

Youths' Department.

AN INDIAN PRINCESS' WEDDING.

(Mrs. Corey in Tidings.)

Just across the road from the mission house there is a fine up-stairs house, the home of a Rajah; it is surrounded by a high wall, the height of which always attracts the attention of an English person, for the wall is so high that only the upper story of the house can be seen from the street.

This Rajah has several children, among them a grown up daughter (for to the credit of the rajah caste be it said they do not give their girls in marriage till they are fifteen or sixteen years of age.)

Soon after we moved here (at the beginning of the year,) rumor said that this daughter was soon to be married to a young prince from Tuni, (one of the stations of the Ontario Board.)

Sure enough in April, we began to see signs of the approaching wedding. Leaves were strung together and hung over the entrance to the grounds, and a large open shed thatched with palm leaves was erected.

Finally one day in May the guests began to arrive. First, came a procession bringing a messenger from the Tuni Rajah to this Rajah, he came all the way (more than a hundred miles) in a palanquin borne by relays of men. The journey took several days when it would have been only a matter of a few hours by rail, and much less expensive, but that mode of travelling to a wedding is the custom among the rajahs.

In front and behind him were long lines of men carrying loads of bananas, mangoes, coconuts, and jack fruit for the wedding feast.

It was said that two hundred bandies came by road at the same time from Tuni, bringing wedding guests.

The bridegroom also came, but instead of going at once to the palace, he staid until the wedding (for two days) in a tent provided by the rajah, half a mile away.

The day of his arrival in town, the wedding music began, and the following day a huge elephant gaily caparisoned in scarlet stood at the entrance to the palace to bring the bridegroom.

All that day the street near the Rajah's was full of people, and the next morning even more came; such a crowd, of men, women, and child-

ren, all happy as little folks at home during a holiday celebration.

I wish you could have seen what a picturesque scene they made with their bright clothes and smiling faces.

As usual that morning I was helping the children with their lessons, and as the music had been the same for two days and the people had told us so many times that the elephant was gone and the Prince was coming, we paid no attention to what was going on, until glancing up, we saw the procession was really in front of the palace; then we hurried out to see it. The Prince dressed in purple velvet, and seated on the back of the elephant, in a beautiful howdah of filigree silver, headed the procession. On either side and in front of him were four attendants richly dressed, while directly behind, was another who held over him a white umbrella.

Next to the Prince came an open, empty palanquin covered with scarlet, and as usual with the front shaped like an elephant's trunk. It contained two seats facing each other. Ordinarily, the bride and groom would have been carried in it, but in this case, the bride being of the rajah caste could not appear in public (as the Rajah women are always kept in seclusion.)

Behind the palanquin was a line of men, then came a relative in a covered palanquin.

As I said before, the procession halted at the entrance to the palace, then at the signal it passed under the large arch at the gate into the grounds where only the immediate relatives, friends, and brahmins were allowed to go. The marriage ceremony took place an hour afterwards, and was followed by a great feast for the assembled company.

Later on the Rajah sent us at different times two large trays of sweetmeats.

Day after day he gave food to the villages around, among others, the Christian village across the way was feasted.

For a week, the music was kept up during the day, and a good part of the night.

Each night from ten o'clock till the early morning hours fire works were set off. Some of them were very pretty, especially the bright colored rockets and the different colored lights which illuminated the whole palace and the grounds around it.

One evening, they let a small balloon ascend. Away it went sailing over the lawn, finally it descended and was found by one of the Christians.

A few days afterwards he and some of the others decorated it with the motto "God is Love," and started it off on another flight.

It seemed sad to us that the bride could take no part in the festivities, and only see the fire-works through some crack where she could not be seen.