

THE BRIDE

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The Bride by Samuel Rowlands

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SAMUEL ROWLANDS

THE BRIDE

The Bride

THE BRIDE
By Samuel Rowlands

Reprinted for the First Time from a Copy
of the Original Edition of 1617 in
the Library of Harvard College

With an Introductory Note by
Alfred Claghorn Potter



BOSTON
Printed for C. E. Goodspeed
at The Merrymount Press
1905

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Introductory Note

WHEN THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SAMUEL ROWLANDS were issued by the Hunterian Club in 1872-1880, in an edition of two hundred and ten copies, the editor was obliged to omit from the collection the poem entitled "The Bride." No copy of this tract was supposed to be extant. Twenty years later, in the article on Rowlands in the Dictionary of National Biography, Mr. Sidney Lee also names this poem as one of the author's lost works. All that was known of it was the entry in the Stationers' Register:*

"22° Maij 1617

"Master Pauier. Entred for his Copie vnder the handes
"of master TAVERNOR and both the wardens, A Poeme in-
"titled *The Bride*. written by SAMUELL ROWLANDE vjth."

While all of Rowlands's works are classed by bibliographers as "rare," this one seemed to have disappeared entirely. No copy was to be found in any of the large libraries or private collections, nor was there any record of its sale.

Last spring a copy was discovered in the catalogue of a bookseller in a small German town, and

**Arber's Transcript*, vol. iii. p. 609.

M700028

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was secured for the Harvard College Library, being purchased from the Child Memorial Fund. The copy is perfect, except that the inner corner at the top of the second and third leaves has been torn off, with the loss of parts of two words, which have been supplied in manuscript. From this copy the present reprint is made. As in the Hunterian Club edition of Rowlands's Works, to which this may be considered a supplement, the reprint is exact. The general make-up of the book as to style and size of type has been followed as closely as possible; and the text has been reproduced page for page and word for word. The misprints, which are unusually numerous, even for a book of this period, have been left uncorrected. The title-page and the two head-pieces have been reproduced by photography.

Of the poem itself, since it is now before the reader, little need be said. It cannot be claimed that it presents great poetical merit. Rowlands at his best was but an indifferent poet, — hardly more than a penny-a-liner. In his satirical pieces and epigrams, and in that bit of genuine comedy, "Tis Merrie vvhhen Gossips meete," his work does have a real literary value, and is distinctly interesting as presenting a vivid picture of London life at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In "The Bride," it must be confessed, Rowlands falls below his own best work. Yet

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the poem is by no means wholly lacking in interest. If not his best work, "The Bride" is by no means his worst. Like most of his poems, it is written in an heroic stanza of six lines, and, as is not so common with him, is in dialogue form. The dialogue for the most part is well sustained and sprightly. The story of the birth of Merlin, it is true, seems to have been inserted mainly to fill out the required number of pages; but this digression has an interest of its own, in that the name here given to Merlin's mother, "Lady Adhan," does not appear in the ordinary versions of the legend.

Of Rowlands's life almost nothing is known: that little is told in the Memoir by Mr. Gosse prefixed to the Hunterian Club edition, and by Mr. Lee in the Dictionary of National Biography, and need not be repeated here. All that is known with certainty is that Samuel Rowlands was a writer of numerous poems and pamphlets, published between the years 1598 and 1628. During this period there appeared almost every year a pamphlet bearing his name or the well known initials, "S. R." Twenty-eight separate works, of which many passed through several editions, are known to have been written by him. All of these early editions are rare; at least two of the works have been lost; several are extant only in the second or later editions; and of at least ten,

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only single copies are known to exist. Beside the edition of the Works already referred to, a number of Rowlands's tracts have been separately reprinted, in limited editions, by Sir Walter Scott, by S. W. Singer, by E. V. Utterson, by Halliwell-Phillipps, by J. P. Collier, and by E. F. Rimbault in the publications of the Percy Society; to this series of reprints, "The Bride" is now added.

ALFRED CLAGHORN POTTER

Harvard College Library
January, 1905