

ding ceremony. Before the minister pronounces the benediction, whereby a Jewish couple become husband and wife, he reads a legal document, styled in Hebrew and properly signed and witnessed, which states that the bridegroom pays such and such a sum to the father of the girl. Of course, this amount is never paid, but it clearly symbolizes the ancient custom of marriage by purchase. Other advanced nations, like the Chinese and Japanese buy their wives by giving "voluntary" presents. It is true that no educated Chinaman will admit that these presents represent the actual purchase amount, but I have as yet to meet a citizen of the "Land of the Sun" who could show me a single instance where a marriage could take place, if the bridegroom failed to give the usual presents. In our own communities the custom of marriage by purchase was gradually abandoned as infamous, owing to the development of more elevated ideas regarding women. But it has survived among us in two totally different forms. The German "morning gift" and the "dotal portion" of the French and other European nations are, strange as it may seem, transformed symbols of the primitive "purchase sum." This remarkable metamorphosis stands by no means alone in the history of mankind. A comparative study of primitive manners reveals the fact that certain customs remain with us for centuries, lose their original meaning, and assume directly opposite interpretations.

In the very beginning of human history, when capture was the only form of contracting marriage, there were no distinct wedding formalities. This is the case even today among the Eskimos. But as man advanced and marriage became recognized as a matter of some importance, the entering into it, like so many other significant events in human life, came to be celebrated with certain ceremonies. The most primitive form, which these ceremonies assumed, was the wedding-feast, expressing pleasure and joy at the event that took place. These feasts became common to all nations, savage and civilized, ancient and modern. After the custom of the nuptial feast had become an essential part of a wedding, some more advanced ceremonies were instituted by our ancestors. These ceremonies, as a rule, indicate two things: First, the new relation into which the bride and the bridegroom are about to enter and, second, the subjection of the wife to her husband. All marriage rites of the different nations are expressive of these two ideas. In Brazil and Japan the bride and the bridegroom have to undergo the ceremony of eating and drinking together, a formality which symbolizes the living together of the married couple, while among the Asiatics and Europeans the same idea is expressed by the joining of hands. In Ceylon the bride ties a thin cord of her own twisting around the groom's waist which is looked upon as a symbol of the marriage tie. The Hindoo bride and