

A Merchant.

A merchant, originally from Liverpool, having acquired a large fortune in one of the West India islands, concluded that he could not be happy in the enjoyment of it, unless he shared it with a woman of merit; and knowing none to his fancy, he resolved to write to a worthy correspondent in Liverpool. He knew no other style than that which he used in his trade; therefore, treating of affairs of love as he did of business, after giving his friend in a letter several commissions, and reserving this for the last, he went on thus:

"Item.—Seeing that I have taken a resolution to marry, and that I do not find a suitable match for me here, do not fail to send, by next ship bound hither, a young woman of the qualifications and form following:—As for a portion, I demand none—Let her be of an honest family, between twenty and twenty-five years of age, of a middle stature and well proportioned, her face agreeable, her temper mild, her character blameless, her health good, and her constitution strong enough to bear the change of the climate, that there may be no occasion to look out for a second through lack of the first, soon after she comes to hand, which must be provided against as much as possible, considering the great distance, and the dangers of the sea. If she arrives here, conditioned as above said, with the present letter indorsed by you, or at least an attested copy thereof, that there may be no mistake or imposition, I hereby oblige and engage myself to satisfy the said letter, by marrying the bearer at fifteen day's sight. In witness whereof I subscribe this," &c.

The correspondent read over and over this odd article, which put the future spouse on the same footing with the bales of goods he was to send to his friend; and after admiring the prudent exactness of the West Indian, and his laconic style in enumerating the qualifications which he insisted on, he endeavoured to serve him to his mind; and, after many inquiries, he judged he had found a lady fit for

his purpose, in a young person of reputable family, but no fortune, of good humour and polite education, well-shaped and more than tolerably handsome. He made the proposal to her as his friend had directed; and the young gentlewoman, who had no subsistence but from a cross old aunt, who gave her a great deal of uneasiness, accepted it. A ship bound for the island was then fitting at Liverpool, the gentlewoman went on board the same, together with the bales of goods, being well provided with all necessaries, and particularly with a certificate in due form, and indorsed by the correspondent. She was also included in the invoice, the last article of which run thus:—

"Item.—A young gentlewoman of twenty-five years of age, of the quality and shape, and conditioned as per order, as appears by the affidavits and certificates she has to produce."

The writings which were thought necessary for so exact a man as her future husband, were, an extract of the parish register; a certificate of her character signed by the curate; an attestation of her neighbours, setting forth that she had for the space of three years lived with an old aunt who was intolerably peevish, and had not, during all that time, given her said aunt the least occasion of complaint; and, lastly, the goodness of her constitution was certified, after the consultation, by four physicians. Before the gentlewoman's departure, the correspondent sent several letters of advice by other ships to his friend, whereby he informed him that, *per such a ship*, he should send a young woman, of such an age, character, and condition, &c.; in a word, such as he desired to marry.—The letters of advice, the bales, and the gentlewoman, came safe to port; and the West Indian, who happened to be one of the