

times injures the fortune of the rich, and obliges the poor to retrench their necessary wants, that they may not be deficient in their zeal on this occasion. For the origin of this festival, a whimsical cause is assigned; but it is probably of such ancient institution, that the remembrance of the fact which occasioned it is lost, and only the observance kept up; as is the case with many ceremonies in all countries.

The young men do not follow their own taste in the choice of a wife; but take her on the credit of others. Sometimes, however, the bridegroom will reject the bride at first sight; but should the woman ever so much dislike the man, she has no alternative but to submit.

When the Tartars, in the late war, took Nankin, among other irregularities they committed, they hit on an expedient, which amused the Chinese amid all their disasters. They seized on all the women of the province, and putting them in sacks, carried them to market, determined to sell old and young, handsome and ugly, without suffering them to be previously seen, at the moderate price of two crowns each.

On the day of sale, the novelty of the transaction attracted a great many purchasers. One poor fellow, who had but two crowns in the world, purchased a sack, like the rest, and carried it off; but no sooner was he out of the crowd, than his curiosity prompted him to examine his bargain. To his amazement and great chagrin, he found he had got an old woman of the most forbidding appearance. Irritated by the loss of his money, and the disappointment of his hopes, he was going to throw her into a river, when the old lady bid him be of good cheer, telling him that if he saved her