before the ornamentation is begun, as if anything be left till afterwards the shells are likely to be knocked off.

Liquid glue is best to use, and a rather small brush will be necessary.

I put first of all a row of sprigs of coralline all round, projecting over the edge of the bracket, forming a fringe. Then a row of one variety of shells, such as small whelks or cockles, all round inside the fringe of coralline. After this border, a sort of groundwork of the larger shells should be made, leaving the interstices until the last to be filled in with tiny shells and morsels of seaweed. The lovely little pearly galeonna, and the bright pink trough-shells will be at once chosen for these purposes. Should there be a scarcity of bright-coloured specimens, and the bracket looks dull and flat, some little pieces of lichen may be introduced with great advantage; they are of all shades and hues, and can be found on the trees in most country places. They look so much like seaweed that no one will detect the difference, and they add the little touches of colour here and there which are necessary to brighten up the whole.

A favourite, though old-fashioned, way of using these "spoils of the sea" is to take a very small wicker basket, cut it in halves lengthwise, and stitch or glue it on to a piece of cardboard, the hollow side of course inwards. Then fill it with dried or pressed seaweeds, arranging the colours and forms as tastefully as possible, and fastening each piece with gum, either to the basket or to the cardboard, as the position may require. I should have said, however, before the basket is attached, that some sprays of seaweed may be "floated out" on the card, round where the edge of the bouquet is to be. This forms a border and facilitates the arrangement of the rest of the bunch considerably.

A more useful employment of shells, and one, therefore, more to be recommended, is in the conversion of a small wooden box into a pretty work or trinket box. The inside will first require to be lined with silk or coloured material, and the lid attached more securely. Two little hinges may be bought for a trifling sum, and fastened on with tiny nails, or two or three little slips of cloth will do instead of orthodox hinges. A loop of ribbon should also be fastened to the front of the lid, that it may be opened without touching the shells. If they are well glued on, however, they will stand a good deal of wear unless really roughly handled. They are fastened and grouped in the same way as on the bracket. If the box be intended for a present, a pretty idea is to arrange the initials of the recipient in pink or white shells on the lid, the letters being edged with seaweed or very small shells of a different colour, to make them show up well.

The tiniest shells of all may be reserved for the making of birthday and other gift cards; they would be quite lost if employed on any larger objects, but come in beautifully in a wreath of fine and delicate sea-weed on a card of this description, which will form a pleasing memento of a summer holiday at the sea-side.

THE WEDDINGS OF THE WORLD.

A WEDDING IN EGYPT.

TORCHES USED AT A WEDDING.

THE beauty and charms of the women of ancient Egypt are gravely recorded in history and sung in poetry, and modern travellers have been as earnest and elegant in admiring their descendants. Their accomplishments were music, dancing, and singing. They had an extravagant love of jewellery. They had their picnic parties, they paid house-to-house visits, they frequented the fashionable drives and promenades in their handsome chariots, and they carried the arts of dress and the toilette to an extreme never since exceeded. They were fond of gardening, practised gymnastic exercises, played games with balls, embroidered, and did various kinds of work with their bronze needles. There is no reason for believing that they did not make excellent wives and mothers.

A SHELL TRINKET BOX.

The social and legal rights of women were first recognised in ancient Egypt. Hermes, the great founder of its government and laws, decreed that a man should have but one wife. Diodorus, who wrote his history of Egypt about forty-four years before the birth of Christ, says that anciently the marriage contract was regarded amongst the Egyptians as one of grave importance, in which the husband pledged himself to yield implicit obedience to the wife, and she, as solemnly, promised to place his claims upon her love and fidelity before all other claims, including those of her children, should their union be productive of a family. It is most probable that the occasion of ratifying such a contract was, even in the earliest times, accompanied by some festive, religious, or legal ceremonies, but if so, we have nothing to show what they were. The barbarous conquerors who destroyed the written records of old Egypt have left us nothing belonging to those early times but monumental hieroglyphics. I can only tell you that the bride wore a wedding ring, that in their matrimonial unions ties of consanguinity were disregarded, and that marriages between relatives were frequent and common.

How superstition and polygamy dishonoured and degraded the female sex in Egypt is another and a later, and yet a very ancient, story. What the result was is a lesson too sad to be dwelt upon—the pages of Diodorus which chronicle it seem to be written in blood and tears—and that influence, alas! is still in existence.

Passing along the downward course of Egyptian history, we come to the Egypt of a hundred years ago, and enter, by virtue of our invisibility, a great place of public assembly for women—the bath—into which, while they are present, it is death by the law for a man to intrude.

We are in the midst of a noisy crowd of women, old and young, laughing and chattering and talking of their domestic or private affairs, all proudly displaying their fine clothes and jewellery. A great number of active little children are romping and playing with the slave girls in their midst. The mistress of the ceremonies is settling a dispute between some rival beauties; the attendants, accustomed to the noise and confusion, run here and there to take this or fetch that, render assistance in one place or supply refreshments in another. The humid air is heavy with perfume, and here and there the smoke of burning incense ascends.

Some are richly attired in muslins and silks interwoven with threads of gold, rich European brocade, and the flowered stuffs of Aleppo, with trimmings of choice furs, &c., and with head-dresses heavy with pearls, jewels, flowers and small golden coins. Others are stripped for the water and putting on their

bathing wrappers, or having their long jet-black hair carefully braided into numerous small, or a few large, plaits, or the edges of their eye-lids blackened, or their finger nails newly stained with henne. A few are preparing to depart, enveloping themselves from head to foot in capacious mantles of white linen or black taffety, leaving nothing visible but their eyes.

Yonder on the divan, partaking of the chibouk or cup of coffee, are a pair of portly matrons engaged in very earnest conversation, which they interlard with the most extravagant flattery. They have been sighing to see each other ever since they last parted. They have been pining to death for the honour of receiving each other's visit. The greatest possible happiness to them is that of their frequent meeting.

When each matron kisses and bids the other adieu before gathering together her own and going home, each riding astride, a shapeless mass of drapery upon a magnificently caparisoned donkey, and each with the chief officer of the harem riding before her on horseback, there has been done a deed of mighty note—the first step for a marriage between Fatima, aged seventeen, to a young man she has never seen and one who has never seen her, Seid Abdalkadan, the youngest son of Seid Mustafa, has been arranged.

Soon after the male relatives of both families have a formal meeting, at which each side appoints a representative to discuss preliminaries and draw up the contract of betrothal, which binds the bridegroom to pay a given sum as dowry and settle upon the bride a regular payment as bath money, a kind of wedding by proxy. The iman, or priest, being present, asks one proxy if he be willing to take the fair Fatima for a wife and pay down the sum agreed upon by way of portion. If the reply is an affirmative, a similar question is put to the other proxy, whose consent being received, a purse containing, or supposed to contain, the bride's dowry is given to her father by the bridegroom's father. Then, the contract being duly signed, sealed and witnessed, the ceremony is concluded by the iman's reading some verses from the Koran.

The next step is that of taking this legally confirmed contract to the cadi, who grants his licence for the wedding in the form following:—

"Our Lord and Legal Judge, Seid Husseyn, grants permission to Fatima, the daughter of Hadge Abdalkadan, dwelling in, &c., she having been legally betrothed, to marry Seid Abdalkadan, youngest son of Seid Mustafa, granting always that there is no lawful impediment to their union."

To this is appended the date with, at the top, the seal of the cadi.

The father of the bride usually adds to the bridegroom's dowry a second sum of money, which, with the first, is expended in purchasing the young lady's bridal apparel and jewels.

Then, indeed, the entire harem breaks into a state of wild confusion. The preparations employ every hour and every thought amongst its inmates. Every relative, friend, and acquaintance receives the good news, and from each a wedding gift is expected. Curiosity is on tiptoe to know in what forms and numbers these presents will arrive. During the several days preceding the nuptials the betrothed maiden is carried with great pomp to the bath, attended by all her female relatives, her sisters, and her cousins, and her aunts. Everybody is anxious to see, and all who know her are anxious to present their congratulations. It is the delight of everybody to please and amuse her. They describe the handsome looks of the husband to be, tell her of his goodness and his wealth, for she, poor thing! knows nothing about him. They dress her up in male attire, by way of fun, making her first a janissary, then a mameluke, and then some other male character, until the harem rings with their mirth and laughter. They sing songs to her, songs special to the occasion; and so the time flits rapidly away.

ORIENTAL CHRISTIAN BRIDESMAIDS.

The day before the wedding is devoted exclusively to the mysteries of the toilet, and in the evening a rich supper is sent from the house of the bridegroom, where he is being entertained at a special feast.

At sunset on the wedding day there comes a grand procession from the bridegroom's harem led by his female relatives, by whom the bride is torn, as it were, from the arms of her weeping mother, and conducted in triumph to her new home. The return procession is led by dancers on stilts, who carry ornamental balancing poles; then come the bearers of great feather fans, which bend and wave gracefully in the air: some sprinkle scented waters on the path; conjurers and

A MARRIAGE PROCESSION.

mountebanks perform feats of skill, strength, and agility as they pass; troops of *almé*, or dancing girls, follow, their lithe bodies languidly swaying in slow movements, which keep time to their music and singing. Then the matrons of the united families appear in their richest attire gravely walking, and after them, concealed under a magnificent canopy upheld by four slaves, comes the bride, sustained by her mothers and sisters, and entirely covered with a veil embroidered with gold, pearls, and diamonds. After them march a long file of torch bearers, followed by slaves carrying the dowry and bridal gifts, clothes, furniture, jewels, &c., &c., all separated and spread out to make as fine and as long a display as possible. This being the grandest and most interesting feature of the bridal procession, and that concerning which the most curiosity is displayed, much care is taken in exhibiting the various articles to the greatest advantage, and by the greatest possible number of bearers. The procession advances slowly and by the most circuitous and longest route, pausing here and there to give every opportunity to the crowds of sightseers, while the *almé* sing songs in praise of the bride and bridegroom. Guns are fired at intervals, and every now and then is heard that peculiarly sharp, shrill warbling cry of female exultation peculiar to the East, and called *ziraleet*.

At last the pompous bridal procession reaches the bridegroom's house, and the exulting women take possession of the harem to presently witness the festivities in which they have otherwise no part, those of the bridegroom and his friends.

At these the *dancing girls* again appear, and, throwing off their veils, dance to the sounds of tabours, cymbals, and castinets. Nuptial songs are sung, and choruses are chanted which extol the allurements of the bride. She is more beautiful than the moon of a summer night, more lovely than the rose, sweeter than the jasmine. How fortunate and happy must be the bridegroom who is united to so charming a creature! Between the verses "shrill ecstasies of joy," the *ziraleet*, rings out and is heard to a great distance.

During the evening the bride assumes her male masquerading disguises, and passes before the bridegroom, the matrons display their wealth and finery by frequent changes of dress, and the younger part of the assembly amuse themselves with sprightly gambols and games.

When, at a late hour, the guests are about to depart, the bridegroom appears in a fresh and costly dress, and is taken in procession, with music and loud shouts of exultation, to the outer door of the harem, where the women receive him and conduct him in procession to meet the bride, who is in her rich wedding dress and veiled in red gauze. When she appears at the top of the stairs he pauses at the bottom, and her attendants begin a dispute with those of her husband as to which party shall first advance to meet the other. A compromise is arranged; she descends, he ascends, and they meet in the middle of the stairs. There he receives her hand and they ascend together, and soon after the bridal veil is removed, and for the first time Seid Abdalkadan looks upon the face of Fatima his bride, in the midst of a wild outburst of music and joyous voices.

The feasting usually continues during the remainder of the night, and is resumed on the following day, lasting sometimes the entire week.

Such is a wedding as performed in Egypt. How different from the pious and beautiful ceremony in use in our own beloved country!

THE QUEEN O' THE MAY.

BY ANNE BEALE.

CHAPTER VI.

TERPSICHORE AND THE WREATH.

HE next few weeks passed happily enough for May. She trotted about after her elders, watching them, striving to understand her grandmother, making believe to do much and saying little. She saw Meredith most days, and her other relatives and neighbours occasionally, but she neither sang nor danced, save when she was quite alone with Terpsichore. She had an intuitive perception that her exhibition at the class had displeased her grandfather, of whom she stood in much awe. She shrank equally from rebuke and ridicule, and, dreading both with the nervous terror of a sensitive nature, she became ever more chary of speech and more ready in nods. September came on, with the harvest, always late amongst the hills, and she felt very important in being allowed to take her grandfather's dinner into his one wheat-field, where he remained from morning till evening, reaping or gathering up the sheaves, despite rheumatism. Meredith came to help whenever he had a spare hour, and his sisters, Leah and Rachel, also came when they could be spared at home. May was somewhat afraid of these damsels, who were nearly grown up, and, if the truth must be told, jealous of her. They had been hitherto their grandmother's pets, and they did not care to have a rival at Derwen Fach. May had not, as yet, been to their house, indeed she had been nowhere save to church and the Miss Richards's Sunday-school. She had learned that they and Meredith were sole survivors of a large family, and that Uncle Laban doated upon them, and loved all children dearly for the sake of those whom he had lost.

One evening May was seated near the door on a low three-legged stool which was appropriated to her, as it had been to her mother before her, with a needle and thread in one hand and a piece of Welsh flannel in the other. She was making an apron for herself, and her attempts at stitches amused her grandmother, who did two to her one. She had not been taught the useful art of needlework, so she was but a beginner. Her grandfather had told her that she should have a striped flannel apron in which to assist in the dairy and kitchen as soon as she could make it, and her eagerness was great. He came in while she was thus employed, and laid his hand on her head, thus pressing down the golden puzzle. The sun looked in upon her from above the opposite hill-tops, and the sweet peace of evening was over the scene. The cat was purring in her lap; for she had made friends both with her and Hedfa, and she was so intent on her work that she did not see Meredith ascend the garden steps or Miss Edith open the wicket-gate behind him. They both entered, however, and the one whispered, "My fairy queen's at work," while the other stooped to kiss the cheek, slightly flushed by the excitement of labour and the glow of the setting sun.

Miss Edith was greeted by all with respectful pleasure, and returned the greeting with the affectionate freedom of one who considered her neighhours her friends. She took a small packet of letters from her pocket, as she seated herself at the round table.

"I have heard from Mr. Everton at last," she began. "He says that he has only just completed his inquiries, being much engaged. I will read you his letter."

Evan and Peggy sat down on the settle, and Meredith, forgotten for the moment, stood by the open door, close to May, who was so intent on her work that she had not attempted to understand the Welsh conversation passing so near her. But the letter was in English, and her work soon dropped from her little hands, as the contents reached her. As Peggy did not understand them, Evan translated them; and the mingled exclamations in the two languages, and the gestures that accompanied them terrified poor May.

Mr. Everton had taken much pains to learn something of May's history previous to her mother's death, and the result of his research was, briefly, as follows:—

Mr. Goldworthy, May's father, an artist by profession, was said to have left England in search of employment or improvement some four years before his wife's death. As she had never named him to her landlady, and paid regularly for her small apartment, nothing more was ascertained concerning him. But poverty began to creep in at the door, when it chanced that May's remarkable head attracted the attention of a young artist who had known her father, and he asked to be allowed to paint it, volunteering to pay so much an hour for the privilege.

"I remember! it was so!" suddenly exclaimed May at this point of the letter; and, starting up, put herself into a pretty attitude, there in the departing daylight.

Thus she had stood, it would seem, with her white arms arched over her head, when she became a little artist's model to procure food for her mother and herself.

"Perhaps you will read the next in