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Parr, Ralph (?-?),
***Wanted a Wife* (1880)**

[1]

CHARACTERS

Felix Fumbleton, Esq. In want of a wife. (A retired gentleman. Wearing carpet slippers, white vest, and eye-glass)

Nathan Slyboots. Manservant. (Full of wit and fond of fun)

Lizzy Dimplechin. Maidservant. (Not so quiet as she looks)

Miss Lacetight. Applicant. (With narrow waist, fashionable dress, and charming manners)

Dorothy Dingle. Applicant. (Rather slovenly in appearance, and wearing a shawl over her head)

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

Sarah Moprag. Applicant. (A straightforward Lancashire woman. Wearing a big bonnet and print dress)

Molly Malony. Applicant. (A decent Irish woman, with frilled cap and print dress, also fond of snuff)

F.F. How strange it is a good-looking fellow like myself should experience such difficulty in procuring a wife, whilst some men not near as well situated as I am, no sooner get rid of one wife, than some amiable creature steps in to fill the vacant position; in fact, to my mind it looks as if some of our married fraternity were constably looking ahead, and placing their eyes, if not their affections, upon someone ready for a case of emergency. Of course I do not agree with this mode of doing business, because I believe that it is man's duty to show as much respect to a widow as he would naturally expect a woman to show towards him. However, I have decided to have a wife, and as there appears to be no signs of me getting one in the usual way, I have decided to advertise; and by-the-bye, my advertisement was to appear in yesterday's paper, and I have not yet looked to see whether

[2]

it has been rightly inserted. (*Rings the bell. No answer. Rings again violently.*)
(*Nathan enters, bowing and scraping.*)

N.S. Yees, sir; wur you ringin', sir?

F.F. Of course I was ringing, but your ears seem to be of very little use to you. Bring me yesterday's newspaper as soon as you can.

N.S. Aw dunno think aw con, sir, for aw took mi shoes to bi soled an' heeled last neet, an' aw believe aw used hawf o'th papper to tee um up in.

F.F. Shoes soled and heeled again, you extravagant fellow. I think it must be your intention to ruin me.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

N.S. Aw conno help it, mester, for a chap conno very weel wawk abeawt witheaut wearin' his shoes, unless he poos um off, an' carries um under his arm, an' aw dunno think yoad loike me to do that, sir.

F.F. Well, I don't require any insolence at any rate, so you will please find the newspaper and bring it here at once.

N.S. Aw will if aw con, bo iv aw conno, heaw con aw? Bless mi life a fellow's awlus puttin' his foot in it here sometimes. A bit of noospapper met bi summut, goodness knows.

F.F. (*angrily*) Begone, you insolent fellow, and bring the paper.

N.S. Aw reet, sir, dunno bite mi head off iv yer please, awst maybe want it some other day (*Exit Nathan*).

F.F. I must put an end to this sort of thing as soon as ever I can. It's a nice how-do-you-do if employers are to be spoken to by their servants in this manner, and yet if I discharge Nathan, I may possibly get another in his place who may prove to be ten times worse than he.

(*Enter Nathan, who stands in the doorway and throws the paper towards F.F.*)

N.S. Theigher yoa are, sir, aw fund th' papper ut yoa want; that's it (*Exit Nathan*).

F.F. (*Rings the bell violently, and calls Nathan, who walks in as if nothing had happened*). What do you mean, sir, by throwing the paper at me in that manner?

N.S. I didner meon nowt, sir, ony aw wur thinkin' ut when yoa wanted owt awd just stond at th' dur an' throw it in, for ?wn awlus gerrin i' hot watter when aw come insoide.

F.F. You must do nothing of the kind. I insist upon you bringing everything into the room in a becoming manner.

N.S. Aw reet, sir, awl do mi best, nobody con do no moor, aw know (*Bows and retires*).

[3]

(*F.F. opens the paper and begins to look for the advertisement*).

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

(Enter Lizzy with black face and servant's cap on, and a long brush in her hand. She pretends not to see F.F. and begins sweeping).

F.F. Goodness gracious, what's next! Does she want to stifle me, I wonder? Stop that brushing in my presence.

(Lizzy keeps on brushing as if she did not hear).

F.F. Do you hear, you stupid? Stop that brushing I say!

(Lizzy looks round, and, on seeing F.F. seems somewhat surprised).

L.D. Oh, Mr. Fumbleton, I beg your pardon, sir, I didn't have no knowledge as how you was in here, or I wouldn't a kicked up such a dust.

F.F. You ought to know, you dull creature! Where are your eyes?

L.D. They're on each side of my nose, sir, like yours is, and I'm sorry as I didn't use them and look round as I came in.

F.F. Sorry, indeed, what do I care about your being sorry? I am a gentleman I would like you to know, and I insist upon being treated as such.

L.D. Oh, that's it, is it? Well, then, I'd like you to know, sir, that I'm a lady, and I insist upon being treated as such.

F.F. Leave the room at once, and don't venture come to come in again until I send for you.

L.D. Eh, bless your life, sir, if you'll pay me up I'll leave altogether, and be very glad to get away, I can tell you. Folks may well wonder why you don't get married, but I don't; I pity any poor woman as is so unlucky as to marry a snaggy, ill-tempered man like you; as regards myself, I'd be single al the days of my life afore I'd have you, gentleman as you say you are.

F.F. *(storms and goes towards Lizzy)* Leave the room, Leave the room, I say, or I will make you.

L.D. Lay a finger on me if you dare, sir, and I'll soon let you see as how a brush can be used for something else besides weeping.

F.F. You impertinent individual. *(Rings the bell and Nathan enters looking rather surprised).* Nathan, put this female out at once.

N.S. Why, wot's up new?

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

F.F. Ask no questions, sir, but obey my orders, and put her out.

N.S. Eawt o' wheere, sir?

F.F. Out of this room, you silly fellow.

N.S. Aw think yoad better try yoar hand at that job, mester, that is, iv yoa feel onyways anxious to have a lump on the top o' yoar yed abeaut th' size ov a duck egg.

F.F. Obey my orders, I repeat, and turn her out.

[4]

N.S. Nay, no fear, mester, not me iv aw know it. When aw engaged here at the fust, that wur nowt ot o said abeaut turnin' women eaut; besoides, praps yoa dunner know ut Lizzy's moi sweetheart, an' therefore awst not ony refuse to turn her eawt misel, bo awst do o as aw con to stop onnybuddy else fro' turnin' her eawt whoile awm here.

F.F. You are a couple of schemers, that's whay you are.

N.S. Yoa dunner seem much ov a schemer, mester, or else yoad ha' had a woife afore neaw, wouldn't he, Lizzy, love?

L.D. Wife, eh, my word, I know as how he'd have to scheme, and double scheme afore he had me.

F.F. Leave the room, I say, both of you, and no more insolence, or I will send for a policeman and give you in charge.

N.S. Aw reet, sir. Come on, Lizzy, love. (*Begins to retire, and is followed by Lizzy, who, looking scornfully at Mr. Fumbleton, and holding the brush up, speaks as follows*).

L.D. A gentleman, is he, and he'd hit me and turn me out, will he? Yes, my word, he'd better, and I'll let him see that it's not as easy to turn a woman out as he thinks (*Exit*).

F.F. Well, as I said before, I must stop these disgraceful proceedings. My establishment is worthy of something better, and something better I will have, and if I cannot succeed in getting servants who will do just what I require, I will do without them altogether, in fact I shall be able to dispense with the services of one soon, because when I get a wife I shall expect her to do most of the housework, for I believe it to be a great folly for any man to go to the expense of keeping a wife and allowing her to live in idleness all the

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

days of her life. But let me see whether I can find the advertisement (*Takes up the paper and looks*). Ah, yes, here it is (*Reads aloud*).

“A gentleman, good looking, well built, and in possession of independent means, feels anxious to form an acquaintance with a very amiable, loving, and affectionate lady, with an ultimate view to matrimony. Apply, either by letter (enclosing carte), or personally, at Treadmill Cottage, Workhouse Lane, any day (except Sunday) between 10 am and 6 pm (Strictly confidential).”

Yes, that reads very well indeed, couldn't be better. Surely I shall succeed soon, for I know that there are scores of ladies who are constantly reading the papers and looking out for an opportunity like this. Well, I don't wonder at them, poor creatures, for no doubt they feel that it is not very pleasant to be alone; in fact I feel so sorry at times for these neglected ladies that I would marry them all if it were possible. (*A knock at the door*) Hello, who can this be, I wonder? (*Rings the bell, no answer. A second and louder knock at the front door. F.F. rings the bell again violently*).

[5]

(*Enter Nathan, rubbing his eyes as if half asleep*).

N.S. Wur yoa ringin', sir?

F.F. Ringing, you dull fellow, you know I was ringing.

N.S. Oh, yoar wouldner be so sherp, mester, iv yoad ony just wakkened up eawt ov a good seawnd sleep.

F.F. Go to the door at once!

N.S. Aw reet, sir, awm not i' two perts, so awm beawned to go at once if aw goo at awe. (*Goes to door and returns with some letters, which he hands to F.F.*)

N.S. There yoa are, sir, three on um, an th' postman says he wants twopence each for um as there's no king's yeds on th' corners.

F.F. He is evidently like yourself, not very polite; however, take him the sixpence and there will be an end to it.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

N.S. Aw dunno know whether ther will nor not. (*Takes the sixpence to the door, and then returns*).

N.S. Do you want me for owt else at present, sir?

F.F. No, you may retire now, and take care that you pay better attention to the bell in future.

N.S. Aw reet, sir. (*Bows and retires*).

F.F. Now I have got rid of that annoying fellow, let me see what the letters refer to; certainly it is very wrong on the part of anyone to send letters without postage stamps, but these may possibly have come from females in answer to my advertisement, and, if so, the little darling creatures may have been so excited with the prospect of getting a good husband, that they may have forgotten all about the postage stamps. (*Opens the letters and finds that each one contains a carte, laughs, rubs his hands, and dances for the joy*). Success at last, yes, success at last, wonderful success. Who'd have thought that I should have received answers to my advertisement in less than two days after its insertion, but it only goes to prove what a vast number of the fair sex there must be who are terribly afraid that, notwithstanding their numerous efforts to attract attention, they find themselves forsaken and on the shelf at last. (*Looks at the photos, and appears delighted*). My word, these are three beauties, real gems. I wonder whatever my friends would think if they saw me now; they would probably call me foolish, but I cannot help it--not read the letters yet, and, by-the-bye, I have mixed the photos, and therefore cannot tell which is which. Well it cannot be helped now, I must be in love. (*Reads the letters aloud*).

[6]

Buttercup Terrace,

December 21st.

Dear Sir,

Having notices your beautiful advertisement in to-day's newspaper, and feeling convinced that this will afford me a grand opportunity to soothe the sorrows of a

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

distressed mind, and maybe a distressed heart, I enclose my carte, and beg to say that I shall be highly delighted to call upon you to-morrow, when I hope to find your pretty self enjoying the best of health. Meanwhile allow me to remain.

Yours very truly,
Gertrude Lacetight.

F.F. Splendid, to be sure. (*Reads the next*).

3 Rag Street.

Dear Sur,

The paper says as you want a wife, and as I'm wanting a husband, I'll call to-morrow, and if you've no objection we'll coart a week or two and then get switched.

Yours everlastingly,
Dorothy Dingle.

F.F. I don't suppose she will be mine everlastingly. (*Reads another*).

365 Lad's Love Lane,

To-day.

Dear sweet heart,

Havin seen i' th papper ut yoar i th want uv a good looking woman for a woife, and havin' a notion i' my yed ut awst just suit, awm thinkin' o' slippin' deawn to-morrow to have a look at you, to see iv yoal suit me.

Yours confectionately,
Sarah Moprag.

F. F. (*throws the letter on one side*). The ignorant creature, as if it was a question of me suiting her. (*Reads another*).

No. 2 Passage, Mussel Court,

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

December.

Dear Fum.,

I write straight at yez wid me pen, and I mane to come over to-morrow to have a look at yez wid my eyes, so I do, from the woman that yer sure to fall in love wid.

Molly Malony.

F.F. Mussel Court, eh! aw, well I'll take good care that she does not mussel me; in fact I must be wideawake to the whole lot, for there is certainly something very peculiar about all the letters which I have received, except one; but let me see, these letters were posted last night, so this is the afternoon on which they intend calling. I must away and dress at once.

(Rings the bell. Enter Nathan).

F.F. Nathan, tell the maidservant, I wish to see her.

N.S. Awe reet, sir, awl tell her, an' bi glad to do it, for awve bin hitchin' to have a word wi' her. *(Exit, and returns with Lizzy).*

F.F. Housemain, I am expecting visitors, and wish you to get this room in order as soon as possible.

L.D. All right, sir.

F.F. You had also better stay here, Nathan, and render

[7]

whatever assistance you can, and by-the-bye, if anyone calls before I return, let me know.

N.S. Very well, sir, awl noan forget *(Exit F.F.)*

L.D. Good shut'ns to him, if he waits while I tell him it'll not be yeat a bit.

N.S. Aye, good shut'ns to him, love, for we con awlus do without him when we'r busy, conno wi'?

L.D. We can, Nathan, or else we should be hard up and no mistake. But who does he expect, I wonder, that causes him to be so particular?

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

N.S. Aw dunno know, awm shure, Lizzy, bo he's left his letters here aw see, so if yoal keep nicks awl hav a look at um, in we'st praps get to know then.

L.D. Very well, Nathan, but be as quick as you can, for we must have the place straightened before he returns.

N.S. Awe reet, Lizzy, awl bi sharp. (*Reads the letters and laughs heratily. Lizzy listens and keeps looking out*).

N.S. Eh, awl be blest, what dun yoa think?

L.D. I have no idea, Nathan; what is it?

N.S. Why, th' mester bin advertisin' for a woife.

L.D. You don't say so, Nathan.

N.S. It's a fact, aw con tell yoa, for these letters are abeawt it, they'n fro' fro' four different women, an' thi awe say ut they're comin' to-day; it'll bi a caution, winnot it, iv awe th' lot happens to leet here at once?

L.D. It would be a caution, but nothing would suit me better. The very idea to think of a snaggy fellow like him advertising for a wife. I wouldn't have him if his hair was hung with diamonds, and I pity the woman that does get him, whoever she may be.

N.S. So do aw, for aw wouldnow have him if he wur made o' diamonds, and his shuw wur soled an' heeld with gowd.

L.D. (*laughs*) No, I don't suppose you would. Nathan, but we must get on with the dusting, or he will perhaps return before we have finished.

N.S. Oh aye, so he might, love; we'll mak' a stert, bo just have a look th fost ut these potygraffis ut's come along wi' th' letters.

(Both examine the photographs).

N.S. The'r noan sich bad-looking women, are they, Lizzy?

L.D. No, they are not at all bad-looking according to the photographs, Nathan, but you must remember that is is not always safe to go by looks, for there are plenty of people who have pretty faces, but most miserable minds.

N.S. Aye, aw believe that's true, Lizzy, an' aw shouldnot bi a bit surprised iv mester wur to get one o' these sort bu th' way as he's gooin' on.

[8]

L.D. Neither should I; but we must get along with the dusting, you know.

N.S. So we must, love, aw keeps forgettin'

(Both commence to put the things in order ad dust down).

N.S. It's a strange word this, isn't it, Lizzy--

L.D. In which way, Nathan?

N.S. Whoi, in a good many ways.

L.D. Well, I must acknowledge that I cannot see anything wrong with the world, but I can see a great deal that is wrong with some people who live in it.

N.S. Aw, well, aw mean th' people, you know.

L.D. And what is your idea about the people?

N.S. Well, aw dunno know, ony there seems sich a deol o' difference among um someheaw or other.

L.D. How do you mean?

N.S. Whoi, i' this way. One mon ul manage to ger howd ov a good woife, whoile another chap gets howd ov a jolly bad un, an' one young chap gets a noice sweetert i' welly no toime, bo another young felley has to dodge abeawt, and goo on his knees, an' very near wear his breeches knees out afore he con succeed.

L.D. Not many young men do that, Nathan.

N.S. Oh, yoi, there is, Lizzy; aw know one mysel.

L.D. And who might that one be, pray?

N.S. Whoi, me to be sure, an' yoa conno deny it.

L.D. Oh, nonsense, Nathan.

N.S. Nay, theer's no nonsense abeawt it, aw con tell yoa, it's reet deawn truth, it is for sure.

L.D. And who are you in love with, Nathan?

N.S. Whoa am I love with, can yoa forshame to ask, neaw?

L.D. Certainly, because I have never seen you walking out with anyone.

N.S. Nowe, for the simple reason ut awve never had th' chance.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

L.D. But supposing you had the chance, who is this particular young lady upon whom you seem to have fixed your attention?

N.S. Whoi, yoa, whoa else is it likely to be?

L.D. Me, Nathan, me?

N.S. Aye yoa, aw tell yoa.

L.D. What, a common servant?

N.S. Aye, a common servant iv yoan a mind, loike mysel.

L.D. Well, I'm astonished, Nathan, I am indeed.

N.S. Are yoa? Ah, well, never mind, yoar not the fost ut's bin astonished, an' aw dur say if the truth wur kneawn, ut there's lots wouldno moind being astonished i'th' same

[9]

way; heaweever, that's nowt to do wi it; everybody seems to be gerrin' wed ut has a chance, an' aw dunno see whoy we shouldn't--so I'll be plain: will yoa ha' mi?

L.D. Those are plain words, Nathan, but why do you fix upon me, surely you can get somebody else better?

N.S. Con ah, aw weel, awm noan gooing to try, so iv yoa winnot ha' mi aw shall bi an owd maid aw th' days o' mi loif.

L.D. Hush, here's Mr. Fumbleton. (*Enter F.F. dressed up and wearing an eyeglass.*)

F.F. Come, come, I think it's about time you had finished this bit of a job.

L.D. We are not slaves, sir, I should like you to know, at least I don't intend to be one.

N.S. Nowe, nor me noather, bo iv yoad loike to know, sir, we'n bin doin' summat ut somebody as aw know would like to be doin'.

F.F. What is that, I demand to know?

N.S. Whoi, courtin' to be shure, doesn't it mak' your teeth watter?

F.F. No insolence, sir. Have either of you touched these letters whilst I have been away?

L.D. Me touch your letters, sir, indeed I have something else to do.

N.S. Lettuce did you say, sir, aw dunno think ut there's a bit i' th' heawse, bo there's plenty o' watercress.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

F.F. Who said lettuce, you stupid?

N.S. Well, dunno boite me yed off, sir, if yoa please, for me un Lizzy's gooin' to wed afore lung, an' awst look soft gooin to th' church witheawt yed.

F.F. Leave the room both of you, and take care that you don't come in again unless I ring for you. I will attend the door myself.

L.D. (*indignantly*). Don't mention it, sir!

N.S. Nowe, dunno mention ir, come on, Lizzy, he'll oppen th' dur un let um in hissel.
(Exit both)

F.F. What does he mean, I wonder? If I thought for a single moment that he had been looking at these letters, I would go and pull his ears; but stay, I must be a little cautious, because I may possibly need his assistance, and the maidservant's also before the day is out. Let me see, I had perhaps better side the letters, &c. before someone comes. (*Picks up the letters and photos and places them in his pocket*). Now I am ready, come what will. Of course I know that my powers of choice will be put to the test, because according to the photos they are all very good-looking females; I am sorry that I mixed the letters and photos, for I shall not be certain which is which without asking their names.

[10]

(*A gentle knock at the door*).

F.F. Good gracious! that is a female's knock. (*Goes to the door*). Come in, please!

(*Enter Miss Lacetight*)

F.F. (*Holding out his hand*). Good evening!

Miss L. Miss Lacetight, I presume?

Miss L. Yes, sir, that is my name at present, I believe.

F.F. Hum! Thought so, perhaps you will be seated please?

(*Places a chair near to his own*)

Miss L. Thank you. (*Both become seated*)

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

F.F. I am glad you have called, for I have been anxiously awaiting your arrival, and I can assure you that the day hath appeared to be twice as long as an ordinary one.

Miss L. Yes, I dare say, for they generally are at a time like this

F.F. You appear to have experienced the same then?

Miss L. Yes, slightly.

F.F. Hum, and it is no doubt the way with everyone who is in love?

Miss L. Ha, ha! very likely, human nature is human nature, I suppose evrywhere.

F.F. Yes, dear, it must be so. But now a little more to the point. I presume that you are not engaged?

Miss L. Oh, dear, no never thought of such a thing.

F.F. That's right, my dear, I am very glad to hear it, because it shows that you have not been given to flirting about with first one and then another, like most women. What might your age be?

Miss L. Twenty-four in February next.

F.F. Oh, indeed. Hum, a nice age. Have you ever been married?

Miss L. (*Rather indignantly*) Married, did you say? The idea! I should think not. Do I look as if I had?

F.F. No, dearest, you do not, and I like you all the better for that, but you must excuse me for asking such questions, because I am anxious for us to know each other thoroughly before we join our hands together, and of course whatever takes place between us now is in strict confidence, no one besides ourselves will know anything about it.

(During this conversation Nathan and Lizzy are peeping in unobserved).

Miss L. Oh, it is quite right, sir, I have no objections to answer questions if they tend, which I hope they may, to our united happines

[11]

F.F. Yes, love, that is my wish. I suppose you have no objections to being married?

Miss L. No, indeed, not the slightest, in fact I think it everyone's duty to be married.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

F.F. Yes, ducky, so do I. But do you think you could make up your mind to love me, supposing you were asked?

Miss L. Well yes, I believe I could.

F.F. That's right, my sweet cherumbim, come into my arms, I adore thee.

(Gets up as if to embrace her)

Miss L. Stay a moment, don't be in a hurry, let us settle matters first; you know it is the ordinary way for people to show all their fondness before marriage, and thus have none left for the afterpart, but in our case pray let it be the other way about.

F.F. Yes, love, it shall be so, but what have we to settle?

Miss L. Well, Mr. Fumbleton, you know that we are not married yet?

F.F. Eh, dear no, my little rosebud, we are not, but we soon can be; where can we obtain a licence, I wonder?

Miss L. I cannot say, but there's no hurry, because we have to arrange for the wedding yet.

F.F. So we have, my honeysuckle, but just give me a kiss, there can be no harm in that I should think?

Miss L. Certainly not, but is there anyone watching, think you?

F.F. No, my sweetes, for I have forbidden anyone to enter this room.

Miss L. Oh, very well, just as you please. *(F.F. places his arm around Miss L's neck, during which time Nathan walks in, and casts his eyes upon the floor as if looking for something).*

N.S. Han you seen owt o' moi knife, mester? *(F.F. and Miss L. jump upon hearing Nathan speak).*

F.F. Confound your impudence, sir. How dare you come into my private room in this manner?

N.S. Oh, dunno put yoarsel abeawt, sir, you con get on wi' your kissin' for it's ony waht awve done mysel' monny a toime. *(Exit Nathan).*

F.F. I will discharge that felow. *(Knock at the door).* Good gracious! who can that be? Just step into the side room, Miss Lacetight, please, for it will not be wise for us to let everyone know our business. *(Exit Miss Lacetight as requested).*

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

(F.F. goes to the door, and upon opening it, in walks Dorothy Dingle).

F.F. I am not in want of anything to-day, mistress.

[12]

D.D. Arn't you, well, all that I can say is that you've not been long in getting supplied.

F.F. How long do you mean?

D.D. Why, you've bin advertising for a wife, haven't you?

F.F. *(shaking his hand)* Don't speak so loud.

D.D. Oh that's it, is it, so you're afraid of someone hearing, are you? Ah, well, that's not my way a doing business, I like to be straight and above board, and none of your whispering for me.

F.F. Well, and if I have advertised for a wife, what has that to do with you?

D.D. Oh, it's nothing to do with me much, only I'm one that's written to see if I can get the job.

F.F. *(sneeringly)* You get the job?

D.D. Yes; why not?

F.F. Do you wish to insult me?

D.D. No, but I think as you are trying your best to insult me.

F.F. Well, I don't wish to have anything more to say to you.

D.D. Don't you, but I wish to have something more to say to you. I suppose I'm not fine enough for you, eh, is that it? If you wanted a fine, fancy, foll-the-doll sort of a lady with Piccadilly fringe, and high-heel'd boots, and Grecian bend, why didn't you say so?

F.F. Come, come, don't speak to me in that manner.

D.D. Why, who are you more than anybody else, eh? I reckon you think because you've got a bit of money, as you can advertise for wives, and do this, that, and the other, and nobody should speak to you. I can tell you one thing--you are just such a miserable, ill-tempered man as I thought you would be, before I came. I am down of those men who cannot get a wife without advertising for one.

F.F. If you have nothing better to talk about, you can go. I can do without you.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

D.D. Yes, and I can do very well without you, Mr. Advertiser. Don't think because I have come here, I am so badly off for a husband that I would marry any sort of man.

No, no, not me, I may not be finely dressed, but I am a woman of principle, for all that.

F.F. Look here. I will not have any more of your insolence, and if you do not leave the house, I will make you.

D.D. Oh, that's the way you do your business, is it? You advertise for a wife, and then when one puts in an appearance, and does not happen to suit you, you threaten to put her out, eh?

F.F. Never mind what my way of doing business is; do you intend to go?

D.D. Yes, when I'm ready.

[13]

F.F. Well, the sooner you go the better.

D.D. Oh, indeed. Well, thank goodness, I have never been frightened of a man yet, and I don't think as I'm going to start now.

F.F. You insulting woman, are you doing?

D.D. Yes, I'm going now, for I think as I've wasted time on you, and I'll go out at the back door, for I shall maybe disgrace you if I am seen going out out at the front; but, bear in mind, I shall not forget to let people know what sort of a man you are. (*Holds her head up and walks out*).

F.F. My word, if this is advertising for a wife, it is a caution, and goodness knows what has to come yet; besides, none of the photographs which I have received resemble that woman in the slightest. (Loud knocks at the door).

F.F. Hello, here is someone else. (*Proceeds to the door, and Sarah Moprag walks in without invitation*).

S.M. Good evenin', sir, heaw are yoa; awve come, yoa see, accordin' to my promise. Aw reckon yoa begun to bi a little unyezzy loike, thinkin' aw wurno gooin' to come?

F.F. Oh dear no, I was not at all uneasy on your account.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

S.M. Wurno yoa? Well, that's funny, an' no mistake, for moast men are unyezzy when they'n expectin' theree love to caw un see um.

F.F. Oh, I see, then you are one of the persons who answered my advertisement.

S.M. Aye, who else don yo' think aw am?

F.F. Well, to speak the truth, I could not tell who you were, for I have no recollection of sseing your photograph amongst those which I received.

S.M. Eh, bless yoar life, nowe, aw dunno think yoa have, for aw had no likeness o' mi own, so aw borrowed one, an' ov course iv yo' dunn make up yoar mind to ha' me, awst want that likeness back again.

F.F. A novel idea, to be sure; but however, you had better take a seat.

S.M. Thank yoa, aw wur just thinkin' so, for moi legs are not as young as they used to be. (*Both take a seat*).

F.F. What age might you be?

S.M. Awst be fifty-foive in a fortnit, iv aw live an' nowt happens.

F.F. Fifty-five! You don't say so?

S.M. Yoi aw do; an' yoa dunno look such a young chicken, noather.

F.F. (*smiling*). Don't I? But you will have been married, I suppose?

S.M. Aw should think aw have, by gum!

[14]

F.F. More than once?

S.M. Aye, three times; an' iv aw happen to mak' it reet wi' yoa, thi'sll be th' fourth.

F.F. Three times. And how many children might you have?

S.M. Well, there's abeaut eight on'em when they're o awwhoam.

F.F. Eight children?

S.M. Aye, eight children. Does it surprise you?

F.F. It does for sure.

S.M. Well, it doesno tak' mich to surproise yo, then, for there's lots o' folk wi' twice that mony.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

F.F. Then if I marry you I shall be expected to take the children, I suppose?

S.M. Yo just will, for wheere aw goo they'll ha' to goo, aw con assure yo.

F.F. Well, if that is the case, the matter may be considered at an end, for I shall never consent to take a lot of children.

S.M. Yo dunno know whether aw should consent to tak' yoa yet or not.

F.F. I presume that all who have answered my advertisement will be willing to have me if I choose to have them.

S.M. Dun yo? Ah, well, let me tell yo yo'r off yo'r horse for once--yo've too many memaws an' questions about yo for me; so iv yo'll just gi' me howd o' that likeness, aw'll be gooin'. (*Hands out the photo, which Sarah examines*). This is it, good neet, an' may yo get howd o' somebody ut'll woind yo up neaw an' then, for you want takkin deawn a peg or two. (*Exit back way*).

F.F. The impudence of some people is astounding. Just imagine a woman fifty-five years of age, and having eight children, daring to answer an advertisement like mine? There is only one applicant, so far, whom I admire, ad that's Miss Lacelight. She is a gem, a real beauty, in fact, I should have settled upon her at first, but I thought that possibly even someone better still might turn up.

(*Knock at the door, and in walks Molly Malony, without invitation*).

M.M. Good mornan, sir. How are yez?

F.F. I am pretty well, thank you. But what is it that you require?

M.M. Faith, I'm a pickan up, sir, to be shure.

F.F. Picking up what---old rags or something?

M.M. Aye, that's it, if yiz call yirsilf old rags.

F.F. Then do you mean to say that you are one of the persons who answered my advertisement?

M.M. Bedad, I am, sir. Why not; arn't I good looken enoof for yez?

[15]

F.F. Oh, it is not a question of looks only with me, but manners as well.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

M.M. Shure, yez haven't much manners yirsilf, sir, or ye'd a axt body to sit down afore noo.

F.F. Come, come, you must not be insolent; but you may take a seat if you choose.

M.M. Where shall I sit, sir?

F.F. Upon the chair; where else did you think?

M.M. Faith, I thought yez might want me to sit upon your knee, like lovers generally do; but ut does not matter, sir, p'raps I'll do ut later on. (*Takes a seat*). Will yiz have a pinch av shnuff, sir?

F.F. No, thank you; I never indulge in such a dirty habit.

M.M. That's right, sir, ther'll be all the more for me, so ther will.

F.F. Have you ever been married?

M.M. No bedad, but I expect to be before long.

F.F. How old are you?

M.M. Do yuz want me to tell a phib?

F.F. No; I wish you to speak the truth.

M.M. Then iv I told yuz that I was swate sixteen, fot fud ye say?

F.F. I should not believe you.

M.M. Yuz wouldn't, eh? Well then, look ye here, sir, I'm owld enoof for you at anyrate.

F.F. Yes, no doubt you are in your own estimation, but I shall require someone finer spoken than you are.

M.M. Finer spoken, eh, like yersilf I soppose. ah, there's no doubt but what "Fine Fithers make Fine Birds," but let me tell yer, sir, that fine tauken very often manes dirty flooers.

F.F. Well, there needs to be no further talk about the matter, you are not the sort of person I want.

M.M. Bedad, an' I can tell yuz plainly, sir, that you are not the sort ov man I want, an' I wouldn't have you as a gift.

F.F. No, because you will never get the chance. When I first had the advertisement inserted I thoroughly made up my mind not to marry an Irishwoman under any consideration.

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

M.M. Ye did, eh? An, ye've a wonderful mind to be shure; it would look well stuffed, so ut would, but d'ye know, sir, that one reason why I wouldn't have yuz at anny price is, because from the cut ov yer face, ye'd be wantan to get an order for ejectment afore I'd bin here a week or two.

F.F. (*in a passion*). I will eject you without order if you don't go soon.

[16]

M.M. Oh, I'll go, sir, an' save yez the trouble; but don't think that ye'r done wid ut yet; don't imagine that dacent women have been made to be called together by a man like yersilf, to be questioned an' cross-questioned for nothan. Good avenin', sir, if I don't see you again. (*Exit*).

F.F. See me again, eh, not, if I know it; you are the last applicant for the worthy position which I have the power to give, an a smart specimen you are, in fact I am glad that you have gone, because I began to think that I should not get rid of you so easily; but I must away to Miss Lacetight, she will be waiting, and, of course, as no one better has applied, I must either take her or go without.

(*F.F. is proceeding towards the Sitting Room door, when in rushes Nathan, Lizzy, Miss Lacetight, Dorothy, Sarah and Molly, and entirely surround F.F.*)

F.F. What doth all this mean: is it a plot?

N.S. You'll discharge me, eh?

L.D. And you'll serve me the same, will you?

D.D. None of the photpgraphs resembles me, do they?

S.M. An' awm full o' impidunce, am aw?

M.M. An' bedad ye'll not see me agin, won't yez?

Miss L. But you will take me because no one better has applied. Friends, let us teach him a lesson which he will not easily forget.

(*Each one takes part in knocking him about, ruffling his hair, and blacking his face, after which*)---

The Salamanca Corpus: *Wanted a Wife* (1880)

M.M. We all bid yez good avenin', sir, an' trust that the next time yer huntan for a wife ye'll go about ut in a proper shtyle. (*Exit all except F.F.*)

F.F. Well, this is a fine how-do-you-do, and no mistake. Whoever thought that the matter would terminate in this manner? But I have often heard it said that women are not to be trusted, and I believe it; therefore single I will remain, but I shall never forget the adventure which I have had through advertising for a wife. (*Exit*).