

The Jewel in the Crown

She lived with great simplicity. young Hari must have had a shock. From the outside the house in Chillianwallah Bagh looked modern. I suppose it still does. What I believe you used to call a suntrap. All the houses on the Chillianwallah Bagh reclamation and development were put up in the late twenties. It was waste land before then, and was called Chillianwallah Bagh because the land belonged to the estate of a Parsee called Chillianwallah. The Parsees have also always concentrated on business but they are much more westernised, hardly Indians at all. The land was bought from the Chillianwallah heirs by a syndicate of Mayapore businessmen headed by old Romesh Chand, who would never have lived in the sort of modern European-style house that was to be put up there, but saw nothing new-fangled in the anticipated profits. In fact it was to make sure of the amenities for development, such as lighting and water and drainage, and a Government grant-in-aid, that he saw to it his otherwise unsatisfactory younger brother -the one who married Shalini Kumar- got a seat on the Municipal Board. So, in time, up went these concrete suntrap-style monstrosities -suntrap only in the style because with so much sun about it's necessary to keep it out, not trap it, to have very small windows, you see, unless you have wide old-fashioned verandahs.

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Paul Scott.

QUESTIONS

1. When were the houses in Chillianwallah Bagh built?
2. Why were they called so?
3. What did the Parsees do?
4. Who bought the land?
5. Did Chand like this type of houses?
6. Were the houses suntraps?
7. Vocabulary:
 - Heir
 - To head
 - Unless
 - Seat