

## CHAPTER LIX.

## MARRIAGE, AND THE POSITION OF WOMEN, AMONG DIFFERENT PEOPLE, AND AT DIFFERENT PERIODS.

THE laws and customs which regulate the relations of the sexes to each other vary very much, among different people, and in different parts of the world. Like all other laws and customs, they also change, though often very slowly, in every society from age to age.

From want of authentic records of very early times, we do not know what laws and customs then existed, nor can we judge of this by comparison with what we see among primitive people at the present day, for we have no means of deciding how far they may correspond.

There is, however, good reason for supposing that in the very earliest associations of human beings, when they were first emerging from the lower type, the relations of the sexes were but little different from what we see among gregarious animals generally. Probably at a later period, in the earliest organized societies, all the members of that society mated together freely, or from inclination merely. This is what is called *communal marriage*, all the men and women being husbands and wives to each other. Indeed this manner of association is even now practiced in certain parts of the world, according to some travelers.

The first breaking up of this custom would probably arise from the dawning of *taste*, or a feeling of admiration for some particular form of body, or face! No matter how rude and uncultivated this may have been, according to our notions, it was quite sufficient to cause a social revolution. Immediately any females began to be thought superior to the others, in any way, they at once became special objects of desire, and would promptly be taken possession of by those males superior to the others in strength, the inferior females being left to the inferior males. The woman would then become a real possession—would belong to her master—like his horse, or other animal, and would be forbidden to associate with any other man. And just as large flocks and herds were desired, so would a large number of wives be coveted, and each man, according to his power, would seize all that he could. Thus arose polygamy, probably the first form of marriage.

So long as the number of the sexes were about equal, and no notion had arisen that one female was more desirable than another, there could be no motive for exclusive association, either with one or more. But immediately one became more desirable than another, then all was changed, and the desired one, if obtained, became private property.

Selfishness and the wish to outshine others in the amount of their possessions, would operate with many even stronger than mere sexual desire, so that they would

procure more wives and concubines than they could ever possibly enjoy. This we see in the case of David, and others of the Jewish patriarchs; and at the present day with many African potentates. Whenever might habitually makes right, women, like other possessions, will always be unduly appropriated by the most powerful.

One immediate result of the desire for private possession of women would be, in all barbarous communities, the utter abandonment of all pretense of *seeking*, from motives of mutual liking or attachment. The female would be at once taken possession of, without any reference whatever to her wish or preference. Superior strength, cunning, or wealth, would then alone determine to whom she should belong.

So long as communal marriage was the rule, or promiscuous association, all pairing would result from some preference, or choice, and so far all alike, men and women, would be free and equal; but immediately the custom became established for each man to have only his own wife, if the community were rude and barbarous, the woman became a possession—a slave. So far, then, she gained nothing by the change, but, on the contrary, lost immensely. It was, however, a necessary step in the progress which will lead, eventually, to a far better condition than any in which she has yet been placed.

No matter how obtained, by purchase, force, or stratagem, a woman, as a wife, has always been considered, in barbarous or savage societies, as a mere possession, like an animal. Nor is this idea entirely obliterated even at the present day in the most civilized communities. It crops out in many of our laws, customs, and ways of thinking and speaking. The term, *my wife*, is still used by many with the same intent and meaning as my dog, or my horse. In some of the most backward villages of England the notion is still held, by the common people, that a man can sell his wife at public auction, and such sales actually take place occasionally, the parties believing them to be legal. The usual process is for the man to lead the woman to some public place, tie a halter round her neck, and then ask for bids. The highest bidder pays his bid, removes the halter, and takes the woman. This is probably a traditional remembrance of what used to occur in old times. It is quite common even here for a man to remark of his wife—"she belongs to me"—evidently with a sense of proprietary right; nay, it is not unfrequent for a man to claim a woman as *his*, who may not want him, and we often see instances of such men killing women for refusing them and preferring others. We are still far from admitting, at least in practice, that women have the same rights, in regard to marriage, as men, and should be placed, in all respects, upon an equality with them.

Polygamy appears to have prevailed, more or less, with all people, at some period of history; and it is natural it should do so, not only for the reasons already given, but for others equally cogent.

During the wars which always prevail among uncivilized people, the male captives, on prudential grounds, as well as to gratify revenge, would always be slain, but the women would be spared, and be taken as wives and concubines. The Jewish Chronicles of the Bible show how universal was this custom, and how it was sanctioned both by custom and by religion. God himself is represented as directing the Israelites to slay all the men, but to keep all the maidens for themselves.

Slavery also contributes very much to polygamy, the prepossessing female slaves being naturally taken for wives and concubines.

A natural result of polygamy is *prostitution*, because when a large portion of the women are monopolized by a few men, the remaining women must suffice for the

larger number of men. The same result must always follow when, from any cause, a considerable portion of the young people in society are unable to marry. The sexes will associate, and all the restraints of prudence, fear of consequences, or moral principle, amount practically to very little when they are kept unduly separated. Such restraints operate excellently on particular individuals, but they make small impression on the masses of society.

As communities become settled, with established laws, and some notions of equality arise, polygamy naturally declines, and the number of wives held by one man necessarily becomes less. This is seen in Turkey, where, at the present day, the number of wives is usually but two, and seldom over four, except with the Sultan himself. And though the wives may be purchased now, as they were in old times, still they are not now sold again, as they used to be, but are kept as wives, and treated with consideration. In fact, in Turkey we now see polygamy gradually dying out, and being superseded by monogamy. There is no doubt that the institution as now existing there, though repugnant to our ideas and customs, is nevertheless shorn of many of its objectionable features, and is every day ameliorating more and more.

Lady Duff Gordon relates an anecdote which well shows this. A gay Englishman was boasting of his numerous conquests among the fair sex, and rallying a sedate Turk who was present on his polygamy. The Turk replied, "It is true, I have known four women during my life. One of them is dead, and mourned; and the other three are living, honored and respected, in my house, and will do so till they die. Now, *where are all yours?*"

Notwithstanding all we hear about the terrible Turks, I believe it will be found, on unprejudiced observation, that polygamy has always been less objectionable with them, in practice, than with any other people. And their treatment of women, on the whole, will compare favorably with that of any other people on the same plane of development. Certainly they show themselves superior in this respect, in many ways, to the Hebrews, and other ancient and modern peoples, from whom, in fact, they took their polygamous practices; the Turks not being noted for polygamy till after their contact with Christian nations.

By the Hebrew law, polygamy is not at all condemned, but, on the contrary, fully sanctioned; as also is the keeping of concubines. And though Jews always conform, in regard to marriage, to the customs of the countries in which they live, yet so far as their religion is concerned, they may be polygamists. Indeed, many contend that it is the same with Christians, so curiously are the customs of remote ages perpetuated, historically, though long abrogated in practice.

Most savage people are polygamous, at least the great men among them, and consider single marriage highly disreputable. Thus, when the Pandyan king was told that among Europeans every man had but one wife, and lived with her till death, he was perfectly shocked. "Why," said he, "how indecent—just like wanderoo monkeys!"

Nevertheless there are some savages who always live in single marriage. This is the case with the Veddahs, in Ceylon, who, according to Sir John Lubbock, have a saying that death alone can part husband and wife.

Probably the main causes which would determine the practices of men, in regard to marriage, would be the scarcity or abundance of food and women. When the means of living were easily obtained, the maintenance of a numerous household would be no burden, and a man would take as many wives as he could get; but when,

on the contrary, those means were hard to get, he would lessen the number, and frequently would, from necessity, have to be content with one.

As before remarked, when from frequent wars between different tribes, many of the men were killed, there would be an excess of women; and as many would be left over after all had one each, the rich and powerful would take one or more extra, and thus would arise polygamy.

Among the peaceable tribes, when the sexes were in nearly equal numbers all the time, single pairing, or monogamy, would be the rule.

When a rude people happened to be so situated that the means of living were precarious and scant, they would promptly get rid of all useless or superfluous mouths, by killing off the old and sick, as many savages do now. Female children would also be killed, as being comparatively useless and burdensome when grown up. Indeed, female infanticide is now practiced, to a considerable extent, in many countries not at all barbarous. Such a practice, however, always arises from deficient subsistence, and never prevails where food is abundant and easily obtained.

In such a society, the number of males would soon be much greater than that of the females, and so far from one man having many wives, it would not be possible for every man to have even one. This would soon originate the opposite of polygamy, or *polyandria*! By this is meant the institution of one woman having many husbands; or perhaps, more properly speaking, of one woman being wife to many men. This arrangement prevails even at the present day, especially in certain parts of Thibet. A recent traveler has lately given, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, a very interesting account of the practical working of polyandria, as he there saw it. We are so much in the habit of thinking that nothing can possibly work well which is opposed to our own customs, that it will surprise many to learn that the system, so far as can be judged, is practically free from objection.

The most usual arrangement is for a whole family of brothers to have but one wife amongst them. Each man is a husband to her, and the children have all of them as fathers in common. The traveler assures us that the domestic harmony, and mutual affection all round, would compare very favorably with anything of the kind to be found in our own society. And there is this to be said about it, that there is far less danger of the children being left fatherless, or the wife a lonely widow, than in a single marriage. It is quite possible, indeed, that there would be much less jealousy and selfishness displayed than when the woman was the private possession of one man alone. It is also quite unlikely that they would all unite in ill-treating her; some of them would be sure to take her part, and protect her in case of need. The general household would also be better provided, with so many males working for it instead of one, and there would be much less danger of want. If one should fall sick, or be disabled, there would still be the others to depend upon; and, in short, a family would always be in less danger every way, that had so many supporters and defenders. Among the Todas, a girl can accept or refuse any man she pleases; and Azara tells us that the Guana women, before marrying one or more husbands, bargain for all kinds of favors and privileges.

The same traveler also assures us that he saw no reason to suppose that the women suffered either injury or sense of degradation in any way, and on the whole, were remarkably well treated and content, considering the rudeness of society generally.

Among the hill-tribes of India, polyandria also exists, modified more or less, but always, it would seem, as a consequence of scarcity of food, the female children,

as being most useless, being largely made away with. In one village in Eastern India, Col. McCulloch could not find a single female child; all were killed from scarcity of food.

A curious variety of polyandria prevails in some parts of Africa, as we learn from recent travelers there. A woman when she marries may ally herself to her husband for only a portion of the time, instead of for always, and the rest of the time she is free to go with any other man she chooses. The proportion of time she thus keeps to herself depends mainly upon the dower she brings. If she be poor, her friends can obtain perhaps only one day in the week for her, but if she be rich they will claim two, three, or four days, during which her husband has no control over her whatever, and she may do as she chooses. She must, however, be true to him on the days in which he is legally entitled to her.

Whether the man has equal liberty on the off days, and what arrangements are made in regard to the children, we are not informed.

Amongst the ancient Britons, at the time of the Roman conquest, so we are informed by Cæsar, there existed a peculiar institution, which may be called a *matrimonial club*! Ten or twelve families would live together under the same roof, the husbands having all the wives in common, the children of each woman being fathered by the man whom she first married. The members of these singular associations were also frequently nearly related, being all brothers and sisters, uncles and nieces, and cousins of all degrees.

St. Jerome speaks of this practice as still existing in his day, and it appears to have lingered long even after the introduction of Christianity.

Among the ancient Hebrews, it may be remembered, as recorded in the Bible, a man often married two or more sisters at the same time. In the Hebrides, according to Solinus, a very singular custom prevailed in regard to the king. He was not allowed to possess any property of his own, but could use that of his subjects at pleasure; and this arrangement extended even to wives. He was not allowed one of his own, but was free to associate with all those of his subjects at his pleasure. This singular rule was established to take away from him all motives for plundering and oppressing the people, because he could never make anything by doing so.

The Sultan of Morocco takes a wife from the family of every great chief in his empire, and thus associates them all with him, and as the child of either one may succeed him, it prevents jealousy, and keeps them all loyal.

What is called the *morganatic marriage*, which occasionally occurs among royal personages in Europe, may be called a modification of polygamy, and is perhaps a remnant of it.

The king, or other monarch, who is already married to some one of similar rank to himself, also contracts another marriage with some one of lower station. This is called the *morganatic marriage*. Both are legitimate, in the sense of both women being lawful wives, and taking social rank as such, but the *queen* only is the consort of the sovereign, and her children only can succeed to the throne, those by the other wife being simple citizens, unless specially ennobled, and taking her name only. Such a marriage is not detrimental to the woman's character.

The word *morganatic* comes from the old Gothic *Morgjan*, meaning limited, or curtailed, which shows how far back the custom originated. The marriage is also called vulgarly, *left-handed*, but it is perfectly legitimate, only it does not confer on the wife the title or fortune of her husband, nor on her children any right of succession.

Among the German princes, *morganatic marriages* have been customary for many centuries, and in fact prevail even at the present day. The late Archduke John, for instance—the *Reichsverweser* of 1848—married the daughter of the post master of Aussee, in Styria, and she was afterwards created Duchess of Meran.

It is not only among princes, however, that *morganatic marriages* are recognized, but also among the nobility, and in Prussia even the inferior gentry claim the privilege.

The royal marriage act of England, even practically establishes *morganatic marriage*; for though any member of the royal family can marry whom he chooses, still his wife cannot be queen, nor have any claim on his property, nor are their children legitimate, unless the marriage was consented to by the reigning sovereign, or by Parliament, the sovereign's consent being needed before twenty-five years of age, and that of Parliament afterwards. Any marriage contracted without such consent has no legal standing, though it may give the woman a respectable social position, and it is no barrier to another marriage, with such consent, to another woman, upon whom the man would confer his title and fortune, and whose children would legitimately succeed. George the Fourth, it is well known, was married *morganatically* to Mrs. Jordan, but she nevertheless was never known by any other name.

In early times, in the Highlands, and in some parts of Ireland, there was recognized what was called the *hand-fast marriage*! This was, in a certain sense, an *experimental contract*, which was terminated after the parties had lived some time together, if they found that they did not suit each other. Sometimes it was terminated if the woman did not become a mother promptly; and, indeed, the marriage was often made a *hand-fast* one only in order to test this, so that a man who desired heirs might not be permanently bound to a barren woman.

I have been assured, when in Scotland, that it was often the custom for one of these marriages to be contracted with this understanding: if the woman became a mother within a certain time, then the *hand-fast marriage* was to be made a permanent one, but if she did not, then they separated.

It does not appear that this curious arrangement was regarded as at all discreditable in any way. Neither of the parties lost caste by it, nor were the children, if they had any, necessarily illegitimate; on the contrary, they often took precedence of those by any subsequent marriage.

Although in a *morganatic marriage*, in the feudal ages, the woman was allowed by courtesy to be a wife, still it was a serious matter for her, being of inferior station, if she pretended to anything more. Nay, even if her husband made her his consort, and gave her his title, she was still held to be a criminal, and was sooner or later made to suffer. This was undoubtedly with the intention of keeping all succession in the princely line alone. The consorts, whose children were to be heirs to the throne, must be of equal rank with the husband, but the *wife* only might be of any rank.

A most interesting and romantic instance of this is found in the history of the beautiful and unfortunate *Agnes Bernhauer*: she was the daughter of a poor citizen of Augsburg, and lived during the fifteenth century. The Duke Albrecht, only son and heir of Duke Ernest of Bavaria, saw this maiden at a tournament, and fell violently in love with her, as she did with him, he being remarkably manly and handsome. Notwithstanding his rank, however, she would consent to no illicit association, and they were accordingly privately married, he then taking her to a

castle which he owned, where they lived together in great happiness. His father, however, had formed a plan to marry Albrecht to Anna, daughter of the Duke of Brunswick, and was highly chagrined when he heard of his connection with the beautiful Agnes, which he resolved to bring to an end.

To effect this, he arranged a grand tournament, which his son attended, but to which he was refused admission, on the ground that he was living with a disreputable woman, in open licentiousness. Upon this Albrecht openly proclaimed her his wife, but all to no purpose; he was still excluded from the lists. This so enraged him that he proclaimed her Duchess of Bavaria, his consort, and gave her the retinue and maintenance of a princess, with the castle of Straubing for a residence.

The poor woman seemed, however, to have a foreboding of evil, for she erected an oratory and a tomb in a Carmelite convent, to which she used often to retire.

Duke William, Albrecht's uncle, who was much attached to his nephew, took his part, and while he lived, the couple were not molested; but at his death, during the absence of her husband, poor Agnes was arrested, at the order of Duke Ernest, and executed. She was accused of sorcery; of having bewitched Albrecht; and being bound hand and foot, was thrown from a bridge into the Danube, in the presence of the whole people. The current floated her to the side of the river, and one of the executioners, by fastening a pole in her beautiful long hair, held her head under the water till she was dead.

Albrecht was so maddened by this that he took up arms against his father, and ravaged the whole country, driving him to such extremity that the emperor, with the other nobles, had to interfere, and finally made a truce between them; so that Albrecht returned to his father's court, and eventually married Anna of Brunswick.

To conciliate his son, Duke Ernest erected a chapel over the grave of poor Agnes; but twelve years after, Albrecht removed her remains to the convent at Straubing, and buried them in the tomb which she herself had erected.

In this case, if the parties had been content to regard the marriage as simply morganatic, and the Brunswick princess had been also espoused as consort, there would have been no trouble; but the act of declaring a plebeian woman duchess, and refusing in consequence to marry the Princess Anna, was an offense against royalty not to be forgiven.

Concubinage, in conjunction with marriage, appears to have existed from the very earliest times, and to have been viewed in different ways at different epochs. Among the ancient Romans, the marriage law was very strict, and in many respects burdensome, so that free unmarried men got into the habit of forming less onerous contracts, in the form of concubinage. This was, in fact, an agreement for permanent cohabitation, under certain understood regulations. The children of such unions were not regarded as legitimate, but still were acknowledged by the father; and no doubt by custom, both they and the mother had certain rights, and a recognized position, possibly something like the morganatic families of more modern times. Even in the reign of Augustus, concubines were allowed to be taken, but only from women of low position.

The concubines we read of in the Bible and contemporary histories, were probably merely slaves, with no legal rights nor any recognized position. In fact, the distinction between the wife herself and the concubine, in this respect, does not seem to have been very clear in those days.

Betrothment, or agreement to consummate marriage at some future time, was

once very common, and accompanied by various observances, such as kissing, joining hands, and exchanging rings or pieces of money broken in two. Such engagements were held sacred, and those breaking them were subject not only to social and ecclesiastical censure, but also to legal disability, for they could not contract marriage with a previous betrothment unfulfilled. Thus Henry the Eighth had his marriage with *Anne Boleyn* declared invalid, on the ground that she had been previously betrothed to the Duke of Northumberland. Church condemnation for failure to fulfill a betrothment did not come to an end, in England, till the reign of George the Second. Since then the only redress in such a case is a suit for damages, for breach of promise—a much more prosaic, but more sensible proceeding.

Not unfrequently, in former times, young children were betrothed to each other by their parents, even at birth, and such contracts were always regarded as binding at the proper age. This custom prevails even now in some countries, where women are appropriated as wives without their consent.

Our modern *engagement*, with its ring, is a survival of the old custom of betrothment. In fact, in some countries it is still called betrothment, and is regarded as quite binding. In Scotland a mutual betrothment, legally proved, is in all respects a marriage, and gives equal rights.

In short, there are many curious modifications both of polygamy, monogamy, and polyandria to be met with, even at the present day; and these have not been established by caprice, or by deliberate choice, but have been evolved by the natural growth of the societies in which we find them. Each one is the product of the conditions under which that society has existed, and no other arrangement was possible with those conditions.

In fact, the marriage relations are constantly changing in all communities, even the most civilized and settled; but the changes occur so gradually and naturally, from the changed relations of the sexes generally, that they are scarcely noticed. The condition of a married woman is now, in many respects, quite different to what it was a century ago, or less even. She has been freed from many legal disabilities, and is, in many ways, more a free agent than she used to be. Even in conservative England, a married woman can now receive and hold property of her own, and is entitled to her own wages. A few years ago her husband could take everything from her. In America, a woman's individual rights and liberty are more fully awarded than in perhaps any other country, but even here she is still under many disadvantages, and has not full equal rights and justice with man. She is, however, gradually but surely getting them, and in a few years they will be fully accorded.

Divorce also is now placed on a more rational and just basis than it used to be, and it is no longer insisted upon that utterly unsuitable people should be indissolubly bound together, when neither individuals nor society would suffer by their separation.

In short, the relations of the sexes in marriage, in our own society, as in all others, are slowly but surely changing in many ways, and marriage, at some future day, will be very different from what it is now. It would be a great and fatal mistake, however, to anticipate these changes, or to bring them about prematurely. They must come gradually, or be evolved from the natural progress of society. Very possibly some of the marital arrangements of the future, if we knew them, would appear shocking to us, and would cause serious evil if now established. But when the time comes for them, they will be as proper and as useful as our present arrangements.

If the good people of a few centuries back could have seen society as it is now, in its marriage relations, they would certainly have thought it fearfully deteriorated.

The manner in which men obtain wives, and the customs and observances attendant upon marriage, are remarkably varied. Very often the difference will be great between peoples living close together, and apparently of the same race, with no reason, so far as can be seen, why it should be so. Probably accident or caprice may have established certain customs in the first instance, and then habit or fashion would continue them.

Among all savage people, the law of battle has always prevailed, in regard to women, as in regard to all other envied possessions, and they have invariably been one of the chief causes of war among men, even within comparatively civilized times.

Not only did men singly contend for women, but tribe would fight with tribe, and nation with nation. Even in the same community, in friendly contest, men strove with each other for female favors, the strongest and most skillful carrying off the prize. Among the North American Indians, Hearne tells us, it was the custom for the men to wrestle for choice of women. A weak man, so Hearne says, unless he were a skillful hunter, or in some way had influence with the tribe, could never keep a wife that a stronger man coveted.

This constant rivalry and effort to excel must have had an excellent effect on the physical development of the young men, and as the best among them would be preferred by the best among the women, it would constantly tend, by natural selection, to the improvement of the race. It was, in fact, a rude way of bringing about the pairing of the best of both sexes.

Similar customs, more or less modified, prevail among other savage people, the rule being recognized that "to the victors belong the spoils." And in every way we can regard it, such a custom is a great step in advance over more barbarous usages. It made the men more manly, and the women more womanly, because each one would constantly try to excel in those qualities which the other admired.

The Australian, perhaps the lowest savage of all, has no idea of excelling in anything but cunning and brute force. He has no choice in women at all, nor any desire to conciliate them in any way, but merely covets them like any other possession. His custom, therefore, is to lie in ambush, and watch till he finds some woman of another tribe isolated from her companions; he then springs upon her, lays her senseless with a blow from his club, and carries her off. That is the whole of the courtship; there is no effort to attract, nor to please—not the slightest idea, in fact, of anything of the kind. Perhaps he kills her with the blow! If so, he simply leaves her and tries again; and if next time he strikes less hard, it will be so that he may not quite kill but only disable.

The desire of the two sexes to please each other, by conduct, or by personal adornment, is one of the first steps toward improvement, both physically and morally. It is, in fact, the beginning of civilization.

Even among the lower animals, as already shown, it is one of the most powerful means of improvement, since it leads, by selection, to the propagation of the fittest.

Anything which excites endeavor in rude human beings, tends to their improvement, either by the development which it causes in their physical and mental powers, or by the softening of manners and the inspiring of taste. The love of adornment, which we see in most savages, and which probably first arose from desire to please or attract the other sex, has been one of the most efficient agents of civilization.

Professor Hartz remarks that no matter how poor a man may be, or how miserable, he may take a pleasure in adorning himself; and he might have added, further, that he is all the better for it. If he have no clothes, nor other personal belongings with which to decorate himself, he paints or tattoos his bare body, and feels both gratification and personal pride in doing so. One philosopher has even contended that clothes were first worn for ornament, and not for use or comfort.

Even the barbarians that lived in caves, during the reindeer epoch, probably millions of years ago, possessed objects that were valued, in some way, for their beauty, or singularity, and not for their utility.

The different modes of personal adornment are very curious to note. Many of them consist, among savages, in mutilations of different parts of the body, or in deformities caused artificially. Nor is the tendency yet extinct even in civilized society, for we still find that contracted waists and crushed feet are thought desirable among ourselves, just as flattened heads and perforated noses are among the Indians.

Darwin well sums up some of the most remarkable *fashions*, in regard to the person, in his *Descent of Man*: "In one part of Africa the eyelids are colored black; in another, the nails are colored yellow or purple. In many places the hair is dyed of various tints. In different countries the teeth are stained black, red, blue, etc.; and in the Malay archipelago it is considered shameful to have white teeth, like those of a dog! Not one great country can be named, from the polar regions in the north to New Zealand in the south, in which the aborigines do not tattoo themselves. This practice was followed by the Jews of old, and by the ancient Britons. In Africa some of the natives tattoo themselves, but it is a much more common practice to raise protuberances by rubbing salt into incisions made in various parts of the body; and these are considered by the inhabitants of Kordofan and Darfur to be great personal attractions. In the Arab countries no beauty can be perfect till the cheeks or temples have been gashed. In South America, as Humboldt remarks, a mother would be accused of culpable indifference toward her children, if she did not employ artificial means to shape the calf of the leg, after the fashion of the country. In the old and new worlds the shape of the skull was formerly modified, during infancy, in the most extraordinary manner, as is still the case in many places, and such deformities are considered ornamental." Just as pinched waists and dwarfed feet are with us.

In North Africa it takes a man ten years to get his hair perfectly grown into shape. In other parts of the world all the hair is shaved off, and even the eyebrows and eyelashes carefully picked out. On the upper Nile the natives knock out the four front teeth, so that they may not look like brutes. Others knock out only two, and think Europeans look disgusting with the whole set perfect. The Malays file the front teeth to sharp points, so that they look like a saw, and some pierce holes in them, in which they wear studs. One of the African kings told Sir Samuel Baker that Lady Baker would be *much improved* if he would knock out her four front teeth and split her upper lip.

Flattened noses are esteemed handsome in some parts, and lips cut open so as to hold flat broad bits of wood or bone are equally in vogue in other parts. Rings and other ornaments are of course worn wherever they can be placed, in the ears, lips, and nose especially, the ear being often made larger than the hand, and pulled down to the shoulder by them.

In all these cases, the great motive is, as Darwin says, "self-adornment, vanity, and the admiration of others." . . . With the men of New Zealand, a most

capable judge says, "to have fine tattooed faces was the great ambition of the young, both to render themselves *attractive to the ladies*, and conspicuous in war."

Some New Zealand girls, when urged by the missionaries not to be tattooed, begged hard to have a *few lines*, so that they might not look *too ugly* when they got old!

The great impelling motive to all this is exactly the same as what we call *fashion* among ourselves. The foundation of it is the desire to attract and please the other sex, and to outshine all rivals!

Personal peculiarities which are thought disgusting by one people, are considered desirable by others. Hearne says, "Ask a North American Indian what is beauty, and he will answer, a broad flat face, small eyes, high cheek bones, three or four broad black lines across each cheek, a low forehead, a large broad chin, a clumsy hook nose, a tawny hide, and breasts hanging down to the waist."

The Siamese ladies have small noses, with wide spreading nostrils, a large mouth, with thick lips, and high broad cheek bones. Their male admirers, however, consider them much more beautiful than European ladies.

One peculiarity of Hottentot women has been referred to elsewhere, but there is also another, considered by the male Hottentots to be a great mark of perfection. It consists in a most remarkable development of the posterior regions, which are sometimes so large that when a woman sits down on level ground she cannot rise straight up without help, unless she can push herself along to some slope. Burton tells us that the Somal men, who consider this a great beauty, are accustomed to place the women in a straight line, all facing one way, and then pick out those who project the furthest, posteriorly, as being the most handsome.

If there were artificial means of increasing this development, they would undoubtedly be adopted, and we should see it still more pronounced than it is. The preference given to the largest tends, however, even now that way, by the process of natural selection.

Any natural peculiarity is thus apt to become desirable, and to be valued in proportion as it is developed. Those savages that have long hair value it in proportion to its length and abundance, and not infrequently one is chosen chief because his locks are longer than those of all his rivals. Those savages, on the contrary, who have but little hair, naturally affect to consider it a blemish in any amount, and carefully eradicate every one from their bodies. With them a perfectly hairless body is the highest beauty, as among some of the New Zealand tribes, who have a saying that *there is no wife for a hairy man!*

Some African chiefs have been known to remark, in regard to European ladies, that they would be passable enough were it not for their *white skins*, making them look like *ghosts!* With them a black hide is indispensable to any claim to beauty.

Darwin remarks, in regard to the studying of these apparently trivial details, that no excuse is needed for doing so at all, for, in the words of Shopenhauer, "The final aim of all love intrigues, be they comic or tragic, is really of more importance than all other ends in human life. What it all turns upon is nothing less than the composition of the next generation. . . . It is not the weal or woe of any one individual, but that of the human race to come, which is here at stake."

And this is quite true; there is nothing more important to the human race than that which bears upon the association of the sexes, and its result—propagation!

Mr. Windwood Reade informed Mr. Darwin that the Joloffs, a tribe of negroes on

the west coast of Africa, were remarkable for their uniformly fine appearance; and when a friend of his asked one of their chiefs the reason for it, he said, "It is very easily explained; it has always been our custom to pick out our *worst* looking slaves and sell them." Of course the best looking were kept, and as the females were all taken for concubines, this accounted for the fine children and future adults. These negroes simply applied to their own kind the same rules which they found effective in improving their domestic animals, of which they were skillful breeders. In this respect they were ahead of ourselves.

It is a fact worth noting, in connection with pairing, that among animals in a state of nature, single couples are by no means the rule. Even when the sexes are equal in number, or nearly so, the strongest males often appropriate a large number of females to themselves, and the weaker males are left solitary bachelors. This is seen in cattle, horses, seals, domestic fowls, and many others. From this it has been argued that polygamy is natural, and is a provision by which the strongest and most powerful prevail, in propagation, over the feeble.

I am not aware of any instance of polyandria among animals in a state of nature, or one female habitually serving several males.

One curious result of communal marriages, where all the women of a tribe were wives to all the men of the tribe, was the tracing of the descent of a child necessarily through the mother, because the father could not be known. Every one's ancestry was followed through the female line only, because in this there could be no doubt nor mistake.

This is the custom now, among many of our own Indian tribes, the mother only giving name and social position to the children. When *Osceola* was a prisoner in Florida, he explained this to one of our officers, who expressed surprise that children were not always named after their fathers,—"*Mother always known,*" said he; "*father uncertain.*"

Sometimes even the mother seems to have been ignored, and the children as well as the women were all tribal, each belonging to the whole community. This points to a time when the association of the sexes was quite promiscuous, and all interests were in common. It is quite easy to imagine why such a state of things must have existed, as a necessity. When the whole tribe was in constant danger, it was the safest plan; for every individual, and especially every child and woman, would be better protected as part of the whole community, than if left to struggle alone.

There is even reason for supposing that, in some instances at least, human beings have paired, like many animals, only for a season, or for one birth. Indeed, some travelers assure us that arrangements of this kind exist even now in some parts of Africa. If so, it is evident how they have arisen; not from caprice, but from surrounding conditions.

It is not to be supposed that the male, in these unions, would concern himself about the support and care of the children; that would be left to the mother, who would also have to support and protect herself. This, however, she could not do unless food and shelter were easily and surely obtainable. Such an arrangement, therefore, could only originate and continue in a state of comparative peace and plenty.

It is quite probable, as before explained, that in all primitive tribes, the women were held in common, so that no man could have a wife of his own, all to himself, in his own tribe. If he wished one he must steal or capture her from another tribe,

and then she was his private possession or slave. In all probability this was one of the first ways in which wives, as private possessions, were first obtained.

A very curious proof that all the women of a tribe were originally considered to belong to the tribe, is found in what was called the *expiation of marriage!* If a man wished to take a wife to himself, he had to pay something to the community for the privilege, because it was considered that he was making a private possession of what properly belonged to all.

It was probably a long time before this common right was fully abrogated, so that certain women would belong only to certain men; and none be considered the common property of the whole tribe. Nor would this new form of marriage be regarded at all as a step in advance, morally or otherwise, but on the contrary would be looked upon as a dangerous and demoralizing innovation. Under the communal system, according to Sir John Lubbock, instead of a woman being esteemed on account of reserve, or unusual continence, she received honor in proportion to the freedom with which she bestowed her favors. And under such a condition of society this was perfectly natural; for that which with us now is a social crime, would then be a public virtue.

A curious form of polygamy formerly existed, under the feudal system, in France and other European countries. The feudal lord, or seigneur, when one of his dependents married, claimed the right to assume the husband's place, on the first night of the nuptials! And this right was both claimed and exercised, until a comparatively late period. Sometimes, however, the dependent, if rich, would buy off the privilege, and sometimes it was waived as a favor.

In some parts of Africa a similar right is also asserted by the kings of tribes, and so far from being resented, it is considered a mark of favor.

Among the ancient Romans, if a husband admired another man, for any bodily or mental quality, he would often request him to visit his wife, so that their children might possibly resemble his friend. Similar requests were also not unknown on the part of the females.

The Spartans habitually encouraged the intercourse of their best men and women, and, as far as possible, made them the only propagators, without any reference to special marital relations.

In some of the countries of Palestine and Mesopotamia, it was formerly the custom for every woman, at least once in her life, to prostitute herself to any one who wished, in the Temple, on certain public occasions. This was, in fact, a religious rite, which it would have been sinful to omit; but probably it was, originally, a mere survival of the old communal marriage, or an assertion of the right of every man to every woman.

At a later period the custom became modified, so that certain women only were set aside, or devoted, for this purpose, and were considered sacred and holy. Those who sought their favors paid for them, and in this way the priests derived much of their income. Young girls, even at the present day, are thus devoted to the service of the temples, in India and Turkey; and we see from the Bible that the custom was common in Palestine, even among the Hebrews themselves sometimes, as we learn from *Kings*, and *Hosea!* These women so devoted were called *Kadesh*, meaning *pure*, or *consecrated*. See also in Deuteronomy, where it does not say there shall be no *Kadesh*, but only that they shall not be of the daughters of Jacob. (Chap. xxii. vs. 17, 18.)

One cause of polygamy should be borne in mind, as it still prevails. It is customary with the males of many animals, as the gorilla for instance, to fight for possession of the females, and so fiercely that the weaker males are all killed, or driven away to solitary life. This necessarily leaves several females to each of the males that survive, and hence polygamy. Now in all probability the same course would be pursued in all small and isolated assemblages of human beings, in their rudest state; a few of the strongest males killing or driving off all the feebler ones, and then dividing the females amongst themselves. Like other customs, when once established, it would be perpetuated long after the conditions from which it originated had ceased to exist.

It is always a great gain for the women, in any rude community, when the men begin to have ideas of beauty, and to prefer some to others. The favored ones, of course, soon become aware of their power, and in various ways make the men pay for their favors. Even if purchased or taken forcibly, they are at least cared for and protected, like any other valuable property, and receive a certain degree of consideration. The women less favored by nature strive to make themselves attractive by artificial adornments, and by other means, and are thus stimulated to try and improve themselves, crude though the attempt may be. Taste will also vary, as we always see it do, and almost every woman would become an object of desire to some man.

If the sexes were tolerably equal in number, and the means of living were easily obtained, the woman could make her own bargain in marriage, as we find her doing in many parts of the world at the present day. Many of the marriage customs which prevail among rude tribes, in widely separated places, illustrate this very well.

Hearne tells us of a woman among our Northern Indians, who repeatedly left her husband to go and live with her lover; nor was it considered anything more than the exercise of a right, or at least a privilege. And among the Charruas, in South America, according to Azura, a woman can divorce herself when she chooses, and marry again. Among the Abipones, although girls are usually bought from their parents, for wives, still, even after the bargain is made, they often reject the husband and run away from him. Among the Patagonians, and in Terra del Fuego, it is the same. In Fiji, the rule is for the man to seize the woman he wishes for a wife, by force, real or pretended, and take her to his house; but if she does not like him, she runs away to some one else; if there be no objection, she stays, and that is marriage. When a Kalmuk Tartar wishes a girl for a wife, he races with her, she always having a certain start. If he catches her, she is his wife, but if not, she is free; and we are assured by Clark, who was much with them, that he never knew of a girl being caught unless she wished. The same custom prevails among the Koraks of Northern Central Asia, and with some of the Malays. In each place the same tale is told—that when a girl is caught, it is always because she wished to be.

Even in those parts of Africa where girls are bought from their parents, and beaten if they object to their husbands, they obtain, in some way or other, a certain amount of freedom of choice or refusal; for we are told that very ugly men, even if rich, cannot get wives at all. The girls also, before they are betrothed, insist upon the men submitting themselves to inspection from every point of view, and showing off their paces. No doubt those who are not desired hear such comments, from the objecting fair ones, that their ardor for them is effectually cooled. Sometimes the women themselves propose to the men, and quite commonly they run off with a favored lover, rather than accept a husband they do not like.