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## PRIMITIVE AND MODERN MARRIAGE CUSTOMS

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**T**HE various forms of human marriage and their probable origin have long ago drawn the attention of scholars and laymen alike. An investigation of this interesting subject is of special import to us, as it gives us an idea how our wedding ceremonies and customs originated.

Far back in the earliest period of human history we find our savage ancestor exerting all his energies upon the acquisition of a mate, who would be to him a helpful companion and the mother of his children. He acquired this mate in the only way that was open to him—by means of capture. Primitive man stole or carried off his future wife not because he was ferocious, as many are inclined to believe, but because of the difficulty he encountered in procuring a wife in a friendly manner. It must be borne in mind that in those remote days abundance of children was an important factor in a man's wealth. Their bringing up cost nothing, or very little, and the help they offered to the household, when grown up, was of immense value. Hence, a family was always unwilling to part with one of its members without receiving compensation for the loss thus sustained. Another important cause that forced our savage ancestors to capture their wives, was the low degree of sociability that existed and still exists in primitive communities. As in those days the fashion of living together in large numbers was not practiced, and social intercourse and functions were unheard of, each family constituted a distinct, independent unit, that looked upon every stranger as its natural enemy. Hence, an outsider trying to become a member of such a social body, was treated like a foe, even if his intentions were the best.

It was, therefore, very natural that abduction should have been the primary form of human marriage. And this savage form is still practiced by a number of races, scattered all over Asia, Australia, and Africa.