

*pials* the men and children are sleeping. Now and then a mat or tiny pillow reveals a greater degree of comfort.

On and on, in and out through smoky alleys—here is the scene of splendour! It is a tiled-roofed, two-storied house, with spacious verandahs, tiny alcoves and niched walls. In front is an immense pandal clothed in robes of the richest green.

The wedding will not begin for an hour, they say. Look in that room—why are those strings in saucers of castor oil burning before those gaily painted pots, bedecked with gaudy flowers? “Oh,” says one, “in each of those *Kimdas* is either rice or ghee or molasses or peas. After the marriage we will worship these things so that plenty and prosperity may ever attend the wedded pair.”

A tapestry mat is brought. The women gather round. How they are bedecked and bedizened—complexions brilliant with saffron paste; eyelids beautified with the blackest dye; foreheads, adorned with the brightest vermillion; forms skillfully draped in richly embroidered cloths; the silver belts and the velvet jackets and the jewellery—the bracelets and armlets, the necklets and anklets, the finger and toe rings, the ear rings and nose rings and the various shaped plates of gold with there jewelled pendants adorning the massy coils of glossy hair.

Why, the women—where have they gone? There lords appeared so they disappeared. “Liberty, the greatest of earthly blessings—give me that *precious jewel* and you may take everything else.”

More lamps are lighted; but the bride has not yet donned her wedding robes. She is sleeping there on the rug. What a scrawny girl of seven years and her husband they say is thirty-seven!

Twelve o'clock—and still the bridegroom tarries. The nautch party arrives. Now what music—drums and bag-pipes, cymbals and harp, guitar and tambourine and many other instruments to which no English name could be applied. The men recline on the pandal platform, vigorously chew the betel-nut and lend an ear to the immoral songs which are to us as vain mutterings. The lavender water is sprayed, the cotton-wool tipped and attar-dipped quills are offered, camphor beads are garlanded, and *pan supari* is distributed.

One o'clock! We must go. We thought the wedding was to be at ten! “Oh, please wait a little longer. They are going for the bridegroom *now*.” The procession starts. The Principal of the High School acts as our escort and explains the performances.

The bridegroom, he comes! he comes! Hark, the joyous airs are ringing! and the people are whispering—“How beautiful! How beautiful he is!” He is mounted on a gaily caparisoned white steed. He is superbly dressed in colored embroidered clothes while his white gown reaches to the ground. The bride's party (the bride is not present) and that of the bridegroom meet. As they stand facing each other the bands play simultaneously and the dancers dance. The