Lutyens's art was petrified by the cold, never wholly relaxing grip of Palladianism. As for variety of materials, one of Lutyens's earliest buildings, a pair of loggias at Park Hatch, Hascombe, is described as being built of stone, Horsham slate, timber in the gables, and pavings of travertine and of brick. Marshfield is mainly of chalk, but has an admixture of stone, and of brick. At 42, Cheyne Walk, a narrow street with a small gabled house and arched windows, the material is of brick with a mixture of stone, and of brick. Marshfield is mainly of chalk, but has an admixture of stone, and of brick. As for craftsmanship, the otherwise not very interesting building at Magdalene College, Cambridge, has the handrails of its five staircases designed all completely differently, and with details challenging the skill of any craftsman. At the Midland Bank in Birmingham, every course of stone had to be 0.75 inches thick in height, and an inch thick in the other direction. The variety of wrought-iron balusters to staircases is equally remarkable. But Lutyens's liking for elaborate and transparent ironwork is characteristic only of the fun he had with materials and their shaping by craftsmen, but also of the fun he had with space. The library steps at Campion Hall, Oxford, are one of the most enduring examples of this spatial fun. They get you up six steps as any old lad, but at the same time spatially and geometrically no less entertaining than a young man's tricks in designs for children's playgrounds are nowadays.

Lutyens's handling of space has not in the past been sufficiently appreciated. The staircase at Little Thakeham is almost as ingenious with quite simple geometrical means as the staircases of the eighteenth century which we admire in Germany and Austria. Equally ingenious is the way in which at Ashwell House, the staircase in a comparatively small well is made to look large. The vaulted corridors at Castle Drogo have a spatial force which, Mr. Hussey rightly compares with Piranesi's. No wonder that Lutyens on his first journey to Italy got excited about the staircases of Genoa. The lavish space given away in staircases makes me sick with envy,' he wrote in 1909 (197). If the architects of Genoa had seen the size of Lutyens's staircases at Delhi ten or twenty years later, the envy would have been theirs.

England has never been particularly keen on ingenious or monumental staircases, and Lutyens's are amongst the finest she has produced. The English reluctance to give staircases enough space is connected with the practical, pragmatic, utilitarian side of the national character. But Lutyens had no patience with the utilitarian, and if perfect architecture is defined as a blend of art and use, then Lutyens was certainly not a perfect architect. 'Let houses be as comfortable,' says Nathaniel Lloyd, 'in what held the building up or composed the core, heated or drained it... The office dealt only in surfaces'

Lutyens's wishings will be recognized as effortlessly as I recognize his folly. In his serious mood he is so completely divorced from all that architects outside France have striven for, that a balanced judgment of his place in history is perhaps impossible. I am fully aware of that. All I can claim for these pages is that they have emphatically not been written to debunk but to arrive at a judgment at least not consciously biased.