

bridegroom have their hands bound together and among the Gonds of India the actual marriage ceremony consists of tying together the garments of the bride and bridegroom. The last instances show us the origin of the present-day "wedding-ring". The cord of the primitive Ceylonese and the twisted grass of the Hindoo have been transferred by us into the more esthetic and convenient ring of gold.

On the other hand, the Australian bride is compelled to carry fire into the tent of the groom, in token of her submission. In Grotia the bridegroom boxes the ears of his future wife, in order to indicate that, henceforth, he will be her master, while in ancient Russia the father of the bride took a new whip and after striking her gently with it, told her that he did so for the last time. He then presented the whip to the bridegroom. Even our own wedding ceremonies are indicative of this idea of the wife's subjection, through the formula which every bride is expected to recite: "I promise to love, honor, and obey."

Many people seem to believe, that the religious phase of our present-day weddings owes its origin to the introduction of some higher form of religion. This is the most erroneous idea, as it can be shown that this element has its counterpart among pagan nations. As a matter of fact, religion had at first absolutely nothing to do with the marriage ceremony. Among the Hebrews marriage was no religious contract, and there is no trace of a priestly connection of it, either in the Scriptures or in the Talmud. Among the Mohammedans also marriage is a mere civil contract, although concluded with a prayer to Allah. The founder of the Christian Church did not prescribe any ceremonies in connection with it, and if the early Christians asked for their pastor's benediction, they did so on their own accord. In Germany marriage was considered valid even without ecclesiastical benediction until the year 1563, and Luther himself was of the opinion that matrimonial affairs did not belong to the Church. And yet, we find that almost all people, pagan and civilized, contract their marriages with the assistance of a shaman, or chief, or priest. How is this to be accounted for? In a very simple manner. As soon as marriage became a social institution, recognized and respected by each member of a certain community, the necessity arose to legalize it by or before a witness. And what witness could there be more desirable among a savage people than the chief, or shaman, or, as a further step, the priest of a religious sect? We, at the very height of intellectual and moral progress have gone back to the primitive idea of the functions of a priest or chief during a marriage ceremony. Our Justices of the Peace, and Alderman take the place of the ancient chiefs and shamans, and we employ their services not so much in order to have them tie the marriage-knot, but rather to serve as legal witness to the actual contracting of the marriage. Such was the nature of the service