Bengal Army Officers purchased from the Parker Galleries in London, now grace the Nagraj Bar.

In 1939 came a Clock for the Reading Room from Mr. C.E.L. Milne Robertson.

Finally, photos of H.M.S. Effingham and H.M.S. Hawkins were presented by their officers in recognition of the hospitality extended to them by the Club during their visits to Calcutta in 1938.

No record would be complete without mention of those stalwarts in whose hands lay the responsibility for ensuring the physical, spiritual and gastronomic comfort of the members — Secretaries and Stewards who from time to time held office during the period. It opened with Col. A.L.Barrett, D.S.O., in charge as Secretary. He was to leave in 1928 after only two years in office but he has a place in history in the annals of the Indian Army in that during the First World War he raised the Bengal Battalion. Sporting a large dark beard he was a popular character and known as "Boomer Barrett" because of his deep resounding voice. It is not known whether he sported the former attribute during his military service, but, it alone would have been sufficient to instil the fear of God into his troops!

He was succeeded by Col.H. de L. Ferguson, an enthusiastic race goer, and who, it is said, was a walking "who's who" of members of high society. He resigned in 1931 to be followed (after a term as Managing Member), by Mr. P.B. Warburton who held the post till early 1934. Again a Managing Member, Mr. J.A.S. Walford, acted until the appointment of Mr. F.S. Cubbitt, M.C. in December 1934 a post the latter was to hold for the next fifteen years.

In April the following year the Committee decided to advertise for a Steward. It declared a preference for a British national but added the rider that should a suitable one not be found, a "Continental" would be sought. Apparently no such British candidate was available and the choice fell on a Mr. U. Ressia, an Italian restaurateur from "Peletis" and what a fortunate choice it was. We shall hear more of Mr. Ressia later for he was to serve in that office for the next 30 years. He obligingly salved the consciences of the Members of Committee by adopting British nationality in the year following his appointment, thereby avoiding internment during the war.

This, as far as Club affairs are concerned, naturally brings this epoch to an end but the reader will it is hoped have gained the impression,

rightly that apart from temporary inconveniences to members over leaky roofs and fortunately very occasional intrusions by the gentler sex, the Club was a haven of repose and tranquility conducted with that decorum appropriate to "Burra Sahibs". While this was undoubtedly so, the same could not be said of conditions outside, for civil unrest was rife, gaining momentum as the years progressed to such an extent that it was found necessary to employ an Armed Guard located in the Entrance Hall. It will be recalled that members included many Senior Government servants. While hitherto the target of extremists had been confined mainly to this class of the British community, by 1931 there was a threat to all. Happily however no "incidents" occured within the confines of the Club premises and the Armed Guard was subsequently appointed as Caretaker and Supervisor.

It had always been the tradition to offer entertainment to illustrious members of the community as also to distinguished visitors.

One highlight of such was the visit of the Simon Statutory Commission in 1929, the members of which were entertained to dinner by the Committee. An interesting feature of the table arrangements was the seating of one member of the Commission with one member of the Committee at each of the seven separat tables and there can be no doubt that the opportunity was taken for members to express not only their own views but those of their fellows in Government service who were obviously interested in what would be the outcome of the Commission's deliberations.

While probably incomplete, there are records of Viceroys being dined and wined as guest of the Club during their visits to Calcutta – His Excellency Lord Irwin, Earl of Halifax, the Earl of Willingdon, just prior to his retirement, and the Marquis of Linlithgow are all mentioned.

Governors of Bengal also figure in the list. In 1937 Sir John Anderson attended the Silver Jubilee Celebration as the guest of honour and later dined with the Committee on relinquishing office. In the same year Sir Robert Neil Reid, a member of long standing in the Club, was appointed Governor of Assam. He was then the retiring President and the

honour thus conferred on him was a source of considerable gratification to his fellow members. The dinner given in his honour was a very special occasion. Lord Brabourne on assuming office in 1937 was similarly entertained. His sudden and tragic death in 1939 was a sad blow as he had elected to become a Permanent Member and made frequent use of the Club. His successor Sir John Woodhead was officially lunched at the Club—another special occasion as he too was an old member. He too was a frequent visitor.

The Guest Rooms were often used for Old Boys Association reunions. These were not always conducted with the decorum to which members were used and demanded and there are records of indignant protests about the "inconvenience" casued thereby. Under the bye laws music was not permitted in the Club, except on those grand occasions where an orchestra played restrained music in the minstrels gallery, and while perhaps a legal mind could have challenged the reproof conveyed by the Committee to a particular Old Boys Association in that the cacophany of sound that emanated on two occasions could not under any circumstances be termed music, it was accepted, as also was the fine imposed for damage done! It would be invidious perhaps to name this Association but a clue lies in the fact that part of the damage was done to wall! Incidentally in relation to music, the Committee was adamant for a number of years against members even having radios in their rooms. It eventually however relented in 1939 and sanctioned the installation of a Philips Radio in the Reading Room – a facility that was to be of enormous value during the war.

No record of the social activities which were a feature of Club life would be complete without mention of the "Friday Lunches" when members and their Guests thronged into the Club to partake of a leisurely lunch with of course the essential accompaniment of pre-and post-prandial spiritual comfort. To some extent they were business entertainments but were a tradition almost as old as the Club itself, for Trevelyan in his memoirs refers to how his uncle, Macaulay, and his associates would meet regularly every Friday for breakfast to discuss, no doubt over appropriate libations, affairs of state into a late hour in the afternoon until stricken by conscience over the thought of pending files they one by one dispersed to

their respective offices, which tradition it may be noted has not in any respect been departed from even to this day!

In Europe while wars and threats of war had become the pattern of events from the mid-thirties onwards, to those expatriates in India the increased tempo of civil unrest was of greater immediate concern. True the Munich crisis increased tension to a high pitch, but this as elsewhere was allayed by that promise of "Peace in our time".

During all these alarms and excursions the Club remained a haven of tranquility wherein Members could relax and if not forget, at least put aside for a brief moment, thoughts of the turmoil which raged around them in the outside world.

CHAPTER II

THE WAR YEARS AND INDEPENDENCE 1939-1947

September 3rd 1939 saw the outbreak of World War II but it was not until the relative calm of the "phoney" War in Europe had been rudely shattered and the Mediterranean virtually closed by the fall of Crete, was there any real impact on the even tenor of the Club's activities.

The Committee however had not been unaware of the possible repercussions arising from the War and the likelihood that employees in the Auxiliary Forces in India might be called up, for there is a record of a decision guaranteeing that in such cases they would not suffer financially. It will be recalled that prior to the outbreak of hostilities Officers of ships of the Royal Navy visiting Calcutta had been offered facilities at the Club. Now came a request from the Senior Naval Officer to put this on a firmer basis and Bye Laws were altered to afford them Honorary Membership on more favourable terms than hitherto. This was a pointer to the future for later large numbers of all the Services including those of the United States of America, were to pour into the Club bringing as we shall see later, considerable complications in respect of housing and feeding not only this large influx but also a greatly increased number of ordinary members.

Thus while at the end of 1939 chambers were only 40% occupied and the President at the Annual-General Meeting commenting on the year's working had drawn a somewhat gloomy picture in that membership had fallen during the past ten years from 992 to 785. By the end of 1940 chambers began to fill up largely because by now considerable difficulties over passages to the U.K.were being experienced and Home Leave virtually suspended. As an incentive consolidated rates for resident members had been introduced and this too had been instrumental in filling up chambers. Town membership by 1940 had increased by 133 over the previous year and all in all the Club was now prospering.

As far as domestic affairs are concerned, the fate of No. 34 Chowringhee once again came up for consideration. One member apparently revived the previous suggestion of demolishing it and providing tennis courts but with the interesting addition that a small Bibi Khana should be constructed there on! Whether this was foresight and intended to counter the possibility that in future the monasterial sanctity of the Club would be invaded by the gentler sex, or whether it was a genuine desire to introduce a less austere and certainly more decorative atmosphere than that provided by members, is not on record. Whatever may have been his intention no decision was taken and no Bibi Khana built, largely however because the cost would have been prohibitive and the lease, (originally to be terminated on 31st March, 1941), was extended for a year but there is now mention in the Minutes that an offer for the premises had been received from a "private party".

Considerable progress had been made in refurbishing Chambers but some forty remained to be done. The War put an end to these activities.

1941 saw the first rumblings on the question of "dress". It had been a firm tradition that formal dress should be worn in all public rooms, a tradition that was to be progressively relaxed as the years passed. It started with a request in March from Headquarters Presidency and Assam District that Officers should be permitted to wear "shirt sleeves". This was first refused but later the Committee relented, relaxing the regulations to the extent that they would be permitted to wear shorts and shirt sleeves in the Dinning Room, and adjacent lounge during day time but not for dinner. A further relaxation was the introduction of what was known as the "Dirty Dinning Room"—the old small Dining Room where Members could dine in informal dress. To provide a lounge for them, (one suspects with the ulterior motive of completely segregating them from the elite) a billiard table was removed from the Billiard Room. It would appear that this innovation was resented by some members but enthusiastically welcomed by others, particularly those, who attending to spiritual comforts elsewhere, were too late to change into formal dress. The Secretary was enjoined however to ensure that "Dirty Dinners" were not excessively dirty and on several occasions he had to wage a wordy battle thereon, the most notable one of which was with an Engineer employed on the construction of the Howrah Bridge who appeared in shorts, a vest, and boots much to the surprise, it may be assumed, of others at table!

By and large up to this time this was the only long established tradition that had been departed from unless is included the voluntarily agreed to restriction on choice of food and the issue of Scotch and Gin as a gesture in the light of the rigorous conditions prevailing in the Home Country. It is certain that none then anticipated that even more severe restrictions would be imposed on them by subsequent events.

December 1941 saw the treacherous attack by Japan on Pearl Harbour but with the fall of Malaya and Singapore and the subsequent rapid advance of the Japanese into Burma the whole atmosphere changed and the War became real and earnest.

Even before this, in mid-1941, Air Raid precautions had been put into operation but as far as the Club was concerned they had been limited to the provision of fire fighting equipment and the blacking out of the premises. Now blast walls were provided and vast areas of glass replaced by plywood and wire netting and fire fighting squads trained under the able direction of the Steward, Mr. Ressia. So satisfied were the authorities with these arrangements that the Ground Floor was declared a Public Air Raid Shelter and No. 34 Chowringhee a Medical and Surgical Aid post. History does not record whether they were ever employed as such, or if so, how the Committee dealt under the Articles of Association with the influx of non-members.

Partly as a result of uneasiness but probably more so because Hotels and other similar institutions were paying highly inflated wages much in excess of what the Club could afford, thirty-three employees left in spite of an increase in pay. With the fall of Singapore and the lightning advance of the Japanese into Burma another sixty defected in March-April and could only partially be replaced. Now more fuel was added to the fire by air raids on Calcutta in December 1942 when seventeen more deserted among the estimated exodus of six hundred thousand residents who at least were evidently bent on quitting Calcutta if not India! Though half subsequently withdrew their notices, staff became a continual problem thereaf-

ter. As an incentive against further desertions a "siren" allowance was instituted to be paid to all who turned up during an air raid and in addition compensation of one year's pay in the case of injury (as sick leave), or to relative in the case of death. This was over and above what had been arranged under a Government scheme.

Food shortages, already considerable, had been exacerbated by the disastrous cyclone in the Midnapore District in September 1942 and costs were mounting rapidly further to add to the burden of financing the Club.

The threat to the eastern region of India had now become so great that it was considered prudent to make provision for safeguarding important records and valuables. The Staff Provident Fund Accounts were dispersed and copies sent to Bihar. The oil paintings were dispatched also to Bihar for custody by a member, Mr. Ivan Parr, the better prints packed in a hermetically sealed box and placed in the custody of Victoria Memorial, and the various cups sent to the United Service Club in Simla. Precautions, as it happily turned out, were not in the event finally necessary. It may be mentioned here that all these treasures were restored at the conclusion of hostilities. A silver flower bowl originally presented by the Club to the United Service Club in Simla in recognition of its kind services was later returned by that Club when it had to be wound up.

The exodus from Calcutta was by now however being largely compensated for by the influx of the Army, Navy and Air Force. Calcutta had been transformed. The maidan was invested by troops against a possible parachute landing; avenue trees along Mayo Road were used as hangars and those along Red Road felled to provide a landing strip for fighters, (an interesting obstacle incidentally to landing and on occasion taking off, being the steeple of St. Andrew's Church which lay directly in the flight path). The Hooghly under the "denial scheme" was divested off all craft, including country boats Except those on military or naval service. Premises of all sorts were being requisitioned here, there and everywhere to house headquarters of rapidly expanding Military, Naval, and Air Force formations in and around Calcutta, and Station Staff Officers and their counter parts in the other services were being hard put to it to find accommodation not only for their own officers but also those of forward units, for by now

Calcutta was becoming the base for supplying those formations stationed to the East.

The offer of Honorary Service Membership was avidly accepted by the authorities and soon the Club presented an animated spectacle with as many as from thirty to forty joining the queue in the bread line at meal times! While under the Articles of Association such membership was limited to officers of rank of Lieutenant Colonel (or equivalent) and above this qualification had not been strictly observed by sponsors and by the end of 1942 service membership had amounted to 381, among whom was a number of much less exalted rank. Pressure increased as the services expanded, until by January 1944 honorary membership had reached twelve hundred. While this figure does not represent a true picture in that many were birds of passage who failed to notify permanent departure or resign, things were coming to such as pass by the end of 1942 in respect of accommodation and feeding a large population that members were requested to be more discriminatory in sponsoring service membership and to limit them to those of rank of Major or above, exceptions however being made to permit entry of officers of more lowly rank but of "seniority" in their normal spheres of activity, and of relations of Permanent Members, for which latter class the Committee did not attempt to define any permissible degree of consanguinity!

The rank qualification was later again upgraded to Lieutenant Colonel and above and led to some curious incidents, for instance a very senior member of the Club in the uniform of a private in the Auxiliary Force (India) being severely ticked off by a subaltern for daring to come in to a place reserved for his superiors, and another who was refused permission to enter by the Goorkha darwans!

Rationing had been introduced in 1943 and the Club's quota took no account of the greatly inflated and variable numbers of members who required meals at any time. Early in 1944 therefore the Committee had regretfully to announce suspension of further military membership. This had an immediate effect and through wastage of existing members and in spite of continuing rationing difficulties it was possible to raise the ban early in 1944 but with the restriction that it should henceforth be confined to officers on leave from the forward areas only and that membership would

lapse on their leaving the Club or Calcutta. It will be of interest to note that by now members of the United States Services were also joining, adding further confusion, at least initially with their totally different badges of rank, for those whose duty it was to segregate the sheep from the goats!

Restrictions were also imposed on entertainment of guests of military members – they would now have to reside at least fifty miles from Calcutta. For reasons that may perhaps best be presumed the Committee had hastily to issue a rider to this rule to the effect that it applied to members of the gentler sex as well as men!

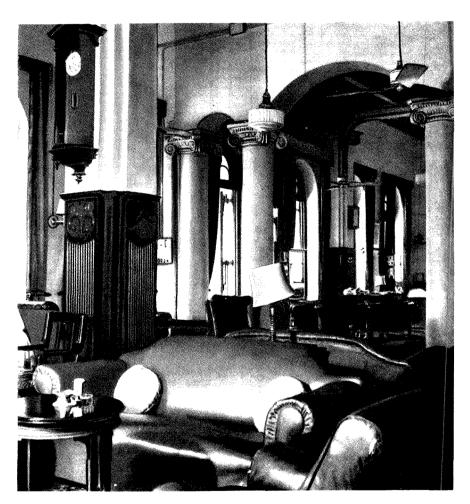
A number of dormitory rooms had already been reserved for service members but as permanent mofussil members were also clamouring for accommodation the two small Guest Rooms were converted into dormitories, three to a room. These were used on nearly four thousand occasions during 1943 alone.

With the turning of the tide in the war situation on the North East Frontier, bigger and better military formations were arriving in Calcutta and in November an application was received from one for military membership for no fewer than one hundred and thirty Officers of eligible rank, and so it went on until the end of the war with Japan on 15th August, 1945, after which like old soldiers, many faded away.

It is indeed unfortunate that no record was kept of the large numbers of illustrious members of the Forces, including those from the United States, who availed themselves of the facilities the Club offered during the war years but it can be reasonably assumed that they included such now historical personages as Mountbatten, Gifford, Auchinleck, O'Connor, Smith, Leese, Carton de Wiart and etc. The writer, during a rather curious interlude in 1942 can vouch for at least one of them – Field Marshall Sir William Slim, then a Corps Commander who, after a conference invited him to lunch at the Club. He had fortunately by this time attained the (minimum) qualifying rank to obviate being refused entry, but even without, the party consisted of so much red tabs and brass he is convinced no one would have dared to do so. One famous name that is on record is Air Marshall Sir John Baldwin, K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., who visited the Club to



Approach to The Reynolds Room



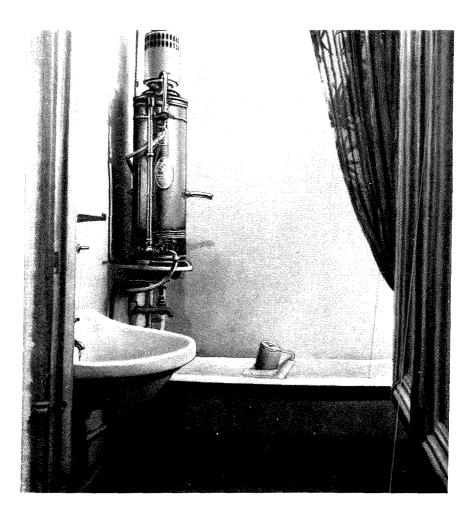
The Reading Room



The Dining Room



The Coffee Room Verandah



One of the Club's old Geysers

give an informal talk to members, which was much appreciated.

There is also no complete record of the decorations and honours won by members during the war but there is mention of the award of the George Medal to Mr. Gyles Mackrell, D. F. C. for his services during the evacuation of Burma in 1942. Mr. Harold Roper who afterwards received a Knighthood, was awarded a C.B.E. for his part in the same episode.

The tradition of offering entertainment to Viceroys on their visits to Calcutta was continued, as also to Governors of Bengal. Lord Linlithgow, as Viceroy, dined in the Club shortly after Pearl Harbour and in a memorable speech outlined the dangers ahead but there is no record of acceptance of similar invitations issued to his successor Lord Wavell in 1943 and 1944.

The death of Sir John Herbert, Governor of Bengal in 1943 was yet another sad blow, for he had joined as a permanent member and had also made extensive use of the facilities of the Club during his term of office. There is no record of acceptance by his successor Sir Richard Casey of an invitation to dinner, but he often lunched at the Club.

While the end of the war with Japan resulted in some reduction of the pressures on accommodating and catering for a greatly increased and largely peripatetic Service membership, problems were by no means over, particularly in respect of the latter. There was still a shortage of food with a consequent rise in prices and this was hitting the Club employees badly. Some relief in the way of increases in pay and allowances were given, but this was not considered by them to be adequate and in May 1946 they aired their grievances in a petition. Some further relief was granted and scales of pay revised. Plans for improving their quarters and living conditions were also drawn up but there can be little doubt that outside influences had been at work to stir up dissatisfaction – all part and parcel of the anti-British civil unrest which had gained momentum by the failure of the Cripp's mission in 1942 and the "Quit India" movement.

The unrest culminated in a strike by some of the menial staff early in 1947. An extract from the Chairman's speech at the Annual General

Meeting paints as good a picture as any of how this situation was dealt with—"In common with every class of labour on whom high prices and severe shortages have pressed heavily, the staff agitated for better terms of service and your Committee had met their request generously. The lightning strike of the menials in February therefore came to me as a shock and a disappointment. I still feel sure a great majority of the staff were loyal but were ill-advised, misled and even intimidated. With the course of the strike and it's settlement you have been kept informed.

A word of thanks to you Members (and particularly those resident in the Club, whose personal servants stood by so loyally) is due for your good-humoured support - tacit and practical - not forgetting the amateur malis and sweepers. Not that the efforts in the Lower Hall on Sunday morning call for any favourable mention, but the sterling work in the dusk in the compound with a soft broom by Mr. Justice Hindley received my admiring commendation. The bar squads have also to be thanked particularly the one that not only wrote out the bar chits, but also signed them, an innovation rapturously received. I wish to make special mention of our outside supervisor, Mr. Smith, who allotted to himself an extremely necessary if not unpleasant job which, if it had not been carried out might have had serious consequences to the health of the members. There are a lot of outside volunteers to be thanked including the Steward's daughter and the Secretary's two lady assistants who set to with a will and dusters to help keep the public rooms presentable. Even the clerical staff joined in and kept their office in good trim."

The food shortage also had an effect on members, restrictions having had to be placed on the number of courses provided at meals and parties in the Guest Rooms were limited to a maximum of twenty-five, all of which had an adverse effect on the Coffee Room accounts.

More trouble however was to come for towards the end of 1946 Government promulgated "The Bengal restriction on Meals in Establishments Order" which applied to Clubs as well as hotels, restaurants and similar establishments — a blanket order fixing the maximum prices that could be charged for meals. No discrimination was made between any hole-in-the-wall eating house and respectable establishments. The cost

of providing meals at the Club was already in excess of the limit set by this order but in spit of representations no relaxation was permitted and losses on the Coffee Room continued to mount.

The end of the war removed, for a few years at least, a source of continual headaches for the Committee, namely supplies of liquor and in particular those two main lubricants to keep the wheels moving—"Scotch and Gin".

It was obvious by the end of 1941 that supplies of these and other similar commodities would become precarious and no more shipments from the U.K., could be expected, a warning note to this effect having being sounded in January 1942.

Thereafter Committee Minutes are replete with anguished appraisals of the whisky situation but nothing could be done except to impose restrictions. The half-peg was reduced to a third; times at which liquor could be served were curtailed; honorary and military members were not allowed to introduce guests, and supplies from the cellar to members were discontinued. While initially these restrictions applied only to Scotch they had eventually to be imposed on Madeira and Sherry and even Gin although by now an indigenous brand was available.

There was one shipment of Scotch on the way by the *Clan Colquohon* and never perhaps has the progress of any ship been more eagerly followed through her diversions en route to Calcutta. Her arrival was greeted with open mouths for it eased the situation for Christmas in 1943. Some slight improvement in stocks in the following year permitted the issue of limited quantities from the cellar.

Of all people, the Police, towards the end of 1944, were responsible for a windfall. A considerable quantity of illicit Scotch seized in a raid was offered to (and eagerly accepted by) the Club on one condition, that it should not be sold at more than Rs. 14/8 a bottle! In a fit of generosity the Committee decided to allot this to up-country members but this decision was the cause of some animated discussion on how it was to be delivered to them. One member opined that if it were sent by normal

public transport it might never reach its destination. Another however countered with the argument that if it was held for members to collect in Calcutta it was more than probable the same thing would happen. It is not on record how this problem was eventually resolved but it may be assumed that when and whenever it was in the event consumed, it was greatly appreciated by those Mofussilities who, far removed from regular and scanty sources of the real McKoy, had been constrained to imbibe all sorts of lethal brews in lieu thereof. Anyone reading the Minutes of Committee and the annual reports might be led to the conclusion that liquor supplies formed the main concern of members in spite of the worldshaking events which were occurring about them, but to the "Management" at least this concern was justifiable for with the Coffee Room showing ever increasing losses, it was important to ensure that the "Bar" the main alternative source of profit, was well patronised, and this could only be done by ensuring that liquor even if rationed was made available to all who used the Club.

As far as Club premises were concerned, the work on re-furbishing and generally improving quarters which had been initiated prior to the war and which had to be suspended during the war largely on account of the lack of the necessary materials, was resumed. Apart from the backlog of ordinary maintenance, much in the way of replacement to put the Club into proper shape had now also become necessary.

In 1946 action was initiated to provide gates to the entrances, an innovation that was to prove of enormous value during the tragic communal riots of October.

In the 1947 Annual General Meeting the Chairman listed seventeen major items considered necessary, estimated at Rs. 10 lakhs. Priority was given to reconstruction of Servants' Quarters and a new "Dhobikhana" but it was to be a long time before they were ready for occupation.

Of interest in the light of subsequent events and almost with prophetic vision, at this 1947 Annual General Meeting were the President's comments on what he and some members of the Committee opined on the

future of the Club, as follows:-

"Some of us these last two years have had great doubts about the advisability of putting such a large sum into the present building for it is an anachronism and is ill-conceived and constructed for modern conditions of Club life. My opinion is that the building should be scrapped and a modern air-conditioned one substituted, which on a smaller superficial area and with no greater elevation, would give us equal living accommodation and far greater amenities for town as well as resident members than the present building.

Your Committee has gone so far as to consider other sites on which to build but no proposition has been found satisfactory."

He concluded "Here is our problem Gentlemen -

We have a magnificent site.

We have a sentimental affection for this building.

It is uneconomical to work.

It needs large sums of money into it to bring it to present day requirements.

Many think it is chucking good money into bad.

There is difficulty in getting material for new construction but that will pass.

To build on the site means tremendous inconvenience to us all.

Yet new servants' quarters have to be built. Finally there is June 1948."

This reference to June 1948 perhaps requires a word of explanation. This was the date originally fixed for transfer of power and which was later advanced to 15th August, 1947. It was evident that the possible implications of Independence on the future of what had hitherto been a purely British Institution were in the minds of members.

While it is easy to be wise after the event one cannot help wondering had the lead given by the President on this Occasion been followed up more rigorously in the next few years, whether the subsequent move to what in the event was a severely truncated Club, could have been avoided.

An important transaction was reported at this A.G.M., the sale of No. 34 Chowringhee to Imperial Chemical Industries for the construction of their new premises. It will be recalled that the original purchase of this property was made with a view to preserving the "amenities" of the Club. While this somewhat altruistic object was now in some measure to be departed from, a condition of the sale was that the new construction would not exceed the height of the Club's premises.

Some little time before 1908 in order to provide the necessary funds for the construction of the new premises at No. 33 Chowringhee three series of Mortgage Debentures amounting in all to Rs. 16/- lakhs had been issued. We shall have more to say on the subject of these Debentures later but the sale of No. 34 for Rs. 4,50,000/- was a valuable addition to the Club's funds for it permitted of the resumption of the Second and Third Series, still leaving a balance of Rs. 57,000/- for a Redemption Fund which had been earlier created. Allowing Rs. 2,00,500/- for debentures now held by the Club this meant by the 1st of April, 1947 the sole charge on the Club properties was Rs. 6,45,000/-, all on account of the outstanding balance of First Mortgage Debentures.

These last nine years had been difficult ones in respect both of finances as well as administration and the frequent references to those two stalwarts Messrs. F.S. Cubitt, the Secretary and U. Ressia, the Steward were well deserved.

The former's firmness in handling awkward situations (and it may be added on occasion, members) earned him the nickname of "The Fuhrer" and the Club itself was familiarly known to many as "Freds Place" and how Mr. Ressia, with so little to work on, was able to maintain that high standard of "The Table" for which the Club was renowned, remained a source of wonderment to the thousands who passed through its doors.

Some valuable gifts were added to the Club's treasures during this period namely three Wedgewood Jugs presented by Lieutenant Colonel Berkely Hill and the magnificent Grandfather Clock from Mr. A.R. Cope which thanks to much juggling with its inner workings by Mr. Satow again charms its audiences by its delightful chimes after many years of silence.

At the end of 1946 the "wind of change" was already blowing culminating on August 15th 1947 in the transfer of power to India bringing with it an end to an era, which as far as the Club and its original objects were concerned, had lasted for one hundred and twenty years and for the first time a new flag, that of the Dominion of India was flown over the Club.

CHAPTER III

15TH AUGUST, 1947 TO 1970

That repercussions on the Club were likely as a result of Independence were implied in the President's address at the 1948 Annual General Meeting.

For some time previously the Committee had been making an appraisal on whether changes were necessary in respect of the Articles of Association and in particular, that of eligibility for membership.

As there was considerable diversity of opinion on these points an informal meeting of Members was held where certain proposals were discussed, but voting was inconclusive. Yet another meeting was called in February 1948 for a further expression of views for the guidance of the Committee, with the same results however. Later, in April, an Extraordinary Meeting was summoned "to consider and if thought fit to adopt unanimously" a change in the name of the Club.

It was held by some that the use of the term "Bengal" was no longer appropriate in view of the partition of the old Province under that name between two separate sovereign States, and that this, in some measure, had also outdated the original objects for which the Club was formed. The Committee had not been able to come to an unanimous decision on two alternative names suggested. When these were put to the vote, happily any motion to make an alteration was rejected, an outcome perhaps not uninfluenced by Shri Rajagopalacharia's advice in writing to retain the old historical name.

The status quo in respect of eligibility for membership however continued and it was not till 1959, when again at an Extraordinary General Meeting, albeit not without previous pressure from outside, an overwhelming majority of members voted conclusively in favour of the admission of Indian nationals to membership, on however a quota based on Town Membership, and what had now in the opinion of many members unduly long been an anachronism, was done away with.

Not surprisingly recruitment of Indian Nationals to membership was for some time low, for apart from other considerations there were other Clubs, and in particular one of old vintage, of which many eligible Indians were already members and one which offered facilities for social entertainment not quite as austere as those available at the Bengal Club.

It was fortunate however for the future that those early Members included Messrs. D.P.M. Kanga and V.V. Parekh who later as Presidents so ably and energetically conducted the affairs of the Club to permit of it being reborn in its Russell Street premises.

In spite of financial stringency there was no option but to undertake many items of repair and renovation which during the war years of necessity, had had to be pended.

In 1947 first priority was given to reconstruction of servants quarters and the "Dhobi Khana "and work on these items was surely if slowly proceeded with and were duly completed in mid-1951.

In 1952 yet another appraisal of essential works was undertaken the estimate for which amounted to some Rs.3/- lakhs, but funds amounting to Rs. 35,000/- only could immediately be found. The main items undertaken were malthoiding of the roof and replacement of sadly outworn equipment for the Aerated Water factory. A memorandum issued to members explaining what it was proposed to undertake must have caused many to raise their eyebrows in surprise if not in acute concern, for, by a typographical error "carbonic" was incorrectly shown as "carbolic" acid gas. Fears were however hastily allayed by a correction slip!

One innovation approved was the construction of a Bar in the annexe to the Billiard Room which was duly completed in that year, its opening being celebrated by free drinks from 5.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. It was voted a great success except for one item – the Bar stools were considered too small adequately to accommodate members comfortably and securely. Whether this was only discovered late in the evening or not history does not relate but action was subsequently taken to obviate any further criticism in this respect.

Air-conditioning of this Bar had already been kept in mind and was installed in the following year, again with free drinks in celebration.

Spurred by the success of this venture a much more ambitious project was launched, also in 1953, namely to air condition and divide the Billiard Room into a new Dinning Room and still have four Billiard Tables. Air conditioning was extended to the "Dirty Dinning Room" which then became a lounge. This was taken in hand and proved to be perhaps the most popular of all the improvements ever undertaken.

1954 saw a break in tradition of enormous import, approval for the provision of married quarters. A special meeting of members was called to consider improvements in general and possible economies, in which the above was included. In the course of discussion the question of conversion of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors of the Russell Street arose with the object of leasing them as office flats. It was pointed out that if married quarters became popular they would of necessity extend to that portion of the building. This proposal, and once again, one advocating removal of the Club to another smaller building was rejected, the latter it may be noted, " in the hope of better prospects." History was made by an item in the Committee Minutes allotting suite No. 42 to a Mr. and Mrs. G.R. Harris from 1st January, 1955. This set the pattern for the future for in that year Rooms 11 and 12 and 29 and 30 were taken up for conversion to suites and in the following, Rooms 18 and 19. The chambers on the 3rd floor in the Russell Street block retained their cloistered and monastic sanctity as bachelor or grass-widowers' cells though the more opulent of them occupied suites.

In 1956 the question of providing more amenities for ladies arose. We shall refer later to the whole subject of the break in tradition caused by the intrusion of the gentler sex into parts of the Club which had erstwhile been a strictly reserved domain for the male, but with the ladies now admitted to the Reynolds Room at all times, a "Powder Room" had become essential and was duly provided in the same year which also saw the installation of a bar in the verandah of the Billiard Room.

The final innovation was the conversion in 1968 of the now vacant

Club Shop into a Buttery. An attractively furnished and decorated airconditioned room, with a bar, it was intended to cater for customers who wanted to drop in for a drink and an al-fresco meal without having to sit down to a formal one. The Buttery part of it never got off the ground however and even as a bar was little used for, in the event, it merely diverted custom from the upstairs Cocktail Bar. As it turned out the expenditure incurred thereon was not a dead loss for the furnishings were later incorporated in the even more attractive Nagraj Bar of the new premises.

That these embellishments to the Club were made is a tribute to those successive committees which, in spite of acute financial stringency, were able to carry them out for there were many items of renovation and redecoration which also had to be undertaken to bring the premises up to that standard which members justifiably expected from the increases in subscriptions, cost of meals, chambers and etc. which had from time to time been imposed.

Work on rehabilitating chambers had been commenced before the war, priority having been given to bathrooms. To meet the cost of these latter it had been proposed to levy a surcharge on those members residing in those particular rooms where they were to be done. This elicited comments from one member that he understood, when completed, they would compare favourably with those normally associated with film stars, only to draw the riposte in that case he could reverse the normal procedure and invite one of them to come up and see him sometime.

Only nine chambers had been rehabilitated when war broke out and all further operations had to be suspended, leaving another forty to be done. After the war, work was recommenced slowly but surely until in 1963 the President was able to report that all had now been completed.

By 1958 air-conditioning had virtually become a "must". Members had previously been permitted to air-condition their chambers at their own cost. Now it was Transit rooms, and airconditioning was installed therein by the Club. The epidemic continued and in 1961 it was the turn of the Ladies Coffee Room subsequently formally invested with title of The Garden Room.

But over and above all these refinements there was a constant drain on resources to cope with ordinary maintenance and repairs. Those who have suffered the cold weather smog of Calcutta know only too well that with the advent of the rains the erstwhile pristing glory of the outer faces of buildings are immediately disfigured by soot and dust dislodged from ledges cornices and etc., and there is an item in the records of nearly half a lakh of rupees being spent on colour washing the extensive facade of the building and later again Rs. 20,000/-, just to make the Chowringhee face presentable both at apparently "knock down" prices arranged through the intervention of a resident member. Further there was a continuous need for patch repairs to walls, floors, electrical equipment, woodwork. water mains, conduits, roofs, guttering and etc., all inevitable in an old building constructed in a grandiose and somewhat baroque style. From time to time also there was unforeseeable expenditure, for instance, the provision of a new tube well at some thirteen thousand rupees to replace one that had outlived its utility. All this necessitated the retention of virtually permanent staff, masons, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, all adding to the high expenditure on premises. Successive Committees in turn begged and borrowed if they did stop short at stealing to provide funds but it could not last and inevitably the time came when a decision had to be made to move to premises more in keeping with modern standards and limited usage of the Club.

In the Annual General Meeting of 1966 the President drew attention to the advisability of so doing, commenting that in his opinion it was unwise to continue pouring new wine into old bottles. One year later the financial position had become really desperate and something on these lines had now become a necessity for it was no longer "a question of continued prosperity but of survival".

A development Sub-Committee was formed to examine ways and means of dealing with the problem and in April 1967 there is an item in the proceedings of General Committee on a discussion on certain proposals apparently formulated by it. These envisaged either the development of the whole site, temporarily moving elsewhere in the interim or alternatively of the major portion only, the remainder being reserved for a separate Club building. After some difference of opinion among members of

the Committee it was nevertheless reaffirmed that the Sub-Committee should press on with the preliminaries of development on the basic principle of retention of the whole site whilst arranging to finance the project by loans from prospective tenants.

In May however, doubts were expressed whether it was advisable to go ahead with the project in its present form in the light of already surplus accommodation being available in the City and the merits of the outright sale, in spite of tax liability were to be examined.

At subsequent meetings differences of opinion continued until in July 1967 it was agreed that members should be approached with a single definite recommendation which was broadly to develop the Chowringhee site and simultaneously to arrange for the sale of the Russell Street half, thus obtaining funds to put the Club on its feet in suitable quarters elsewhere where it would either continue permanently or alternatively return to the developed site later.

An informal meeting of members was called on 29th August, 1967 to express their views on the various proposals. At this meeting there was even more diversity of opinion, ranging from the extremes of winding up the Club once and for all to continuing somehow or other as before. One member voiced the opinion that all that was required was a luncheon room presumably in order merely to perpetuate the "Friday Lunch" tradition (by now, be it admitted, largely on the expense account). Another put up figures to show that were the upper floor of the Russell Street block leased to business houses and a recruiting drive organised to fill chambers, there would be no financial worries. Many however based their arguments mainly on sentimental grounds, rather skating over the whole question of how finances could be obtained. In the event the majority view was that the Club must continue and a mandate was given to the Committee to continue its efforts on this basis under whatever scheme would ultimately be found practicable.

The very diverse opinions expressed were apparently not recorded, which is perhaps fortunate for one member in obvious opposition to the idea of reducing the hitherto premier Club to a restaurant suggested that if

this were to be the decision then perhaps the Development Sub-Committee might consider the prospects of leasing the Ochterlony Monument and transforming it into a rotating restaurant like the Post Office Tower in London, which, had it been put on record might have sent the Committee on yet another wild goose chase.

Deliberations continued on various suggestions at one time or another until in December 1967 a questionnaire issued to members calling for their views thereon. This resulted in the majority concensus that the Chowringhee Block should be retained and the Russell Street portion leased or sold. Subsequent examination of taxation implications however indicated that the former alternative was preferable.

As far as development was concerned, several projects were examined, namely a "three cornered offer" for a five star hotel which however failed to materialise. Then a number of business houses became interested in one which envisaged taking up office premises in a " developed "building, but just as it looked as if this might succeed, economic recession and industrial unrest hit the State and this too proved unfructuous even on a modified reduced scale. East India Hotels then came into the picture and a scheme was drawn up under which the Club would obtain space to conduct its activities rent free in a large hotel on what, at first sight, seemed very favourable terms. A meeting was summoned on 6th August, 1968 for members to adopt a resolution giving effect to this scheme, one member submitting an amendment relating to certain terms included in the original resolution. During the discussion that followed another pointed out that he was of opinion that the somewhat rosy financial prospects detailed in the memorandum were not likely to be fulfilled for even with rent free floorspace, tax on its value would be attracted. This really was a spanner in the works and it was decided to refer the matter to expert opinion which when it was received sometime later, confirmed, the member's opinion, and naturally the whole project fell through.

In February 1969 manna literally fell from heaven in the guise of National and Grindlays Bank Limited, who made an offer for the purchase of the Chowringhee half, and at an Extraordinary Meeting held on 2nd June, 1969 by now a very harassed Committee received approval from

members for the sale.

In the meantime the Committee had considered various alternatives to continue the Club in the event of a sale being approved. These were :-

- (i) To adapt the Russell Street premises to requirements.
- (ii) To rent or buy an old building elsewhere and ultimately sell Russell Street also.
- (iii) Rent a floor in an air-conditioned building.
- (iv) Pull down Russell Street and build a 2-storey Club building on the site.

The Committee's choice was alternative (iv) but subsequently as a result of altered circumstances, and in particular the need to finalise matters quickly, it was alternative (i) that was happily adopted.

There was an anxious moment in July during the final negotiations when Government nationalised a number of Indian banks and it was not quite certain what repercussions might arise, but in due course instruments were signed, sealed, and delivered on 20th August, 1969 when it was also decided to allot the overall work of reconstruction of the Russell Street premises to Architects Collaborated. National and Grindlays Bank generously allotted the Club time till the 28th February, 1970 to vacate the Chowringhee premises.

The next six months provided a scene of feverish activity, deciding on what furniture and furnishings would be required for the new premises, what fittings could be removed and used therein, reducing the Library to proportions which could be accommodated in the new building yet to be constructed but of much smaller proportions, decoration schemes, temporary arrangements for housing and feeding displaced residents, all while the builders were getting on with the work of reconstruction.

Although it was not found possible to vacate on due date, that it was

done at all was due entirely to the hard and dedicated work put in by volunteers drawn from members and their wives who conducted the various operations among all the confusion, noise, and dirt, which appears to be an essential ingredient of any construction work in Calcutta.

The 2nd February, 1970 was an occasion, sad in many ways, but nevertheless giving great hopes for the future for a Dinner Dance was held to celebrate (if such is the correct term) the relinquishing of the premises at No. 33 Chowringhee, and at which, in a colourful ceremony, the keys thereof were handed over to the General Manager of National and Grindlays Bank.

It was a tragic coincidence that the then oldest Resident Member of the Club, one who had consistently opposed the change, passed away during the celebrations. He was at least spared the agony of seeing the process of demolition of that old noble landmark of Chowringhee Road.

The problems of the war years and those that immediately succeeded them were many, but peace raised even more complicated ones.

Perhaps those which were the most difficult to settle came from the numerous disputes with employees of the Club over wages, benefits, and terms of service generally, and which were to become the pattern of labour management relations throughout the State in ever increasing severity.

In 1948 Government had appointed a tribunal to look into conditions of service of employees of all major Clubs and although from time to time in the immediate past the Club had substantially increased the salaries of its employees, and had further accorded various benefits in an effort to compensate them for the ever rising cost of living, it accepted the recommendations made by the tribunal, thereby adding a further burden of Rs. 41,000/- to the wages bill.

Two years later as a result of "demands", (a term to be heard on numerous occasions thereafter), a further increase was accorded.

In 1951 The Bengal Chamber of Commerce method of calculation of Dearness Allowance was adopted. This was an allowance on a sliding scale linked to a cost of living index which would rise or fall in accordance there with. But as this continued to rise so accordingly did the amounts payable increase, but its introduction nevertheless ushered a period of relative peace and we hear of no further demands till 1951 when the employees' Union, which had now been recognised, put in a complaint to the Labour Officer over the X'mas Fund. This particular dispute continued to exercise the attention of the Committee over the next two years but by 1963 other issues such as bonus, increased dearness allowance, tiffin allowance for clerical staff, and so on arose, not only for the employees as a whole, or sections thereof, but also in respect of individuals.

Dispute followed upon dispute in regular successsion during which time the financial situation of the Club was becoming more and more desperate until in 1966 it was evident that if the Club was to survive, it would have to be located in less pretentious premises and also retrenchment of staff would have to be considered. The wages bill had increased in 1967-68 to Rs. 6,27,390/- from Rs. 3,81,075/- in 1961-62 and plans were formulated both to superannuate certain members of staff as well as to offer terms for voluntary retirement Eighty-six of staff accordingly left service at a cost however of Rs.3,70,204/-. This still left over one hundred on the books.

More disputes followed until September 1969 under the auspices of the President, and in order to settle things " once and for all " an agreement—was reached with the Union representatives in respect of bonus, filling of vacancies in the future, increased tiffin allowance to the clerical establishment and its extension to subordinate staff, and rescaling of pay of certain—grades, but the Club reserved the right to review the sanctioned strength of its establishment as from 1st June, 1970 on the basis of "membership and usage of the Club at that time," a wise provision, for those few residents who remained after 1966 or so will recollect how on ordinary days, to coin a collective term, a "squattery" of table servants and wine waiters congregated at the pantry end of the air-conditioned Dining Room, to rise at the entry of the first dinner, as Mr. A. P. Trevor so

graphically described it, "like a flock of paddy birds taking of" subsequently to embarrass those few members present by their excessive and quite superfluous attentions.

Peace certainly brought with it improvements in the supply of foreign liquor as shipping again began to ply normally and this, together with stocks of the Club had been able to conserve, restored the Club, if not exactly to a land of milk and honey, at least to one in which acceptable substitutes were again freely available, but with Independence the situation changed.

Prohibition had been one of the main planks of the political platform even prior to the transfer of power, and a number of States implemented this declared policy either wholly or in part. West Bengal had other ideas, for income from excise duties on all forms of liquor formed a very sizeable portion of its revenues. Further it already maintained a very large Preventive staff and prohibition would have necessitated supplementing it considerably.

In 1949 the blow fell - the enactment of the Bengal Excise (Amendment) Act of 1948. The first mention of this in the Committee proceedings related to discussion on a somewhat impassioned letter from Mr. H. A. Fowler who pointed out the horrifying prospects which would face members on its implementation, for thereunder Clubs were henceforward to be treated as Licensed Premises. A license fee would be payable, excise duty was to be raised by 50 %, there would be one "Dry" day in the week on which no liquor could be served at all, and perhaps worst of all there would be no longer an "off license". This latter provision was likely seriously to affect the Club Shop - the "Jug and Bottle Department" and appropriately enough Mr. J.R. Walker was given the mandate to try and negotiate some relaxation, in particular of this rule, without result however with the consequence that sales from the Shop had perforce to be at "on" rates until in due course even under the aegis of contractors, these proved unprofitable. Initially the "Dry" day was on Saturdays but from time to time thereafter the day was altered until it finally came to rest on Thursdays. The authorities however were quite accommodating in transferring it to another day when circumstances such as national holidays demanded

something in the way of adequate celebration. Later the "Dry" day was modified to permit of sales of liquor thereon in restaurants, hotels and clubs, but not from liquor shops.

Subsequent history on this aspect of the amenities offered by the Club can be briefly stated. With periodic increases in excise duty coupled with foreign exchange restrictions, direct imports by the Club under permit were limited by 1970 to Bengal Club whisky alone, and those old traditional items such as the Club Madeira disappeared from the win lists. All other foreign liquor was obtained from regular suppliers. All was not lost however, for during the years that followed Independence many new local brands of so styled "foreign type" liquor were coming on the market, whisky, gin, rum, beer, liqueurs and even latterly wine. Admittedly like the safeguard favoured by many authors many of them should have borne the label "any resemblance to living characters are purely coincidental," but there was no shortage of potable liquor — at a price.

In the light of previous shortages it can be imagined with what mixed feelings the Committee had, in 1957, to authorise the sale of all its stocks of Beefeater and Seagram's gin and forty cases plus six hundred and eighty six bottles of beer as also certain brands of Scotch owing to heavy "gallonage fees". It will be sufficient commentary on the ever increasing costs of liquor to quote that while in the early 1940's the price of a half peg of Scotch was nine annas in 1970 it had risen to Rs. 4.75.

It will be appropriate at this stage to pay further tribute to those who held the posts of Secretaries, and in between times Managing Members, Stewards and their assistants, who had the unenviable task of implementing the many schemes of rehabilitation which came into operation after the war and at the same time to maintain the high standards expected by members under conditions or what was steadily developing into a failing economy.

Unfortunately it was soon to be a case of hail and farewell to Mr. F.S. Cubitt, M.C. who had so energetically and efficiently held the office of Secretary for so long, for in 1948 he signified his intention to retire at the expiry of his agreement towards the end of 1949. He fully deserved

the eulogies accorded to him at his last appearance as Secretary in an Annual General Meeting in November. Alas he was not long destined to enjoy the fruits of his retirement as he suddenly and tragically died of a coronary thrombosis on the 6th October 1950 in England, while occupied in his beloved hobby of gardening, one which had stood the Club in such good stead in the management of the Bengal Club garden at Tollygunge.

An advertisement to find a successor brought no fewer than two hundred and fifty applications, among them some rather curious ones. Perhaps the prize effort was one from a fun-fair manager with a game leg who added as a qualification that he could teach members to dance. This conjures up a pretty picture of "Burra Sahibs" partnering each other, (for be it remembered the entry of ladies into public rooms was still strictly limited), learning the steps of those energetic and frenetic dances which by now had replaced the stately waltzes and slow fox trots of the past. Another stated that were he appointed he would be prepared to leave his wife behind but not his dogs, and yet another from one who was an all-in wrestler.

The choice fell upon Mr. J. Gledhill who had had considerable experience as a purser in the P. & O. and who remained in the post for six years. He is now Secretary of The East India and Sports Club.

There followed a period of Honorary Managing Members – Messrs. G.S. Broadbent and G.C. Fletcher filling in until Mr. G.K. Mitchell took over permanently as such, for the Committee had by now decided a full time Secretary could not be afforded. His appointment brought in an innovation in that Mrs. Mitchell was authorised to sign cheques and correspondence normally dealt with by a secretary, thus initiating the subsequent "regiment of women". During periods on leave Messrs. G. Carlton and A. Henry acted as Managing Members.

Mr. Ressia acted for a period between Mr. Mitchell's retirement in 1965 and the appointment of Mr. H.F.G. Burbridge as Secretary in March the same year, but he resigned early in the following year to be replaced by Mr. M.E. St.. John Perry. He left in 1968 to be followed by Mrs. V.C. Laing.

It was Mrs. Laing and on her departure in January 1970, Mr. M.R. Smith and then Mr. A.J. Mathyoo, Honorary Managing Members, who had to bear the brunt of the dissolution.

To many, and in particular resident members, the news of Mr. U. Ressia's retirement from the post of Steward after thirty years' devoted service came as a nerve shattering event. He had developed into an institution almost as great as the Club itself and, ruling his staff and members with a rod of iron, to him was entirely due the excellent standard of the catering and the decorum with which any meal was conducted.

Those bachelor and grass widower residents who could appropriately have been termed "The Knights of the Round Table" by virtue of the ritual with which they conducted the business of wining and dining at a special table, and that with which new members were admitted to the magic circle, will remember his stately presence and how with pencil in hand, he imperiously summoned them to the Dining Room when the ten or so minutes of grace not ordinarily permitted to others to appear, had expired.

His departure from the scene was comparable to the loss of a limb by an Olympic gold medalist and it is good to know that he is well placed in a similar appointment in England for he has joined his erstwhile associate as Steward of the East India and Sports Club.

He was succeeded by his shadow Mr. S. Fernandes (though the term shadow is inappropriate in the light of his ample figure), also of long standing and who, following in the steps of the Master, ably and efficiently carried out the duties of Steward. As towards the end of his tenure of office the number of resident members as also usage of the Club had been reduced to a minimum, it was a tribute to him and his staff that standards were still maintained at such a high level, for incentive must in no small measure have gone. He was a victim of retrenchment, voluntarily retiring in 1968 to be replaced by Mr. P.K. Dutt who since 1963 had served as Steward's Clerk.

It was inevitable that first the war and then the changed circumstances consequent on Independence should bring about changes in

many of the customs and conventions of the Club.

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In most associations of a similar nature such, with the efflux of time, develop into traditions which lend character and give a special *cachet* to the particular institution. Among such, none were more jealously guarded by members than that of retaining the essentially male character of the Club, and of "dress."

The break in tradition in respect of the instruction of the gentler sex was recorded by Sir H.R. Panckridge in his part of this history and though repeated in 1935 on the occasion to mark the celebration of the Jubilee of their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary, it was evident that members were struck with horror at these unfortunate lapses and were adamant against any further liberties, but the flood was not to be stayed.

First it was permission to enter into the Large Guest Room, then the Ladies' Room, afterwards named The Garden Room, These rooms were still far away from the male preserves of the main building, but more was to follow, for in 1953, at an Annual General Meeting a plea was made by one member for "more facilities for the ladies." Mr. Barr Pollock, then one of the oldest members, and with memories on the indignities he had suffered on the occasion of the Centenary celebrations voiced a strong protest, for apparently he had been importuned by several of the lady guests to show them round the rest of the Club and in particular "Chambers" on the grounds that they would see the public rooms during the function in any case. In the discussion which followed Sir Harry Burn suggested if this were to be the future policy then why not start it by introducing a blonde into the new Bar. A Sub-Committee was appointed to examine the possibility of providing further facilities but were firmly informed such would be on a no cost basis! It will be only fair to mention that Mr. Barr Pollock two years later resiled completely from his former stand.

In 1954-55 the subject of improvements in general came up, but in a questionnaire the opinion of members was also invited on the question of providing married accommodation. Among the replies a number apparen-

tly extraneous matters were raised including for instance, the suggestion that a Bowling Alley should be constructed. This it was considered would not be "suitable". It did however lead to the decision to provide married quarters and also of the Committee being asked to look into the question of even further liberties for the ladies. From its deliberations came a "Powder Room" on the first floor in 1956, for by then the Reynolds Room had been thrown open to them in the afternoons and evenings. Although the deluge had now commenced in earnest the Committee did not altogether relax their hold for it was not until 1957 that resident ladies and their guests were permitted to use the front entrance and lift. Hitherto they had had to creep in by the Russell Street entrances but even this relaxation contained restrictions in that they could only be used from 4 P.M. on week days and 11 A.M. on Sundays, which however was later extended to Saturdays also.

Further surrenders followed, for later they were permitted to "use the two ante-rooms and Cocktail Bars and dine in the verandah of the Coffee Room or in the air-conditioned Room according to season." The Committee in a desperate attempt to stem the tide added a rider to amendments to the bye-laws that it reserved the right to exclude ladies at any time and from any part of the Club.

In 1960 a request came to permit mixed bridge in the Card Room. Initially summarily rejected by the Committee, it was agreed to in 1963, but the last straw, also in 1963, was the introduction of all things, mixed Rowly Bowly evenings. This led to considerable apprehension on possible damage but was allayed by ladies being required to wear gloves while playing.

The Billiard Room remained generally a last stronghold until the final surrender in 1966 when not only was entry, but use of certain tables, permitted.

By 1967 all restrictions were removed even that of "reserving the public rooms on the first floor and the main or air-conditioned Dining Room on weakdays for men's lunches between the hours of 12.30 and 15.30."

Relaxation of conventions relating to dress did not attain the same landslide proportions as those regulating the entry of ladies, but they were neverthless gradually eroded.

It had been a long established convention that formal dress should at all times be worn in the public rooms. The war years, as we have noted, led to some relaxation and the introduction of the "Dirty Dinning Room" and the use of the Coffee Room verandah for those not properly attired but by and large old conventions were restored after the war, and in 1953 dress regulations were enshrined in the Bye Laws. These stated that "members and their guests were expected to observe the usual conventions with regard to dress when in the Reading Room, the two ante-rooms and two adjoining verandahs, provision being made for those not wearing conventional dress to breakfast in the Coffee Room and verandahs up to 12 noon, the Cocktail Bar and Billiard Room lounge at all times " and "for meals the small Dining Room and verandah adjoining the Billiard Room." For non-European nationals the term included national dress.

In 1957 regulations were further relaxed and members and their guests were permitted to "have meals at all times in the Coffee Room verandah in the hot weather, or air- conditioned Dining Room in the cold weather" in non-conventional dress, for by now the small Dining Room had become the Card Room. It was still de rigeur to wear dinner dress or national dress after 8.30 p.m. except on Sundays in the Reading Room, the Coffee Room in the cold weather, and in the air-conditioned Dining Room in the hot. In 1963 "as an experimental measure" this requirement no longer became necessary. The experiment was apparently considered a success and dinner jackets became more the exception than the rule thereafter, but the remaining provisions continued in force.

Interesting conventions of very long standing are to be found in regulations regarding smoking. Though those on dress were not included in the Bye Laws before 1953, in the "Bengal Club Regulations for the internal arrangements of the Club passed by the Committee under No. 58 of the Club Rules in force from 7th June, 1896" one prohibiting pipe smoking altogether in the Dining Room and smoking of any kind between 6 p.m. and 8.45 p.m. appears. In those of 1937 pipe smoking is permitted after

9.15 p.m. in the Dining Room and lighting-up time at lunch fixed as not before 1.45 p.m. Further, no smoking therein was permitted between 3.30 p.m. and 9.15 p.m. In 1953 this regulation was modified to permit smoking in "the Coffee Room in use" between 1.45 p.m. and 3.30 p.m. and from 9.15 p.m. onwards. These rules developed into tradition in that as soon as lighting-up time came and cigarettes and cigars appeared, there was an immediate reaction from the Abdars in attendance who presented those delightful and decorative silver charcoal burning lighters to intending smokers. It was considered Non-U to use matches or petrol lighters — a tradition if ever there was one.

A ceremony that falls within the category of tradition and well worthy of record was the passing round of the "Haileybury Last Term Cup" at the Queen's Birthday Dinner. The origin of this was described in the President's address at the 1952 Annual General Meeting.

"Many of you may have noticed the Haileybury Last Term Cup which is in a case at the end of the Lounge. This Cup was originally the property of eleven individuals who were in the last term at Haileybury in 1859 when it was still in the Old East India College, and the Cup was used by them there, and later in India, as a Loving Cup until 1913. When there were only two of the eleven still alive they decided to donate it to the Bengal Club on the condition that we occasionally drank out of it in remembrance of the good old days. The Cup was used quite often at Haileybury Dinners for some years, but more recently it had remained merely an ornament. This omission was rectified at the Queen's Birthday Dinner last year when it was passed round to all diners and members may now be interested to hear that a replica of the Cup, which had been presented to Sir Philip Browne, for many years the senior Old Haileyburian in Calcutta, was recently donated by his estate to the present Haileybury College, where it is now in use in the Master's Common Room. This provided an interesting link between this Club and the two Haileyburys-Old and New-and I mentioned this matter as being of some historical interest to the Club." With the discontinuance of this celebration after 1967 this too has passed into disuse.

Also had gone those items in other fields of entertainment. The Duds

Handicap Golf Match and the annual one against the Royal Calcutta Turf Club and perhaps most traditional of all, "Rowly Bowly", played regularly by members of the Committee after their monthly meetings as also almost every night by those "Knights of the Round Table". From time to time for a number of years there were organised Rowly Bowly evenings, very popular social events.

Given time no doubt new conventions will build up into traditions, but even now there are perhaps some which could be resuscitated and thereby perpetuated for in the words of Thomas Mann, traditions are of value in that they not only bring the past to the present but the present to the past.

A major casualty of the move to Russell Street was the Library, a rich and catholic collection of books accumulated almost from the first origins of the Club. It was much too compendious to be accommodated in the new building, yet to be constructed, and a reduction became necessary. Thanks to a band of volunteers every volume was checked against the catalogue and marked either for retention or disposal on the principle of retaining (a) every book under non-fiction published before 1900, to be re-examined at leisure later; (b) all books relating to India or having connections with India; (c) those of more than ordinary interest, or by classical authors and (d) under fiction; all books under ten years old together with those considered classics.

It is estimated this resulted in the rejection of some 7,500 volumes but it was a rush job, as apart from that of categorising and subsequently transporting the books retained to their temporary premises in the new building, racks had first to be dismantled and again reassembled. Somehow or other amidst clouds of dust work was completed, but it could never have been done without the valuable assistance rendered by Mrs. A.P. Trevor and Mrs. P. Prashad, who spent many long hours in the heat checking books.

It was intended that members should have the first opportunity to take any rejected books that they might desire, but owing to a misapprehension over dates, representatives of St. Xavier's College, The Asiatic Society and The National Library, who had been informed they could have books free and for nothing, arrived prematurely all at a time and a glorious free for all resulted! The remaining rejections were subsequently auctioned with some surplus racks, for what was felt to be a somewhat meagre but neverthless acceptable sum which was subsequently used to start the work of rebinding damaged books. During the check, regrettably, many books were found to be missing.

Mr. K.M. Daniel Muthalaly who had been connected with the Library since 1944 retired in January 1970 to be replaced by Mr. A.H. Phear on whom fell the brunt of reassembling the Library.

There but remains to tie up the ends, and in accordance with the precedent set in previous chapters, first to record the eminent personages who were entertained by, or visited the Club during this third period and then to acknowledge gifts.

Following tradition Mr. Rajagopalacharya, Governor of Bengal was entertained to tea in 1948 prior to his departure to take over the office of President of India as was also Dr. Katju, his successor, as Governor. Pandit Nehru honoured the Club by lunching with the President and Members of Committee in 1953.

From August 15th 1947 the Crown was represented in the new sovereign India by a High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in India at Delhi and a Deputy High Commissioner in Calcutta, and for the remainder of the period under review successive members of the Commission were to be frequent guests of honour at official functions, in particular those dinners held to celebrate the King's or Queen's Birthday.

The long list included Lt. General Sir Archibald Nye, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., K.C.B., K.B.E., M.C., who on one occasion resided at the Club, Sir Malcolm MacDonald, O.M., P.C., Sir Alexander Clutterbuck, G.C.M.G., C.B.E., all of whom were High Commissioners.

There is no record of the Rt. Hon. John Freeman, P.C., M.B.E., having been officially entertained but he together with the Rt. Hon. Sir Morrice

James, P.C., K.C.M.G., C.V.D., M.B.E., "visited" the Club at meetings of the United Kingdom Citizens' Association, but Lord Gore-Booth, G.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., was present at the 1962 Queen's Birthday Dinner Celebration.

Strictly speaking Deputy High Commissioners should not be mentioned in this connection as they were all permanent members, but were often guests of honour at successive Birthday Dinner Celebrations – Brig. L. J. L. Addison, C.M.G., C.B.E., G.E.B. Shannon, C.M.G., Sir A.F. Morley, K.C.M.G., C.B.E., Major General Sir W.H.A. Bishop, K.C.M.G., C.B., C.V.O., O.B.E., Sir E.G.Norris, K.C.M.G., and Dr. J. Mackenzie, C.M.G., Ph.D., M.B.E., all figure in the lists.

Lord Swinton, Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, a Cabinet Minister, attended the Queen's Birthday Dinner in 1953. Lord Harewood and family on a visit to Calcutta, resided in the Club and a dinner was attended by Earl Home in 1954. In addition to these official functions on many occasions Wardroom Officers of ships of the Royal Navy, and latterly the Indian Navy were offered hospitality during there visits to Calcutta.

Three famous Members of the successful Mt. Everest expedition visited the Club in 1953,— Sir John Hunt, Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay. It is a matter for conjecture whether anyone present then realised that the occasion was a link with the past history of the Club for, in the 1901 list of members there appears the name of one. "Austen H. Godwin" elected in 1880, who surely must have been that members of The Great Trigonometrical Survey of India which was responsible for the survey of so many of the high peaks in the Himalayas, (after whose leader Mt. Everest, "discovered" in 1852, was named) and who himself had a peak named in his honour.

On the memorable occasion of Queen Elizabeth II's visit to Calcutta a Reception was held on the 18th February, 1961 at the Royal Calcutta Turf Club which reflected glory on the Bengal Club, for thanks to the ubiquitous Mr. U. Ressia, letters of commendation were received from Major General Bishop, then Deputy High Commissioner for the U.K., in

India, for the excellent arrangements which the Club had provided.

Some small consolation may be derived from the brief visit to the Club by the Duke of Edinburgh after this function when he met the Committee and Resident Members.

And now to the subject of gifts. One of the most striking portraits the Club possesses is that of "William Bracken, Collector of Customs 1845 to 1855." The earliest list of members available, published in 1901, does not include his name and it is thus not known whether he ever joined the Club, but nevertheless it forms a link with the earlier days of the Club's history and as such is well worthy of an honourable place. One wonders whether the anguish of the modern traveller passing through present day Customs would not be measurably alleviated were his counterparts dressed in similar elegant attire. It was presented by his successor in office in 1961. Another historic link is "Kitchener's Table;" from the Calcutta Light Horse Club when it was wound up in 1966.

Among gifts associated with the extra-mural activities of the Club was "The Russell Street Cup" presented by Messrs. L..M. Blomenstock and F.C. Williams, a trophy for the winner of the annual golf match against the Royal Calcutta Turf Club. Mr. L.J.L. Addison, C.M.G., C.B.E., presented a silver gavel to call members to order for the loyal toasts at the Queen's Birthday Dinner at which, it will be recollected, the Haileybury Cup was passed round.

The portraits of Her Majesty The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh came into the Club's possession in 1955, and that of Zakir Hussain, President of India, through the generosity of Mr. C.G. Montgomery, in the same year.

The four delightful prints which graced the Cocktail Bar came from Dr. F.J. Copeland in 1955 and in 1962 a daguerreotype from Mr. G.A. Johnson, all adding to the rich treasures accumulated over the years.

But to those which have been specifically acknowledged in this and previous chapters must be added a host of others, too varied and too

numerous to list in detail, for it has been the tradition for members retiring from India to present to the Club, a parting gift. They range from silver cocktail shakers, condiment sets and other forms of table ware, to settees, chairs, a complete bedroom suite, a bridge table and chairs, a set of car -pet bowls, Rowly Bowly billiard balls and a host of other items. Wherever the nature of the gift permits it has been inscribed with the name of the donor and the date of its presentation and thus forms a lasting memorial. More prosaic, but equally acceptable gifts comprised donations to various Club Funds. Two portraits were restored from sums donated by retiring members—they were all gratefully acknowledged and listed in the preamble to the printed Report and Accounts.

CHAPTER IV

FINANCES

Finally that sad tale of woe, the eventual, and towards the end rapid, collapse of the finances of the Club.

It will be well to note at the outset, as has already been recorded to obtain the necessary finance to purchase the site and to construct the new premises, three series of Mortgage Debentures of Rs. 8/- lakhs, Rs. 5/- lakhs and Rs. 3/- lakhs, bearing interest at 5%, 5.5% and 6% respectively, were issued in 1907. Under the terms of their issue there was but one obligation, the redemption at a minimum rate of Rs. 5,000/- annually of "one of the issues" – it is not clear which. The 1st and 2nd issues were redeemable on 31st December, 1967 and the 3rd on 31st December, 1969. It was however permissible to redeem the 1st Debentures at a maximum of Rs. 10,000/- per annum.

A Debenture Redemption Fund had already been constituted when the story is taken up in 1928. By then 1st Debentures to the value of Rs. 60,000/- had already been redeemed and the fund stood at Rs. 98,581/-. It had been maintained by allocations from general revenues (mainly from a proportion of entrance fees).

The Annual Statements of Accounts from 1928 to 1950-51 are not traceable but from Proceedings of Committee and Presidents' addresses at General Meetings we can assume that this general procedure of redemption and allocation continued normally till 1939 when the whole subject of Debentures came into prominence in relation to an appraisal of "the position with regard to the depreciation of securities held in the Club Provident Fund." It was recorded that the Debentures then outstanding were, 1st issue Rs. 6,90,000/-, 2nd issue Rs. 4,53,000/- and 3rd issue Rs. 2,40,000/-. By this time the Redemption Fund held Debentures of the 3rd and 2nd issues to the value of Rs. 1,41,000/- now in the hands of the Club

At an Extraordinary General Meeting in August 1940, called to

pass a resolution to contribute to the East India Fund for British War Services, it was stated that contributions to the fund had been at the rate of Rs. 21,000/- annually.

By 1944 it stood at Rs.2,16,253/- of which Rs. 2,13,198/- were on account of Debentures held by the Club.

1946 saw the sale of No. 34 Chowringhee and the sale proceeds all remaining 2nd and 3rd Debentures were redeemed and meant that by 1st April 1947 the sole charge on the Club's properties was the balance of Rs. 6,45,000/- on outstanding 1st Debentures.

It will be appreciated that this Rs. 4,50,000/- was a shot in the arm to Club finances, which even then were causing concern, as it alleviated to a considerable extent the erstwhile heavy drain on resources to provide for payment of interest on the Debentures.

In the Annual General Meeting of 1947 the President in his address, (scorning round figures) pointed out that it would now be necessary to allocate annually a contribution of Rs. 21,129/- to the fund in order to provide for the obligatory redemption of Rs. 5,000/- plus optionally another Rs. 10,000/- to extinguish the outstandings within the due date of maturity, 31st December, 1967.

In the event this amount was regularly increased from 1955-56 onwards but the target of redemption of Rs.15,000/- annually was apparently not attained, for subsequent records showed this as only Rs.10,000/-.

In 1963-64 additional Debentures to the face value of Rs.1,15,000/-were purchased with "a view to eventual cancellation" by which transaction all those outstandings (Rs. 4,75,000/-) were now held by the Club. Reduced to Rs. 4,50,000/- in 1967-68 they were finally redeemed on due date.

Apart from the absence of annual statement prior to 1950-51 it

would, it is felt, be both uninteresting and unprofitable to enter into any great detail into the history of the economics of the Club prior thereto, for in the final analysis it was the serious proportions which revenue deficits had attained in the later years that necessitated a quick decision to capitalise on the potential sale value of the front portion and a quick decision to move to smaller premises before it was too late.

Deficits began to assume large proportions in 1955-56 when they stood at Rs. 33,898/-. In 1957-58 and the year following there were surpluses but thereafter again deficits continued in varying magnitudes until in 1965-66 they assumed the alarming total of Rs. 1,94,283/-. A further landslide occurred in the following year, to Rs. 2,36,385/-.

1967-68 was an abnormal year on account of the heavy expenditure on establishment as a result of retrenchment and while it was realised the economies resulting therefrom would not be fully reflected in the accounts for a year or two, neverthless the deficit for the eighteen months period 1968-70 amounted to Rs. 4,95,315/- the accounts for which however now show a very welcome statement on profits derived from the "disposal of the capital assets" which indicated a favourable balance of Rs.30,28,645/-the working capital for the new premises.

To the writer unversed in the intricacies of commercial accounting the audited accounts, and in particular that portion termed "Members Capital Account," are comparable to a branch of applied science, statistics, of which it was once said, like a bikini their value lies more in what they conceal than what they reveal. Nevertheless the Club failed from 1965-66 onwards. Built up from the 1951-52 total of Rs. 14,14,626/- to Rs. 20,48,586/- by 1964-65, it declined to Rs. 9,20,115/- in 1967-68.

A considerable element of the revenues of an institution such as the Bengal Club is derived from entrance fees and subscriptions paid by members and any considerable falling off in numbers must have serious repercussions. Membership consisted of various categories, permanent members being further divided into Town, Mofussil and Supernumerary. The terms "Town" and "Mofussil" are perhaps self-explanatory. "Supernumerary Members" comprise those original Permanent Members who on retirement from "India, Pakistan, Burma or Ceylon," (for such were the now sovereign States originally embraced), who for a relatively smallsubscription were enabled to maintain their association with the Club. Incidentally the term "Mofussil" also included the above countries.

Provision was also made for a class of Honorary Members- members of reciprocating Clubs, Officers of Military or Naval establishment, those of "Cricket or other sporting teams," all of whom, on visits to Calcutta were eligible for membership, normally for limited periods and under varying conditions in respect of method of admission and rates of subscription. Eminent personages such as Governors of Bengal were offered Honorary Membership "free of ballot and subscription."

An entrance fee was payable by every Town and Mofussil member, that for the latter however being on a reduced rate. All Permanent Members, (excepting those Supernumerary Members who had elected to compound their subscriptions), paid annual subscriptions at a common rate.

Regular monthly subscriptions were payable only by Town Members, Mofussil Members visiting Calcutta paying on a daily basis to a maximum in any one month of that paid by a Town Member.

It will be appreciated that it was Town Members that in the main contributed the bulk of the income from entrance fees and monthly subscription and for that matter that derived from the various departmental activities.

The following statement indicates the decline of this particular class of membership and the altered distribution of the various categories of Permanent Members.

Year	Town	Mofussil	Supernumerary	Total
1928	423	133	416	972
1950	384	96	597	1077
1957	280	95	797	1172
1960	252	86	854	1192
1966	211	58	844	1113
1968	211	52	805	1068
1970	230	63	688	981

The absence of any data on membership between 1928 and 1950 makes it impossible to follow fluctuation in membership in any detail but from proceedings of Committee and occasional references at Annual General Meeting there had been from time to time "concern over falling membership" and these were apparently usually accompanied by increases in fees.

The Club's annual income depends largely from **profits** obtained from the Bar, but the magnitude thereof is in its turn dependent on the extent to which members make use of it. Up to 1950-51 the turnover continued to be reasonably satisfactory in spite of the various restrictions imposed as a result of limited supplies during the war, for consumption was high by virtue of the large number of members using the Club. Increased costs of liquor were compensated for by raising the price of drinks and profits were thus still substantial and in point of fact increased successively from year to year until 1942-43 they were up by Rs. 59,000/- over the previous year.

In 1948 came the Bengal Excise (Amendment) Act which however did not appear materially to affect the absorption capacity of members unduly in spite of increased charges to cover license fees and additional duty levied under the Act.

In 1952-53 however, as the President commented there were "dan-

ger signals", profits having gone down by some Rs.14,000/- from the previous year. From 1955-56 onwards they continued to drop steadily until 1963-64 they were Rs. 56,831/- as against the 1950-51 figure of Rs.1,09,305/-. It increased by some Rs. 12,000/- in the following year and for some unaccountable reason to what, under the conditions then prevailing, was a phenomenal one of Rs.90,428/- in the next, but again slumped to just under Rs.46,000/- by 1967-68. The eighteen months period 1968-70 however exhibited a welcome rise again.

Reasons for reduced profits are not hard to find, costs of living coupled with high personal taxation made it necessary to economise but in addition to this, during the past ten or so years there had been radical changes in behaviour patterns generally, much more entertaining being done at home and the days when members dropped in for a convivial evening at the Club had in no small measure gone. Fortunately the Friday Lunches, Cocktail parties and other official or semi-official luncheon and dinner parties continued for the Club still offered facilities for such which could hardly be excelled elsewhere.

The story of that other source of liquor supplies, initially the cellar and lately the Club Shop can be briefly told. Lack of supplies during the war restricted issues and some considerable diminution in profits became inevitable.

Peace restored the former position until in 1948-49 profit slumped largely because sales from the Shop were suspended for four months pending negotiations with the authorities to obtain an "off license". The failure of these resulted in an ever decreasing off-take for, to meet overheads, prices were from Rs.2/- to Rs.3/- a bottle higher than those charged by outside retailers. 1950-51 nevertheless saw an increase over the preceding year largely apparently because members were availing themselves of the relatively large stocks the Shop held, but thereafter the land-slide commenced until 1957-58 profits were reduced to Rs.24/-! There followed a period of actual losses until in 1961-62 onwards small profits were made, the largest however being Rs.4,244/- in 1955-56-a sad commentary from the 1950-51 figure of Rs.45,207/-. From 1968 this item in the Departmental accounts no longer appeared as the Club Shop was

closed down and converted into the Buttery.

The Aerated Water Factory with its extensive outside clientele was one Department that could always be relied on to make a profit. True these were disappointing from time to time, for instance immediately after the war when replacements of outworn equipment, and writing down losses on bottles etc. put up the expenditure thereon, but from 1954-55 onwards the margin of profit increased by some 100% to Rs.62,746/- in 1957-58. Thereafter it dropped somewhat to round about the Rs.48,000/- mark. In 1966-67 it went up to the all time high of Rs. 66,128/- but this burst of energy seems to have been too exhausting, for down it went again to some Rs.44,000/-. The 18 months period 1968-70 brought in Rs.56,748/- clear profit.

It is unfortunate that this valuable asset had to be foregone in the new premises for various reasons not only connected with inadequate space to rehouse it.

The word "concern" appears in the records from time to time in relation to occupancy of chambers, for instance in 1939 when alternative accommodation outside was becoming readily available.

The abnormal conditions imposed by the war removed complaints on this score but in 1949 pressures were again building up and it was found necessary to raise rents by 25%. As an incidental to the appraisal made of the Coffee Room accounts and which had led to a revision of the system of accounting, the "basic fact emerged" that profitability in respect of chambers could only be achieved on an average annual occupancy rate of 61%. In the absence of statement of account prior to 1950 it is not possible to comment in detail on the fluctuations in income derived from "Club premises" which occured prior thereto, but taking as a criterion the item, Rent of Chambers, it is evident that by 1953-54 it was falling rapidly. Charges were again raised in 1954 and this improved the position by some Rs.30,000/- over the previous year's working and income from rent thereafter continued to increase until in 1958-59 it was Rs. 2,07,252/- as compared with the 1950-51 figure of Rs.1,35,2278/-. Partly as a result of improved occupancy but also from a further rise in charges in 1957 it rose to Rs.2,27,715/-.

In 1962-63 the accounting system was dressed in a new bikini under cover of which alterations were made in the allocation of daily and monthly charges of Residents. At the Annual General Meeting of 1964, the President, in a masterly understatement, commented as a result of the changes, it was difficult to make comparisons with the previous year's working, but added that thereby the Coffee Room accounts had benefited by Rs.1,01,000/-.

Even adding this to the total shown under Rent of Chambers (Rs.67,582) income was down by some Rs.50,000/-. Some small increases were exhibited in the following three years, but by 1967-68 it was down to the abysmally low figure of Rs.37,759/- and for the 18-month period 1968-70 it was only Rs.46,372/-, which on proportion indicates a still further decline.

No figures however can as graphically depict the state of affairs existing at the end as the deserted appearance of the public rooms on any but special occasions, for of the 12 Double suites and 16 Single suites which comprised the accommodation then available there were but five occupied by permanent residence and in addition there were 18 Single transit Rooms.

A relatively small, but veritable gold mine among departmental activities, was the Grocery Stores housed in the Club Shop. Originally run directly by the Club it was later leased out to a succession of contractors.

In the 1928 accounts it was shown as having made a profit of Rs. 440/-. Thereafter it receives but scant mention in the records and it is not known whether it continued to do so in the interim till 1950-51 wherefrom its history can be traced. Alas, thereafter the veins commenced to peter out, profitabillity declining from a figure of Rs.18,103/- in that year to Rs.6,156/- in 1959-60, after which (except for 1963-64 and 1964-65), it continued to drop until with a profit of only Rs.1,796/- it was closed down.

Other departmental accounts require but little comment. Profits

from the sale of Cigarettes, Cigars and Tobacco slowly but surely declined from Rs.6,344/- in 1950-51 to just over Rs.3,000/-in 1958-59, then to a nadir of Rs.346/- in 1965-66, for by this time the general exodus of resident members had occurred.

The Hairdressing Saloon consistently produced losses. Similarly with the Cards and Billiards accounts, but these were all considered necessary amenities on which members were prepared to accept losses and in any case brought in some incidental revenue to other departments by their usage.

Off all departments none more justifiably deserves the name of "The Sick Man of Europe" than that of the Coffee Room for even in 1938 it showed a loss of Rs.19,609. While thereafter references occur in the Committee Minutes, details are not freely available, but the story can to some extent be taken up from 1941, when, as a result of the high cost of food, a surcharge of 15% was placed on Coffee Room bills and inclusive rates raised by Rs.27/- per month. The surcharge was later increased to 20% and them apparently again to "50% over pre-war prices." In 1942-43 it is recorded the deficit was Rs.6,878/-as against a surplus of Rs.11,351/- in the previous year. In 1944-45, partly as a result of increase in prices of lunches, the loss was only Rs.3,600/-. The deficits, it should be remembered occurred when the Club was over flowing with Service members.

1945-46 showed an "even bigger loss," a term that was to be repeated thereafter almost *ad nauseam*.

By 1949 the situation was such as to necessitate economies in stuff, considerable simplication of meals, and in an attempt to circumvent in sum small measure the price restriction order, the introduction of an *a la carte* system. Coffee and Cheese were charged for separately. As a gesture free dinners at Committee Meetings were abandoned!

In 1950-51 after much preliminary work, the Secretary and Steward, under a Sub-Committee introduced a new accounting system improvements were made in the working arrangements and control over

food and stores was tightened up, but meals served were down by some 10,000 during the year.

The new arrangements reduced losses from Rs.72,044/- to Rs.49,000/- in the following year and to Rs. 35,117/- in the next. Now a welcome increase of some Rs.14,000 in the number of meals served, together with increased charges for meals reduced losses in 1953-54 to Rs. 18,958/- which year also saw some relaxation of the restrictions imposed by the 1946 Act. In the meantime the Secretary had compiled a detailed note on the Coffee Room accounts in which he had drawn attention to the difficulties now being failed in renting Chambers, plaintively adding that the answer to the declining revenues lay in a recruiting drive immediately to enrol 100 Town Members instead of the present "yearly trickle" but as far as can be seen the only result of the deliberations was an increase in the charges for lunch.

A proposal in 1954 to raise charges for meals was deferred in view of the recent increases imposed on rents of Chambers. As an incentive a sort of season ticket system was introduced for regular Monday to Friday lunchers—Rs. 75/- a month, but this apparently was not a success and was hastily abandoned and losses commenced to rise again until 1957-58 they stood at Rs. 42,000/-. Meal prices were once again raised with salutary effect for in spit of a reduction in the numbers served the deficit came down to Rs.13,710/-. Immediately after however up and up they climbed to Rs.38,837/- by 1960-61.

It will be recollected that 1961-62 saw the introduction of a new system of accounting for Club premises with result the Coffee Room accounts exhibited profits for the first time for many years. These were maintained during the next three years attaining the phenomenal total of Rs. 68,024/- in 1964-65, but during these three years meal prices had been twice raised as also inclusive rates for in 1963 Government had dlapped on a Sales Tax for all meals served.

By 1965-66 the material of bikini supplied previously began to wear thin and profits fell to Rs.9,770/-. Thereafter it was the usual land-slide—there were but few residents left and meals served dropped from the 68,000 mark of 1964-65 to a mere 33,200 in 1967-68 when the defi-

cit stood at Rs.47,976/-.

No comment has hitherto been made in this review on one aspect of the expenditure side of the Departmental Accounts, that of the proportionate charges to each, on account of salaries. While the increased costs of the wages bill which occured latterly had an impact on all of them, it fell particularly heavily on that of the Coffee Room Account for which a large staff had of necessity to be maintained to serve those sometimes unforeseen influxes on high days and holidays. From time to time the employment of "ticca" staff had been considered but there was still a considerable irreducible minimum that had permanently to be employed. In this context it will serve to quote just a few figures to illustrate the effect on the Coffee Room accounts of the wages bill. In 1928 salaries amounted to Rs.32,150/-. In 1951-52 they were Rs.82,950/- but by 1967 they had risen to Rs.1,34,543/-. Little further comment seems necessary.

The reader who has struggled so far with this final uninteresting chapter may perhaps consider that it has been accorded undue prominence. The writer however offers no apologies as he has done so with malice aforethought for therein lies a moral. Admittedly the old Chowringhee premises had outlived its usefulness under modern conditions. It was uneconomical to run and absorbed from time to time large sums on capital account to provide improvements consistent with the increase standard of living that members expected, and further, even before the start of construction of No. 33, it had carried a burden of debt.

The new premises commence free of all these disadvantages, and now comes the moral, for even as such, it cannot hope to prosper unless members are prepared to make full use of the facilities and amenities it provides.

TAILPIECE

So comes to an end the history of one hundred and forty three years of the Club's existence expect for a tailpiece, and what could be more appropriate than a story on the circumstances which led to the adoption of the representation of a King Cobra as the Club's crest.

We are indebted to Mr. Panchanan Ghosh, Chief Clerk for the details.

He had apparently often been asked by members how the symbol was chosen and decided to try and find out for himself as none of the existing records made any mention thereof. In the course of his researches the late Mr. P.N. Chatterjee, then a member of the staff with many year's service, told him a story which he in turn had heard from Mr. Basanta Kumar Dutta, Head Bill Clerk (and incidentally the grandfather of the present Steward, Mr. P.M. Dutta), when he first joined service.

The same story was told to him by Shellim Khan, ex-khitmatgar No. 1, also an old servant of the Club, and was further corroborated by Darsani, the servant of the late Mr. R. Haywood, a member of 1927 vintage.

To quote Mr. Ghose it runs as follows:-

"In the time of laying the foundations of the Club's Building the labourers were digging the ground when a very large King Cobra came out and stood guard over the place. The local labourers and the overseers stopped work and refused to carry on as they considered the King Cobra to be the worshipful guardian of the place not to be disturbed, disregarded or killed for to do so would bring disaster and misfortune.

On the advice of the Overseers a Brahmin, who was Priest of the Temple of "Monosha", the snake goddess was fetched from Bagh Bazaar. He made pujas with milk and bananas worshipping the king and asking for permission for laying the foundation of the building. The King Cobra, fed with milk and banana went away giving the ground as a token

of consent. The whole incident took a few hours but the snake did not go away until the puja was finished.

The Burra Sahib who was present there during the puja declared to the pleasure of everybody that the symbol of the King Cobra would be used as the Club's crest to show respect to the gurdian of the place".

Those who have spent many years in this country, particularly in rural areas, will have heard many similar stories of people, places and things, which, embellished though they may have been in the course of being passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation, are nevertheless often founded on fact.

As Mr. Ghose points out, Calcutta in those days was covered in jungle and infested by snakes and it would not be an altogether unusual experience for a King Cobra to make an appearance. Further, it would, as at the present day, be treated with both awe and reverence by those who had disturbed the reigning deity in its accustomed haunts.

What particular building was involved is not clear, but it could not have been No. 33, Chowringhee for the crest was already in use in 1901, seven years before the start of reconstruction of Macaulay's old residence, for the list of members published in that year bears the crest on the front cover, but is there any reason to reject the possibility that the incident occurred during some work or other of construction being undertaken in either of the two premises previously occupied by the Club in Esplanade or "Tank Square"? If not why should a King Cobra have been appropriated by the Club as its crest?

Fact or fiction? That the reader must judge for himself but to the writer it is not only an interesting but a very credible story.

LIST OF PRESIDENTS

(1928-1970)

1927-28	O.S. Martin		
1929-30	The Hon'ble Sir George Rankin		
1931-32	W.M. Craddock, D.S.O., M.C.		
1933	H.A.M. Hannay		
1934	H.H. Burn		
1935-36	The Hon'ble Mr. R.N. Reid. C.S.I., C.I.E.		
1937	Sir Thomas H. Elderton, K.C.I.E.		
1938	B.A.C. Neville		
	C.E.L. Milne Robertson		
1939	E.B. Pratt		
1940-41	E.N. Blandy. C.S.I., C.I.E.		
1942	R.S. Purssell. C.I.E., O.B.E.		
1943	The Hon'ble Mr. Justice G.D. McNair		
1944	D. Henry, M.C.		
	Dr. A. Jardine		
1945	J. McFarlane, M.C.		
1946	C.M. Keddie		
1947	Dr. W.E.Fetherstonhaugh		
1948	Sir Charles W.M. Miles, O.B.E.		
1949	F.F.M. Ferguson		
1950-51	W.T.C. Parker		
1952-53	Sir Anthony J. Elkins, C.B.E.		
1954-55	N.D. Harris		
1956-57	Dr. Frank McCay		
1958-59	H. Mackay Tallack		
1960-61	T.C. Hornby		
1962-63	A.D. Ogilvie		
1964-65	J.M. Parsons		
1966	C.G. Montgomery		
1966-67	J. Russell		
1968	D.P.M. Kanga		
1969	V.V. Parekh		
1970	M.G. Satow		

LIST OF PRESIDENTS

(1971-1996)

1971-72	B. P. Ray
1973	A. W. B. Hayward
1974	C. R. Irani
1975	P. K. Choksey
1976	M. R. Smith
1977	Arabinda Ray
1978	Pran Prashad
1979	Bhaskar Mitter
1980	D. K. Basu
1981	A. L. Mudaliar
1982	K. K. Dutt
1983	Dipak Roy
1984	P. H. St. R. Surita
1985	Dr. Tarun Banerjee
1986	Dr. Dara P. Antia
1987	Jahar Sengupta
1988	Sukhendu Ray
1989	Subimal Ghosh
1990	P. Majumdar
1991	N. M. Ghose
1992	A. Mazumdar
1993	A. Mazumdar
1994	P. M. Narielvala
1994	Arun K. Ghosh
1995	B. N. Bhattacharjee
1996	Aloke Mookherjea



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