

London Girls in harems.

One summer evening, as a couple of young, merry-hearted Englishmen, employed in the service of the Indo-European Telegraph Company at Teheran, were strolling in the outskirts of Persia's capital, they met two women. The women were in the conventional Persian female costume for outdoor wear—a black swathing gown from head to foot, and a long white veil completely concealing the features. One of the Englishmen in a frolicsome mood, made an innocent remark on the appearance of the women as they passed, knowing well he would not be understood. What was his astonishment when he heard one of the women speaking with an unmistakable London accent.

It is death for a European to speak to a Persian woman in the streets, but the Englishmen risked it. Instead of the shrouded figures being daughters of Iran, they were a couple of London girls, Frances and Ada Blackman, who had been brought out to Persia two years before, shut up in a harem, forbidden intercourse with Europeans, and especially the English; and there they had remained, their existence unknown to the little colony of Britons in Teheran, till a chaffing remark on a summer evening revealed their identity.

The story is romantic and sad—one of the most romantic I have ever investigated; for though London girls have at times done strange things, entering the harems of wealthy Persians is hardly one of their foibles. And the sadness of it is that the Englishwomen went out to Persia quite ignorant of the fate awaiting them.

These girls had lived with their parents at Willesden, and were engaged in selling knick-knacks at one of the stalls in the Crystal Palace. Frances was aged nineteen and Ada sixteen—two bright, pretty young ladies, with pleasant accomplishments, playing the piano and speaking French.

When the late Shah, Nasr-i-Din, visited England, he was accompanied by a wealthy and noble relative, Nasr-i-Sultan, indeed, his first wife was the sister of the Shah, and this gentleman, during his ramblings about London, found himself in the neighborhood of Sydenham, enamored by the charms of one of the Palace stall-girls. That was Frances Blackman. He bought more trinkets from her than an afternoon visitor does usually; he came the next day, and bought more; the same thing happened the third day, and Miss Blackman soon learned that it was herself and not her wares that attracted the gentleman was a prince with untold wealth; he lived in a beautiful Eastern land; he was her devoted constant slave; she had but to will and he would do; and so on "ad infinitum," the admiration always punctuated with costly gifts. The upshot was that Nasr-i-Sultan proposed marriage; he was accepted, and then he representing himself at the ceremony as a Roman Catholic Church in the beginning of 1890.

Nasr-i-Sultan did not return with his sovereign to Persia. He stayed in England with his young wife, of whom he was extremely fond. They had a flat at Hyde Park Mansions, visited much stayed long at Torquay, and altogether life to the bride was a happy, delicious dream. But in 1892 there came a royal command that the Persian must return to Persia. Nasr-i-Sultan—let it be said in extenuation—had to show himself intended going back to his native land; he was a man of cultivation, and of European inclinations, and preferred Torquay to Teheran. Under pain of forfeiting his property, however, he was obliged to obey the Shah's orders, and—by way of providing his wife with a suitable companion—invited Miss Ada Blackman to accompany them. During the journey across Europe they were entertained in some state at the Persian Legations in the various capitals; and the girls anticipated with joy the blissful, princess-like life awaiting them in the country of love-songs and ruddy wine, rose bowers and melodious streams.

As to the position of women among Mohammedans they knew nothing. The knowledge came sharply and with a whelm, filled with grief at their fate. Nasr-i-Sultan was no longer a naturalized Frenchman, who worshipped in a Roman Catholic Church, and the day the girls reached Enzele, the port on the Caspian Sea, they were compelled to dress in Persian attire, and shield their countenances from the eyes of men. They were placed on horseback and taken by eunuchs the long journey overland to Teheran. Frances Blackman ceased to be Madame Nasr-i-Sultaneh. Her name henceforth was Babi Khonam. It was all very strange and wonderful to the girls, like the workings of an Aladdin's Lamp—a skip from selling little ornaments at the Crystal Palace and chatting and joking with young gentlemen purchasers, to the secluded, hidden, guarded life of Oriental women, never daring to show their faces, far less speak to men.

The ladies were at once taken to Nasr-i-Sultan's harem. They sobbed and protested, and wondered who all these peculiarly-clad women about them were. Knowing not one word of Persian their lot was pitiable. At last the truth came out; Babi Khonam was startled at learning that, in addition to the usual "andaram" Nasr-i-Sultan had three other wives, and she was his fourth. There were scenes, protestations and explanations, upon which it is not necessary to dwell.

Nasr-i-Sultan, though he had deceived his English wife, and willfully kept her in the dark, was undoubtedly fond of her. As a Persian and a Moslem he could not, of course, allow her any more liberty than Persian women usually receive. He forbade Babi Khonam and her sister Ada to have any communication with Europeans. But in deference to their pleadings he provided them with a house at the village of Da Ruz, so that they might escape the repellent life of the "andaram." Six months after reaching Persia Babi Khonam presented her husband with a son, and her sister Ada with a daughter. From a Persian point of view—the treatment of her with great consideration and kindness. But, naturally, neither she nor her sister were happy. They were in a strange land, among a strange people, speaking a strange tongue; they were like frightened, trapped birds, trembling at their doom. Permitted to wear English garments, and to adopt the Persian garb in the streets, and many a time passing through the European quarter of Teheran they heard the welcome English tongue, and they thought they could not run up to their countryfolk and clasp them by the hand.

This was the sad prison-life the London girls led for two years, relieved somewhat when they were able to speak Persian by occasional visits to the "andaram" of the Shah. Frances Blackman was what may be called Nasr-i-Sultan's favorite wife, and he resided chiefly at Da Ruz. His first wife, the royal blood and twenty years older than her husband, who was twenty-five years the elder of his English wife, was kind to the young London girls. Though Frances always regretted her position, Ada found diversion in visiting Persian ladies. They were both welcome guests in the Shah's harem, and, woman-like all the world over, the royal ladies dressed to please. The London ladies dressed, loved to rig themselves in the clothes of their visitors and were very curious to know whether their lord and master, the Shah, had any English wives. Chatter, scandal, arraying themselves in finery, smoking, sipping tea, doing embroidery work, are the occupations of ladies in the Persian harem. Babi Khonam, the Persian innovation. She translated an Iranian the detective adventures of Sherlock Holmes, and Dr. Conan Doyle may be pleased to know that nowhere in the world are his writings, so much appreciated as in the harem of the Shah of Persia.

Miss Ada Blackman, in time, liked the luxurious life of a Persian lady, and indeed nearly became the wife of the greatest man in all Persia, the Sadr Azam, or Grand Vizier. He, however, was deposed. It was only the fearful beseechings of her elder sister that induced Ada to refuse what, to a Persian woman would have been the greatest honor next to marrying the sovereign.

When it was known among the British countrywomen were in a harem, their ladies visited them, and, after a time, custom and invited English gentlemen to the house. Thus it was that Ada Blackman made the acquaintance of an Englishman, was married to him, and she now lives at Shiraz.

A few months ago Nasr-i-Sultan became sick, and as he had fallen under the displeasure of some great men in being poisoned. He decided to make a pilgrimage to sacred Karlela in Arabia; and Babi Khonam, clad entirely in Persian costume, went with him. When they reached the holy city of Karlela he died. Instead of being buried within the walls, as all good Moslems wish, he was interred by the Molems outside, because he had taken a foreign woman to wife.

Babi Khonam was terribly upset at the death of her husband. So overcome was she that it was necessary to take her on the horse to bring her back to the capital. On reaching her house at Da Ruz, she found that her husband's eldest son, Adib-i-Sultan, who was jealous of his father's having settled so much property on his little boy by an English mother, had seized everything and sealed all the doors. Babi Khonam broke the seals. She was, however, a prisoner, and twice there were attempts to poison her and the child, their lives being saved by Dr. Scully, an English doctor, having been called in by some of the faithful servants of the unfortunate woman. It was seen by the British legation that certain much interwoven were put out of the way, and so Mortimer Durand sent the legation grooms to Da Ruz. They forced an and her little boy to the legation, where Lady Durand extended a much appreciated hospitality till matters quieted down a little. As Babi Khonam was solicitous to return to her friends and relatives in London, Lady Durand brought all her influence to bear; but the authorities raised many obstacles—Babi Khonam was a Persian, Persian women were not allowed to be permitted to Nasr-i-Sultan could not be permitted to be taken to a Mohammedan faith; and so on.

Meanwhile—and indeed, at the time this article is being written, which is the condition of the Persian women cannot understand why Babi Khonam should grieve to the death of her husband and continue to dress in black. Oriel, a Persian is limited to a fortnight, and then a woman marries again as soon as she has a chance. Woman says to Babi Khonam, "Why do you cry, and dress in black? You should only dress in black for a fortnight; then you should dress in dark blue; then you should revert to dark brown; then you should revert to grey; then you should revert to colors." And further Babi Khonam has had an offer to enter the harem of a great dignitary. One day four eunuchs came to her house which they said had been sent to her by her master; he desired her acceptance to his andaram. "But I don't know your master; I have never seen him, and he has never seen me." "No," they replied, "but he has seen your back with us we shall be beaten." She told them to take the present back, and they rolled on the ground, weeping and praying she would come. But she was firm, and the eunuchs were obliged to depart without the lady.

Babi Khonam is looking forward to ultimately returning to England. Through the good assistance of Lady Durand an arrangement has been made and she will shortly go to London with her child. The sum of two hundred

pounds a year has been settled on her, and the understanding is that no attempt made to proselytize the lad to the Christian faith. When he reaches the age of twenty-one, Nazrat-Khan must return to Persia, if he desires to inherit the immense fortune left him by his father.

Such is the story of London girls in a Persian harem—a story as romantic and tragic as one can well conceive; without parallel, I am certain, in the history of the hundreds of thousands of London shop-girls.—John Foster Fraser.

AN INCIDENT AND A SEQUEL.
How a Cripple Boy Became a Power in the World.
One of Dr. A. J. Gordon's favorite sayings was that God never made a half-providence any more than a man makes a half-pair of shears. A good many years ago a little Scotch boy, four years old, was caught in a threshing-machine, and his right arm was torn off. That was a terrible accident in every sense of the word, for the boy not only lost the use of his arm, but was deprived of a future livelihood. He was a farmer's son, and, it was supposed, could himself be nothing but a farmer. Now what would happen to him when he grew up?

This problem the boy's mother took to her heart. There she held her mutilated lad, and prayed that God would make him a prophet. As his service on the farm was out of the question, she prayed that he might be used for a nobler husbandry. Thus the boy grew up, with his mother's prayers of dedication ringing in his heart, and in spite of himself, they formed his life. He could not evade them. Her prayers shut him in with God.

The lad grew and studied, and was admitted to the University of Edinburgh. He is the student of whom the story has been often told, how Doctor Blackie asked the country boy to rise and recite. Geggie—for that was his name—rose and held his book awkwardly in his left hand.

"Take your book in your right hand," said the teacher, sternly.

"I have no right hand," answered the youth, holding up his stump.

There was a moment's silence, which was broken by the hisses of the class. Tears of mortification were in the student's eyes. Then Doctor Blackie ran down from his desk, and putting his fatherly arm about the lad's shoulder, as a father might, said:

"I did not mean to hurt you, lad. Then the hisses were changed to loud cheers, and Doctor Blackie thanked the student for the opportunity of teaching a class of gentlemen.

It was about that time that Major Whittle came to the University, and Ed, Geggie was the first to give himself up to the service of Christ.

Some time afterward Doctor Gordon was telling this story to his congregation in Boston. There was an impression of stillness, and after the service had a stranger with more than usual solemnity, congregation walked up the aisle. The one arm. With a feeling of peculiar presentiment, Doctor Gordon came down the pulpit stairs to meet him.

"I am your Geggie," the stranger said, with great emotion.

Doctor Gordon, with a ringing voice, called his congregation back and told them that his illustration was before them. The student, it always looks clean. The pantry floor should be so painted. If the pantry is large enough to accommodate a small table, it can be beaten up a pie or a pan of biscuits without disturbing the kitchen. The best rule for minimizing the pantry work and keeping it neat and clean is to have a place for everything and everything in its place. When a cover is removed from a box put it back again through. Have narrow strips of wood nailed along the shelves two inches from the wall; then platters may be set against the wall without danger of sliding down. Have hooks in the wall on which to hang pans, pails, etc., out of the way. A small chest of drawers under the lowest shelf is a handy thing in a pantry. Here the coarser linens may be kept, together with towels, dust cloths and kitchen aprons. Have a shelf over the pantry table for flavoring extracts, rolling pin, yeast powder, etc. It will save many steps. A wise housekeeper will have a small shelf beside the stove on which to keep the spices she needs for cooking. These will be put in covered boxes labeled so that no time need be wasted in finding them. She will have a box containing salt and another full of flour for thickening gravies, sauces, etc. Cooking utensils will be kept near the stove and dish-washing, generally looked upon as most disagreeable, can be made a very simple operation by having plenty of hot water, soap, clean towels and dish cloth. A large kettle of water will heat while the family is at the table. Have a capacious dishpan and use soap, and it will take but a few minutes to put the dishes away. Rinse up the dish cloth and towels, and hang them up in the sunlight to dry. They will then be clean and sweet smelling for the next time. Before commencing to wash the dishes have them all on the table or sink near the dish pan, and when all are wiped, pile them neatly together, and carry them to the pantry. If one has a dining room the table can always be kept in readiness and the dishes put back again when washed. This saves much work.

One excellent housekeeper makes it a point to prepare as much as possible of breakfast the evening before. Her table is spread, the fire is laid, the water-kettle filled, coffee ground and the sprinkles in order before she retires. She orders to start in early the following morning with her ironing. She is an early riser and generally has time to clean and prepare for cooking the vegetable she is to have for dinner. She can serve cold when she has a fire already planned a day ahead, and she knows what time she will have. On washing the work done she endeavors to have as possible, and so avoids the enervating heat of mid-day.

IT IS A FACT.
Playing cards were invented in France for the amusement of the mad King Charles VI. By 1775, 428,000 packs had received the government stamp in England.

Bells were introduced in Christian churches in A. D. 400.

The Prussian prayer book enjoins that the whole of the service, including the sermon, shall not exceed one hour. In the middle ages pepper was one of the most costly spices, and in the thirteenth century the gift of a few pounds of it was considered a very handsome present.

One pound of gold may be drawn into a wire that would extend round the world.

THE HOME.
SAVING LABOR IN SUMMER.
Now that the warm weather has come housewives in general want to make their work as light as possible, or at least they do not wish to do more than necessary. In many ways the general routine work can be lightened. Cooking will be simpler, for fresh vegetables and fruits take the place of other dishes which require cooking and which were better relished in cold weather. The greater part of the summer sewing is done and nothing in that line will be thought of until fall. The housewife requires some time for pleasure and rest, and all out-of-door invites her now.

The whole house being opened to admit the blessed air and sunshine, accumulates considerable dust. For this very reason some wise housekeepers remove heavy hangings and cover their upholstered furniture. Many ornaments which collect dust are put away. Covers are drawn over sofa pillows, making them cool-looking and clean. By this method dusting is simplified, and if a room is put in order and dusted daily, one sweeping a week will be enough, with, of course, the exception of the family sitting room. Fresh flowers take the place of ornaments and brighten up the entire house. Nothing is sweeter in the morning the occupants of the bedrooms throw back the bed clothes and open their windows wide. After breakfast, when the housewife comes to make up the beds they have been thoroughly aired and she need waste no time. This thoughtfulness on the part of the family is a great help to one who must do all of the work.

The hardest work and the most disagreeable is that of the kitchen, but many a housewife makes much extra work for herself through carelessness and a lack of neatness. A certain housewife who complains about the great amount she has to do, was making jam one day, and not wishing to spend much time over it, she filled the kettle to overflow. When the mass commenced to rook the fruit juice boiled over onto the stove and floor, time and time again. Of course when the jam was done she had to wash both stove and floor, which was by no means easy, as the sticky juice had hardened. Had she filled the kettle only half full each time she would not have had to watch it continually and there would have been no such mess. Time and work would have been saved. If one is careful about such matters, a stove requires but one thorough blacking and polishing every week. Keep a cloth convenient and directly after frying or cooking wipe the grease off. If the cloth is used every morning and the dust removed a stove will always look clean.

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Much work is spared by having the kitchen floor stained or painted. Two coats of good, dark paint and cracks and crevices filled with putty, will put a floor in nice condition and easy to keep clean. No scrubbing is necessary. Wiped up when needed with a soft cloth and warm soapy water, it always looks clean. The pantry floor should be so painted. If the pantry is large enough to accommodate a small table, it can be beaten up a pie or a pan of biscuits without disturbing the kitchen. The best rule for minimizing the pantry work and keeping it neat and clean is to have a place for everything and everything in its place. When a cover is removed from a box put it back again through. Have narrow strips of wood nailed along the shelves two inches from the wall; then platters may be set against the wall without danger of sliding down. Have hooks in the wall on which to hang pans, pails, etc., out of the way. A small chest of drawers under the lowest shelf is a handy thing in a pantry. Here the coarser linens may be kept, together with towels, dust cloths and kitchen aprons. Have a shelf over the pantry table for flavoring extracts, rolling pin, yeast powder, etc. It will save many steps. A wise housekeeper will have a small shelf beside the stove on which to keep the spices she needs for cooking. These will be put in covered boxes labeled so that no time need be wasted in finding them. She will have a box containing salt and another full of flour for thickening gravies, sauces, etc. Cooking utensils will be kept near the stove and dish-washing, generally looked upon as most disagreeable, can be made a very simple operation by having plenty of hot water, soap, clean towels and dish cloth. A large kettle of water will heat while the family is at the table. Have a capacious dishpan and use soap, and it will take but a few minutes to put the dishes away. Rinse up the dish cloth and towels, and hang them up in the sunlight to dry. They will then be clean and sweet smelling for the next time. Before commencing to wash the dishes have them all on the table or sink near the dish pan, and when all are wiped, pile them neatly together, and carry them to the pantry. If one has a dining room the table can always be kept in readiness and the dishes put back again when washed. This saves much work.

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In trying to get along with a gas-line or oil stove, one is apt to have many cold meals. This should be avoided. If cold meat is served have some simple warm soup or warm drinks may be taken. There are a number of easy-made soups—all nourishing and palatable, and for which no meat stock is necessary. They can be made in the morning and warmed for dinner.

SPOILED CHILDREN.

Probably at no time during a child's life will proper training be of so much importance as during illness. A disobedient or obstinate child will often thus endanger his life, and quite often, too, the excitement he undergoes in being compelled is worse than no medicine at all. Parents who know that their children would act in such a manner ought to correct the fault. A father of two little girls said recently when the younger one was threatened with a dangerous disease: "I do not like to have either sick, but oh, I would rather have the older one sick twice than have Anna down once, because she will not take medicine, and she is so obstinate!" One certainly does not feel like correcting or threatening a sick child, and such obstinacy may cost its life. It would be wise for parents to teach their children to take medicine without complaint. A child who is not obedient, has certainly had his training neglected. It must be a source of much worry to the parent that in case of sickness the little one will be troublesome for nurse or doctor, and too often the doctor is blamed when the results are fatal. Proper attention to this cannot commence at too early an age, and half the anxiety usually attendant upon a little one's illness will then be obviated.

PINCH BABY'S NOSE.

An ingenious doctor has discovered a new way to stop a baby's cries. Monkeys on sticks and kissing are not in it with this method, which is to gently pinch the nose of the baby until it stops crying.

The medical man who discovered this new method says that the crying baby should be laid on its back, one hand being placed over its mouth, and the first two fingers of the other used to gently pinch the nasal organ. This has an instantaneous effect. As soon as the fingers close on the child's nose its qualling ceases. The baby, instead of being more cantankerous, is struck with wonderment at the sudden stoppage of breath, and on finding that the same thing occurs whenever it cries gradually ceases to cry at all.

Thirty babies were experimented on recently. Before the doctor put his new method into practice the rafters rang with shrieks; in ten minutes you might have heard a pin drop. Besides stopping a baby's cries this method is said to improve its temper.

AN ELECTRIC HORSE.

The Ingenious Device of an English Inventor Which May Soon Be Adopted.

Horseless carriages, while favored by many persons, are equally an eyesore to many others. These latter are, as a rule, ardent lovers of horses, and it naturally pains them to think that the day is evidently quickly coming when the horse, as a beast of burden, will be rather an unusual sight in any large city. The former, as a rule, have never cared much for horses, and consequently they naturally welcome any mechanical contrivance which is able to take the place and do the work of the animal.

Mr. Blackmore, an English inventor, has been trying to make peace between the two factions, and with that object in view he has patented a one-horse electric carriage. This contrivance, he claims, should be welcomed by all—both by those who want a horse as well as by those who want an electric motor. He styles his invention the electric horse, and he insists that no motor for carriages can equal it.

In the body of this not uncommonly quadruped there are stored, not armed warriors, but peaceful electric accumulators. The ordinary horse required a goodly ration of oats before he will do a long journey; all this horse needs is a few volts of electricity.

Two conductors transmit electric energy to a motor, which is placed between the legs of the animal, and power is then transmitted to the hind wheel by means of a chain similar to that used on bicycles. But this is not all. If it were the horse would be a mere dummy. The horse, however, can walk, trot, amble, pace, gallop and even canter. The automation on the box seat has only to manipulate the reins cunningly in order to produce any desired motion. These reins communicate with the front wheel, and are the most important part of the whole contrivance. They must be managed properly, or otherwise the electric horse will prove unmanageable as any living Burephalus.

The tail, too, plays an important part. It seems that the animal will not trot unless the tail is moved a good deal to one side, and that it will not gallop unless the tail is removed altogether. Any one, therefore, who desires to become an expert driver of the electric horse must carefully study the various uses of the reins and tail.

AN ACHIEVEMENT.

There is an unusual disposition to become jocose with reference to Alfred Austin's poetry, said the mitter-of-face person.

Yes, replied the pale youth who writes, but his detractors can't obliterate the fact that he triumphs in respect.

What is that?

He gets his poetry printed.

Prince and Princess of

The first lease granted to the Marlborough of occupied by the London Prince and Princess of ed that the garden of ary" should not be buildings. Therefore it passer-by on the Pall tops of lofty elms, and chestnuts in the and if fortunate enough the heavy entrance gateway to a smooth and on one side of the plain, ture known as "Marl Until the beginning of try the descendants of ill, the first Duke of ed in the mansion. Be riage of Prince Leop King of Belgium, to the Charlotte it became the brief but happy union, ager Queen Adelaide there. At her death it for the art collection into the South Kensington in the year 1863 it present owners.

In the current number of the Metropolitan there is a ten article descriptive of the appearance and the interior of the royal mansion. A is unpretentious enough carriage-way leads up quadrangle formed by ing and its wings, and entrance to the house of fine bay trees set in Sentries are constantly gates and a number of are also on hand day of them in plain clothing follow the Princess of a respectful distance, s abroad alone, which she going to York House. The quadrangle is the ings devoted to the d ment of Marlborough situated the kitchen, 3 extent and fitted with convenience. There is chen, but it is convenient not like that in Bucking quarter of a mile distant dining apartment. T staked with between 4 none too many for t Under a glass enclosure riages are placed to b among them is the "R tered in dark blue Mo Prince's brougham, a comfort and convenience the same color. Oppos department are the off Leighton Froby, the House of Household, transect Sir Francis Knollys, the vat Secretary. There a stables on the place, b substitute exists in the portico upon which the opens into the garden tiled in blue and yellow filled with a view of fort. Here guests smoke on the Turkey-red couch small, white marble four with ferns and water night and day.

The drawing room of House is of spacious proportions, enlarged from what was suite of three apartments marked the original division the objects of virtu to are two Louis XVI. cab in ornolu, inlaid with e and ivory plaques. Its leads to the famous li favorite with the Prin parties are mainly Paris are given. This rly the library, is stock less treasures of art in ons, and jewels, among tray from Mysore, a w of workmanship. A shor from it, so the Prin room, and on to the also known as Her Royal dining-room, though she Thence by the main cor ern side of the house is here is the household di feet square, and adjoini sale as manger, where a table, and a pair of P striking of the apartment one formed the entrance house. It has been con reception salon, 30 by 30 with marvellous Gobelin present from Napoleon I from the main hall, car rages are always parked one of which, the recep family frequently breakf 10 o'clock. The Princess joins it, and is appoi to her private taste ture is covered with dam in red silk, and always pated there is a profusion of wide hearth where in cool are always burning. The corated in white and gold, hung with satin damask tern, and the curtains at her Highness' writing ta here stand in the Prin sions. Her wardrobe ro second floor over the ki Prince's is on the opposi house. A thorough artist her own gowns, and has millinery, cultivated, n youth of happy poverty in the routine of her day in the morning, like any leiserer she works a little tries over new music, re and relatives, attends to response, or experime camera, a favorite pinc may call upon the Prin invitation, and even per must await the intimati wishes to see them. After real business of the day fulfillment of the never-c zents her position entails