

HOW A LADY PASSES HER DAY IN INDIA.



A LITTLE PARSEE BOY.

attended to. First among these is the children's bath. The mother must see to this if she wishes it done well. The little ones, bathed, and dressed in loose white garments, soon find their way—accompanied by mamma—to the room in which they breakfast, and are quickly busy discussing bread, butter, fruit, and iced milk. The little creatures being satisfied are taken back to the nursery, generally a large, airy apartment, almost always in glorious disorder: Tommy's drum, with head beaten in, making a resting-place for Mary's doll, or what is left of it, said dolly being amputated in every limb; toys of various description are scattered around, and the walls are pencilled over—the young aspirants to artistic honours not despising charcoal when pencils are scarce. It is near nine o'clock, and the little folk are shut in for the day; their punkah swing, and a thermantidote, with a "khuss-khuss" screen on the opening, keeps the children's room as cool as could be desired. Mamma is now at liberty to bathe and dress; the morning robe of white muslin is donned, and the lady walks direct to the breakfast-room. "Hubby" must be at "kutcherry" by eleven; and the good wife would like to take a look at the table to see that all on it is clean, bright, and inviting, before the master of the house sits down. There are two or more khuss-khuss screens on the doors, on the

quarter the hot wind is blowing, which are kept constantly wet by a coolie outside; and overhead two large punkahs, with deep white frills, swing noiselessly. The temperature of the breakfast-room at this hour is delightful. The table looks enticing with its snowy linen and elegant arrangement of flowers, glass dishes filled with fruit, and sweet home-made butter surmounted with a large piece of Wenham Lake ice. Breakfast over, and after a cigar indulged in at the table, "Hubby" seats himself in his office "gharry," and is driven off to kutcherry, where he slaves away the long summer day, returning tired and weary enough about five o'clock, or later; if it is an evening on which racquet is played, he manages to leave the office earlier, driving direct to the court, and returning after the game to his bath, and to dress for dinner. However, we are forgetting the "mehsahib;" her busy hour has also commenced; and before she leaves the breakfast-table, two or more account-books are placed before her, and the attentive "khansama" (or butler) awaits, with hands folded demurely before him, the lady's pleasure. The business of taking the khansama's account is generally a distasteful one; the lady knows she is being robbed, but she also knows it is of very little use to expostulate against palpable extortion. If the khansama is dismissed, most probably a worse one has to be engaged; and if the man's account is "cut," he will in all likelihood spoil the dinner, alleging in excuse having been mulcted in so many eggs, &c., and the impossibility of being able to do on less. There is a "burra khana" (big dinner) that evening, and the lady submits in silence to being "fleeced" to an extent that would astonish any not used to the ways of the natives of the East. Orders are given for dinner—children's included—master's lunch, and the following morning's breakfast, and now it is time to dress for the day; for, hot as it is, visitors drop in from twelve to two o'clock, and these two hours have to be passed in the darkened drawing-room; the lady occupying herself with fancy-work, which is never taken up at any other time. She is at liberty after two o'clock: no visitors are admitted after that hour; the "darwaza bund" (door-shut) being given to any venturesome caller. However, there are but few who care to call after two o'clock. Ladies generally lunch with the children at their dinner-hour, which is three o'clock. Mamma robes again in flowing muslin, and the little folk wait impatiently for the feast to begin: soup, mild chicken-curry, rice pudding, and well-cooked vegetables, and fruit, forming the mid-day repast of most children in India. Mamma returns with the children to the nursery, and all the troubles of the day are told her over and over, even baby joining in with his little plaint. She reads to the wee ones, and instructs those old enough for a short time; looks up all the socks to be darned, also small garments that require tapes and buttons. These are all sent out by the "ayah" to the "durzie,"

who, seated in the verandah, defies the scorching blast that blisters a European skin, but which only causes the tailor to go to sleep when he ought to be sewing. Often is he to be seen with head resting against the white-washed wall of the verandah, legs stretched out, hands still holding the implement of his craft lying

his eyes shut he will be fined "char anna" (sixpence). To return to the lady: "No go yet, mamma, no go yet; uttee mut jow" (don't go yet); but yes, mamma must go, for in the next room the "dhoby" (washerman) is waiting with the clean linen spread out on the beds, and the soiled linen carefully sorted on the mat-covered



A PARSEE LADY AND BOY.

limp beside him, mouth open and eyes shut, and actually snoring; flies go in scores on exploring expeditions in and out his open mouth, and buzz about his ears; but Golam Hyder sleeps on, caring nought for things past, present, or to come. The ayah stops, then giggles, and calls the "peon" in attendance to come and see "khulloofa" (polite name for tailor) asleep. They both laugh, and the ayah throws all the articles she has brought out to be mended on the man's outstretched legs, which wakes him. He asks what is the matter, and is told by the ayah that if the memsahib sees

floor of the room. This task over, the ayah collects the children's clothes and takes them to the children's room, where she arranges the linen in the wardrobes. The "bearer" does similarly with his master's linen, first seeing that shirts are not minus buttons; if any are wanting, the durzie is sought, and a great deal of talk between master's attendant and the tailor, ends in the former carrying the shirts off. The next day the tailor is at liberty to sew on the missing buttons. If the lady have a second ayah—which is almost always the case—she does not put away her own linen;

if not, this is an extra duty. The dhoby comes once a week, and the time taken to see clean and foul linen counted is often quite an hour and a half. In India every one changes daily, and two or three vast bundles of linen are taken weekly. The washerman, whose wife helps to get up the linen, lives in the "compound," and only washes for one family, unless the family be limited, and he gets permission to take in other washing.

The lady now feels weary, and thinks she will rest awhile. Not yet. "Phine clât—khapsra walla [cloth-man], memsahib," calls out the hawker; and if the man is sent away, it may be days before he comes again; and some things being urgently needed, the lady directs that the cloth-man be taken to an ante-room, when a door being cautiously opened to admit him—for the hot air still blows as if from a furnace—he displays his goods, and the lady entering, is soon deeply engaged bargaining and buying "phine clât" (fine cloth), till the house-clock warns her of the hour 5.30, and the ayah that the afternoon tea has been served in the lady's dressing-room. Often the tired master is back from kutcherry, and joins his wife in a cup of tea; or sometimes a very intimate lady-friend is venturesome enough to come out for a gossip over the social tray. However, tea being discussed, the weary woman seeks half an hour's rest, but very often this is not allowed her, and she dresses for the evening drive, taken about 6.30 or 7 o'clock. Oh, how warm it is at this hour! how weak a woman feels!—as if she had no vitality left. The coachman stops at the bandstand, and the tired and pale lady reclines in her carriage and listens to the band, and to the conversation of gentlemen who come to have a little chit-chat. The lamps are now lighted, and the order given, "Ghur chullo" (Go home). And now to dress for dinner—if, as there is to-day, a "burra khana;" if not, a flower in her hair is enough; and seated at her

table, the lady dispenses hospitality, or enjoys a quiet dinner with "Hubby," who, though tired, seems to appreciate the varied viands and well-iced wines. Conversation and music close the evening. But you must not think mamma has forgotten the little ones, for after the return from her drive, and before she has made her toilet for dinner, the mother has been to the nursery, has seen the pets take their milk-and-water and bread-and-butter, and has helped to robe them in the sleeping-suits worn by children in India. The little lipsers have said their prayers, and each in his tiny cot reposes before the mother quits the room. The punkahs swing, the thermantidote stops not, and the doors between mamma's and the children's room are thrown open. Mamma kisses each little face, giving baby an extra one, and *then* she goes to dress. Thus passes each day in India. Varied it may be by other duties; but occupation is found for each day in the week.

There are women in every quarter of the globe who neglect the duties of wife and mother. In an Indian household where such a woman reigns queen, discomfort, debt, and unhappiness will surely follow. To live comfortably in India, "to make ends meet," as the saying is, and live on your husband's income, requires entire and constant supervision by the mistress of the house. She must be cognisant of each detail in the household expenditure, and take nothing on trust a servant may say. The natives of India are as a rule a thieving race, in whom truth is not to be found. Each servant tries to steal all he can. And when an establishment consists of twenty-five or more servants, all intent on peculating, it becomes a serious and most difficult matter to manage the expenditure and keep it within your husband's income; for though incomes in India seem large to people in England, they are not really so, the expenditure being commensurate with them. A LADY FROM INDIA.

WASHING AT HOME.

BY A PRACTICAL WOMAN.

ECONOMY is a necessity to many of us, and a real pleasure to a few, those few being decidedly of the feminine gender, if it takes the form of petty economies in small things. In the matter of home washing, a very great saving may be effected by learning how it should be well carried out. We all know what a heavy item are the clear-starchers' bills; and yet a great deal for which they charge heavily can, with care, be satisfactorily done at home. With regard to the getting up of lace, muslin, &c., we would remind our readers of that sage axiom, "If you want a thing well done, do it yourself." In the present paper we propose to show how to clean various things which in our everyday life are wont to puzzle us. With that sage advice in our minds about self-help, we will begin with lace.

A little soaking is always advisable, and a pinch of borax in the water helps to dispel the dirt. If very dirty, as lace caps and other things will become, they should be put for a quarter of an hour or so in a moderate oven, covered with water and shredded soap, a plate being placed on the top of the earthenware pie-dish or pipkin (the best things to place them in), great care being taken that they do not get burnt. We have known lamentable instances in which, left too long, the contents have almost if not entirely disappeared. Well rinsed, and subsequently allowed to simmer in a saucepan of cold water, muslin or lace, however dirty, becomes a good colour.

Old laces require time, trouble, and also delicate manipulation. Small pieces are best treated as follows:—Wash in a soap lather made with the best curd soap, the mode of washing being merely to pat and press the lace daintily with the hand, and not rub