

From Flowers of Loveliness.

"TO VICTORIA.

Violet, grace of the vernal year!

Offer'd be thou to this spring-like reign!

Is not thy tint to that lady dear,

Whose banner of blue is the lord of the main?

Ivy we twine of changeless green,

Constant for ever in leaf and bough;

So may the heart of our maiden queen

Be always verdant and fresh as now.

Carnation, laced with many a streak

Of blooming red on its leaflets bright,

May be a type of her mantling cheek,

Blent with a brow of pearly white.

Tansy, though humble an herb it be,

Look not upon it with scornful eye:

On virtue, that lurks in low degree,

A glance should fall kind from those on high.

Olive, thy branch, dove-borne o'er the foam,

Was a sign for the surges of death to cease;

So, from the lips of our dove should come

The soft but the sure command of peace.

Roses of England, ceasing from fight,

Twine round her brow in whose veins are met

The princely blood those roses unite

In the veins of the noblest Plantagenet.

Iris, to thee the maid of the bow,

That promises hope, her name has given;

Join, then, the wreath at her feet we throw,

Who beams as a symbol of hope from heaven.

A nemone, flower of the wind! is the last.

We cull,—and our garland is now complete—

Gentle the current, and soft be the blast,

Which Victoria, the queen of the ocean, shall meet!"

L. E. L.

WIVES BY ADVERTISEMENT.

BY R. SHELTON MACKENZIE, L.L.D.

There are many wretched persons—miserable in mind and in prospect—poor in pocket and in spirit—degraded by misfortune or vice—abased by circumstance or crime—unhappy by reason of their own doings, or the deeds of others: for such there is pity, and there may be pardon. But there is a class yet lower, almost beneath contempt, who are the artificers of their own shame. In this motley world, among those classes who rank as the "civilized," there is one set of persons sunk in abasement and wretchedness far, far beneath the vicious or the pauper,—those are the men who advertise for wives!

The lowest creature upon earth,—lower far than the beggar whose rags float in the wind, and whose bed is in the ditch by the way-side,—is the wretched one who advertises for a wife. His doing so is an open and undisguised avowal of his own great unworthiness. It proclaims that he is unable or unworthy to obtain a wife by the usual means. His vices may have shut him out from reputable female society; his defects of mind or person,—perhaps both,—may have excluded him from being known to the respectable portion of womankind, for not otherwise can any man lack the means of being introduced to the acquaintance of women of character. Thus isolated, he puts himself up to the public bidding, for the unworthy to purchase. He lays aside the dignity of his sex, and avows himself desirous of a life-union with age, deformity, vice,—so that they be thickly gilded. He proclaims that he is in the market, like any other commodity. He avows that pride, passion, principle, are all abandoned; he only wants to wed for money. Is there any creature more debased than such a thing? Is it not gross calumny to dignify it with the name of man?

The advertiser usually (indeed, almost invariably, for as yet the fair sex are not quite so self-degraded) is a male. By his own account, he is young, wealthy, and accomplished. Is it not passing strange that such a gifted being is so utterly unacquainted with reputable females, as to be compelled to put himself up to public bidding?—to render himself the laughed-at dupe of all who may select him as the butt for their covert mockeries?—to degrade the name of man—to defame the fair character of woman—to disgrace marriage (a sacrament of one church and a holy ordinance of all), by avowing himself purchasable by any female who may be hopeless enough to make such a bargain—heartless enough to put up with it? Who can—who must be the replicants to such advertisements! The old, the ill-favored, the unprincipled, the characterless; all whose demerits have not enabled them to get a husband before.

The woman who seriously replies to such an advertisement must have abandoned all sense of the touching, beautiful, and becoming delicacy of her sex. There must be a deliberate resolve to discard that modesty which is the brightest gem that female decorum can wear, to prostrate her mind and curb her feelings,—to level herself to the utter degradation which such a negotiation involves; for, besides the bold assurance requisite for such bargaining with an utter stranger, the poor wretch must have

made up her mind to the chance of being refused. The advertiser may be a little fastidious, and disapprove of her; a little capricious, and reject her; or a little facetious, and have been only playing a trick.

After a long courtship, conducted with respect on one side and modesty on the other, a delicate minded maiden in private life hesitates to say "Yes," to the hearted request of her affectionate, her faithful, her long-trying lover: but here the position is reversed. The heartless female may hear a refusal from the lips of the stranger with whom she has been bargaining for marriage! What humiliation for a woman.

Bankrupt, indeed, in charms and character must she be who would proffer herself as the spouse of a wife-advertiser for the fulfilment of such a speculation. What can they expect from an union thus composed of the mingled elements of all that is wretched in mind and base in purpose? Seek they for love? It is a holy passion not to be sold nor bought. Strive they for happiness? That, also, is not a marketable article. Hope they to meet with the esteem of each other? Alas! they cannot have their own! All sympathy of taste, all mutuality of feeling, all congeniality of temper, all the charms and all the decencies of the marriage state, they must take on hearsay. They buy each other, as we buy cattle. Their qualifications must be discounted in the bargain. They cannot love: theirs is a contract from which delicacy shrinks, and at which pride revolts. If they should have children, with what face can they tell them that they, the parents, became wedded through the introduction of a newspaper advertisement. That man should be so fallen, and that woman should be so mean, as to be linked together by such ties, is one of the marvels to which the venality of this buying and selling age has unhappily given birth. That eminent individual, Mr. William Corder (who happened to get hanged one day, in Suffolk, for the murder of a young woman whom he seduced), obtained a wife by an advertisement in a London paper. A very pretty precedent for such delicately-minded ladies and gentlemen!

Suppose that she who replies to such an advertisement should not be refused, and that the advertiser is satisfied with the "property" she brings him, in exchange for the honour of wearing his name—for, under the circumstance, he can scarcely have a heart to win, or worth winning—what prospect of happiness can there be for her with one of whose disposition she previously knows nothing. And he must be no less ignorant of her. The one—as in the case of the murderer, who married thus—may be taken from her by the hands of justice, to expiate his crimes on the scaffold: the other may be recognised as friends, if to his friends he dare introduce a woman thus wedded for him at hap-hazard, as a person of abandoned character who has completed her wretched career by sheltering herself beneath the sanction of wedded life.

Think, also, on the chance of the husband's being tricked. He may be deceived in the amount of the "value received" for his precious person. Instead of opulence, he may have become wedded to poverty; instead of luxuriously living in wealth and splendour, he may have espoused one deeply in debt, who by her marriage provides herself with a scape-goat, to rot in the prison, which otherwise would have received herself; for it is part of the English law, that the husband is accountable, in purse or person for the previous debts of the wife.

What a sweet cat-and-dog sort of union must that be, where mutual confidence cannot exist. It is a desecration of marriage. It is the abuse of the ordinances of religion to legalize prostitution of mind and body. It makes a living libel upon that affection, which, through delay and danger, through toil and trouble—seeks (and finds so often) in wedded life, a sweet reward to counter-balance the heart-breakings, which had nearly wrecked the proa of their trusting hopes. It degrades marriage to mere animal sensuality. It tears the veil from the sanctity of that state which has something higher and holier than mere passion for its impulse: something of a mind to delight in and repose on, when the edge of appetite is dulled. It is, in a word, a disgrace to the social compact, in a Christian land, that a man should openly put himself up to the heartless bidding of wealth, and sell himself for gold.

From such marriages the prospect of felicity is small. Love must be quite out of the question. How can the man love her who buys him? How can the woman esteem him who not only marries her for money, but must have some extraordinary deficiencies to preclude him from obtaining an introduction to female society, from which he might select a wife in the usual and legitimate manner? Wretchedly low must be the man for the woman who is content to take a wife or husband on trust. The tyrant Mezentius, who tied the living to the dead, was less cruel than those self-destroyers who proclaim themselves willing, as old Trapbois would say, "for a con-si-de-ra-ti-on," to link themselves with age, deformity, and vice. The suffering of the tyrant's victim would soon be over: a long life of misery and wretchedness may elapse before death separates the unnatural union of the others.

It is a fact, that the advertisements which invite women to matrimonial alliances, just as they are invited to bargain at auction

or shops, are not jests, to see if females would notice them; they are what they avow; and it is an ascertained circumstance that many mesalliances have been formed through this very delicate medium.

The infection has crossed the waters. Matrimonial advertisements frequently appear in American papers, as well as in Paris papers—happily more rarely in those of England. There are but few female advertisers in either country—though they are numerous in France; but this arises, not from modesty (because whoever would answer such an advertisement would advertise), but because men are not yet quite so abandoned as to accept a lady who offers herself. Of the two, the male advertiser is the more degraded; he abandons himself to the indiscriminate biddings (the term is a marked one) of the females, and resigns his privilege of choosing and asking a wife for himself. Even in India, whither English belles resort on matrimonial speculations, they pass through the ordinary ordeal of private introduction, they must be seen before the negotiation for them commences, and the man does not blindly run himself into the matrimonial halter. The advertiser may lose his chance. He may be content to risk his prospect of future happiness upon, perhaps, one interview: the lady may be virtuous (the chances being forty to one that she is not), but may be she is not equally vicious! The only consoling prospect is, that when he has spent his *sposa's* fortune, he can take wings in the next packet-ship and cross the "deep, deep sea," leaving the *dama* to despair, and the chance of another advertisement! Could she expect constancy—or love—or confidence—or respect?

It is worth consideration, that, in almost every instance, the wife-advertiser puts in the interesting innuendo, that the lady "must have some property," which he modestly intimates, "may be settled upon herself." Kind hearted wife-seeker! he will be moderately content to live upon the interest of her fortune.

The impudence of these announcements is extraordinary. One, now before me, states that a wife is wanted (with a good fortune), and ending with the very encouraging hint, "that to a lady whose acquirements would render the unemployed hours of the advertiser agreeable, a preference would be given." Think of that, Master Brooke! "a preference would be given!"—it is the language of an auctioneer when he advertises property for sale.

The matter is this—that the advertisement puts the man up to female competition. Are women indeed so badly off that they must seek husbands? If the advertiser should find a purchaser, let the buyer and the bought have the curse of remembering, for ever, that one has paid money for a husband for her purity; the other sold himself as a slave, for a daily dole of food, and a decent coat.

Better break stones by the highway—better beg—better starve—than thus degrade the dignity of manhood.

PASSAGES FROM THE LIFE OF A CONDEMNED MAN.

FROM THE FRENCH.

Part I.

Condemned to death!—For five weeks has this thought dwelt alone with me; I have been always frozen by its presence, always crushed down beneath its weight. Formerly—for it seems to me these are rather years than weeks—I was a man as others are. Each day, each hour, each minute had its idea; my spirit, young and lofty, was full of phantasies. It amused me to unravel them, the one after the other, without order and without end, embroidering, from inexhaustible arabesques, its rough and slender staff of life. There were visions of young maidens, splendid mitres, battles won, theatres filled with light and sound, and again young maidens and solemn walks at night beneath huge branches of chesnut-trees. There was always a festivity in my imagination. I could think on what I would; I was free.

Now I am a captive; my body is in irons in a dungeon; my spirit imprisoned in one idea, one horrible, bloody, implacable idea. I have but one thought, one conviction, one certainty—I am condemned to death.

Whatever I do it is always there—the infernal thought!—like a leaden sceptre at my side, alone, jealous, chasing all distraction, face to face with me, miserable, and shaking me with its two icy hands, when I would turn away my head or close my eyes. It creeps in all forms where my spirit would flee from it, and it mingles, like the horrible burden of a song, with all the words that are addressed to me; it glues itself with me to the hideous gratings of my dungeon, possesses me when awake, watches my convulsive sleep, and re-appears in my dreams as a knife.

I have just started in my sleep from my pursuit. Ah! it is but a dream. Well, even before my eyes have had time to open sufficiently to see, this fatal thought, written in the horrible reality which surrounds me, on the damp and sweltering flag-stone of my cell, in the pale rays of my night-lamp, in the coarse woof of the cloth of my garments, in the gloomy figure of the guard-soldiers, whose cartouch-box shines through the grating of my dungeon; it seems that a voice has already murmured in my ear, "Thou art condemned to death!"

It was a beautiful morning in August. For three days my trial