THE RANEE.

"I am greatly honored that you should wish to ally yourself with my family," said the Rajah of Khetri, bowing with courteous grace.

"The honor will be entirely on my side, your Highness," said the fat old Rajah of Johdpore, wagging his double chin. "There is not a man in Rajputana, not the Maharajah of Jeypore himself, to whom I would sooner give my daughter than to you."

The two rajahs sat side by side on two cane arm chairs in a room of the Johdpore Palace, which boasted no other furniture except a white sheet stretched upon the floor. Behind them, at a respectful distance, a group of their attendants squatted on the floor. The Rajah of Khetri was a remarkably handsome man of 30, with a clear, brown skin, and straight features, and large, languorous black eyes; he had a tall and graceful figure, which was shown to advantage by his long, well-fitting white cloth coat. There was a smile lurking in the depths of his dark eyes and behind his silky black mustache. He was thinking of the gossip he had heard in his own zenana, that Johdpore's daughter had seen him one day from a window when he came to shoot with her father, and had straightway fallen in love with him, and persuaded her father to offer her to him in marriage.

"My daughter is very fair and beautiful," said old Johdpore, seeing his neighbor still sat silent. "She is also very accomplished. She can sing and play the zither, and she has been taught to read and write."

"I am sure she is everything that is charming," said he of Khetri, courteously, "I have always heard her beauty most highly praised. I shall be most happy to receive her at your hands for my wife."

"This is a joyful day for me and my house," said the old rajah. "I think your Highness has only one ranee at present?"

"You are rightly informed, rajah. I have but one ranee at present."

The old man knew his chosen son-in-law had no son to succeed him, so he forebore to ask any more questions, and sat and beamed in silence on his young companion.

"Doubtless your Highness intends to bestow some dowry on your fair daughter, although her charms are in themselves a rich fortune. For myself, I would ask nothing more; but we have to consider our state and the wishes of our people.

"Certainly, my Bai will have a dowry," the Johdpore Rajah answered, shooting a keen glance at his neighbor. "It will perhaps be well that we consult with our advisers on this matter." He turned and said a few words to the attendants behind him. Two or three arose and left the room, and presently the ten or twelve councilors of the two states came filing in with dignified salaams, followed by servants carrying chairs, and presently they were seated in a half-circle on either side of the two rajahs. Grave and reverend signiors all. There was not one amongst them who could read or write his own language or sign his name; but they were, nevertheless, astute and capable councilors of their respective chiefs. Then followed many compliments and much flattery on both sides before they settled to a long and keen bargaining, in which the rajahs took no part, as to how many villages and how much revenue Johdpore's only daughter should bring in her hand when she went to her new lord's palace.

Meanwhile, in the close seclusion of her zenana, in another part of the palace, the bride elect sat among her maidens.

In a large and pretty room, colored a pale green, with many slender pillars and delicate arches, with the whole front open to a sunny, sanded court, a wide and thick mattress spread upon a carpet on the floor, with a huge bolster at one end of it. Here the spoilt darling of the zenana reclined upon her guddi. A swarthy girl of 15, with if one may say so of a rajah's daughter, a plain face and awkward, squat figure. She was listening now, with a self-conscious smile on her thick lips, to the praises of the young Rajah of Khetri. Her women sat about round the edge of the guddi, all talking together at the pitch of their high, shrill voices, telling her how handsome was the bridegroom elect; how large and dark his eyes; how straight and tall his form; what a good hunter he was; how brave and manly.

"But I shall not be first ranee," she said at last, with a pout.

"The first ranee has no children, Andata. And with your beauty and your talent you will have reign the first in the heart of your husband."

"Bring out the book and see if I shall have any children, Noki Bai," commanded the young Princess.

One of the woman rose and brought a ponderous volume from an inner room and laid it at her young mistress' feet. With a lazy hand Bai Sahib opened it and read what was written on the open page. As her wily old father said, Bai Sahib had been taught reading and writing, but he forebore to mention that she had never been able to acquire either of those difficult arts.

One of the maids read aloud a sonorous verse of Hindi, and another proceeded to interpret its meaning.

Bai Sahib would bring two beautiful sons to the state that was lucky enough to have her for its ranee, and she should have never a daughter to be an expense and a reproach in the household.

"Look now and [illegible] whether the rajah will always love me, and never want to take another wife." And she turned over the pages of the book amidst a chorus of the women.

"Could any man fail to love forever so beautiful and so amiable a princess?"

"There is no woman so beautiful and so beloved in the whole of Rajputana as you, Andata."

"He who has once beheld you will never want to look on another woman." They fed her with flattery that had been her food every day of her short life.

The reading woman read a verse and the prophet again interpreted, promising all pleasant things to the vain young princess.

"Give me a betel," said the princess, yawning, and kicking away the book with her foot. One of the women leaned over the guddi, taking care not to touch it, and reached out for a chased silver box, that lay near her mistress' hand; opening it, she took out a folded betel leaf pinned together with a clove and filled with spices and broken fragments of betel nut. This she gave Bai Sahib, who put it in her mouth; then she opened a little silk bag that lay on the guddi, and poured a handful of cardamoms into the girl's hand, which she peeled lazily one by one, putting the seeds into her mouth.

"Sing something, Seristi," she said, yawning again.

Ceristi, a pretty, bright young girl, fetched a small barrel-shaped frum from a corner, and seating herself in front of her mistress began thrumming on it and singing one of the monotonous Hindi love songs.

The princess listened and yawned and chewed her betel, and one or two of the older women dozed, sitting round the guddi; they had been up half the night helping her to sleep. Then this pastime palled, and she called for food. They brought in a small square table, about a foot high, and placed it on the guddi. Then two cooks brought in trays covered with a cloth which they placed on the table, trays filled with a multitude of little silver bowls, containing small portions of rice, soup, boiled meat and chopped vegetables, all very hot and highly spiced, sweets, and a little pile of chupatties. Bai Sahib sat up and began to eat, dipping her fingers first in one bowl, then in another, making ugly noises when she ate. When she had finished one of the maids brought her a vessel like a silver coffee pot, full of water, which she poured over her hands. Then the Princess lay back on her guddi again, to chew more betel and ask more questions about the young Rajah of Khetri.

So it wore on to evening and bedtime. The Princess' women brought in a low squart bed and spread a mattress and pillows on it, and Bai Sahib arose yawning and threw herself upon it without any ceremony of undressing. The women filed out till only four were left; and then began the nightly business of putting the young lady to sleep. Two sat on the bed near her feet and thumped her legs hard with their fists, one pounded her head, and one sang loudly a discordant lulaby; until by and by she slept, and the women who watched her talkked together in low undertones; but cautiously as befitted those who talk among spies and talebearers, where each one was anxious to win her mistress' favor and disgrace her fellows.

The wedding day was fixed, and there was a great making of wedding garments. Silken skirts, a hundred yards wide, heavy with gold or silver lace, as is the fashion of Rajputana; pale-hued bodices with glittering bands of gold and silver; fairy chuddahs of gossamer and spangles, and delicate embroidery to be worn over the head and shoulders, and sweeping round the skirts. Many presents of jewelry came pouring in from the other chiefs of Rajputana. Bracelets, anklets and earrings; necklaces, strings of pearls and jeweled bands for the hair, very costly, mostly very clumsy, set with uncut stones.

There was merry-making for many days, and guests came from afar. On the wedding day the great hall of the palace was filled with the zenana guests, so overfilled, indeed, that many fair ladies fainted and had to be carried out.

The rajah had brought camels and elephants and a great train of servants, to bear his bride with all due honor to her new home. There was a rich and handsome palanquin for the lady herself, in which she would be carried the three days' journey that lay between Johdpore and Khetri. On the morning of the wedding day the rajah would take her the first stage on her journey home. Before that he was priviledged to pay her his first visit in her zenana.

She stood there now on her guddi in her gorgeous wedding dress, with jewels on her hair and neck and breast; on her arms and wrists and ankles, hardly able to stand under the weight of it all.

"The Rajah Sahib is coming," cried one of the women, hurrying across the court.

"Ask him to come in," said the bride.

"Come in, come in," cried the women standing in the court; and the rajah came across the sunshine to his bride, the only man except her father whom she had ever seen in the zenana.

He drew aside the shrouding veil, and looked long at the dark plain face whose beauty had been so vaunted to him.

"My fair ranee," he said, with grave courtesy, "You are willing to come with me to Khetri? I hope you will be happy there."

She giggled and did not answer.

They sat side by side upon the guddi looking out upon the sunlit court, and he tried to talk to her, of her music, of the books she had read and a little of Khetri. The bride sat silent, with downcast eyes and a self-conscious smile, plucking at the bracelets on her wrists. At length he rose to go, and the momentous interview was over.

Then she was led downstairs and put into her palanquin, with high screens held up all round her as she went, so that no curious eyes might behold her, and the long cavalcade set forth. Women in bullock carts, men on horses and camels and elephants, long strings of baggage camels—a picturesque sight enough.

They traveled all that day and reached the first stage in the evening, where they encamped for the night; the ranee and her women in a great bare rest house, the men outside in a narrow sand valley between slate hills. The camels sat round in circles with their heads together, in their sociable fashion, the men were cooking and smoking and eating round great flaring wood fires; here and there a tent one for the rajah, two or three for his more honored followers.

The rajah sent to inquire if the lady was comfortable in her rest house, but he did not come himself. The women wondered a little, but they said nothing, and the ranee slept without a lullaby.

On the third evening they reached Khetri, when it was too late and too dark for the bride to see anything of her new home. Next morning she was up betimes, contrary to her usual custom. Her maids were strangely silent as they dressed her. When she was ready she asked impatiently, "Why does not the rajah come? Tell him he can come in." But the garrulous maids were silent.

"Where is the rajah?" she asked, looking darkly upon them.

"They say, your Highness, the Rajah Sahib has gone to Jeypore for the races, but doubtless he will return soon."

"What does that mean?" she asked, staring blankly at them. One old woman who had nursed her as a baby began to cry. The others slipped out of the room one by one, with as little show as possible.

"Where is the other ranee, then? Is she here in the palace.

"Oh, my beautiful one, this is not the palace."

"Where am I? What is it? she cried, springing up from the guddi.

"You are in the fort."

"The Khetri fort?" she whispered. She had heard of the Khetri fort; a grim and frowning pile of buildings on the top of an almost inaccessible rock, where the widows of the Khetri rajahs were sent to finish the remnant of their lives when a new rajah reigned in Khetri.

"Then is the rajah dead?" she asked, bewildered.

"No; it is the truth, your Highness, that he is gone to Jeypore. Wait, and have patience, Andata; he will come."

But though she waited he never came.

Up in that grim and dreary fort to-day there is an old white-haired woman of 60 years. She has passed all her life since she was 15 in that eyrie on the rock, spending her days among her women as she had done at Johdpore before her marriage, listening to the gossip that now and then come up to them from the palace down below the valley, chewing betel and lolling on her guddi. Into her life there has never come the one solitary consolation of the zenana, a husband's fleeting affection, the love and care of young children.

The handsome young rajah married many wives, and was gathered to his fathers, and another reigns in his stead; but he never went again to the wife who had not found favor in his sight.

PRE-HISTORIC IRISH CANOE.

A Feat Thousands of Years Old, Perhaps Discovered in a Bog.

A curious discovery has been made in the townland of Kilbrenan, in the parish of Moviddy, near the road leading from Bandon to Cookstown. A farmer was reclaiming some bog land, and in sinking a drain came upon what appeared to be the trunk of an oak tree 2 feet beneath the surface. On further examination he found that it was an ancient Irish canoe. It is composed of bog oak and was made from the section of the trunk of a huge oak tree, hollowed out at the center; it is of one piece, no nails having been used in the construction. The length is about 15 feet 10 inches, the breadth is 2 feet 8 inches, while the depth is about 1 foot 3 inches, and the sides are about 2 1-2 inches thick. It would accommodate three or four persons, and was probably used for fishing. Externally it is of a dark-brown color, but underneath the surface it is quite black, and the wood is extremely hard. There are two curious grooves about 6 inches in diameter at both the bow and the stern, extending from the gunwales to the keel, but it is not easy to surmise what purpose they served.

Canoes of this kind have been discovered in other parts of Ireland, and it is not known to what period of history they belong, but there are many indications that this boat had lain in its late position for some thousands of years. At present there is no lake in the vicinity, and the place on which it was found is on a slope of a hill; but it is probable that there was once a lake a mile and a half in circumference, as the land close by forms a kind of basin with an amphitheater of hills, and at one end there is a narrow gorge which may have served to drain the lake. Within 3 yards of the place where the canoe was found is one of those circular mounds of stones and cinders, about 12 yards in diameter, which are found in Ireland, and of which there are three or four in the locality. What these mounds were used for, is not known, but it is supposed that they were either connected with dwelling houses or else were used for sacrificial purposes. It is probable, however, that the canoe and the mound belonged to the same age and people.

THE FASTEST SHIP.

The Hon. C. A. Parsons, the inventor of the system of marine propulsion by steam turbines, is about to construct at Newcastle-on-Tyne, England, a vessel of the torpedo-boat destroyer type which he estimates will be capable of easily going from 36 to 40 knots an hour. The speed is equivalent to some 46 miles an hour, and no ship, except the Turbinia, has ever yet been built capable of travelling at a faster speed than 32 knots an hour. At the Jubilee Naval Review this small experimental vessel, the Turbinia, 100 feet in length, 9 feet beam, and 44 1-2 displacement, fitted with three separate compound turbines directly coupled to three screw shafts, was ran at speeds up to 34 1-2 knots an hour, thus proving herself the fastest vessel in the world. The shafts went at the rate of 2,230 revolutions per minute, and this exceptional speed was achieved without any sacrifice, of economy. Mr. Parsons is now fitting the Turbinia with a stern-going engine which will give her a speed astern of ten knots; at present it is only three knots.

ABOUT THE HOUSE.

THE SUNFLOWER.

If yonder sun should set forevermore,
Just at the hight of summer bloom and bliss,
Rising on other worlds, but not on this,—
Where would the sunflower be? Methinks as o'er
The face of Nature spreads the darkness deep,
Blotting her beauty into dreamless sleep,
Hushing her music, quenching all her hope,
Till only Ruin and Decay survived,—
Its drooping disc would still its great eye ope
Toward the West, where last the glory lived
That made it live; till, withered and forlorn,
Prone on the breast of sightless earth 'twould lie,
What if the yearning with its being born,—
Soul of the flower,—wore immortality?

THE GUEST ROOM.

There are guest rooms and guest rooms; some so cheerless that one is tempted to keep the lights burning all night in order to offset the "creeps:" others where the bed is redolent of musty feathers and the air as stale as that of the vaults of the Pharoahs, and still a third, the property of the "dirt fiend," where the visitor finds the keyholes stuffed with cotton, the toilet table covered with a towel, and the pictures swathed in netting, as though a fly would dare to venture in!

In this last the visitor is in constant terror of injuring something: afraid of opening the window because of moths or dust, scarcely daring to rest in the rocker because of the wonderful tidy, and almost holding her breath when dressing, lest a stray drop of water or loose hair, should escape her vigilance. Friends, if you cannot help being fussily neat, do take out the plugs, swathings and covers before your guest arrives, freshen the air and give the room a cheeriness that will warm the heart of your guest.

The ideal guest chamber should breathe out a welcome, a bidding to rest, forgetful of work and worry, that is its mission. A visitor has a right to expect two things, an immaculate bed, and adequate toilet appointments. Other furnishings are not so important, yet the thoughtful hostess will try to meet every need of her guest.

The great fault of Americans in moderate circumstances, that of "keeping up appearances," is too often noticed in the furnishings of the guest room; comfort is sacrificed to show an elaborate set of furniture and a cheap spring and mattrass. Have your bed comfortable if you cannot buy another article; cheap springs will sag, and low-priced mattresses soon lose their shape, while neither are restful. Have the pillows light and fluffy; the linen real linen if possible, the blankets soft and fine, with bindings intact, and if comforters are used, they should be light and warm, not thick and heavy. If your bed is "dressed up" with shams, scarfs, etc., do not have them so intricate that they require a half hour to remove them; also keep the sham holder in repair.

I know a woman who struggled a long time with an unruly one that would not stay up. Her hostess had retired, so she felt unwilling to awaken her, and after a vain attempt to remedy the evil, she placed the pillow at the foot of the bed and slept in that way. Fortunately for us women folks heavy furniture and thick hangings are out of fashion for this apartment and only dainty effects are allowed. All paper, carpets, woodwork and rugs should be in delicate tones. Select your wall paper most carefully that in case of illness the feverish fancy will not distort the design into frightful pictures. This is no idle fancy, as many can testify. I well remember the torture I endured when ill with a fever: dogs' heads looked from the conventional flowers of the paper, dogs with great thirsty tongues rolling from their mouths, the sight of which increased my fever and thirst almost beyond endurance.

Have the commode well supplied with towels, fresh water, wash-clothes and soap; the stand with pen, ink and stationery, a small bible, and if you have a garden, fresh flowers. A small work basket supplied with mending paraphernalia would be appreciated also. A pin tray or cushion with black and white pins, a whisk, matches, curling-tongs, and a catch-all for combings and burnt matches should be found about or upon the toilet table. A tiny clock would be a great convenience, and beside this should be hung a family calendar, which may be decorated as one wishes and tell the hours of meals, family prayers, Sunday meals, church services, etc.

A guest is often faint between meals and as it is not customary to ask for a lunch or polite to go out and buy something, the considerate hostess will keep a jar of nice crackers in the room, or provide a plate of fresh fruit, with knife and napkin. Do not forget that your guest may wish to have a quiet hour occasionally, for rest or sleep, and provide an afghan or extra blanket to throw over her, also a few good magazines, to while away an idle hour. See that a pitcher of hot water is taken to the room at dressing and undressing time, also a small one of fresh drinking water, and if your guest is of the "masculine persuasion," be sure to remove the shams and bed-spread and turn down the coverings every night; also add blacking and brush to the contents of commode.—Mrs. J. W. Wheeler.

TWO GOOD WINDOW PLANTS.

One of the best flowering plants for the ordinary window in winter is the single petunia of the garden. Double petunias are worthless here. If a young seedling plant is potted in early autumn, it will soon come into flower, and it will continue to blossom the entire winter. Its flowers will be produced in great profusion, and their bright colors will make the window bright and cheerful as few rarer plants would succeed in doing. An old plant can be made use of if there are no young ones, if its entire top is cut away. Soon it will throw up new branches, and shortly these will bear flowers. As soon as all the buds on it seem to have developed, it is well to cut the branches back and encourage a new one to start and take its place. By this treatment the plant can be kept growing indefinitely, and as long as it grows it will bloom. This plant can be trained to grow up or down. It will take kindly to a trellis, or it will do well without one, and many prefer to use it on a bracket, allowing its branches to droop at the side of the window. It is very pretty in a basket, suspended in the middle of the window. It will soon fill a window of ordinary size with its luxuriant growth, and a fine plant, in such a position, is sure to attract a great deal of attention from passers-by. Do not allow seed to form. If you do your plant will soon cease to bloom, and throw all its energies into the perfecting of its seed.

Another very good plant for winter is the nasturtium, but it will require more attention than the petunia, for the red spider will be pretty sure to attack it unless you go on the "ounce-of-prevention" plan, and discharge this pest before he gains a foothold. Water will do the work for you. Apply it daily. Do not use a whisk broom or a brass syringe such as most greenhouse men have, or a small force-pump, and give your plants a real showering. See that the underside of every leaf gets its share for there is where the spider will be most likely to take up his abode. Keep this voracious little animal from the nasturtium and you will have no trouble in making it flower most of the time. It should be cut back from time to time, the same as the petunia.

TEN NEW THINGS.

A Cement for Broken China.—Dissolve half an ounce of gum acacia in a wineglassful of boiling water, add plaster of paris sufficient to form a thick paste, and apply with a brush. Be positive the edges are freed from any foreign material.

A Perfect Hair Tonic.—Put a teaspoonful of salt in half a pint of water, boil, bottle, apply freely to the scalp every day with a cloth. Try this.

To "Set" Wash Goods.—Dissolve half pint of salt, common in a pint of cold water, soak the water two or three hours, and the hardest washing will not dim the daintiest blue, pink or especially black colors.

Prepare Your Own Baking Powder.—Six ounces of corn starch, six ounces of bicarbonate of soda, four ounces of tartaric acid, powder, sift fifteen times bottle tight.

Substitute for Fresh Cream.— Whip the white of one egg to a stiff froth, add carefully by drops a lump of butter melted, pour into it gradually the cooked coffee, stirring meanwhile so that it will not curdle. It is really difficult to distinguish it from fresh cream.

Boil Your Lemons.—Place in cold water and boil until they soften, when you will obtain twice as much juice.

Dry Mushrooms.—Gather them when fresh, dry in the oven, and powder them in a mortar. Bottle and use in soups, sauces, etc.

Indigestion.—Drink hot water, as hot and in any quantity as can be borne until the stomach will no longer retain it. This remedy is not pleasant, but it cures.

NEW DOUBLE POPPIES.

In no branch of flower culture has greater advance been made in recent years than in the case of the double poppies. Perfectly gorgeous creations are now at the command of anyone—the blossoms rivaling in their beauty the more pretentious chrysanthemums. The grower of the old-fashioned, single poppies, set down suddenly before a bed of 1897 double poppies, might well rub his or her eyes in Rip Van Winkle style, so wonderful have been the results obtained in improving this flower. Poppies have always been noted for the beautiful clearness of their colors. This characteristic has been retained while changing the old single form into magnificent, feathery balls. Not only do we find among the up-to-date poppies, the soft, feathery forms, but closely packed heads of a solid color with the smooth, rounded outer surface frosted over with a bit of contrasting color.

Among the fluffy-headed poppies may be seen a wealth of color, ranging all the way from pure white to a flaming scarlet or cardinal. The interior of the head of some is of one color, with the tips of each petal-plume, for an inch or so, of a beautiful contrasting color. Among them all, however, it is hard to find any more attractive than the solid whites and heads of a most beautifully delicate pink. It is difficult to conceive of any way in which a flower lover can get more solid satisfaction than in the purchase of a package of mixed seeds from the new double poppies.

CARE OF PALMS.

Palms in the summer can be set in the open air, in a shady place protected as much as possible from heavy winds, or they may stand on a shady veranda. In the house they can stand where they will receive a fair amount of light, but they do not need the direct sunshine. When watering give enough to wet the ball of soil all through, and then wait until there is an indication of dryness before supplying water again. Wash or sponge the foliage frequently and keep it free from scale insects. If any scales are present they can be destroyed with a brush dipped in alcohol, and then they may be wiped or brushed off. Palms are not troublesome to care for.

THE MATRIMONIAL LOTTERY.

Jinks—Winks married a woman of intellect, didn't he?

Blinks—I don't know. Why?

Jinks—I notice he never has any buttons on his clothes.