

ly meet each other before the marriage compact is sealed. Indeed the Oriental theory seems to be that love comes after marriage, not before it.

When a young man has reached a proper age and acquired sufficient means to pay a suitable dowry, his parents relieve him of the trouble, or defraud him of the pleasure, of wooing his bride. The mother, or a go-between who acts in her place, selects an eligible damsel. The father sends a deputy to act as "friend of the bride-

marriage, if not indeed its equivalent. (Matthew i. 18, 25.) The dowry, as Dr. Tristram states, among the class just above the peasant in Egypt, varies from £15 to £25, or more if the bridegroom's father be wealthy. There is often a betrothal feast almost as liberal as a wedding festival.

The marriage festivities often commence a week before the wedding day and continue as long after. Invitations are sent far and wide to all the kin on either side. (Judges xiv. 12, and John ii. 1, 2.)



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groom," (Judges xiv. 20 ; John iii. 29), to conduct the business negotiations. These being satisfactory, a written contract is signed and a portion of the bride's dowry is paid in hand. Her father is expected to contribute also a suitable sum to her marriage portion. Gifts to the bride or her family are also often made on the part of the bridegroom. These customs find illustration in that olden romance, the betrothal of Isaac and Rebekah. (Genesis xxiv.) This betrothal is held only less sacred than

Often the invitation is literally in the words of Scripture, "Come, for all things are now ready." (Luke xiv. 17.) Sometimes a wealthy host will distribute new and costly garments among the guests. To this custom allusion is made in Matthew xxii. 11 : The king finding a man without a wedding garment rejected him as an unauthorized intruder from the feast. The company is often so numerous that the wine becomes exhausted, as at the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee.

The home-bringing of the bride