

said to resemble the Arabs in the simplicity of their worship more than they do the inhabitants of Hindoostan. They practise circumcision, and the women appear in public unveiled. They hold three days in the week as lucky to begin an undertaking, namely, Monday, Thursday, and Friday. They devour locusts, and consider buffalo-meat as the greatest luxury.

As soon as a child is born and washed, the father puts his mouth to its ears and asks a blessing. On the seventh day, the operation of shaving the head takes place, when prayers are likewise offered up. A midwife is always in attendance at the birth, and is engaged for forty days. On the fortieth day the mother performs her ablutions and prayers, and is then looked upon as clean.

It is customary on an engagement of marriage for a day to be fixed for the bridegroom to transmit the money for the nuptial expenses, before which day the ceremony of filing the teeth of the woman is gone through. This is performed by the women with a kind of fine stone found at Acheen, or with a small steel file. The operation is accomplished in an hour, but is very severe; the teeth are filed off to one-fourth of their length. This operation is also undergone by the males; but they encounter it at an early age, when it is generally made an occasion for festivities. I have been informed that this operation is never omitted, and that the figure thus given to the teeth is considered as a great beauty. After the teeth are filed, they are blackened, which is effected by a liquid called grang, obtained by charring cocoanut-shells. This practice of filing the teeth I had often observed before I heard of its being a general custom among the Malays of the peninsula, having seen it among the natives of Sooloo; the fashion closely resembles the Africans of which I have spoken in the first volume.

Marriages are preceded by the betrothal of the parties. To make this arrangement, the friends of the bridegroom wait upon the bride's father, to whom they present a ring and a few clothes. The nuptial expenses are then agreed upon, and the portion of the bride is set aside. This is about thirty rupees, and is always paid in silver or gold. The betrothal takes place before witnesses and an agent of the bride, whose consent is asked as a matter of form. After this the husband may take his wife whenever she arrives at the age of puberty, and carry her to his own house; but she always remains with her father until that event takes place.

On these occasions, when the parties are wealthy, a feast of buffalo-meat is given. The bride, three days before marriage, cuts off her hair in front, and dyes her nails and the palms of her hands yellow with henna.