

HOW SHE GOT A HUSBAND.

In the early part of the eighteenth century a wealthy English baronet died, leaving his estates to a beautiful only daughter, who soon after disposed of herself in marriage in a very singular way.

Tradition and a contemporaneous ballad concur in representing her as courted by many, but refusing all and keeping herself "fancy free" and heart whole, until attending a wedding at Reading, she met a young and handsome but poor attorney, named Benjamin Child, with whom she fell violently in love on the spot. For some days she reasoned with herself on the subject, trying to shake herself free of this sudden passion, but all in vain. Then, feeling that something must be done, but unable from confusion of mind to devise a proper course, she took the extraordinary step of sending the young man a letter, demanding satisfaction for injuries she alleged he had inflicted on her, and appointing time and place for a hostile meeting. Mr. Child was much surprised, and quite at a loss to conceive who the challenger could be. By the advice of a friend, however, he resolved to attend. The meeting may be described in the words of the ballad :

Early on a summer's morning,
When bright Phœbus was adorning
Every bower with his beams,
The fair lady came, it seems.

At the bottom of a mountain,
Near a pleasant crystal fountain,
There she left her gilded coach,
While the grove she did approach.

Covered with her mask, and walking,
There she met her lover, talking
With a friend that he had brought,
So she asked him whom he sought.

"I am challenged by a gallant
Who resolves to try my talent;
Who he is I cannot say,
But I hope to show him play."

"It is I that did invite you;
You shall wed me, or I'll fight you
Underneath those spreading trees;
Therefore choose from which you please.

"You shall find I do not vapor,
I have sought my trusty rapier;
Therefore take your choice," said she:
"Either fight or marry me!"

Said he "madam, pray what mean you?
In my life I've never seen you;
Pray unmask, your visage show,
Then I'll tell you ay or no."

"I will not my face uncover
Till the marriage ties are over;
Therefore choose you which you will,
Wed me, sir, or try your skill.

"Step within that pleasant bower
With your friend one single hour;
Strive your thoughts to reconcile,
And I'll wander here awhile."

While this beauteous lady waited,
The young bachelors debated
What was best for to be done,
Quoth his friend, "the hazard run ;

"If my judgment can be trusted,
Wed her first, you can't be worsted;
If she's rich you'll rise to fame,
If she's poor, why, you're the same."

He consented to be married;
All three in a coach were carried
To a church without delay,
Where he weds the lady gay.

Though sweet pretty Cupids hover'd
Round her eyes, her face was cover'd
With a mask—he took her thus,
Just for better or for worse.

The ballad goes on to state that the pair went in her coach to the lady's elegant mansion, where, leaving him in the parlor, she proceeded to dress herself in her finest attire, and by-and-by broke upon his vision as a young handsome woman and his devoted wife.

Now he's clothed in rich attire,
Not inferior to a squire;
Beauty, honor, riches' store,
What can man desire more ?

It appears that Mr. Child took a position in society suitable to the fortune thus conferred upon him, and was high sheriff of the county in 1714.

As horses start aside from objects they see imperfectly so do men. Enmities are excited by an indistinct view; they would be allayed by conference.