

noise ended, I felt a pang of grief, for I knew that I must now give up Almah forever.

I was right. The ceremony was over. We had to part, and we parted with tears of despair. I was led away, and as I went I heard Almah's sobs. I broke away, and tried to return for one more embrace; but in the darkness I could not find her, and could only hear her sobs at a greater distance, which showed that she too was being led away. I called after her,

"Farewell, Almah!"

Her reply came back broken with sobs.

"Farewell forever, Atam-or!"

I was once more led away, and again traversed the dark passages, and again came back to my den, which now seemed dark with the blackness of despair.

On my return I was formally and solemnly congratulated by all the paupers. I should not have received their congratulations had I not expected that there would be something more. I expected that something would be said about the result of this act of separation; for Almah had believed that it would have been the means of saving my life, and I believed that it would be the means of saving her life, and for this reason each of us had performed our part: although, of course, the joy of meeting with one another would of itself have been sufficient, and more than sufficient, to make that ceremony an object of desire. I thought, therefore, that some statement might now be made to the effect that by means of this ceremony my status among the Kosekin would be changed, and that both I and Almah, being no longer lovers, would be no longer fit for the sacrifice. To my intense disappointment, however, nothing whatever was said that had the remotest reference to this.

On the following *jom* I determined to ask the Chief