

The Reluctant Mrs. Jordan

When the husband of Mrs. Jordan had been dead only three or four days (1623), Mr. Pooley, fearing that a rival should ask for her hand, requested Captain Isaac Madison to broach a proposal of marriage in his behalf to the widow. At first, Madison declined, saying that he did not wish to "meddle in any such business".

However, being a friend of the clergyman, Rev. Greville Pooley, he felt certain that Mrs. Jordan was certain to marry some other man (if she did not marry Pooley), so he yielded.

When Madison told the widow of his mission, the lady declared that she would marry Mr. Pooley as anyone else that she knew, however that she did not think it quite decent to act so quickly. When Pooley received his answer, he mustered the courage to visit Mrs. Jordan himself.

During the interview, he desired a dram of her, and on her bidding one of the servants to and fetch it, declared very gallantly that he would have prefer her to fetch it. She then went into the next room for the liquor.

A verbal contract was then declared with all of the formalities of a marriage ceremony, and the couple drank to the health of one another. He kissed her and exclaimed:

"I am thine, and you are mine until death do part us."

A few moments later, Mrs. Jordan began to fear lest she should be criticised for remarrying too soon. Pooley, however, protested "before God that he would not reveal" the engagement until she thought "the time fitting."

But, being very full of the secret, he soon told it. Mrs. Jordan was so angry that she declined to carry out the contract and told the clergyman "if he had not revealed it, he might have fared ye better."

Source: British Colonial Papers, Vol. 1622-3, No. 30. List of Traced Virginia

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