two

Ancestors

A Methodist, a Soldier, and a "Lady Not Entirely White"

On a steaming July day in 1810, the air still wet after the morning rain, a young Englishman leaned on the railing of an East India Company frigate dropped at anchor in the Bay of Bombay. He was of medium height, with the brown eyes and even darker brown hair that bespoke his Welsh heritage. William Vawdrey Glascott, named after a family friend in Cornwall, William Vawdrey, who in turn gave two of his sons the middle name of Glascott, answered to the name of Billy or Will. He was to become Anna's grandfather. But at the moment he was twenty-one and just beginning the great adventure of his life. Billy had joined up with the Indian Army, the private army of the British East India Company, as a cadet, and now strained eagerly on the crowded deck for his first sight of the foreign city where he planned to spend his life.

The *Sir Steven Lushington* was a big Indiaman with a 608 tonnage (Sutton, 155), making its last voyage to the East. The voyages from England in the East India Company's Indiamen were full of horrors. "There were courts-martials innumerable amongst the recruits" (Hervey, *A Soldier of the Company*, 9). One traveler related that "the cat o' nine tails was constantly at work" during his voyage in 1809, and "so many of the soldiers on board were flogged" that at last the captain intervened, "and informed the senior military officer that he 'would not have his quarter-deck turned into a slaughter-house" (Cotton, 60). But the greatest danger was disease, and the decks were filled with sick and often dying men.

The trip had taken four months because it was made in the old days, before the development of the Overland Route, when passengers from Europe could travel by land to Suez and there pick up a regular steamer on to India. The first scheduled steamer east from Suez did not sail for another twenty

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years, and it would be sixty years before the Suez Canal opened in 1869, allowing ships to sail due east from the ports of Europe. 1810 was still the age when travelers to India took the long route. Billy's ship left Portsmouth on March 14, 1810, and sailed south, down the west coast of the African continent, around the stormy Cape of Good Hope, then north, up the east coast. Turning east at last, on its port side the ship passed the Persian Empire and crossed the Arabian Sea to the western coast of the Indian subcontinent.

Billy's first sight was an enormous semicircular bay lined with waving coconut palms, just visible along the low hills. The air had changed, and now carried the strong smells of rotting fish and dank shallow waters. There were seabirds screeching everywhere. Small boats swarmed around the ship, the people in them holding up their wares to the foreigners. There was an air of celebration, making it easy to forget the ugly truth that these new soldiers, most without any training, had come to strengthen an army of occupation, that they were reinforcements of the foreigners who held these lands by force against the wish of most of its Indian peoples.

The Company did have a military academy, known officially as the East-India Company's Artillery and Engineer Seminary, unofficially as Addiscombe. It took boys from fourteen to eighteen to train them for the artillery or engineers, considered the more elite branches of the Company's military. Admission required that a boy must "have a fair knowledge of Arithmetic, write a good hand, and possess a competent knowledge of English and Latin Grammar" (Vibart, 15). The fee was sixty pounds for two years, high enough to keep out most would-be cadets, who joined the infantry instead. The boys who joined the Company's army were typically impoverished second and third sons or bastards (since the class structure and sexual mores of Great Britain created a seemingly endless supply), and from country families all over England, Scotland, and Ireland.

William Hickey, a cadet a few years before Billy, left us a vivid account of the emptiness of the testing process:

> I attended before a Committee of Directors to undergo the usual examination as a Cadet. Being called into the Committee room . . . I saw three old Dons sitting close to the fire, having by them a large table, with pens, ink, paper, and a number of books lying upon it. Having surveyed me, . . . one of them . . . said:
>
> "Well young gentleman, what is your age?" Having answered
>
> "Nineteen," he continued:
>
> "Have you ever served, I mean been in the army? Though I presume from your age and appearance you cannot."

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I replied, "I had not."
"Can you go through the manual exercise?"
"No, sir."
"Then you must take care and learn it." I bowed.
"You know the terms upon which you enter our service?"
"Yes, sir."
"Are you satisfied therewith?"
"Yes, sir."

A clerk who was writing at the table then told me I might withdraw, . . . I went to Mr. Coggin's office, who . . . presented me with my appointment as a cadet. (Callahan, 18)

Here was an examination that was hard to fail. Billy had "Passed the Court" on January 24, 1810.

Billy was a cadet of the lowest status. First, he was in the infantry, the worst paid of the East India Company's three military branches. John Low, who served in and around Bombay during the second decade of the nineteenth century, wrote home vigorously warning mothers against letting their sons join the infantry. As Ursula Low (34) put it, "the lot of the Infantry Officer in the pay of John Company at this date appears to have been deplorable." Second, even in the infantry, there were better and worse assignments. Billy got a worse, a Native Infantry regiment, meaning all native troops with only the officers European. Third, Billy had been sent to Bombay, the lone company center on the west coast of India, rather than to Madras or Calcutta on the east coast. Bombay had a reputation throughout Britain and its colonies as "the last choice of all ambitious young writers and cadets" (Furber, *John Company at Work*, 212).

In the early nineteenth century, huge sections of the Indian subcontinent were not controlled by the British. Three major British territories had been carved out in different regions, which the English, with typical arrogance, had named the presidencies. Each had a port city, with a fort from which the East India Company would send out its armies. Bombay was a much less active military center than the two east coast presidencies, but it was the busiest port.

Soldiers assigned to the two east coast presidencies had much better financial opportunities. The battle pay, called *batta*, was not for being in battles at all. It was a bonus received whenever a soldier was sent outside the boundaries of company territory, and paid to him as long as he was stationed there. The beautiful and alluring fact was that from the moment a battalion marched out of company territory, every man received this bonus. The Company's *batta* policy, which the directors in London were always trying

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to eliminate and the soldiers were always clamoring to increase, was the major financial mistake which from the late eighteenth century on kept the Company in bankruptcy while its army flourished. And it is why so many senior officers in the field used extremely dubious arguments (an "insult" had been given, spies spoke of gathering arms) as excuses to invade a prince's territory and stay. It is hard to overestimate the importance of the *batta* policy in the history of the British takeover of India.

In Bombay, where "allowances were low, pickings slim, and expenses higher than anywhere else in India" (Callahan, 27), soldiers almost never received *batta* or prize money. In terms of daily business opportunities, the commonest being to get a percentage on the food sold to the regiments at the bazaars, Bombay soldiers made the least extra money. They also waited the longest for their promotions, and they still died by the thousands of disease. All these details marked Billy Glascott as one of those "doomed to Bombay" (Furber, *John Company at Work*, 212).

In the British Army, officers joined with a commission, which was expensive and required a recommendation by a gentleman. The notion was straightforward: officers were "gentlemen," well-born, well-connected, and having money or relatives with money. This simple system ensured for generations that the officers in the Crown's service, those responsible as leaders for the military protection and the advance of Britain, all came from the same elite social class.

The startling fact is that from the seventeenth through the middle of the nineteenth centuries there were two different armies in England. One was the Crown's; the other was the private military arm of the East India Company. The Company's army had its own system for officers. They did receive commissions and needed a sponsor. But there the similarity to the Crown's system ended. Men joined the Indian Army precisely because they did not have the social status, connections, or money to join the Royal Army. The directors were explicitly "opposed to the appointment of well-born men as officers for fear that they would resent being ordered about by merchants and become quarrelsome" (Bryant, 204). The Company wanted its officers to be subservient, socially and professionally, to the merchants they served. It wanted, in Warren Hastings's words, to "afford employment and support to the middle-class of the subjects of Great Britain" (Bryant, 220).

Still, recruitment was a permanent problem. Company officers had a bad reputation, as "base born adventurers" and "people of very low education" (Cadell, 45). The Duke of York dismissed the Company's officers as "young men who have ruined themselves and are obliged to fly the Country or very

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low people who are sent to make their fortunes." Until the nineteenth century, "the quality of men attracted to the service was poor: a band of political renegades, runaway debtors, ne'er-do-wells, illiterates and ancients." Indeed, "a certain degree of financial and social desperation had been required for a man to become an officer in the Company's army" (Bryant, 203–5). With "their heterogeneous social background" (Bryant, 219) and their typical dream of having a small business in India, these men's lives were a far cry from the world of the British Army's "officer and a gentleman."

So what could have led Anna's grandfather to join this disreputable army? Billy was minor gentry, but still gentry, the second son of an obscure country parson. But Reverend Cradock Glascott was a "very remarkable man" (Martin, 357), part of a revivalist movement called Methodism within the Church of England, which swept the countryside and the industrial cities in the eighteenth century. Calling themselves the "Bible Christians," these serious young men were dedicated to serving the poor, whom they saw (somewhat accurately) as abandoned by the Church. In 1767, Cradock Glascott joined a famous group of these ministers who worked as itinerant preachers, known because of their patron as "Lady Huntingdon's Connexion." He described in his diary a sermon he gave in 1768, when he was twenty-six: "last Sunday after a Volley of Eggs and huzzas, which obliged us to preach some distance from the Tree, I preached to two or three hundred in the highway, who for the [most] part were very serious and attentive [and] entreated me to come again" (Welch, 100). By 1781 he was still riding all over England ("I am engaged to preach this week at Darleston, Walsal, Dudley, Bromwich and Birmingham . . . if the weather is favourable a table will be my pulpit, the Canopy of Heavens my Sounding board"), and the response was phenomenal. "At Darleston we had at least fifteen hundred poor Colliers and Nailors," and at Nottingham "at eight in the morning we had at least two thousand and in the evening at the Market cross at a moderate computation there were not less than Five thousand" (Martin, 358).

Rev. Glascott was a traveling preacher for an astounding fourteen years. In December 1781, he accepted a poorly paid position as vicar in the little town of Hatherleigh in Devon, in the west of England. His traveling days were over. He and his beloved wife, Mary, the daughter of William Edmonds, spent the next five decades never moving from the solid square parsonage. (See figure 1.) The Glascotts had five children. Mary Ann was born in March 1785. A year and a half later came the first son, Cradock John, baptized on November 20, 1786. Then came Billy (William Vawdrey), baptized on July 26, 1789. Three years later a third son, Thomas, was baptized on August 29,

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figure 1. Hatherleigh Parsonage, as it looked in 2001. Photo: Susan Morgan.

1792. And finally, in 1794 there was the fifth and youngest, named Selina in honor of the reverend's beloved patroness, the Countess of Huntingdon, but who died before the age of two. Billy carried the warm memory of these siblings with him throughout his life in India. Their names echo throughout this narrative, reincarnated as his descendants. Billy named his first daughter Mary Anne, Anna named her first child Selina, and Williams and Vawdreys abound.

Rev. Glascott served with great success as vicar of Hatherleigh for fifty years, the lone Methodist in the region, much admired by his fellow Methodists as "the one solitary clergyman shining as a light in a district which embraced a large number of parishes" (Bourne, 3). He died, at age eighty-nine, on August 11, 1831. His half century of dedicated service to the small town in Devon is memorialized by a plaque on the south wall inside the church. It pays tribute to the spirit and the achievement of the man Hatherleigh Parish considers its greatest spiritual leader.

Billy was the only one of the children to leave. The other three stayed home, two right in Devon and the other in Gloucester. Mary Ann married Samuel Walkey, a surgeon, on July 6, 1811. The couple lived in Exeter until Mary Ann died on Christmas Day, 1857. Cradock John followed in his father's footsteps. He took a B.A. from Trinity College, Dublin, in 1807 and was ordained. He did not have a prosperous career. He started as a curate

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(below the vicar) at Exmouth, on the Devon coast, marrying Georgiana Goodin Bourke in June 1814. For years he boarded pupils in Exmouth to make ends meet. Finally in 1838 he received his own living, as the vicar of Seaton-cum-Beer, Exeter Diocese, with an annual income of 265 pounds and a house. He and Georgiana had six children (Edmund, Ann Jane, a baby who died, Georgina Charlotte, Editha Mary Ann, and Mary Ann Letitia). The couple died within three weeks of each other in 1867, after a half century of married life.

Thomas also followed his father's career, and he too spent decades in poverty. After attending Balliol College, Oxford, he was ordained and got a small curacy, at Stockleigh Pomeroy, from 1815, and then in 1818 became curate of Rodborough, in Gloucester. Thomas married his Devon sweetheart, Caroline August Morris, in 1819. He remained a curate in Rodborough for twenty-two long years. Finally, in 1840 Thomas became the vicar of Rodborough, with an impressive annual income of 310 pounds and a house. Thomas and Caroline had at least one son, who also grew up to be a curate, and later spent almost twenty years as the chaplain at Versailles.

Rev. Glascott's radical Methodist position had put him and his children outside the sphere of social influence and mentoring. Cradock John's and Thomas's long years in genteel poverty were an inevitable cost of their father's religious actions, which deprived his children as well as himself of the social and professional connections so necessary for advancement among the English gentry. Billy's response to his lack of prospects in England was not to settle for a poorly paid curacy but to sail away and take his chances in India.

Billy Glascott's peaceful childhood in rural Devon was in stark contrast to the life he lived in Bombay. The city had been British since 1660, when the monarchy was restored to the throne after Cromwell's Puritan Revolution, with its distaste of many things, including theaters and all things foreign, had failed. Charles II married Catherine of Braganza, daughter of the king of Portugal, whose dowry included the island of Bombay. The problem was that the Portuguese had controlled Bombay for two centuries, had married locals for generations, and rejected the notion that Bombay was now British. When a British Army force of five ships and more than four hundred soldiers sailed into the bay in 1662, the Portuguese governor refused to allow them to land. The stalemate went on for three years, by which time out of the original "force of 400 just 97 emaciated castaways finally . . . scrambled ashore at Bombay" (Keay, 133). They were the unprepossessing beginning of the Army of Bombay. In 1668, "heartily glad to

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be rid of the place," Charles ceded the island to the East India Company (Keay, 131).

By 1810, Bombay was a bustling place, dotted with low wooden buildings called factories, where the Company stored its goods. The famous crescent-shaped harbor was a forest of masts, full of ships loading and unloading at the docks or anchored farther out and waiting their turn for a spot. When Eliza Fay landed in 1784, "the many fine ships building and repairing with the number of Europeans walking about, almost persuaded me I was at home, till the dress and dark complexion of the workmen destroyed the pleasing illusion" (Fay, 233). Commercial shipping was what nourished and sustained Bombay.

Behind the docks stretched the town, with a population of more than one hundred thousand, the islands joined by the land reclamation projects of the eighteenth century. Behind the town were the Deccan Mountains, rising four to five thousand feet. In 1810 there were several hundred stone buildings, wide avenues, and an extensive grassy area in front of the bay, called "Bombay Green." Many travelers were moved by the first sight of Bombay, with "the foothills very green after the monsoon, the sea very blue, the buildings mostly white and looking very gorgeous from the sea, and altogether a feeling of opulence and luxuriance" (Allen, 37).

Travelers emphasized the city's cosmopolitan character. Captain Hall, a British naval officer, wrote in 1812 that "in twenty minutes walk through the bazaar of Bombay my ears have been struck by the sounds of every language that I have heard in any other part of the world, uttered not in corners and by chance as it were, but in a tone and manner which implied that the speakers felt at home" (Albuquerque, xiv). Only Singapore would have a similar reputation for an international population. But in 1810 Singapore had yet to be dreamed of, let alone built.

As one of the few European-controlled ports in India, and the major port on the west coast, Bombay was a center for craftsmen, a place where one could buy anything.

> Ports in the Persian Gulph furnished its merchants with pearls, raw-silk, Carmenia wool, dates, dried fruits, rose water, ottar of roses. . . . Arabia supplied them with coffee, gold, drugs, and honey. . . . China [supplied] tea, sugar, porcelain, wrought silks, nankeens. . . . From . . . the eastern islands they brought spices, ambergris, perfumes, arrack, and sugar; the cargoes from . . . Africa consisted chiefly of ivory, slaves, and drugs; while the different parts of India produce cotton, silk, muslin, pearls, diamonds, and every precious gem. (Forbes, 97)

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But the single most important product in Bombay was ships. The harbor boasted an enormous dockyard, center of a major international shipbuilding business that played a key role in the history of Bombay, of Europe, and of the Americas. In 1736, the Company brought in a group of Parsi carpenters from Surat. This extraordinary family took the surname Wadia, meaning "shipbuilder." They were about to revolutionize shipping throughout the world.

The ships were teak, built at a time when the great oak forests of southern England were being depleted. Bombay ships not only cost far less, handled better, and were stronger, they lasted "thirty years against an English vessel's average of twelve." By 1810, the Company had a superb supply of Bombay-built ships, including the famous Indiamen, and so did the Royal Navy. The Wadias were the first family of Bombay, an international business dynasty. Their status was so high that an English lady in 1809 who met the brothers assured her readers that "I should never guess they were not Englishmen, if I did not see their dark faces and foreign dress, or read their unusual names at the end of a letter" (Asiatic Society of Bombay, n.p.). One Wadia mansion has been taken over by Bollywood. It is owned by a major film studio, Raj Kamal.

For all Bombay's commercial bustle, daily life was somewhat quiet. The Chinese, the Hindus, the Muslims, the Europeans, the Parsis, the Armenians, and many others banded together in their own neighborhoods. The British living in the fine neighborhoods of Byculla and Mazagaon included "a few very wealthy merchants, some talented civilians, and a number of military officers" (Asiatic Society of Bombay, n.p.), all company employees. In England the richest were called nabobs, men who had made enough money in India to be thought of virtually as princes. The other group of Europeans in Bombay were the soldiers. They lived in the military cantonment, the "Fort," on the right side when facing the city from the water, balancing the softly rolling Malabar Hills on the left. There were crowded barracks, long "single-storied buildings with thatched roofs," for the European regiments (Bancroft, 9). The buildings were far apart, to pick up breezes, with open areas where the sepoys slept, no buildings being provided for them.

And then there were the tents, thousands of tents, an entire city of tents. They belonged both to the sepoys and the European regiments. Those living outside kept their gear in these semipermanent tents, although all cooking throughout the cantonment was done outside. The tents not only kept out the fierce rains, they conveniently solved the expanding needs of a diverse and ever-changing military population. For the fact was that the Fort was not a

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world of soldiers. It was a city, housing all the people and animals connected to the soldiers: the water haulers, cooks, barbers, washerwomen, food vendors, and the buffaloes and chickens. Soldiers in the canton, European and Indian, typically lived with their families, their ladies (legal or illegal), their children, and a variety of relatives. There were tens of thousands of camp followers connected in some way to the Bombay Army who lived in the tents.

When the army went on marches, the camp followers went too, loading hundreds of bullock carts with tents and necessities, including their children, for life on the road. The women who followed the army were known as "heavy baggage." When they camped, one area was for the soldiers and another for the families. "This assemblage of tents, *pals* and hovels, of a variety of forms and sizes, presents a striking contrast to the regular encampment. . . . Tis only the poverty-stricken married soldiery who are so miserably provided for" (Hervey, *A Soldier of the Company*, 132).

Billy Glascott was quick to learn canton life. He began his military career in India as an ensign in the Fourth Regiment of Native Infantry as of July 2, 1810. The Native Infantry, or N.I., reflected the Company's recruitment problems. Given the absence of willing Europeans, it turned to the "topas" (or "topaz"), a military term for the local descendents of Portuguese/Indian intermingling, and then to the non-Christian natives, the sepoys. Billy was an officer to sepoys. What Billy, and everyone else, actually did while on duty was simple. In 1810 the Company's military strategy for training and exercising infantry was to have them form orderly lines and practice being able to march in step, turn, and stop on command. One kneeled or stood, depending on which line one was in. And one fired. Training for battle meant virtually nothing more than drilling: learning by endless repetition the commands for moving in a group. So Billy drilled. Off duty, he grew to know and love Bombay.

Billy was a lowly ensign for more than four years. But if you did not think too much about promotion, then life in Bombay was grand. Billy would have agreed with another ensign's reminiscences of those times, that "all that one has ever heard, or read, or conceived of India, falls infinitely short of the reality; and so lively, so novel, so animated, and so interesting is that picture which presents itself, that the effect has a much greater resemblance to enchantment, than to fact" (Welsh, 1–2). Billy lived in the officers' barracks, set up his "cot" from the ship, with his boxes under it, and enjoyed the noisy company. It did not take him long to learn that the best place to sleep, and the best place to live as well, was outside.

After finishing the day's drills, this country boy spent much of his time exploring the city. He learned that "*here* no European uses his own legs; but that

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all ranks and ages must bend to the custom of the place, and be carried" (Welsh, 3). And carried he was, in a palanquin that used, on average, twelve people to carry one European. Radically changed from that July morning when he first saw Bombay, Billy was no longer a sheltered Englishman of pious upbringing from Devon. He could never go back to being simply an Englishman again. Part of what defined him as a nationality had melted in the heat and the intense smell for which Bombay was notorious. It featured a putrid combination of the sea and the low marshes and the garbage and the effluvia of so many thousands of people, and only the monsoons were strong enough to blow it away. A century earlier, Dr. Fryer, a company surgeon, had noted rather pompously that "the people of Bombay walk in a Charnal house, the climate being extremely unhealthy, at first thought to be caused by *bukshor* or rotten fish but though that is prohibited, yet it continues mortal. [There is] an infecundity of the earth, and a putridness in the air" (Rodrigues, 115).

But the sea breezes and the rains could refresh this city of low marshy islands, and Bombay soon enough began to smell comfortingly familiar. Like many others, Billy realized that "as I shall probably never more visit England, [I] will make everything as agreeable for myself as possible." The Englishmen in the Company's army shared a "sense of exile in an alien land" (Callahan, 25), but most also shared a sense that India was now home. Billy became comfortable with ways of thinking and living that were incomprehensible to his family back on that other, colder island.

Life in "an European regiment was not, at that time, the best school for either industry, morals, or sobriety" (Welsh, 9). But Billy had learned from his father a deep concern for the lives of local peoples, a sense of equality with the poor, and a respect for the views and opinions of those whose experiences were far from his own. Growing up in a family that had itself been marked as different, and that prized the inner life over the externals of rank and wealth, Billy brought to Bombay neither the typical snobbery nor the ignorant fear of foreigners that characterized too many of his fellow cadets and officers in India. His Methodist faith had prepared him well. It had taught him tolerance and humility, a respect for spirituality rather than its trappings, and that poverty was not a sign of spiritual paucity and was, in fact, nothing to fear.

Sepoy and European alike, brought together in this strange and in so many ways unethical military enterprise known as the Honourable Company's Army, shared basic qualities of the military life. The days, filled with "drills of all kinds, morning, noon, and afternoon" (Bancroft, 21), were repetitious

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and deadening. Billy's lack of cultural arrogance probably helped to save him from the demons that destroyed so many unhappy Englishmen in India: drinking, debts, duels, and gambling (Ram, 63, 74). He became acquainted with the sepoys in the Fourth N.I., many of whom were of a higher class and generally more cosmopolitan than he. Billy and some of the other Europeans spent many of their evenings talking and drinking with their men, particularly the group leaders known as the subedars. He learned the views of Muslim and the Hindu castes, so similar in their rigidity to the military rules of rank, and knew better than to pass food around carelessly or ask someone to touch someone else's drinking bowl. But these were the simplest lessons. The talk ranged from basic information to questions of cultural and religious comparisons, to regional and international politics and the British role in India.

The Company's economic purpose became increasingly dubious as it sank into debt. In 1813 the news spread rapidly to everyone in the Company's army, down to the drummer boys, that the monopoly status of the Company was over. Parliament's 1813 Charter Renewal Act not only canceled the Honourable Company's trade monopoly but, after a bitter fight on the floor of Parliament, forced the Company for the first time to allow Christian missionaries into India. European and Indian soldiers alike rightly feared that the days of easy camaraderie would be replaced by the pressure to blend together less. The British presence was clearly no longer about trade. What it was about instead—the cultural, economic, and political domination of the subcontinent by the Company's Indian Army—was increasingly visible to all.

What sustained the troops, Europeans and natives, at this uncomfortable historic moment was probably not any noble cause or national pride but rather their friendly sense that they were all in this together and their dreams of promotions and *batta.* When that was not enough, "the bazaars sold spirits and opium, the former the solace of the European infantry, the latter of the sepoys" (Callahan, 31). On November 24, 1814, a small piece of Billy's dreams came true. He received his appointment as a lieutenant in the First Battalion of the Fourth Regiment N.I. But Billy's job did not change much. He stayed with his battalion, joining the leaders of the drills on Bombay Green, but now as an officer and with a raise. The latter was crucial, not least because "Bombay had long been noted as a very dear place to live in, and in 1814 it was a hundred per cent. dearer than any place in Hindustan" (Douglas, 187). The moneylenders who lived in the cantonment smiled benignly on Billy as he moved out of the barracks into a bungalow.

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It was time to think of a wife. The senior officers sometimes had parties, particularly on the rare occasions when a few single ladies arrived from England on the ships that poured into the harbor. But there were so few girls from Great Britain in the early years of the century (the ratio of British women to men was estimated as an astounding one to fifty, including wives) that none would dance with a mere lieutenant. They had come on serious business. Even the most tenderhearted and least materialistic of English girls in India were in the marriage market. An ensign's salary supported no one, including the ensign. A lieutenant's salary could support a wife and family in only the meanest way. Everyone knew that between the Company's two categories of servants (employees), the civil (meaning the merchants) and the military, only the civil servants made enough money to pay for a domestic life. The senior officers were all right too, though not as desirable as a merchant. No lieutenant had a prayer of marrying an English girl.

Billy Glascott did have a family in India. But who were they? This question is remarkably difficult to answer. Because British records focused on the upper class, the facts of Billy's family's existence were either not recorded or have long vanished, leaving only the fewest of tracks. But there are tracks. Billy had a wife in Bombay and at least three children, a boy and two girls. Though there are no baptism records, there are references to the children in a few places in the official documents. Billy's oldest child was Mary Anne, named after his oldest sister, and his second daughter was Elizabeth (Eliza). Billy's youngest was William Frederick, named after his father.

Local women who were connected to company men in India were often called "sleeping dictionaries," and "hard facts about these women are frustratingly elusive" (Baron, 29). Billy's wife, Anna's grandmother, was a local woman. She remains a mystery, standing completely in the shadows of history. In the big ledgers kept by the civil servants of the East India Company, with their black leather covers, pink and then blue ruled lines, and handwritten lists of marriage and baptism records, this woman and her children are simply not there.

Their very absence from the company registers highlights an important piece of historical information. The one certain fact about Anna's grandmother is that she could not have been European. The most likely possibility is that Billy's wife was an Anglo-Indian (mixed race), born in India. Even with no company record of a marriage, I assume that Billy married his lady. He could not afford a mistress of good family. Nor, I believe, would this parson's son from a large and happy family have wanted one. And given the Company's rules for its soldiers at the time, we can draw no moral conclusions from

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the fact that there is no record of Billy's marriage or his children's christening. A marriage to a local was completely acceptable among the lower officer and civil levels of company employees during his time. It was understood that officers lived with locals (Ram, 24). Billy's commanding officer was almost certainly at the wedding and knew the family well. Although by the late eighteenth century the company rules sent from faraway London generally forbade the immigration of European women and condemned marriages with locals, the reality was that a soldier's hopes for a home and family lay with the Eurasian girls of the Anglo-Indian community in Bombay.

The pool of available women for a lower officer consisted of mixed-race Christians, typically with Portuguese ancestry and family links to the Company, the daughters or granddaughters of other soldiers. In the society of British Bombay, these women formed a respectable middle class, definitely not the sort to accept relations outside marriage. As they, and their families, were perfectly aware, the acute shortage of eligible women who were Christian and whose language was English gave them a special cachet as rare and invaluable participants in the social scene. And it worked both ways. For these Anglo-Indians, the one available pool of eligible men was the Company's soldiers.

Billy Glascott and his shadowy lady were destined to begin an extensive Anglo-Indian family. Their many descendants would be personally successful and often publicly distinguished. But their own lives were relatively simple and, economically at least, quite poor. They lived in one of the numerous small bungalows, usually a room or two along with a wide front verandah, for rent in the cantonment. Billy's lady would not have been referred as a wife, because no one was. The polite term among the British for one's spouse was "lady" until the 1840s. Only then did it become acceptable in society to refer to her as "wife" (Kincaid, 150). The lady's family and Billy's military buddies with their families provided the couple's social life.

Made lieutenant almost four and a half years after his arrival, with a ranking date of November 24, 1814, Billy married sometime in 1815, after he received his commission. Once in their bungalow, the Glascotts settled down to start a family. First came Mary Anne, born sometime in late 1815 or early 1816, probably within a year of the wedding. We have her age listed at the time of her recorded death. Billy's merit appointment as adjutant came after Mary Anne's birth, proof of his commander's approval of his family and high opinion of him. Within a year of Mary Anne's birth, in late 1816 or early 1817, came a second daughter, Eliza. Billy's children are listed as Christians, meaning that they had been baptized.

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The girls were raised in the Fort with the rest of the army children, daughters of an officer, though a junior and impoverished one, and a Eurasian mother not "on the strength." But mother and daughters were British by language and religion, like almost all the wives and families of lower officers among whom the Glascotts lived. One of the things we can learn from Billy's story is that in that time and place the very definition of "British" was a highly malleable notion. Did the couple have more children who died? There can be little doubt that there were more pregnancies. If there were more babies before William, they must have been girls, in view of the custom of naming first sons after the father. In the historical records of British India, lower- and middle-class girls, losing their surnames so quickly, are even more invisible than boys. If Mary Anne and Eliza Glascott had sisters, I have not found them.

During the next three or four years, the Fourth N. I., including its junior officer from Devon, saw no military action. But in 1817 there was a great stirring. The Maratha princes around Bombay, who had for many decades hated the British invaders and waited for an opportunity drive back these oppressors, decided the moment had come at last. One of the Maratha princes, the peshwa (the chief minister) of Poona, ninety miles east of Bombay, was particularly determined on war, incensed by the humiliating terms of a treaty the British had forced on him.

The British response was nothing short of enormous. The Company amassed two huge armies to cover most of central India. One moved down from the north (the Grand Army of Bengal) with troops from Calcutta, and the other moved up from the south (the Army of the Deccan) with troops from Madras and Bombay, destroying all opposition in their way. Their goal was not only to rout localized adversaries such as the peshwa of Poona but also to destroy what remained of the Moghul rulers in India. John Shipp, the baggage master of the Left Division of the Grand Army, recorded that the Left Division had 8,000 soldiers. They were accompanied by "80,000 men, women, and children, 50 elephants, 600 camels, 11,000 bullocks, horses, mules and pack ponies, 500 goats, sheep and dogs, 250 palanquins, and vehicles of every kind and description" (Ram, 35). Such ratios were standard.

The Maratha Wars of 1817 and 1818 were momentous events in the history of the British takeover of India, and especially in the presidency of Bombay. The peshwa of Poona "attacked and burnt the British residency, only to see his army defeated by the Bombay troops" (Heathcote, *The Military in British India,* 67). The pervasive British blindness about and condescension to the peoples it conquered can be seen in Maria Graham Callcott's memoir of visiting Poona. She casually remarks of the peshwa, who would soon lead a

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courageous revolution, that though she would like to get a look at a native prince, "I am told that he is a man of little or no ability, a great sensualist, and very superstitious" (Callcott, 77). The official English view of the Maratha Wars and the British presence in India generally was an exercise in ethical inversion. It held that "victory was due to the moral ascendancy of the British troops" (Cadell, 151).

After the peshwa fell, the rest of the princes in this fight for independence were similarly beaten. By 1818, the British had annexed Poona and various other dominions around Bombay. The defeat of the Maratha princes was the death knell of the power of the Moghul emperor in India. "Although until 1835 the Company would continue to strike currency bearing his cipher, India was now subject to a new empire, and a new military system" (Heathcote, *The Military in British India,* 67). The invaders from the West had conclusively defeated the remaining descendants of the long-ago invaders from the East. India was theirs.

The Maratha Wars brought military action, and *batta* bonuses, to most of the Bombay Army regiments. The Fourth N.I. was not one of them. A flank company, it spent the war in reserve in Ahmadnagar, a town far east of Bombay, on alert and ready to move, but the call never came. Yet the Maratha Wars were a turning point for Billy, the beginning of fateful changes. The first and best of those changes was that on July 1, 1818, Billy was appointed to be the adjutant to the First Battalion of his regiment. This new job was not a promotion in rank, but it brought more responsibilities and more pay. Although there is no written account of the personality of this lowly obscure lieutenant who lived almost two hundred years ago, his merit appointment as battalion adjutant tells us how the men who worked with Billy evaluated him. A strong sense of fairness, being well liked and sociable, and an easy familiarity with and respect for local ways were the crucial requirements for this important and much-coveted job.

The adjutant was in charge of battalion enlistments, and in charge of understanding and solving problems for and about the men. He had a semiofficial bungalow, where Billy and his family lived. From there, usually on the verandah, he made the recruiting decisions and the judgment calls that helped the battalion to run smoothly. When an Indian wanted to join the regiment or when one of the battalion's sepoys brought a relative to join, they went to see Adjutant Glascott. When they needed to settle a dispute or ask for special treatment, or needed a go-between to the battalion commander, they would head for the adjutant's verandah. In an army where not everything was set by rules, Billy was a kind of semiofficial judge. He determined not

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only recruiting but also matters such as who needed to move his tent, who was getting too much duty and who was slacking off, and who could go on personal leave and for how long.

Billy kept his lovely appointment as adjutant for the 1st/4th N.I. for only two years. In 1820, the Company yet again decided it need more soldiers, and Billy, as an experienced officer, was transferred to the newly created Twelfth Regiment N.I. It turned out to be a bad move. He was sent into action at last. In 1821, his new battalion, the 2nd/12th, was shipped out of India, west to Kishme, a tiny island just off the Persian mainland in the Persian Gulf. Kishme (now Qishm) was considered strategically located along shipping routes, since it lay on the northern side along the route of ships from Europe heading for India. The Company, continuing the "disastrous British obsession with offshore properties" (Keay, 333), directed the Bombay Army to "quell the piracy of the Arabs in this region" (Cadell, 169). Piracy was conveniently defined as any native person seen as an obstacle to British business and political interests and having a boat. Billy's regiment, as well as some others, was sent on the pointless little task of flushing out and battling the "rebel" Arabs on Kishme, with the goal of "the complete subjugation of the whole of the tribe" (Mainwaring, 233), particularly the infamous Arab pirate tribe known as the Beni Boo Ali.

It was an action of many months. In the first assault, one of the tribe's many forts was taken, but the British force was then successfully attacked. The 12th, along with Billy's old 1st/4th, was sent as part of a second force, on January 10, 1821, to fill a role Billy knew quite well: the backup troops. The big battle took place on March 2, 1821, with the Arabs being defeated. But a few months later, on October 31, 1821, Lieutenant William Glascott of the Twelfth Regiment N.I. died in Kishme, of unlisted causes. Since no battle injury is listed, and his name is not among those in the casualty lists, the likely cause of death was disease. He was thirty-two.

Judging only by his army records, the young Methodist from Devon who went for a soldier led an uneventful life. Billy's public role, hardly a noble one, was as a foreign soldier in an occupying army. But his private role was as an accommodating young man who made a distant and vastly different world his home. Billy was mourned by the Glascotts of Devon. But for all their love of the son and brother who sailed to India, when he died more than a decade later they no longer knew the man for whom they grieved, the man he had come to be. Perhaps the greater grief was felt by the family he left financially as well as emotionally bereft, the Glascotts of Bombay.

Billy never saw his son. When he was shipped off to the Persian Gulf in late December 1820 or early January 1921, he left a pregnant wife behind.

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Given William Frederick's age recorded at his death, he was born after February 5, 1821.

When Billy died, he and his lady had been married for six years. She was left with at least three children to support: Mary Anne, age five; Eliza, age four; and a newborn. From the perspective of the British upper class, such women did not even exist. Mrs. Fenton, writing seven years later about the widow of a captain, commented that "the situation of these native born young women . . . is most often pitiable under *such* [impecunious] circumstances." Mrs. Fenton's sympathy was, of course, limited. She concluded that surely these "dark Ladye[s]" are "generally unfitted by their birth and education to retain a place in their husband's class of life? These marriages are unfortunate for both parties, and seldom turn out otherwise" (Steuart, 97).

When Billy died intestate, Rev. Glascott hired the Bombay Agency of Messrs. Shotton Malcolm and Company to discover the state of Billy's finances. The news was long delayed, quite typical, and not good. In July 1824, two and a half years after Billy's death, the Company's Bombay Court concluded that, although the Company owed Billy 8,000 rupees, he owed the Company double that, 16,000 rupees, from his lieutenant's bond. Presumably, giving up his life was considered sufficient to erase his debt.

We have no way of knowing how Billy's lady managed. There is no sign that she had any contact with the Glascotts of Devon, or that the reverend and his lady even knew that she and the children existed. But we do know her options. She and the children would have been evicted almost immediately from the Glascott bungalow, not by the army but by the moneylenders. Her husband's debts, come due in the event of his death, could be paid by losing the bungalow and furniture. Mary Anne lost her chance to attend the regimental school, which at five years old she would have just begun. Billy's company friends, themselves always broke, chipped in a little, as was the custom. The Company would not have turned them out destitute. There was a small pension for families of deceased officers, lasting three to six months, from the Clive Fund. After that there was nothing.

Billy Glascott's widow, a "lady not entirely white" (Sherwood, 396), had only two real choices: move back to her family or remarry. Much depended on the lady's age, her looks, and her relatives. Perhaps she and her three children were able to move into her family's home. But the more likely choice, and absolutely the solution she would have tried for, given the continuing acute shortage of available women for British soldiers at the time, was to remarry, to someone else in the Company's employ. I hope this is what happened. Even though I look back unable even to have discovered her name, I wish her well.

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