

"It is not in my vocation, my good fellow, to give secular instruction."

"I don't see that you couldn't give it, all the same. A man can teach another what he has learnt himself. I could show you how to use a file, although it's not my business to teach. I am engaged in work all the day; I can't go to school."

"There are masters who give private instruction."

"Yes; but I prefer to learn from a gentleman what is necessary to a gentleman."

This distinction seemed to flatter him, although he protested that schoolmasters were not less gentlemen than he—which, as a matter of fact, is quite true, though not perhaps as they appeared to me at that time.

"I could teach myself to read and write," I continued, "and knowing how to read, I could acquire knowledge of facts and things from books. But that is not all I need. I must learn how a gentleman thinks and acts under certain conditions, and I can

only learn that by associating occasionally with a gentleman, and putting questions to him which perhaps no book could answer me."

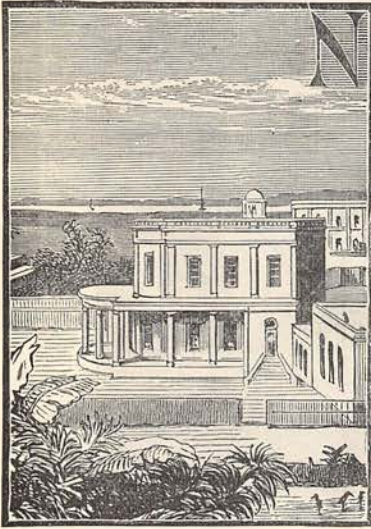
"Ye—es," he said, looking askance at me, with that expression of doubt as to my sanity which I was so accustomed to see. I saw that I must make my terms, and leave him to accept or decline them. So I went on—

"My trade will allow me to pay a pound a week for the instruction I want. Deduct from that a certain sum for the purchase of such books as you thought it necessary that I should have, and the rest would be yours in return for a couple of hours' teaching five nights a week."

After some protest and considerable discussion, Mr. Sheepley—that was the young curate's name—accepted my terms, and it was arranged that my studies should commence the following night.

END OF CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

HOME LIFE IN BENGAL.



NOTHING can be more striking to the fresh arrival in India than the changed conditions of living which immediately surround him. The customs on board ship will, indeed, have prepared him to some small extent for the habits with which he is so soon to become familiar; but al-

though he may see an occasional native servant accompanying an old Anglo-Indian, or perhaps an Ayah attending to the wants of a family of small children, he will yet himself be still accustomed to the attendance of the European stewards.

But no sooner does he reach the splendid jetties erected upon the bank of the Hooghly, than his acquaintance with the natives of India really begins. The coolies, with hardly a rag of clothing, will present themselves in almost incredible numbers in search of any porter's work which may be going, and the traveller, before he well knows what he is about, will find himself in a "ticca-gharry," or hackney-coach, on his way to his destination in the City of Palaces.

And here it may be observed that, though Calcutta

has received this very dignified appellation, it nevertheless, upon a first acquaintance, hardly appears to deserve its title. In some of the main streets, indeed, are to be seen large and imposing buildings. But within the heart of the town are narrow dirty streets, having here and there a building of some consequence, but for the most part occupied by small broken-down houses, in which the native traders, and not a few enterprising Chinamen, carry on their business.

To this portion of the city the term City of Palaces could certainly not be applied, though some of the great native merchants still have their sumptuous mansions in this quarter. But when we turn our steps towards the district occupied by the more wealthy Europeans, we at once perceive the justice of the name which has been bestowed on the capital of our Indian Empire. This quarter of the town is known as Chowringee, and here are collected together the detached residences of those wealthy Anglo-Indian money-makers to whom the name of "nabob" has been so erroneously applied. The "West-end" of Calcutta is separated from the business quarter of the town by a considerable expanse of grass-land. It is a sufficiently pleasant piece of ground to walk across in the cool of the evening, and serves to keep the business and the residential parts of the town separate.

Adjoining this open space, at one point is the "Maidan," the park of Calcutta, which extends for a long distance between the bank of the river Hooghly and the suburb of Chowringee. Upon a portion of this splendid plain has been erected the fine Cathedral of Calcutta, but for the most part it is an immense open space, intersected here and there by grassy roads and pathways, bordered upon either side

by rows of well-grown trees. Skirting the "Maidan," upon the river side, is a splendid road, whence can be seen the vessels of all sorts and sizes constantly passing up and down the sacred stream.

Let us now enter one of the large two-storeyed houses in Chowringee. It stands in its own grounds, which are of no very great extent, and are generally enclosed within a high brick wall. This enclosure, in nearly the middle of which the house is built, is

leaving unseemly patches of rough brick-work in the walls. This stucco is made, by-the-way, not of lime and sand, as it professes to be in this country, but of a mixture of lime and brick-dust, known to the natives by the name of "soorkee."

The house is entered by a flight of three or four broad steps, at the top of which is a verandah open to the outside, or enclosed at most by an open wooden trellis, over which some luxuriant tropical creeper has



THE ESPLANADE, CALCUTTA.

entered by a large wooden gateway, at which, day and night, a watchman is stationed, upon whom devolves the duty of excluding unauthorised persons from the premises. On the right, as we enter the gateway, stand the stables and coach-houses, while in front of us is the large square stuccoed building. These Calcutta houses are invariably built of brick, and as invariably are stuccoed over the whole extent of the outer walls. Why this should be, it is difficult to perceive, for the damp humid atmosphere of the delta of the Ganges is far from being favourable to the preservation of plastered surfaces, and often large masses of the material become detached, and fall to the ground,

been allowed to spread itself. Along the inner side of the verandah, which occupies the whole breadth of the house, is a glass screen, a door in which opens into the hall, from which two archways give admission to the dining-room, while from one side of it rises a flight of broad wooden stairs, giving access to the suite of rooms on the upper floor.

The dining-room is the largest apartment on the ground-floor. Upon either side of it are smaller rooms, some of which serve as bed-rooms, one perhaps as a billiard-room, and one generally as an office, in which business may be carried on without interruption in the early morning. There is gene-

rally, too, on the ground-floor a store-room in which such "dry goods" as can be purchased by the householder, independently of his servants, are stored. And at the back of all these rooms is another verandah, almost equal in size to the one in front, which is resigned to the servants, and serves as a stage in the passage of the meals from the kitchen to the table.

The upper storey is almost a reproduction of the lower, but the large central room becomes the drawing-room, and all the side rooms are usually bed-rooms, unless it happens that one of them has been converted into my lady's boudoir, tea-room, or what not.

These smaller rooms, situated around the central apartments, are screened off only by a hanging curtain, or "purdah," for though each of them is usually provided with a door, it is seldom or never closed, in order that the air may have the freest possible circulation.

Early rising is a rule almost without exception in Calcutta. A servant generally appears in the bedroom as soon as the sun is up, with a cup of hot tea and a biscuit, or small piece of dry toast, and perhaps some guava jelly, or a small pat of fresh butter; this is called "chota-hazri," or little-breakfast. Having consumed this light repast, and had a bath in the adjacent bath-room, it is time for a walk or ride, unless business should come in the way of our enjoying this—the pleasantest portion of the Indian day. The early morning's ride may be followed by another bath, for every one bathes frequently in India, and, by-the-by, in what at first appears to be a somewhat eccentric fashion. The floor of the bath-room is formed of the inevitable "soorkee," and ranged in a row at one side of it are a number of earthenware vessels called "gurrahs" or "khelsees," each of which contains something over a gallon of water. The bather, standing on the bare floor of the bath-room, empties these vessels, one after another, over his head, until he feels himself sufficiently cooled, and then returns to his bed-room, where the "bearer" is awaiting his arrival with a rough towel ready to rub him down.

When the operation of dressing for the day has been gone through, it will be time for "hazri," or breakfast, which is served at about nine o'clock, and consists of fish, meat, and in fact anything that is in season, including sometimes large rosy-shelled prawns, which are caught in some quantities in the Hooghly, and form a most delightful dish, whether simply boiled or curried. After breakfast, the buggy is ordered round, and the owner thereof drives off to his office in town, the "syce," or groom, in his clean white coat and turban, or "pugrie," hanging on behind in true tiger fashion. At the office it is all hard work until about one o'clock, when the famous "tiffin," or luncheon, makes its appearance. Tiffin is an important meal, for here all the office employes meet together, and discuss such matters as do not come strictly within the scope of their routine duties. Then, too, gentlemen with much business and little time drop in, that they may speak of their affairs and eat their luncheon together, thus killing two birds with one stone, and saving the time of all concerned. Work at

the office ceases generally between four and five, and it is then time to return home to Chowringee, where the carriage, and let us hope the ladies also, will be awaiting our arrival, in order that the whole party may proceed together for a drive.

There is practically but one drive in Calcutta, and every one with the smallest pretensions to being fashionable may be seen night after night driving up and down the "Strand," as that road is called which borders the river side of the "Maidan." Here, during the season, are to be seen the Viceroy and his suite, whose approach, heralded by a couple of outriders in gorgeous liveries, is the signal for every hat to leave the head of its male proprietor, while the ladies bow gracefully to the representative of royalty, and perhaps feel no little satisfaction should the vice-regal smile or bow appear in return to single them out particularly for attention.

No sooner does the sun go down than the early night of the tropics spreads its dark mantle over the gay scene, and long before the company reach home it has become quite dark. Then it is time to dress for dinner, the pleasantest meal of the day. The brilliant lamps on the table, and hung about the room, give a more homely air to the bare and spacious room, while the "punkah" waving gently overhead wafts gentle breezes round about, at once dispelling the oppressive heat, and causing a cessation of hostilities on the part of those plagues of Indian existence, the mosquitoes. Dinner in Calcutta differs little from dinner in any other part of the world, except perhaps from the presence of an occasional dish only to be obtained in the East, and, it might be added, from the supply of ice which is always to be found upon the table.

After dinner there are plenty of amusements to be found by the regular inhabitants of Calcutta. There are, for instance, the entertainments and receptions at Government House, to some at least of which it is not difficult to gain admission. For the levées of the Viceroy may be attended by almost any one who is unquestionably "respectable," nor are gentlemen obliged to invest themselves and their money in extravagant Court suits, though an effort was once made, with but little success, to induce ladies to appear in "trains."

Calcutta has not the reputation of being one of the healthiest places, even in British India, but yet it hardly deserves a bad character, even during the worst months of the rainy season; while in the cool months—from October to April—the climate is delightful. During the hot rainy months, the Court, and all in any way connected with it, retire to Simla, the sanatorium of India; and not a few other inhabitants imitate this good example, betaking themselves to the hills either at Simla, Darjeeling, or elsewhere. And so they manage to exist, with no little comfort and pleasure, until in due course their time of service expires, or their fortunes are made, when they betake themselves to their native land, there to spend the remaining years of their lives as best they may, sometimes in idleness, but oftener in kind and arduous efforts for the welfare of their poorer neighbours.