

WHEN A MALAY WEDS

SOME REMARKABLE FESTIVITIES DESCRIBED BY AN ENGLISH VISITOR.

Actual Wedding Day Preceded by Week of Nightly Feasting - Affairs Ends With Ceremonial Bathing, Supposed to Avert Ill Luck.

A week of nightly festivities generally precedes the actual wedding day, and in the case of a rajah two months of festivity may follow it. In Singapore, where cosmopolitanism has infected everything, the guests will be invited to feed one night on white man's fare and yet another on curry. Malay fashion, with their fingers; the bride will appear one night in an English gown, the next as a Chinese lady, and then gray robed, gay sashed, as a geisha girl; the bridegroom will be driven around town in a buggy. But up country in Malayland proper, where these corruptions have hardly as yet crept in, there will be only the decorations of houses with curtains and flowers, feasting, the staining of finger tips, palms and soles of the feet red with henna (a performance without magic import and borrowed from the Arabs, whose ladies consider fingers so colored beautiful and always affect this henna dye); and there will be the brushing of forehead and hands with rice paste, which forms an indispensable ingredient of the medicine man's pot and which is used on so many occasions to avert ill luck. This is preliminary.

Finally the morning before the sanding, which is the essential lay part of the wedding and the part I was to see, the legal and religious rite is performed, a kind of registry office business, where the dowry is paid over, conducted before the kathi, or Mohammedan priest, and in the absence of bride and women folk. The sword dance by the two Patanis finished, the bridegroom was escorted away, and the people turned homeward; I also, to don native dress and be present by invitation at a Malay dinner at the rajah's house and the subsequent marriage ceremony or sanding. About 9 o'clock the wedding procession collected to escort the bridegroom, attired just as he had been in the afternoon, in a pilgrim's flowing Arab robes, across to the house of his bride. After describing the ceremony the writer proceeds: On the next day at 4 o'clock in the afternoon the marriage party reassembled, this time for the ceremonial bathing, mandi tolak bola, or mandi sampat, to avert ill luck. The bridegroom, dressed in his holiday silks and escorted by his friends, went over to the bride's house, where he has to live awhile under the eyes of his mother-in-law. There he changed his attire for the shabby clothes that are always reserved for abluition and, with a towel over his shoulders, passed into the inner room, where his newly wedded bride, also dressed in old clothes, awaited his coming. Amid the buzzing, clattering and laughing of the mothers of the kampong the pair grasp each the end of a handkerchief and so united march out into the passage. The narrow passage with the split bamboo floor is crowded with excited women, and every one except the mazed victims is laughing and talking. They, poor things, sit with down turned faces, dumb, motionless, walking, sitting, standing, not of their own accord, but mechanically and under the compulsion of eager hands.

Bowl after bowl of water is poured over the bedraggled pair, strained through the coconut fronds and the cloth. The milk of the young coconut is emptied after it. The coconut shoots and cloth are soaked and dripping. Two women continue to drench the couple, but for the sheer comedy enacted by the rest I had not been prepared, though I had expected something from seeing my friend the rajah doff his official European khaki for something less elaborate than his silks of yesterday. I was soon to learn. The excited women having finished with the victims in chief, turned their attention to the audience and vented their feelings by dousing every one within reach, the rajah and myself included. We could only retort with ineffectual handflaps, while they were of practiced arm and equipped with basins. However, fortune favored us. Often bamboo squirts, salted or peppered water or rice water are employed. The women lead the bride away for a fresh toilet. The groom dons his silks again and waits, no short time, in the passage till his spouse shall have had her toilet completed to the satisfaction of the matrons. Once more the bridegroom is ushered inside, and he and his bride are seated side by side, as on the previous evening. The nasi dami or rice of accord is brought in and placed before them. They just taste it, the circle of women indulging the while in piquant reflections on the married state and the newly married couple in particular. An old letah woman is galvanized into grotesque activity, clapping her hands and chucking in a gruff voice. The audience shriek with laughter, their attention diverted for a moment from the embarrassed pair. The wedding is over. It only remains for the bride and bridegroom to sembah or lift folded palms to brow in salutation of the rajah, who has honored them by his presence and provided entertainment for their bridal. Temple Bar.

Cause For a Rebate. A colored undertaker was requested to embalm the body of a colored man. The wife of the deceased asked what the cost would be. He named his usual charge, to which she quickly replied, "I think that's too much." "But it is

the regular fee," protested the undertaker. "That may be," assented the widow, "but this ain't a regular corpse. My husband had a wooden leg."

SAVING "OLD SOUTH."

The Debt Which the United States Owes to Mrs. Hemenway.

The ground on which the Old South meeting house in Boston stands was the dwelling place of Governor Winthrop. Benjamin Franklin was baptized in this meeting house. The voices of Adams and Hancock and Warren and Washington have been heard within its walls. You will see back of the pulpit platform and below the quaint old sounding board the very window through which General Joseph Warren came to deliver his famous oration on the anniversary of the Boston massacre, because the crowd in and around the church was so great he could not enter by the door.

In this church were held some of the great meetings leading up to the famous Boston "tea party." Indeed, it was from this "sanctuary of freedom," as it has been called, that the band of men disguised as Indians started for the wharf to board the ships and throw overboard the taxed tea. Did you ever hear the story of how the Old South was "saved?" Reverence for historic landmarks did not run so high years ago as it does today, and in our centennial year of 1876 it was proposed to sell the Old South simply for the value of its bricks and timbers and tear it down that a modern business block might be built on its site. Indeed, it was sold—"knocked down" at auction to a bidder for the meager sum of \$1,315!

Suddenly a wave of patriotic feeling swept over the city of Boston. The papers and some of the people began to protest against the tearing down of the old "sanctuary of freedom," and a movement was set on foot to raise funds to buy the church from its purchaser and to buy also the ground on which it stood. This good plan might never have succeeded had it not been for one noble and loyal woman in Boston, Mrs. Mary Hemenway, of hallowed memory. When the difficulty of securing funds for the purchase of the old meeting house became known to her she came forward with a gift of \$100,000, and thus the old meeting house was saved to stand as an object lesson to the children of future generations.

Having given such a large sum to help save the Old South meeting house, Mrs. Hemenway felt that it should be something more than a mere silent monument. She determined that it should be a real, living force in our country, and particularly to the children of Boston. She determined that it should renew and increase its fame as a temple of freedom and that its sacred walls should again echo and re-echo to the sound of patriotic utterances and that some of these utterances should come from the lips of the boys and girls of Boston, and thus the Old South lecture course and the Old South prizes were established. Each year a prize of \$40 and another of \$25 are given to the graduates of the Boston high schools who write the best essays on historic or patriotic topics. The committee having this work in charge announce the subjects in June, just before the schools close, and the competitors must submit their essays the following January. Then on Washington's birthday there is a patriotic gathering of the school children of Boston in the old meeting house, and the names of the prize winners are announced.—St. Nicholas.

Locating Avignon.

Mr. Frederick Pollock used to tell this story of the dilettante society: The qualification for membership was that the candidate had been met in Italy by the proposing member, but once it happened that a candidate was elected who had been met at Avignon. The error was discovered and the society proceeded to vote "that, in the opinion of the society, Avignon is in Italy." This, however, seemed a flimsy precedent to establish, so they gravely laid their heads together and solemnly resolved in a further motion "that, in the opinion of this society, Avignon is the only town in France which is in Italy."

Mr. Hearst went out and killed a lion to prove that he is qualified for the presidency. So there, now!

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