

THE YOUNG WOMEN

A Hindu Wedding

I had never attended a Hindu wedding, so was much pleased when invited to one the other day, at the home of a rich landowner. We arrived early, and were given seats on a little balcony where we would be able to see all that was going on. Two men were busy making Jasmin wreaths, and another was making sandalwood paste, and all around us were people hurrying with the last preparations. Down below sat an old priest giving instructions to a young one who was to officiate. The young priest was blessing the saffron, rice, cocoanuts, and all the other things that were to be used in the ceremony. Then when all was finished he wrote on the wall "Glory be to God" and impatiently waited for the ceremony to begin.

The guests began to arrive, and such beautiful clothes! The women looked like a lot of gay butterflies. The guests were called by some of the household and escorted to the ceremony by a band.

At last the bridegroom went to a friend's house and was brought back by the band and accompanied by his friends. He stood on a bamboo enclosed space in the inner courtyard, waiting for his bride. The women guests surrounded him while the men were in an upper balcony. He was a fine tall man dressed in spotless white, and had a fancy paper ornament on his forehead, with two dangling streamers over his eyes, which he found a great bother.

Another blare of trumpets and in came the bride, who looked to be about sixteen. She was very demure and kept her head bowed most of the time. So that she would be somewhat the same height as the bridegroom, she had to stand on a little trunk that was hastily shoved under the white cloth mat carpeting the enclosure.

Then the ceremony began. As the father was dead an uncle took the father's

place. There was a maid of honor, who did her best to keep the bride's beautiful saree pulled back when the priest was wildly throwing some red paste about. The groom was so worried over the fact that some of the guests could not enter on account of a crowd around the gate that the priest had hard work to get him to make the responses. What was said, we could not hear, for at all the most important parts the band played loudly. This was so that no crying baby or sneezing could be heard as that would bring bad luck, especially the sneezing. The priest filled the groom's hands with rice, then the groom poured it over the bride's head, then her hands were filled and she poured it over the groom's head, this was done again and again. At one part everyone had rice given to them and threw it at the bridal couple. Cocoanuts too were used a lot, the priest would bless them and pass them back and forth between the bride and groom.

The proceedings took an hour, then we were well sprinkled with rose water, daubed with sandalwood paste, presented with garlands and fruit, and saying our farewells to our host we departed.

Mary Stillwell McLaurin.

VOICES FROM THE REDEMPTION HOME

By Mrs. I. C. Archibald

Oh salaam Nagamah! When did you come, and where did you come from?

I came from Palasa today by the passenger train, to see my little boy, who is here.

Didn't you used to be here years ago, Nagamah?

Oh yes, I was one of the first to come to the Home and very glad I was to get here, because I could not live right in the family where I was working, and Miss Priest sent me here and I remained here six years.