

bringing about this glorious consummation?"

THE MASK OF MISERY

A Chinese Bride has no voice in the choice of her future companion; the groom even has little or nothing to do with the selection of his wife, and seldom even beholds her face until after the ceremonies of the marriage day. The preliminary arrangements are all made by the parents, with the assistance of a party called "the go-between," who, in China, is a sort of professional matrimonial agent. He keeps a list of all the eligible young ladies, with details and particulars, somewhat as a broker in live stock would do. After a satisfactory selection has been made, the ceremony of *Man-Ming*, a kind of betrothal by the interchange of presents and various religious rites, is performed by the friend of the bridegroom at the house of the bride's father. The dowry is also paid to the father and formal letters of proposal and consent are interchanged with him. The blessing of the ancestors of both is reverently sought at the ancestral altar, and, usually, a wild goose and gander are presented as an emblem of conjugal fidelity and affection. The next ceremony is called *Nap-Pie*, and consists of the presentation of the wedding robe with other presents to the bride by the parents of the bridegroom, followed by a grand dinner at the house of the latter. The parties are now betrothed. The third stage in a Chinese marriage is *Tseng Kee*, or the selection of a lucky day for the wedding. This being settled by an appeal to the oracles, the bride spends the thirty days preceeding her marriage in bewailing her removal from her father's house. The night before the wedding is wholly spent in lamentations by her and her attendants. Two days are set apart for the bridal ceremonies. The first is for inspection of the bridal presents, which are displayed at the house of the bridegroom. On the second day the nuptial ceremonies occur. The bridal chair is sent by the bridegroom and is richly adorned, and bears the emblem of an orange tree laden with fruit and strings of coin, and the inevitable goose and

gander. The procession returns with her, accompanied with great parade and pomp. Closely veiled, she leaves the chair and enters her future home, led by her youngest brother who "gives her away." After several ceremonies of obeisance to her lord, respect to the guests, worship to the ancestral tablets, she retires to an alcove in the bridal chamber, where the bridegroom receives her alone, and lifting her veil, for the first time gazes upon the face of his bride. She then comes forth and the bridal ceremony proceeds. The principal feature of it is the drinking by the bride and groom from two cups joined by a sacred cord, while the attendants repeat sentences about future peace and happiness. The ceremonies over, she is loaded with gifts and conducted to a chamber where she sits for inspection, the visitors being expected to examine and praise every part of her attire and ornaments, the smallness of her feet and the beauty of her person. At seven o'clock in the evening a banquet is held, at which the bride brings the principal dish from the kitchen with her own hands and places it on the table, and assumes the place of a waiting maid. But, alas! all this grandeur is often but the mask of hidden misery.

What happiness can there be in such a strange mechanical and heathen form? Archdeacon Troy tells of fifteen virgins, near Canton, who, on learning that their parents had affianced them, met together and resolved to commit suicide. They flung themselves into the river and are buried in what is known as "The Virgins' Tomb." He also mentions another case which occurred in 1873, where eight young girls who had been thus engaged, clothed in their best attire, and at eleven o'clock in the darkness of the night, walked out to the river's side, bound together by cords, and hurled themselves into eternity to avoid the ignomy and misery of a heartless marriage and probably a polygamist's home.

Mrs. Baldwin, of China, gives a still sadder picture of heathen motherhood. "Yes," said a poor woman who came to comfort her on the death of her own babe, "I know all about it, I was married, and our first child was a girl. O, how I loved it as soon as it was born. But it was