

## CHAPTER I

### Introductory

The design of Government House, Calcutta, is an adaptation of the plan of Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire which was built for Lord Scarsdale, the great-great-grandfather of Lord Curzon of Kedleston, in the years 1759-1770 by the renowned architect Robert Adam. Although the fame of Kedleston was on many lips in the second half of the 18th century on account of its decorative features and the beauty of its style, it was not this so much as the remarkable suitability of the general design to the conditions of a tropical climate which led to its adoption as the general model for Government House, Calcutta, which was built in the years 1799-1803.

The scheme of a great central pile with curving corridors radiating from its four angles to detached wings, each constituting a house in itself, was admirably adapted to a climate where every breath of air from whatever quarter must be seized.

Government House resembles Kedleston Hall in the broad external features of shape, design and orientation, in the extreme dimensions from East to West, in the concentration of the main State rooms in the middle pile, in the placing there of a great marble hall supported by columns and in the superimposition of a dome above the Southern façade, but the two houses differ radically both in material and arrangement. Kedleston is built mainly of a grey or yellowish sandstone and only partly of brick while Government House is built entirely of brick covered over with white plaster which is color-washed every year. They differ also in completeness of construction, only two of the projecting wings having been finished at Kedleston, whereas Government House has all four. Government House also has a semi-circular projecting portico and colonnade on the South front which Kedleston lacks. Another point of dissimilarity is that the curved corridors at Government House are two stories high and so their roof line is level with that of the wings and of the main building, whereas at Kedleston the corridors are only one storey high so that the wings stand up higher than the curving corridors which join them to the central pile. Government House in addition has spacious verandahs on the Southern face which are absent and unnecessary at Kedleston.

In the interior, Government House differs from Kedleston in that above the Marble Hall at Government House is a Ball Room, whereas at Kedleston the Marble Hall is carried right up to the roof and is lit by skylights. Also there is a grand central internal staircase at Kedleston whereas at Government House there are four comparatively small staircases at the four angles of the central pile which are very much better suited for the arrangements which have to be made for the coming and going of public entrée and private entrée guests at large functions.

GOVERNMENT HOUSE, CALCUTTA.

FIRST FLOOR.

Scale 100' = 1"

