

considered an old maid, and a bachelor at twenty-five was a *rara avis*. But as a consequence of the dowry system, and the entire absence of anything like elopements or clandestine marriages, there was necessarily a very large proportion of old maids. If the intelligent men of the community would but reflect on the consequences of the pernicious dowry system, and the daily increasing misery its perpetration entails on the masses, they would surely endeavor to reform it. Among the wealthy families early marriages were the rule, and the nuptials were often made even before the girls had reached their teens. In all cases where eligible *matchams*, i.e. cousins or sons of mothers' brothers or fathers' sisters were available preference was accorded to them—almost as a matter of right. In the absence of any such, a young man of equal caste was fixed on, and negotiations with his relations commenced. The paper then described these negotiations, dwelling at length on the arrangements entered into with regard to dowry, and then proceeding to tell of all the feasts and ceremonies connected with a Moorish marriage. A deputation went to solicit Moora Lebbe as a husband of "Aysha, the daughter of Hussain Marikar, their dear friend and near relative." Various panegyrics were passed, a rich feast followed and the party dispersed. From this time a periodical exchange of presents kept the flame from dying out. There is yet another ceremony before the marriage, *viz.*, the payment of "Seedanani," or dowry money, which is a function of importance and takes place some months in advance of the nuptials. The cash of the dowry alone goes to the husband, and enables him to meet the wedding expenses and to purchase the bride's *trousseau*. On an auspicious day after partaking of the usual *Patchoru Pantharam*, milk, rice, and cakes, a party of the bride's immediate friends, to the number of about seventy, attended by the family priest or "Lebbe" and a brother or cousin of the bride carrying the *seed in pannam* of the sum agreed upon, with some betel leaves and a lot of other things, proceed to the young man's house, where elaborate ceremonies are gone through. About ten days fixed for the wedding the invitations are issued. The bridegroom arrayed in his best, and attended by a large party of friends, calls at every house of every Moor, high and low, within a radius of several miles, and invites its inmates of both sexes, by calling out in stentorian tones.

On the wedding day takes place the great feast at the bridegroom's house called *mapulle wettu packe' choru*. By midday all the invited guests from far and near have arrived and seated themselves on the floor, tailor fashion, shoulder to shoulder according to caste and condition. Water basins are then passed round preparatory to eating. After the repast the guests leave with a remark to the effect "I will go and come again." The men all gone, the fair sex are entertained in a similar manner. In the afternoon a party go to the bride's house, where they are received with much cordiality and the bridegroom is presented with a ring. In the evening there is a fresh assembly of friends to do honor to the bridegroom and accompany him to the bride's, where the marriage rites are to be solemnized. In the presentation of the *santolam* the immediate friends of the bridegroom head the list with the highest sums—say fifty rupees—and then smaller sums follow. Thus sometimes Rs 1,000 have been collected, in addition to rings of varying value presented by the relatives. While this is going on the bridegroom is supposed to be at his toilet, to the due performance of which a bath is essential. After this the party proceed to the bride's house in great state, on the way to which numerous ceremonies are gone through. At the house the *knuttam* or written record of the marriage is signed. The next function is *karin*. The

priest takes the bridegroom's right hand in his own, and repeats a formula in Arabic three times, asking if the bridegroom is willing, to which of course he replies in the affirmative. The priest with two witnesses then enters the bridal chamber, and similarly addresses the bride. After the conclusion of the ceremony the bridegroom is conducted to the bridal-chamber by her father or brother, and the ceremony of tying the "tali" takes place, the "tali" being clasped round the throat and never removed during the lifetime of the spouses. The "tali" being tied the bridegroom is expected to "clothe" his bride. This consists of placing a silk kombaya round her waist. All this time the bridegroom neither sees, nor hears, and after the ceremony the bridegroom sitting on the bed near by has his first look at his future life partner. The position is embarrassing, as all eyes are fixed upon him. More feasting follows, and it is not till two o'clock in the morning that the bridegroom retires to the bridal chamber for the night. Early next morning the married sisters and female cousins or nearest female relative of the bridegroom visit the bridal chamber and prepare its inmates for the bath, to which they are conducted under a white canopy, and sitting side by side are bathed. Then the newly married couple feed each other. At night the bridegroom's family is invited to dinner at the bride's house, and the next night she and her family are similarly entertained at the bridegroom's. From this time feasts at *intervals* take place at the houses of the mutual friends over a period of some months, the happy couple living in *Beenu* at least until the first child is born, but if a part of the house has been given in dowry the best room is appropriated to them. — *Madras Times*.

Who Should Help?

BY A. T. ALLEN.

Whose sympathies and tears should overflow,
And who should feel most keenly woman's woe
If not her sisters who have been more blest
With Christian grace and culture, than the rest?
Whose hands should be outstretched to bear the cup
Of blessing to their lips, and lift them up
Into the same sweet fellowship divine
Which thrills with love and peace your souls and mine?
O, sisters! you whose homes and lives are bright
Under the blaze of gospel's truth and light,
Grudge not the little sacrifice you make
For your less favoured heathen sisters' sake.
Perchance some yearning soul across the sea
Is waiting just a little help from thee.
Which, if withheld, the books of God will show,
Would seal to her a destiny of woe;
But if, in Christ's dear name, the help is given,
Would seal that soul for happiness and heaven.
How shall you help? Let Him direct the way
Who taught your hearts to love—your lips to pray.
He, in whose all-appreciative sight
The grandest gift may be a "widow's mite,"
Can, by His power, make your offering.
Under His touch, the most effectual thing
Do you remember how a Jewish lad
Gave to the Lord the little lunch he had,
And after He a simple "grace" had said,
By that same lunch the multitudes were fed?
Fear not; but in His faithfulness abide,
And cast your gifts upon the rolling tide:
Under His eye your gifts cannot be lost,
Under His care the billows shall be crossed,
And *somewhere*, in the lands across the sea,
Your gifts shall safely reach their destiny:
And *somewhere*, they shall help to gild the night
Of heathen darkness with the gospel light