In 1799 Governor General Wellesley ordered Benjamin Heyne, a medical officer in the East India Company, to appropriate “the Sultan’s garden at Bangalore... as a botanical garden” and develop it “as a depository for useful plants sent from different parts of the country.” A decided superiority must be given to useful plants, over those which are merely recommended by their rarity or their beauty.

Heyne was an enthusiastic member of a global network of naturalists collecting and classifying plants. But he was also part of an enterprise concerned for their cultivation, transplantation and use for ‘social benefit’ and ‘profit.’ This field of economic botany appealed to the East India Company.

In 1802 the Company appointed Heyne full-time superintendent of the ‘Company Garden’ at Bangalore. He introduced plants but he also provided food for regimental messes while demonstrating to ‘natives’ the cultivation of ‘European vegetables.’ In 1807, failing the Company’s ambitions for economic returns the garden was given up to the Mysore Government who put it in the hands of Major Gilbert Waugh, Paymaster of Mysore. In 1819 he offered it back to the Company “with a view to its becoming a source of supply to British India for many of the fruits etc. of England, China & other Countries, together with most of the varieties of Asia which have been introduced with much care and unlimited expense.” But four months after accepting Waugh’s garden, Governor General Hastings withdrew his offer.

The garden thereafter remained with Mysore acquiring the name Lalbagh. Its global connections would continue to extend together with its transformative influence on cuisines, economies, and landscapes of the Mysore tableland, most significantly its immediate environs. Once a naked country, these environs would become the Garden City.
GARDEN CITY

The ground of Bangalore was tested by Cornwalis’ men when they camped here in 1791-92. “The soil is fruitful,” writes L. R. B. Hanchard, “calabash, betel, and other European culinary wares, planted by British officers, thrive in the gardens all around without any extraordinary attention.” This fertility was exploited in the 19th century with exotic plants disseminated from the Company Garden. When Hugh Clough was asked in 1836 to identify a place in Bangalore that would serve as an intermediary garden between Madias and Ceylonamund for acclimatizing plants to the subcontinent, La Bluggage was not an obvious choice. Several localities were examined and it was ultimately agreed that the “La Bluggage (formerly selected by Hayler for a garden) was, on the whole, the most eligible spot for the purpose.”

The “scentuating triangle” of temperate Bangalore, Alpine Daley and tropical Madas, transplanted habitats of the world into attitudes of the peninsula. It was maintained by economic botanists from Kew. They drew local inhabitants to the garden and to horticulture even as they reached out to cultivate the tabiined with nurseries, plantations, parks, railway corridors, avenues, traffic islands, even trains. Gustave Krumbein, who took over La Bluggage in 1906, declared that “ever since and more developed ideas” set horticulture apart from agriculture but also took it beyond use and commerce toward the refined art of Landscape Gardening, from where it is “a natural step to Town Planning.” With this step Bangalore received not only plants but planned initiatives, notably, “extensive” where laushe were dedicated by “open spaces, avenues, and boulevards” as “natural adjuncts to Landscape Gardening.”

Eventually the city itself was seen as a garden and organized by “open spaces, avenues, and boulevards.” La Bluggage, Bangalore’s first garden, had cultivated the Garden City.
In 1800, Francis Buchanan identified three cultivated "gardens" on the Mysore tableland: tota, well land, and dry field. Well land (irrigated) and dry field (dependent on rain) he describes as "open" and planted with crops and greens. Tota, a word which he translates as garden, was by contrast "enclosed" and of four kinds: kitchen garden, "coconut garden," "orange" tota, which included other fruit trees, betel leaf garden, "red" tota, and flower garden (tobisa tota).

The "gardens made by the late Mysorean princes" which he visited in Bangalore however, do not appear to fit any of these categories. They are, he notes, "intensive, and divided into square plots separated by walls." There was an experimental aspect to them with "tota" of mulberry from China but also custard apples, apples, peaches, varieties of rice, wheat, jaggery, beans, mesan, and so on. This was evidently not an ordinary garden but a tota of tota—a dry field of dry fields, and a wet land of wet lands.

While the extraordinary garden at Lalbagh today remains a place to connect with the cultivated grounds of the tableland, a more common threshold is the market, a world of merchants and mercantile. A hub of this world is a kilometer west of Lalbagh, the City Market. Produce comes here from cultivated grounds at distances modulated by concerns for Redfinna as much as by traffic, flocks, seasons, mishaps and disasters. And from here it disperses to other markets and consumers whose needs are ordered by everyday rituals, auspicious events, and unforeseen conditions.
The Great Exhibition in London in 1851 featured over a hundred thousand exhibits. "Every possible invention and appliance for the service of man found a place within its embracing limits; every realization of human genius, every effort of human industry might be contemplated there." 

The idea of the exhibition was to encourage competition, to get "the best and the cheapest." The structure that housed the exhibition - the Crystal Palace - however stood alone. This "House of Glass," John Tallis wrote at the time, "will exist in the annals of history long after the wondrous pyramids of Egypt...shall have crumbled to dust." This 18-acre enclosure was designed by Joseph Paxton, an enigmatic horticulturist who had built a number of plant conservatories to shelter tropical plants in Britain. His building was the showpiece of the exhibition, heralding an age of "open" competition. "As in a crystal there is no longer any true interior or exterior. The barrier erected between us and the landscape is almost ethereal...We find ourselves within a sort of segment of atmosphere."

In 1851 a crystal over fifteen times smaller than Paxton's creation came to Lalbagh from England. It was to house the summer and winter Lalbagh Show, a tradition since 1836. The idea of the show was to demonstrate new plants and technologies and to encourage the "improvement of stock through 'intelligent competition'. It fitted the progressive spirit of the Crystal Palace."
HILL STATION

The surfaces gathered by the Arkaadd and the South Penrner or South Pennar meet along what Lewis Rice in 1877 calls a "line" that runs "along the highest part of the ridge of land" through Bangalore. Its extension south and east reaches the coast between the Kaveri and Pennayar watersheds. Its extension north culminates at Nandi Hill, a fortified hill of rock that resisted Conolly's army in 1781. "The plain on which it stands," writes Robert Colbeck at the time, "is supposed to be the highest in the Peninsula of India, and the summit of the hill the most elevated point."

If ascending the passes from the Camatic was to approach the eastern shores of the Mediterranean (the Levant) as Cornwells' men described their arrival onto the Myosor tableland, ascending Nandi was to continue further into the temperate latitudes. "The climate upon this hill during the day is truly European," writes Colonel Welby in 1868. For men like Colonel Cuppage it made the summit an ideal ground for plant introductions from Europe. Here he made what Welby describes as "a beautiful garden...the trees of which, still standing, are watered with dew and misty clouds, which are continually passing over the hill. Amongst them we found an enormous peach, a few plums, and several flourishing Sicilian orange trees, all three being rarities in the East Indies."

Portrayed by artists in 1791 as largely barren, a century later Nandi was being termed "sustaining vegetation." The seeds sown by Cuppage would grow into more than a garden of European virtues; it would grow into a "little sultanism" which "in the warm season, when vegetation is nearly dormant on the plains...is verdant and refreshing."
Through the second half of the 19th century the acclimatizing 'triangle of Ootacamund, Bangalore and Madras' orchestrated by Hugh Clapham in 1856 was furthered by 'Intermediate gardens.' When John Cameron, Superintendent of Lahbagh, was asked in 1890 to propose an experimental garden at Kundysigro, he suggested a "gradation system working from top to bottom, the selection of sites at intervals of varying elevation is exactly what would be required. Plants from cooler climates would thus be gradually moved to the uniform heat of the surrounding plains." He saw it as an "acclimatizing gradient" across 195 and 500 meters of altitude and a point from where to disseminate plants.

Dispersing material across the tableland was not new to this small range of hills. Water flowing off them fan out to a range of destinations along the east coast, from the mouth of the North Pennar to the Kaveri. It presents a surface of knobs that dispenses along tributaries as one moves inland and onto higher ground. But as divergent as these knobs are, they mysteriously gather in Kannh-Hills.

This gathering of the surface of the tableland is celebrated at handi between the Yogeyandira and Illegyandira temples. The former, on the summit points toward the other side of a material source, the detachment agreed to by the ascent. The latter, in the plains northeast of the NE celebrates the fulfillment of the material source in the harvest each year: between detachment and enjoyment is a surface that since Cameron represents the potential of economic botany on the tableland.