

**MATRIMONIAL CEREMONIES DISPLAYED:
WHEREIN ARE EXHIBITED THE VARIOUS
CUSTOMS, ODD PRANKS, WHIMSICAL TRICKS
AND SURPRISING PRACTICES OF NEAR ONE
HUNDRED DIFFERENT KINGDOMS AND PEOPLE
IN THE WORLD, NOW USED IN THE CELEBRATION
AND CONSUMMATION OF MATRIMONY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649436149

Matrimonial Ceremonies Displayed: Wherein Are Exhibited the Various Customs, Odd Pranks, Whimsical Tricks and Surprising Practices of near One Hundred Different Kingdoms and People in the World, Now Used in the Celebration and Consummation of Matrimony by Louis de Gaya

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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LOUIS DE GAYA

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COLLECTED FROM THE PAPERS OF

A Rambling Batchelor ;

With a Variety of Remarks by him, Serious and Humorous.

TO WHICH IS ADDED THE COMICAL

ADVENTURES OF SIR HARRY FITZGERALD,

Who had Seven Wives, with the Character of each,—
a Genuine Story.

Also an Epigram on Matrimony, in Latin and English.

Published for the Information and Entertainment of the Ladies
and Pretty Girls of Great Britain, not forgetting those
of Dublin and Tipperary.

London :

PRIVATELY PRINTED
1880.

THE PREFACE.

FEW authors agree in the definition of Matrimony. Charron calls it a wise bargain, a state, or an honourable conjunction; some more malicious critics call it a yoke, a communion of evils and punishment, a society of cares and troubles. But without adbering to the sentiments of the one, or the differing opinions of others that criticise upon it, I shall define Matrimony according to the Canonists, to be a Sacred Union of Man and Woman, not to be dissolved but by the Death of one of them. Matrimonium est viri et mulieris conjunctio individuum vite societatem continens.

This is the first and most ancient state, owing its institution to the supreme Author of Nature; and for the greater consequence, because it is the foundation of human society, the original of families, and of kingdoms. Prima societas est in conjugio, quod principium urbis, feminarium republicæ.

Marriage is not solemnized in the same manner everywhere, but the rules and laws of marriages are more or less strict, according to the diversity of religion and nations. Among the Christians they are the most strict, when the greatest part of other religions, to make marriages more free, easy and fruitful, allow polygamy and divorce. Yet, among all the different laws and customs in the world, there is no nation so barbarous as not to solemnize marriage with some rites, ceremonies, and public rejoicings.

This made the author enquire and observe what are used among the Christians, Jews, Mahometans, and Idolaters, which make up the four religions that are known to the world. And as the religion of the Jews is the most ancient, and God has been pleased in a peculiar manner to honour them with the name of his Chosen People, their rites are first described in this Treatise of Marriage Ceremonies, which is here submitted to the judgment of the candid reader, and it is hoped it may be to his satisfaction.

SOME REMARKS UPON THE ENSUING
TREATISE.

MARRIAGE being the Port, or Haven, at which most of the Sons and Daughters of Eve design to touch, sooner or later ; 'tis no wonder that people are universally curious to know how this ticklish ceremony is performed in other Countries. We find, here at home, that the first place in the Common Prayer Book that young maidens generally dip in, is the Service for Matrimony. I once knew a raw girl that could readily make all the Responses in that Office, before she could answer to one question in her Catechism ; which occasioned her father, who was a grave old gentleman, to wish that those of her sex would take as much care to prepare themselves for their latter, as for their first end, for so it proves to most of them.

It has been frequently said that Marriage and Hanging go by destiny, but for my part, I am no Predestinarian ; neither do I believe, with the rest of the World, that matches are made in Heaven, any more than I believe that all Oxen are bought and sold there, before they come to Smithfield Market. But though I am no admirer of destiny, as I said before, yet I would not have any one infer from thence, that I believe there is no manner of resemblance between Hanging and Marrying : for Hanging, with reverence be it spoken, as well as Marrying, is performed by tying a knot, which Death only dissolves, and then they agree too in this particular (which is more suitable to the occasion of the Book), that all civilized Countries in the World observe different fashions in one no less than the other.

The Roman Catholics make a Sacrament of Matrimony, and in consequence of that notion, pretend it confers grace. The Protestant Divines don't carry matters so high, but say this ought to be understood in a qualified sense, and that Marriage so far confers grace, as generally speaking it confers repentance, which everybody knows is a step to grace.

It must be confessed on all hands, that Marriage is the most serious action that a man can engage in, and therefore we ought to think of it, as we do of our latter end, with fear and trembling. For this reason, I cannot endure to hear people pass their ill-natured jests, upon so holy an ordinance. If it is a man's good fortune to meet with a good wife, he ought to date his happiness in this World from that very moment; and if she proves not as he desires, he ought to look over the catalogue of his sins, and interpret it as a visitation, or at least to take it patiently. For my part commend me to that gentleman, who having married a lady of an extraordinary capacity, never complained of his fate, nor made his spouse uneasy, but honestly thanked God, that now he had a hole to put his head in.

The ladies that read this book, will find sufficient reasons to thank Providence, that they were born in so good-natured an Island as ours is, where the preliminaries to Marriage are nothing so morose and severe, as they are in some places in the World. To give an instance of this, our Author tells us, among the Sabrians (a sort of mongrel Christians, that live on the Confines of Persia next Turkey) the parties meeting together at Church, the Minister makes the Bride swear before the women, that she is a virgin. As ill an opinion as the World entertains

of our females, I am very well satisfied, that there are above forty thousand conscientious Wives within the Bills of Morality, that would have left all, before they would have taken so rash and insnaring an oath. How is it possible that a woman should positively swear to an imaginary thing which may be lost (the Lord knows how) between sleeping and waking ? This I am sure of, that no Husband was ever a jot securer, for preserving arbitrary and unlawful oaths.

Yet as great a hardship as this may seem to be, it is nothing in comparison of what hardships are practised in some countries, even after the nuptial ceremonies are performed. Thus we find, that among the Greeks, if the women find in the bed the next day any signs of a lost virginity, they make a great feast; but when that is wanting, they say nothing, the bridegroom sending back the bride to her relations and friends. The same inhuman custom is likewise observed by the Persians, as the reader may see, by the Moors of Morocco; the inhabitants of the kingdom of Fez, by those of Algiers and Tunis; by the Spaniards who retain this custom from the Moors; and lately by the Jews in Barbary. As for the latter do not wonder at it, to find such an usage among them, because they were a stiff-necked people, that was always demanding signs and tokens, nor among the Infidels and Mahometans, but that any Christians that are happily freed from the Levitical bondage, should still hanker after the old superstitious leaven, is matter of the greatest astonishment to me. I cannot but reflect with horror, how many ladies in England that now live comfortably with their husbands, and are blessed with a numerous issue, had been shamefully discarded and sent