

street is lined with torch-bearers and bearers bearing trees of the gayest of the gay pith flowers, curiously and variously fashioned. Thousands gaze on the festal scene and the eye is dazzled with the colouring—the white bordered with damson, the scarlets and yellows and the shining greens. What a brilliant scene—picturesque, gorgeous, magnificent !

A representative from the brides party offers the bridegroom fruit and treacle, smears his neck with scandal paste, and garlands him with huge camphor beads and jessamine flowers. After these tokens of respect the processions unite and gaily parade the principal streets.

On our return we find the Bramin priest in waiting. What a sharp-featured, quick-eyed fellow with head clipped before and a ragged lock behind, naked above the loins and a coarse cloth draped below. His appearance bespeaks a careful observance of the prescribed rules of abstemiousness as a preparation for the performance of the marriage rite.

He has arrived ! arrived at last ! A commotion at the gate. The entrance fee is demanded. The family priest, conspicuous by his long white beard and powder-daubed forehead, grandly leads the bridegroom to the chair of state. Yes, it is all honor, honor to the bridegroom.—“Bring that tray and bowl ! Where is the bride’s youngest brother ?” He cannot be found. They call and call and search and search. Now the elders rage—“Just as we told you ! He thinks because he wears pants and speaks a little English that he is above this service which he only should perform.” Here they come carrying the lost brother. He cries and says, “I won’t ! I won’t !” but the Guru solves the difficulty by forcing the lad’s hands into the water and thus compelling him to lave the bridegroom’s feet.

The priest winds the sacred thread around and around the pandal. Now he takes the bridegroom by the hand and leads him around and around the pandal. Then they enter the consecrated bower. Where is the bride ? Here she comes, borne on the shoulder of her uncle. What do we see ? Naught but a mass of red, gold and jasmin. She is placed on a bag of rice near the bridegroom, but a screen intervenes.

We must not tarry to describe how the priest fills her hand now with rice, now with jaggery, now with this, now with that ; how he pours the Ganges water into the bridegroom’s hands and offers flower and fruit to the holy water ; how with the sacred Kusa grass he ties together the wrists of the contracting parties ; how the screen is finally removed and the bridegroom pours rice into her hands and vice versa ; how she places a vermillion spot on his forehead and vice versa ; how the ceremony is brought to a close by the bridegroom tying on the bride’s neck the *tali* or gold piece which has first been touched by all the relatives. And all the while the priest mutters his munthrums, the players play, and the dancers dance.

As we homeward plod our weary way, just as daylight is steal-