CHAPTER V

ARCHITECTURE AND SOME OTHER THINGS

THE ever expanding range of Lord Curzon's intellectual and artistic interests is testified to by the extent of his association, whether in a working or an honorary capacity, with learned societies, and by the number of honorary titles which he held. Besides being Chancellor of one University and for some years Lord Rector of another, he had at one time or another been a Fellow of All Souls College and an Honorary Fellow of Balliol, Romanes Lecturer at Oxford and 'Rede Lecturer at Cambridge; and had been the recipient of the Honorary Degrees of no less than five English and Scottish universities. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society, and in addition to being a Trustee of the National Gallery and a member of the Fine Arts Commission, President and subsequently Trustee of the Royal Geographical Society, he was a Fellow of the British Academy, a Trustee of the British Museum and an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Though his possession of this last distinction was not widely known, it was by no means without significance. The list of Honorary Fellows of the Institute is a small and very select one. It seldom contains more than ten names. The honour, consequently, is a rare one. It was conferred upon Lord Curzon in 1904 as a token of appreciation of the interest in architecture which he had displayed throughout the term of his Viceroyalty, both by his work of preservation and restoration and by his creation of a staff of Government architects with a view to raising the level of public architecture throughout the continent. But it was also given in recognition of the fact that it was in connection with architecture, of which he

had considerable practical as well as theoretical knowledge, that his artistic impulses found at once their most striking and their most characteristic expression. He had an eye for line and colour and an appreciation of a good moulding combined with a practical knowledge of structural detail quite unusual in a layman. And he often said that if politics had not claimed him he believed that he would have succeeded as an architect. Yet what gave to his interest in architecture its special character was neither his technical knowledge nor his aesthetic judgment, but his point of view.

That is not to say that Lord Curzon did not appreciate to the full the utilitarian qualities of a building. With his severely practical mind it would have been surprising if he had not done so. And when during the closing months of his life he devoted so much time and thought to altering Kedleston, he insisted upon the complete modernisation of the famous Adam building, entering as usual into the minutest details himself. There were to be fifteen bathrooms, lifts, a billiard room and an elaborate system of telephones. This last item was one of no small importance, as may be seen from the following correspondence.

> "Don't please ring me up unless for something important," he wrote from Kedleston to his private secretary in London, one day in September 1920. "This house is as large as Windsor Castle. I was busy at the other end of it when I was told you required me on the telephone. It took me two minutes or more to get there, six or seven minutes to get on to you, only to learn that as I was not coming up, you proposed to send me a pouch."

Sir George Cunningham had merely telephoned his message from the Foreign Office in the expectation that it would be taken by a servant, and had little dreamed that it would involve the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in an unnecessary walk downstairs and along passages, still less in a holograph letter of explanation and expostulation.

And if Lord Curzon was keenly alive to this aspect of a building, he was still more sensitive to the artistic qualities of an architect's

and eventually to bequeath to the State, two famous examples of the architecture of different periods of English history.[1]

There was in this the dying gesture of a proud patrician to the people, a fine reminder of his unquestioning acceptance of the obligations attaching to rank. And as one reads those passages of his Will in which he set forth his wishes concerning these princely offerings to the nation, and more particularly his desire that grounds and buildings should be open for all time for the enjoyment of the public, there rises almost inevitably before one's gaze the dramatic scene which accompanied the reading of another famous Will. Had Lord Curzon himself, perhaps, as he penned his carefully thought-out instructions to his Executors, a fleeting glimpse of the Forum of ancient Rome; of the noisy and excited crowd as they hearkened to the persuasive eloquence of Mark Antony; of the effect produced on them as they learned of Julius Cæsar's thought for them—his walks and private arbours and new planted orchards left to them:

> "And to their heirs for ever; common pleasures,
> To walk abroad and recreate themselves?"[2]

The story of his acquisition of Tattershall Castle in Lincolnshire reads like a romance. Public attention had been attracted to the ruin by the rumoured removal from it in 1911 of its four famous mantelpieces dating back to the first half of the 15th century, reputed the finest in the United Kingdom and known to be the models which Pugin had taken for the fireplaces which he designed for the Houses of Parliament. Further publicity had been given to the matter by the public-spirited action of a neighbouring resident, Sir Frances Trippel, in offering, if the National Trust would step in to save the castle and its fireplaces, to advance the money required up to a sum of £5,000 without interest, the anonymous purchaser of the latter having made it known that he would stay his hand if a sum of £2,800 were forthcoming within the next forty-eight hours. For various reasons the Trust declined to act. The fireplaces were accordingly removed and the castle itself became the subject

[1] See Lord Curzon's Will, dated March 8th, 1925.
[2] See Shakespeare's "Julius Cæsar," Act III, Scene 2.

BODIAM CASTLE
Bequeathed by Lord Curzon to the nation

of disquieting rumour, it being widely put about—by interested parties as it afterwards turned out—that the building was to be taken down brick by brick and shipped across the Atlantic.

It was at this juncture that Lord Curzon came upon the scene. He acted with characteristic promptitude. He ran down to Lincoln one November morning, saw the building, and by five o'clock the same afternoon had purchased it by telegram. "I had less than twenty-four hours to do it in," he remarked. Six months later the famous fireplaces were discovered in a store in Bloomsbury, ready packed for shipment to America, and with the generous co-operation of Captain, afterwards Sir, Archibald Weigall, M.P., and other friends, were recovered and restored to their original setting.

His other gift to the nation lay in a different quarter, away in a fold of the Sussex hills where they sweep down to the valley of the Rother. It was, perhaps, because there was no trace of the modern world to mar its ancient and solitary beauty that Bodiam Castle, when his eyes first lit upon it, made so immediate and profound an appeal to Lord Curzon. So potent was the atmosphere that hung over it, that he would have felt little surprise—so he declared in his account of it—had a train of richly clad knights, falcons on their wrists and their ladies mounted on gaily caparisoned palfreys, emerged suddenly from its Barbican Gate. All who are familiar with the sumptuous and erudite volume in which Lord Curzon has traced with his own hand the history of the building and painted a picture of its architectural features,[1] will appreciate the immense amount of labour and research which went to its compilation. Yet incredible though it may seem, the material for the history of Bodiam Castle was collected, and the story itself written, concurrently with those of five—or, if we place in this category the elaborate work on Government House, Calcutta, published in 1925 under the title of "British Government in India," six—other buildings; a task which occupied him at intervals throughout the remainder of his life.

In his pursuit of the life story of these various buildings—Calcutta, Walmer, Hackwood, Tattershall, Bodiam, Montacute and Kedleston—he delved deep into the archives of the Record Office, the British

[1] "Bodiam Castle," published posthumously.

Museum and other institutions; and he perused with unexampled patience and pertinacity page after page of musty parchment on which might be recorded some transaction calculated to throw light on the matter under investigation. "Search must be made," he explained, "in Patent Rolls, Close Rolls, Pipe Rolls, Charter Rolls, Parliamentary Rolls, Inquisitions, Visitations, in the published State Papers, and in any documentary source that tells of the grant or inheritance of lands, the proceedings of Law Courts or of Parliaments, or the gifts and awards of Kings."[1]

To tell in any detail the story of this absorbing quest which had for its goal the production not of a volume, but of a whole series of volumes to be called "The British Mansions Series," would require a book in itself. All that is possible here is to indicate briefly the systematic way in which Lord Curzon set about a task which to him was a hobby and recreation, but which to many men might have sufficed for a life's work.

The story of Bodiam Castle has been the first of six volumes on English houses which he planned, to be given to the world; but it was not the first that he took in hand. His brief occupancy of Walmer Castle in the summer of 1904 had fired him with the ambition of unravelling its past history and piecing together a consecutive story of its Lord Wardens, from Lionel Sackville, Duke of Dorset, who was "the first Lord Warden who is supposed to have resided here and to have built the room in which I am now writing,"[2] up to the present day. And the unhappy associations of his own tenure of the office did nothing to damp his ardour for research into the history of its past. His idea, as set forth in a letter to Mr. Barwick, was to amass and collate all the available material, and from it "to frame a private and unpublished history of the inner life of the castle and the changes through which it has passed."[3] And some time later he explained in greater detail the nature of his aim:

"What I am looking for especially, is the personal aspect of

[1] "Bodiam Castle," p.14.
[2] Letter to Mr. G. F. Barwick, Keeper of Printed Books, British Museum, September 1st, 1904.
[3] Letter dated September 1st, 1904.

the life at Walmer, of the Lord Wardens, their letters from there about the place, the mention of alterations in its structure or appearance, allusions to it in the correspondence of eminent men, incidents that happened there, details about the property attached to the castle or the life and local occupations of the Lord Wardens."[1]

His labour has not been lost. After his death the material which he amassed and the notes which he made together with the manuscript which he had completed, covering the ground up to the death of Lord Liverpool, were entrusted to the competent hands of Mr. Stephen Gwynn; and in the autumn of 1927 the story of Walmer Castle and of the Lord Wardens, planned and more than half written by Lord Curzon and completed from his notes by Mr. Gwynn, was made available to the reading public.

Shortly after his return from India Lord Curzon took Hackwood House near Basingstoke, the property of Lord Bolton, and was soon engaged in studying its past.

"I am looking into the history of this place, which was a famous house inhabited for a century, 1690-1790, by the seven Dukes of Bolton," he wrote, "and since then by the four Lords Bolton. There is a tradition that Capability Brown, whose chief work was done between 1760 and 1780, came here and remodelled the grounds and gardens, and it may well have been so. But we have no definite record. Have you any reference in the Museum to a Life of Brown fuller than that in the Dictionary of National Biography, from which I could derive accurate information? There must somewhere be a record of his work."[2]

A reply to the effect that some at least of the records that Lord Curzon would like to have perused were no longer to be had evoked a sigh of regret—"What a pity it is that records that might so easily be kept, so easily disappear, submerged in private libraries, lost or destroyed."[3]

[1] Letter dated July 25th, 1905.
[2] Letter to Mr. G. F. Barwick, April 18th, 1910.
[3] *Ibid.*, April 21st, 1910.

It was not enough for Lord Curzon that he should piece together the history of the buildings in which he took an interest, difficult and laborious though that task often proved to be. He must also play his own part in the life story of the houses themselves. The zeal with which he planned and carried through his great programme of preservation and restoration of ancient buildings in India, was scarcely more remarkable than the enthusiasm with which, after his return to England, he worked for the preservation and restoration of historic buildings in the English country side. For while in one case he had behind him the financial resources of the State and the professional and administrative assistance of a Government Department, in the other he had to rely on his own unaided effort. It was a positive pain to him to see a building of a particular period losing its character—personality he would have preferred to call it—through ignorance, indifference or neglect from whatever cause arising. And it can only have been a desire to ensure the preservation of the building in keeping with its own distinctive period that caused him in 1914 when heir to Kedleston and in actual occupation of Hackwood House, to take a lease of yet another mansion, which he regarded as being by far the most beautiful house of middle size in England. Once in his possession, Montacute House in Somersetshire underwent complete restoration and was re-furnished from floor to roof.

His interest in the subject was extraordinary, and when Mr. W. H. Helm wrote his book "Homes of the Past," in which he gave a sketch of domestic buildings and life in England from the Norman to the Georgian age, accompanied by a proposal for preserving certain typical houses, each to be furnished as an example of its own time, Lord Curzon not only applauded the proposal but read through the proofs and supplied additional information on little known details of early English life. "I think that your idea of the historical homes is a very good one," he wrote in October 1919, "and before I die I shall have contributed two and possibly three." And after the publication of the book:

> "I received with great pleasure the copy of your excellent book and noticed the interesting interpolation"—this refer-

ring to the information which he had himself supplied—"on baths. As you, I think, point out, they used to bathe together in great tubs in the open air and ablutions were nearly as common as now. . . . The absence of nightgowns or sleeping suits is another feature of domestic existence much in evidence in the stories and wood cuts."[1]

Lord Curzon viewed with dismay the indifference of the age to the sweeping changes which were despoiling England of much that was beautiful and characteristic of her past, both in the great centres of population and in the quiet country side. "One of the glories of the English country is the English village, and the main glory of the English village is the picturesque and smiling cottage in which the English peasant and his forefathers have been wont to dwell," he wrote in a despairing effort to call attention to one at least of the evils which followed in the train of the utilitarian spirit of the day.

> "It would be a national tragedy if in the building or rebuilding of labourers' cottages that is likely to follow any systematic attempt made by the Legislature to improve the conditions of agricultural life, these old buildings were to be replaced by a new type of standardised cottage, dumped down either singly—or still worse—in rows like a lot of band boxes, or canisters, or dog kennels, or whatever may be the parallel suggested by the precise degree of monotony and monstrosity presented in their construction. It is doubtful whether the labourer would be more comfortable—he certainly would not be happier—and a cruel injury would be done to the beauty of the countryside."[2]

The appeal was not without effect; for in the following summer a large number of models and designs of country cottages, embodying the characteristic architectural features of almost every county in England, were sent in by architects from all over the country as exhibits in a competition which was organised in response to it.

[1] Letter dated August 3rd, 1921.
[2] Letter to *Country Life*, October 18th, 1913.

In the meantime Lord Curzon had made an equally impassioned appeal for funds for the preservation, if not of old London itself—for he realised that that was scarcely possible—at least of records, maps and descriptions of it before it had wholly perished and been forgotten. London, he urged the public to remember, was not merely a vast and purposeless aggregation of human beings; it was also a great historical monument, a unique and wonderful treasure-house of the past. "It is a place that has exercised a powerful influence upon the life and growth of the nation; and correspondingly the history of our people has written itself in indelible characters, sometimes in savage scars, upon its face."[1]

Where he was in a position to do so, as in the case, for example, of houses which he himself owned or rented, he gave lavishly both thought and money to the work of restoring to the buildings or their surroundings features which had been lost to them through the carelessness of individuals or the ravages of time. At Hackwood he traced dimly in the undergrowth of the famous Spring Wood, with its giant cedars, beeches and spruces soaring a hundred feet and more into the air, the outline of an ancient cockpit. His curiosity was at once aroused. What had it been like when in use? Had the floor been of soil, or sand, or turf? Would the banks of the arena have been furnished with wooden tiers or grassy steps? Prints of covered-in cockpits by Hogarth and others were extant; but pictures of open air cockpits he had not come across. Did such exist? He turned not for the first time to the Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum—"Once again I wish your kind assistance. I am thinking of restoring an open air cockpit—probably the only one left in England. . . ." His quest was evidently successful, for the cockpit may be seen to-day, a hollow grass-sown cup with sloping bank surrounded by a row of yews and with a flight of steps leading down to the floor of the arena.

In his constant search for, and occasional acquisition of, historic monuments and works of art, Lord Curzon had more than once been brought into sharp collision with persons who trafficked in such things, not so much for love of art as with the hope of profit.

[1] Speech at a General Meeting of the Committee for the survey of the memorials of Greater London, December 14th, 1913.

His knowledge gained at Tattershall, of the means employed for the purpose of raising prices, was added to not long afterwards, in the course of an attempt which he made to preserve in its original setting an historic room known as the Globe room, of the Reindeer Inn at Banbury—"that beautiful specimen," as he described it, "of untouched and unspoiled Jacobean work, equally remarkable for its dark panelled walls, its fine mullioned window and its exquisite plastered ceiling which has for three centuries been the pride of the provincial town."[1] His efforts were unavailing, the room, purchased for a sum believed to be in the neighbourhood of £1,000, was removed and set up in the premises of a dealer in London, by whom it was intimated that it could be bought, the price mentioned being £4,500. On entering into negotiations, Lord Curzon was informed that the room had in the meantime been disposed of though, as in the case of Tattershall, the name of the purchaser was withheld.

> "There," he explained in a letter to *The Times* in which the story of his attempt was set forth, "the matter rests. Whether the Globe room has passed into the hands of some unknown but public spirited benefactor, acting in the interests of the public, or whether it has been made the subject of an arrangement designed to extricate those who are involved from an uncomfortable position, or whether it has entered upon one more phase of its career of unabashed profit hunting, or whether it is fated to disappear from our shores and to turn up in a Transatlantic mansion or a Continental museum, we have no means of ascertaining. We call attention to the matter to show what are the proceedings at Banbury as at Tattershall which those who would fain save the antiquities of our country from vandal hands have to cope with, and how rapacious are the instincts which will tear out panelling and mantelpieces from their ancient surroundings in order to make a dealer's profit out of what should be a nation's glory."[2]

Such experiences were unfortunate. They encouraged the suspicion always latent in Lord Curzon's mind, that persons with whom

[1] *The Times* of August 1st, 1912. [2] *Ibid.*

he transacted business were in the main concerned to get the better of him. They brought to the surface, consequently, a trait in his character which was curiously at variance with his habitually spacious outlook upon life. Despising and condemning meanness in the widest sense in which that term is used—and more particularly meanness of character and pettiness of mind—he nevertheless displayed an almost huckstering spirit in business matters; and while condemning rapacity in others, he openly gloried in getting the better of a bargain. A shrewd appreciation of values derived from the struggles of those early days when, aided by his own exertions, he had with difficulty made the two ends of an exiguous income meet; a certain pride in the possession of knowledge of the kind; an intense dislike of being done—since to be worsted predicated obvious inefficiency—all these led him to drive hard bargains and made of him a man with whom to do business was seldom easy and sometimes far from pleasant.

He himself used to tell with obvious delight an amusing story of the way in which, on one occasion, he foiled the rapacity with which he invariably credited all dealers in works of art. There was advertised for sale at Christie's a particularly fine red lacquer cabinet for which he had determined to bid. On the day of the sale he was detained at an important meeting and on reaching the sale room learned, to his annoyance, that the lot had already passed under the hammer. Ascertaining the price and the name of the dealer from the provinces to whom the cabinet had been knocked down, he journeyed to his establishment, where the following conversation took place:—

Lord Curzon: "I should think Mr. So-and-so, that they will be making you a peer before long."

The dealer: "Why do you say that, my Lord?"

Lord Curzon: "Oh, because of your well-known political views, to say nothing of the immense profits which you must make on the works of art in which you deal."

The dealer: "I assure you, my Lord, that I never look for a profit of more than 10 per cent. on anything that I buy."

Lord Curzon: "Is that so? Then I will give you 10 per cent. on that lacquer cabinet which you have recently purchased."

The dealer though manifestly disconcerted had no choice but to agree. And the cabinet may be seen to-day at the foot of the staircase in Lord Curzon's home in Carlton House Terrace.

Lord Curzon's suspicions were not confined to dealers in works of art. He started with the assumption that all contractors were his enemies. His dealings with them took the form, consequently, of an odd kind of warfare in which he usually—though not always—came off the victor. His strategy was simple, his preference being for a direct frontal attack. He merely knocked off from their accounts the amount which he regarded as constituting the excess over a reasonable profit. This procedure did not always pass without challenge. A firm which he had treated in this way wrote back to him on one occasion in terms which caused him acute anguish for many days afterwards.

When towards the end of his life he began the work which he had long planned at Kedleston, he sought an architect upon whose services he should have first call, and in Mr. A. S. G. Butler he found a man who was prepared to throw himself heart and soul into the task in prospect. The Agreement between them was drawn up much in the form of a Convention between the Governments of two Powers and with all the care that, as Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon would have devoted to the drafting of such a document. Even the quality of the meals to which the architect would be entitled in the owner's absence was exactly stipulated.

In all these transactions it was the reputation for shrewdness which he valued, and not the savings which he effected; for he spent money lavishly and without the smallest tinge of regret provided that the return which he obtained for his outlay was satisfactory. At Hackwood, which he held on a comparatively short lease only, he spent thousands of pounds on improvements, going so far as to have a mound of solid chalk rising at its greatest point to a height of from twelve to fourteen feet above the surrounding level, which interrupted to some extent the view over the park from the ground floor windows, bodily removed. Yet he would write pages in his own hand, disputing over the most trifling outlays which he considered should be made by the landlord rather than by the tenant. A somewhat cold reception accorded by the

landlord's agent to a suggestion which he made shortly after the outbreak of war in 1914, that the estate should supply the material required for the repair of a pond which he wished to undertake, called forth a typical reply—"Really isn't it rather shabby haggling over the petty contributions I ask you to make? . . . I am sometimes almost stupefied at the meanness of the whole thing, the tenant spending thousands on beautifying another man's place, the latter's agent huckstering over a few pounds."

Similarly the somewhat frequent appeals for funds to meet church expenses at once conjured up visions of inefficient management.

> "It seems to me quite wrong that Mr. A. should have these incessant church expenses collections. On each of the three occasions on which I have been present in the last six weeks there has been such a collection. There is not a church in England where there is such an incessant demand for this object. Once a month or twice a quarter ought to be quite enough . . . I have often given £1 to a church expenses collection here. But I will not do this if on every occasion when I enter the church I feel I am forcibly to be dunned for the same object."

A steady rise in the rates was responsible for a prodigious correspondence. Detailed figures showing the increase in certain rates from £86 4s. 10d. in 1908 to £117 9s. 9d. in 1914, were laboriously set out and communicated to the agent for his inspection—"Is there to be no stop to this progressive increase?" Lord Curzon asked. An appeal was suggested; but the suggestion met with little favour.

> "I think you have forgotten that exactly two years ago I spent £20 in a futile appeal against the enhanced assessment of this house. I regard the assessment of this house and estate as scandalous. But my experience two years ago was that I can get no justice from the Assessment Committee. What, therefore, is the good of my appealing again? Do you wish to join me in such an appeal? Two years ago you left me to

bear the entire burden whereas it seems to me that we are equally concerned."

The question of repairs was a constant source of controversy. "The roof of coal shed which I have frequently advised you either to repair or to take down since it is a part of your obligation, has now fallen in as I always told you it would." It was all a question whether under the clause of the lease by which the landlord bound himself to keep the main walls and roof of the mansion house in order, he was bound to keep in similar repair all adjacent buildings. Lord Curzon thought he was—"It was precisely the point that you name about which I took legal advice, viz., that the roof of the mansion carries with it the contiguous buildings. . . . The coal shed has been in a state of dilapidation ever since I came here and I have not the slightest intention of repairing it. If the landlord chooses to dispute his liability I have nothing to say to that; I merely suggest in your own interest that you should save what slates you can while there is time."

The exacting and litigious spirit in which he approached all such matters did sometimes end by landing him in the law courts. "Can you name a competent solicitor to me in Basingstoke," he enquired one Sunday morning, "to represent me in a rather troublesome case with a horse-dealer in the County Court?" A recommendation was duly made; but the nominee had already been briefed by the opposing party and Lord Curzon tried again—"I wrote to Mr. A. only to hear that he is appearing for X. in the case about the horse. As I mentioned to you Mr. B. cannot appear for me because he is Registrar of the Court. I would rather not employ Mr. C. because of the very rude letters that he wrote to me when he represented Y. in the —case. I have never had such letters from a solicitor . . . "

And if it was distrust of the intentions of other people that led him to approach all business matters in an aggressive and unaccommodating spirit, it was similarly distrust of the ability of anyone else to do justice to his case that was the cause of his rooted aversion to delegate work of any kind to others. One day not long before his departure from England to take up his appointment as Viceroy of India, he was surprised by a friend hurrying from room to room

in his house in London, his shirt sleeves rolled up, a pencil and a sheaf of paper in his hands. He was making an inventory of his furniture before leaving. His view of the utility of a secretary was well illustrated by a casual remark in a letter to Ian Malcolm, who had promised to look out for a suitable person for him—"I am so busy with *Frontiers*"—the Romanes Lecture which he was preparing to deliver—"and Oxford that I have carted secretary for the moment; but will take advantage of your good nature later."[1]

He insisted on the smallest detail of estate management being submitted to him in person and complained bitterly if this was not done. "If, as I am informed, it is the case that you have invited people to play on the golf course in Hackwood Park"—though Lord Curzon had the shooting he did not rent the Park—"without reference to me, I must say that this is a procedure which I have every right to resent. I am willing enough to let people use it, but at least I expect to issue the invitations myself."[2] A small alteration to the water-works done without prior consultation with him elicited a similar rebuke—"The water-works arrangement seems to me rather faulty. I never hear anything about it until I get the bill. Clearly as I have to pay two thirds I ought to know what is going on."

Yet he sometimes professed indignation at being troubled unnecessarily. "It is rather hard in all my overwhelming work to be bothered by you with these complaints about rabbits," he wrote on June the 8th, 1921. "Your letter cost me six letters or perhaps twenty minutes of time which I cannot afford and now you trouble me again. Do for Heavens sake write to A. though he is the subtenant." A week later—"It would have been so easy for you to relieve me by writing your complaints to A. instead of taking the pedantic line of bothering me. I often wonder why it gives you so much pleasure to avoid the courtesies of life." And on July the 13th: "I am astonished that instead of plaguing me with these letters you do not take the simple and, I should have thought, obvious course of writing to A. himself. However you seem bent on causing me as much annoyance as you can, and you certainly succeed."

[1] Letter dated October 18th, 1907.
[2] Letter to the Agent, 20th April, 1913.

These traits in a man of Lord Curzon's breadth of vision are amazing. Taken by themselves they give an altogether false impression of his character. *Prima facie* they suggest a meanness from which Lord Curzon would himself have recoiled in horror. Of course he never saw them in this light. He saw in them a perfectly natural display of a very proper business capacity which far from being reprehensible was wholly meritorious. He consequently added to his offence in the eyes of those who did not see matters precisely as he did, by glorying in them. His many acts of private generosity he kept to himself. His gifts to the community—both in India and in Great Britain—were, of course, well known; though few were aware, perhaps, that the reason why he kept Bodiam Castle in his own hands during his lifetime was that he was prepared to spend more money on its upkeep than he thought that any public department would feel justified in doing. He confided to a correspondent who, being unaware of his intentions, had enquired tentatively whether he would be willing to part with it, that he had already spent nearly £5,000 on its restoration, and that until it passed on his death to the nation, he proposed to continue spending on it all that was required to keep it in a proper state of preservation.[1]

Another example of his indifference to money as such is provided by his action in 1915 in repaying to the Treasury sums amounting to between £600 and £700 which had been paid to him in respect of his salary as a member of the Cabinet. His explanation was given in a letter to the Prime Minister:

> "At a time when the Government is preaching and ought, therefore, to be practising economy, I do not like the feeling of drawing a salary so greatly in excess either of my own deserts or of the work which I am called upon to perform as that which I now receive . . . I ask your permission to serve the State so long as I have the honour to be a member of your Government holding only a nominal office (that of Lord Privy Seal) in an unpaid capacity."[2]

That he had refused payment for his services which, though he held charge of no administrative Department, were sufficiently

[1] Letter to Major B. Baden Powell, October 19th, 1921.
[2] Letter dated August 5th, 1915.

arduous, became known at the time. But how many even among his closest friends were aware of his many acts of private generosity and kindliness? Of the banking account of a friend of his youth guaranteed? Of the financial aid rendered to a writer fallen on evil days, whose works he happened to admire? Of the gift to a humble Indian Servant in far away Madras, a man quite unknown to him, but one whose gallant deed in trying to save an Englishman in danger, long after he had himself left India, had come to his notice through the columns of an Indian newspaper?[1]

Nothing, indeed, has been more striking than the number of letters which I have received during the past two years from persons in every stratum of society testifying to Lord Curzon's instinctive generosity and kindliness of heart. Somewhere in this country there is—or was—a young man bearing the name, George Curzon Crabb. He is the owner of a treasured silver christening cup, the gift of his godfather. It was mere chance combined with a thoughtful impulse on the part of a passing traveller that dowered him with so eminent a godparent. He happened to be the infant son of a country chemist to whose shop Lord Curzon was taken for a bandage when he met with a motor accident in 1908. Nor did Lord Curzon's innate generosity stop short at the bestowal of mere material gifts. His interest once aroused, he would spare no pains to assist a fellow worker. Like the author of "Ozias Humphry" and "John Zoffany,"[2] many speak in terms of the warmest gratitude of laborious aid ungrudgingly rendered to them. These are but a few examples taken at random. But it is in these and such as these, rather than in the extravagant economies of an intelligible idiosyncrasy, that is to be found a key to the real character of the man.

[1]The occasion was the assassination of Mr. H. O. D. Harding, District Court Judge, at Trichinopoly in December 1915. The Court Daffadar, an old man of over fifty, grappled with the assassin and was badly wounded. The story was told by Mr. E. L. Thornton, a former judge of the district, in a letter to the *Statesman* of Calcutta, in which he asked for funds to purchase the Daffadar a plot of land. It was this letter which in the midst of his exacting labours in 1916 caught Lord Curzon's eye and moved him to send a contribution to the fund.

[2]Dr. G. C. Williamson, D.Litt., who tells me that in spite of the overwhelming burden which Lord Curzon was carrying at the time—the books in question were published in 1918 and 1920 respectively—he devoted an immense amount of time and trouble towards obtaining for him certain material of which he was in need.