

ANGLO-INDIAN HOUSEKEEPERS.

Trials Put Upon the Memsahib by Her Houseful of Peculiar Native Servants.

The memsahib's housekeeping resolves itself much into a close scrutiny of accounts and watching of supplies. This is easy, since she does not feed her numberless servants, and orders her substance only through one. He is the khansamah, the head butler, usually a person of great pomposity and spotless raiment, with a dignified capacity for robbing you of annas and pice which would qualify him anywhere to represent a municipal ward. Especially when a visitor arrives does the heart of the khansamah rejoice within him, for then is his glorious opportunity. Limes every day for the visitor's bath? But the visiting memsahib has ordered it, according to the khansamah, and you cannot very well ask her. The towels, even the sheets of the visitor's bed, disappear the day of her departure! The khansamah looks sorrowful and deprecating, but thinks the visitor's ayah must have been an extremely dishonest person. And the unhappy visitor has probably had one lime for her bath during the entire length of her stay; and the towels have brought two annas apiece at the bazar, which goes into the secret wallet of the khansamah.

Next in rank comes the kitmutgar, who brings the dishes from the kitchen, helps to wait at tables, but is an inferior person. A favorite term of obloquy among Anglo Indians is "He looks like a kitmutgar," which is much worse than being compared to a khansamah. The baburchi is the cook, and he has a menial in the musalchi, who washes the dishes. "Bearer" is a more or less general term, but when you call the bearer among your household staff, you mean the man who trims the lamps and dusts. He will not sweep—not he!—you must have a mater to sweep, who is of very low caste indeed.

The ayah is the memsahib's maid, and she cannot get on without one. The durwan is the gate keeper, who sits all day long beside the door to attend to callers and messengers, and does nothing else. Beside these the sahib must have a syce—groom—for each horse. No syce will take double pay and attend to two horses—that is not the Aryan way. And if there is a garden there must be a mallee to take care of it, and for the most menial work of the house there is a beestic or water carrier, whose name is admirably appropriate, and who skulks about his business under the opprobrium of all the rest.

The dhoby is the washerman, whose peccadilloes are interestingly "naife." He has been known, for instance, to dismember certain garments of the sahib and send them in separate legs, in order to show the proper number on his list and yet retain a shirt or a handkerchief. There is the dhurzie, too, who is a joy in India, and who comes and sits and sews all day on your veranda for fourpence! Very imitative, indeed, is the dhurzie, not to be trusted with anything, even to bodices and skirts, for which he has a pattern.

Anglo-India tempers are short, and the khansamah knows their brevity better than anybody in the world. A favorite expression of abuse in connection with undergone mutton perhaps, is in exciting Hindustanee "Son of a pig!" which hurts the gentle Hindoo's feelings as much as anything. But the gentle Hindoo usually replies conciliatorily in some term of deep respect and admiration; and certainly the unconscious khansamah got the best of it, who replied to this expression on the lips of his irate sahib, "Sir, you are my father and my mother!"—Garth Grafton in Montreal Star.

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