

the first place—for honouring me with your attentions?" she retorted.

"I think I have proved my motive," said he haughtily.

"Your motive in the beginning was simply to humiliate me—I saw it all. Sir," she cried vehemently, "you regarded me and my aunt as a couple of scheming women, and——"

"Did Dyke regard you in that light?"

I am sure he hadn't the faintest idea of what would be the result of his inquiry, for poor Gwen burst into tears, and prepared to leave the place.

"Don't do that," he cried. "Forgive me; I will go;" and out in the pouring rain he went.

It was all very well for him, but it didn't help *us*. There were we, shut up for an indefinite time—it rained with a steady persistence worthy of the days of the Deluge—with a crying girl. Great goodness! how she did cry! Before that experience I had always believed that women's crying was all outside show, just put on to gain some point. That girl undeceived me. Compared to any exhibition of the kind I had ever witnessed before, it was as Niagara to Lodore! And there were we, squeezed flat against the wall, not daring so much as to wink an eyelid. And that wasn't the end of it, for just as we were beginning to flatter ourselves that the flow of water—both within and without—was abating, we heard footsteps on the gravel, and Dyke, umbrella in hand, darkened the doorway! We knew what was going to happen, and it happened. It came to pass in this wise:—

"I met Roscoe just now, hurrying for wraps for you; so I asked him where you were and have brought you my umbrella."

"That is very nice of you; but as the rain is ceasing, I'll not deprive you of it," answered Gwen sweetly, with not a trace of tears in her voice.

"Do you wish me to take myself off, Miss Clifford?" said he shortly.

"I wish you to do exactly as you please," she replied. "Then I shall stay—at any rate, until I have explained my seeming rudeness in going away so suddenly."

"Wouldn't it be as well for me to take your apologies as made—especially as it is getting fine?"

"No," decidedly. "On the night before I took my leave, just as I was coming to your house, the Colonel sent for me, and after a deal of palaver said you and your aunt were great friends of his, that of course your friends expected you to marry well, as you were an heiress, and all that."

"Fussy old man!" exclaimed Gwen.

"One way and the other he managed to put me up. I did not choose to be considered a fortune-hunter, so I promptly asked for a month's leave, and went off without saying a word to anyone."

"Very sensible of you," said Gwen, quiet sarcasm in her tone.

"So I thought at the time, but as my leave ran on I began to doubt, and I came back resolved to—to——" Here he broke down.

We pitied him; but it was interesting. Gwen didn't help him. So he picked himself up again and went on—

"But when I found Roscoe——"

"I hate Mr. Roscoe."

"Gwen! Gwen! Answer me this—do you hate *me*?"

She turned her face to his.

After that we had a very bad time, but at length they departed.

At mess that night we were asked what we had done with ourselves at the party. We had been missed, and it was requested that we should give an account of ourselves. We stated that we had spent the major part of our time looking at "Tableaux Vivants."

CETHEL.

AT A PARSEE WEDDING.

"THE marriage season is almost over—but if I hear that a wedding will take place before you leave Bombay you may be sure that I will secure you an invitation to it," said Mr. Dosabhoj Franiiji, a well-known Parsee.

"Many thanks," I replied, "but you say the marriage season is over; do you mean that weddings only take place during a certain part of the year?"

"I do indeed," answered Mr. Franiiji, "for when the Parsees first landed in India they were allowed by Jadi Ran, the Hindu chief of the Sanyan, to settle in his territory only on condition, so tradition relates, of their laying down their arms, changing their style of dress, performing their marriages in conformity with the practice of the Hindus, and abstaining from

killing the cow. Now the Hindus only marry their children during January and February, as these months are supposed to be specially propitious; and though Parsees may marry a little later in the year than that, still the greater number of marriages are arranged to take place during those months. I dare say I shall soon hear of a marriage amongst my young friends, and you may be sure I shall have much pleasure in taking you to it."

I regretted I had not been in Bombay during the matrimonial months, as it is only in that city that Parsee marriages can be seen to perfection.

However, all was well, for a few days later I received an invitation to a wedding in the All Bless Bagh or Garden. The hour fixed was six p.m., and shortly

before that time Mr. Franiji and his son called for me and drove me to the marriage hall.

Not knowing whether I should recognise any of the ladies, I said to Mr. Franiji's son, whom I had not met before :

"Will any of your sisters be at the wedding, Mr. Franiji?"

"I am Mr. Franiji," promptly replied his father, "my son's name is Dosabhoy."

"He has your first name then," I said, "but his surname must be Franiji."

"Oh no," laughingly replied Mr. Dosabhoy Franiji, "amongst Parsees we do not use a surname as you do in England, but the sons take the father's first name. My name you know is Dosabhoy Franiji, my son's name is Jehangir Dosabhoy, and his little boy has Jehangir for his second name."

"How very confusing; how can you tell 'who is who,' if every generation has a different surname?"

"That is easy; we all say in describing a man that he is the son of so-and-so, and there is never any confusion. Here we are nearing the All Bless Bagh, and I want to take you to my daughter, Mrs. Cowasji, who will explain everything to you."

The sounds of the "Europe" music, as a brass band in Bombay is called, seemed close at hand, but the crowd of carriages obliged us to take our position in the queue and wait our turn. Many Parsee gentlemen, radiant in their spotless white marriage garments, passed along, while the illumination from the gates at the entrance to the garden shed a fitful glare on the quaint groups of natives who had gathered round to see the *tamaska* or festivity.

The gates were gaily illuminated with "butts," that is, lighted wicks floating in saucers of oil, fifty or sixty suspended on triangular stands, of which dozens were placed about the entrance and in the gardens.

Mr. Franiji took me to the hall set apart for ladies, and there introduced me to his daughter. Already there was a fair sprinkling of the bride's friends awaiting her, all in full dress. Many ladies wore *saris*, *i.e.*, the loose garment which they drape round them so gracefully and cunningly that it serves both as skirt and covering for the head and shoulders. It is made of the palest shade of purple, heliotrope, blue or green, while many ladies wear white soft silk saris with beautifully embroidered borders.

"How long do the ceremonies last? have you been here very long?" I asked of Mrs. Cowasji.

"I have been at the bride's house for some hours, and we shall not return home till midnight," she said, in rather a weary voice.

"Are you not very tired before it is all over," I said, rather dreading that I too might have to stay till midnight.

"Yes, very; but it is the custom for those of us who are related to the bride or bridegroom to wait till quite the last."

Now and then a little Parsee boy dressed in white or pale green satin trousers and having a satin coat of a darker shade would run into the hall to ask something

of his mother, but on the whole the silence was almost oppressive as we sat watching the new arrivals, who were all ladies. Hardly anyone spoke except to greet a friend on her entrance, and it seemed to me *triste*, and very unlike a gathering of my own sex at home.

There must have been seven or eight hundred guests assembled before the bridal parties made their appearance. In the centre of the hall was a small open space round which chairs had been placed. Several venerable looking Dasturs or priests, dressed in white, stood in readiness to take part in the ceremony, and on tables close beside them were trays of dry rice and cocoanuts, emblematic of plenty. Several brass trays holding rice, cocoanuts, and *pân soparis* or spice packets, were brought in on the shoulders of servants. Suddenly, to the sounds of the "Europe" band, the bride's party and the bridegroom's entered from opposite sides of the hall simultaneously. Then there was such a crushing and pressing to the barred windows of the marriage hall to catch a glimpse of the two parties!

Each party was so surrounded by friends that it was hardly possible to see much of the two most important persons. Both parties approached the space in the middle of the hall across which a white sheet was held, the bride and bridegroom taking their seats on opposite sides so that they could not see each other.

Crowds of friends trooped in, till the hall was completely full. Thirteen or fourteen hundred guests were expected, and by this time all had probably arrived.

The priests began to chant the marriage service in the ancient Zend language, which is not "understanded of the people." The bride and bridegroom were each furnished with a handful of rice, and it is a matter of great excitement to see which first throws this rice at the other, when the sheet which has been held up between them is suddenly withdrawn. That one whose rice first touches the other is supposed to possess the warmer affection for the other.

After the sheet was withdrawn the now married couple sat side by side, while the Dasturs, sometimes together and sometimes separately, addressed a long oration to them, still in Zend, on their duties to each other and the world at large. All the time that the oration was going on the priests held rice in their hands and threw several grains at a time over the young couple, apparently enforcing each command with a shower of rice. While the exhortation was going on the guests got up and walked about and talked, and no further heed was paid to the priests or what they said.

Garlands made of jessamine buds interspersed with roses were then hung round the necks of the bride and bridegroom, till each looked as if they were wearing boas of flowers. Then little dabs of vermilion were placed on the foreheads of the happy pair and their near relations, as an outward and visible sign of joy and gladness at the union.

The feast was the next feature of the entertainment

in which everyone took the keenest interest. Long tables with forms on each side were placed in a building opening on to the garden. Fresh banana leaves were put at intervals on the table before the guests, each leaf measuring about two feet by one. They looked fresh and nice and made capital plates. One banana leaf serves for all the courses, which are brought round by attendants. Curries of all sorts, rice chutnees, fresh and dried fruits, sweets and cakes, were placed by the servers on each guest's leaf, till the pretty plate was dotted over with all sorts of good things, which were apparently enjoyed indiscriminately by the guest. Thus, a mouthful of curry was followed by sweets and cakes, by chutnees, all eaten in the daintiest way with the fingers, spoons and forks not appearing at all. At the end of the meal attendants

brought round a bowl and brass jar, and poured water over the fingers of each guest.

Mr. Franji took me round the brilliantly illuminated gardens, where some of the guests were enjoying the music of the band. It was impossible to seat all the guests at once, owing to their numbers. The custom is for the host and his intimate friends and near relations to dine with the last company. The festivities would not finish till about midnight, when the bride and bridegroom would go to their house accompanied by a remnant of their guests.

Is it from the Parsees we have borrowed the custom of throwing rice at a wedding? With them it means, "May prosperity and plenty always be with you." Is there any such meaning in the comparatively modern custom that has sprung up amongst us?

MAY THORNE.

A COLONIAL SUMMER TRIP.



"HE AND HIS WIFE HAD PITCHED THEIR CANVAS HOME" (p. 175).

WE were a party of six; our rendezvous was at a neighbouring homestead, and a merry set we were the night before our start, discussing plans and making our final preparations for a month's trip across the middle island. The following morning dawned as only in New Zealand the lovely prelude of a beautiful day can dawn; and with light hearts we made an early move, after carefully packing our "swag." This, consisting principally of saddles, bridles, and guns, was stowed away in our two carriages, a dogcart and tandem, and a buggy and pair.

Our first bit of road was nothing but a rough track over some fifteen miles of hilly country, and our party were well occupied in holding on while the

wheels made frantic plunges into heavy ruts or jumped concealed boulders. After rounding some pretty lagoons, we presently joined the coaching road, and found ourselves left with a promising crop of bruises and sore bones. With a sigh of relief, the ladies arranged their hair and hats, and settled themselves comfortably to enjoy the remaining three hours' drive to the hospitable station at which we were to lunch. Such a cosy, snug little homestead it was at the foot of a high mountain, planted around with trees, as protection from prevailing winds; dogs chained up here and there, and a breed of pure white poultry strutting in the sunshine.

Our bachelor hosts being university men, devoted their spare time, among other refinements, to forming