

MARRIAGE CEREMONIES.

THE rite by which persons are publicly recognised as 'man and wife,' has been solemnised as a religious ceremony in every country : and this practice being universal and extensive as the human family, decisively attests that matrimony was originally of divine appointment, and that its obligations are most serious and impressive.

The celebration of marriage in all ages of the Christian church, has been conducted with respect to the importance which the Scriptures attach to this indissoluble engagement. It is performed with fewer observances, but with far greater solemnity ; and in whatever aspect the circumstances associated with the rite are contemplated, the ever during continuance of the wedded relation is always presupposed as the basis of the whole proceeding.* From the apostolic era, in every land where Christianity is the professed foundation and sanction of the public morals—however the form may have varied the substance