

our ears is from a funeral-train ; for here, as in other lands, joy and sorrow meet.

The shops are open. Here are native tailors quite at home in the use of sewing-machines—imported, of course, from Europe. Here is a money-changer, his heaps of small coin and shells on a low table before him. Look at that cloth-merchant sitting cross-legged on the floor, his customer seated opposite him and the cloth he is displaying spread out between them. The merchant has about his neck a massive gold chain, though his raiment is scanty. The pretty little boy in gold-embroidered tunic and wearing so many and such costly ornaments is the merchant's son, and the father is evidently proud of his darling.

In this shop close at hand I have an errand. A servant has entered just before us ; he has returned a glass dish that has been sent to his master on inspection. The merchant, rising to serve us, finds it necessary to remove this article. "Why does he pour water over his hands?" Listen to his explanation :

"I am a Brahman, and by the rules of my caste am defiled by touching anything that has come in contact with a person of inferior caste."

"But you are an intelligent man, and know the real purity is not lost by such outward contact."

"I know—I know," our high-caste friend replies ; "but if I do not observe these ceremonies, I shall be put out of caste, and that would be a calamity indeed. But there is less bondage to caste than there was a few years ago, when I began my career as a merchant. My father was very angry then because my stock in trade included some articles regarded by the Brahmans as unclean, but I knew there was no help for it if I would compete successfully with other business-men. Now no one thinks or speaks of such things."

The shop just beyond this one is kept by a Moslem. That pleasant-faced young lad seated on a mat outside the door and swaying backward and forward, an open

book before him, is reading the Koran. I often see him here in the morning, his tongue moving just as glibly as at present. His father is engaged in his devotions, his face towards Mecca. You perhaps wonder why he does not choose a less public place for such a service. He is like the hypocrites of old ; he prays to be seen of men ; and, though apparently so devout, he has a keen eye to business, and will not let his prayers interfere with his chance of securing a customer. We will not disturb him, however, but will make our purchases elsewhere. But no ! He sees we are about to retire, and beckons us to enter. Intent upon driving a shrewd bargain as we shall find, it will be difficult to realize that he has just risen from his knees.

I must call at a banking-house not far from this shop, but I will not detain you long. "Do I call this a banking house ? Yes, a long-established and very prosperous one. The men sitting cross-legged against the wall, with low desks before them and great books across their knees, are members of one family. The head of the establishment—without whose advice and approval no important venture is made—is an old man, the father of several sons all engaged with him in business, as are also some of his grandsons. They dwell together as one family though they number several generations. Sad to say, they are devout Hindus—at least, outwardly so. Yet how much real devotion or sincerity there may be in their worship it is not easy to tell.

Let us now turn our steps towards the market. A troublesome woman who sometimes brings fruit to the bungalow for sale has followed us.

"Buy my lichees," she says ; "they are very sweet."

"So you said when I purchased from you a few days ago, but they were so sour they could not be eaten."

Coming nearer, taking the basket from her head and placing it on the ground, she holds up before us a handful of lichees, saying in a very persuasive tone,