

At this Almah's face became suffused with smiles and blushes. Her arms were about me, and she did not draw away, but looked up in sweet confusion and said,

"Why, as to that—I—I cannot be more your—your wife than I am."

"What do you mean?" I exclaimed, in wonder. "My wife!"

Her eyes dropped again and she whispered,

"The ceremony of separation is with the Kosekin the most sacred form of marriage. It is the religious form; the other is merely the civil form."

This was unintelligible, nor did I try to understand it.

It was enough to hear this from her own sweet lips; but it was a strange feeling, and I think I am the only man since Adam that was ever married without knowing it.

"As to flight," continued Almah, who had quite adopted the Kosekin fashion, which makes women take the lead—"as to flight, we need not hurry. We are all-powerful now, and there is no more danger. We must wait until we send embassies to my people, and when they are ready to receive us we will go. But now let us leave this, for our servants are waiting for us, and the light is distressing to them. Let us go to the nearest of our palaces and obtain rest and food."

Here Featherstone stopped, yawned, and laid down the manuscript.

"That's enough for to-day," said he; "I'm tired and can't read any more. It's time for supper."