IMAGE AND REALITY : THE CHAPBOOK PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN IN EARLY MODERN BRITAIN

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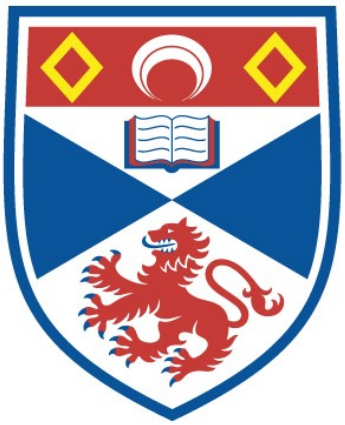
A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of MPhil
at the
University of St Andrews



1989

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ABSTRACT

This thesis appraises the messages in the popular literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the chapbooks, as those messages relate to the role of women during that period. The chapbook perspective on women in their relationship with their fathers, lovers, husbands, and children is examined, as is the chapbook outlook on married and single women and education, work, and leisure. The orientation of the religious chapbooks toward women's role in society also is examined. The thesis compares the literature's perspective on the role of women with the actual participation of women in society, as described by social historians. Conclusions are drawn about whether the pictures presented in the chapbooks are accurate or false images of the actual life of women in early modern Britain. It is determined that the chapbook authors reinforced existing gender distinctions and prejudices while generally ignoring both the changes underway in early modern Britain and the significant achievements of a minority of women. The source for the chapbooks used in this thesis is the Lauriston Castle collection in the National Library of Scotland.

(a) I Charles P. Lord hereby certify that this thesis which is approximately 60,000 words in length has been written by me, that it is a record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

24 August 1988

(b) I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 on 4 March 1985 and as a candidate for the degree of Master of Philosophy on 4 March 1985; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between October 1985 and June 1986.

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24 August 1988

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my gratitude to Dr. R. A. Houston, my tutor at the University of St. Andrews. Without his guidance and enthusiasm, I never would have been able to undertake this project. Both while I was attending the University and during the period when we were communicating across the Atlantic, he suggested, guided, prodded, and encouraged. I am also grateful that the Modern History Department at St. Andrews was willing to accept a middle-aged American as a bona fide student.

I am blessed with a supportive family. Without the understanding and assistance of my wife and three children, we never could have pulled up our roots and moved to St. Andrews. To "Rab", Gay and our children -- thank you! You have helped me to pursue a dream.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Many well-known historians have evaluated chapbooks from various perspectives. This paper evaluates that popular literature's view on the role of women in society. What did the chapbooks communicate to women, to their fathers and husbands, and to their children, about a woman's appropriate role and responsibilities in early modern Britain? What were expected to be her relationships with her father, her lover, her husband and her children? What should she expect in regard to educational and employment opportunities? What did the literature convey as the appropriate role for a widow and a spinster? How should a woman use her leisure time? What did the church and its representatives believe were appropriate activities and attitudes? To what extent did the chapbooks' prescriptions conform to reality?

A review of the secondary literature has provided the perspective required to put the chapbook messages into context. The rapidly developing interest in social history has resulted in a fascinating body of literature which has opened windows to the past, furnishing us with new and stimulating insights on life in early modern Britain. By evaluating the chapbooks' perspective on women in relation to our knowledge about actual life during this period, I will endeavour to provide an answer to a basic question: Did the chapbook literature faithfully mirror the facts in regard to women's life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, or was the chapbook image a distorted one? What was reality? If the image in the literature was distorted, why was this so? To what extent was it so?

Before undertaking that evaluation, I will try to put the questions into perspective by reviewing the spread of literacy in Great Britain and the

development of the chapbook industry, for if we cannot identify both an audience for, and an industry to provide and distribute chapbooks, a review of the books' significance is of little value. We do know that there was a potential audience, for the ability to read, the most basic aspect of literacy, became more widespread among the lower classes in Great Britain during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. With the development of the printing press and cheaper paper it became possible to provide "penny books", chapbooks, which the masses could afford. Stimulated by a desire to read, in a society which became increasingly dependent on the printed word, more and more lower class citizens acquired the ability to understand what was inscribed on paper. At first the Bible and related religious pamphlets were the primary sources for printed material, in part a reflection of the religious stimulation for the education of the masses, a belief that a more literate population would be more likely to understand and accept the tenets of the Reformation church. The quantity of religious chapbooks continued to be very significant during this period, but as time passed other tales and stories became the basis for a majority of the chapbooks published. Before further investigating these publications and the market for them, a few words concerning the approach taken for this study are appropriate.

THE LAURISTON CASTLE COLLECTION

The primary research source for the chapbooks was the Lauriston Castle chapbook collection, presently housed in the National Library of Scotland. Lauriston Castle is located just outside Edinburgh; it was acquired in 1903 by Mr. William R. Reid, an Edinburgh businessman. Mr. Reid died in 1919, bequeathing over 3,700 volumes of books to the National Library of Scotland. Mr. John A. Fairly, "a neighbour and close friend of the Reids" was the collector of the Lauriston Castle chapbooks, which arrived at the National Library as "part of the Reid bequest." Mr. Fairly, who acquired the

materials in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, wrote several papers on chapbooks and had a long time interest in these publications. This collection consists "of upwards of 500 volumes of chapbooks published in the British Isles, with in addition a few specimens from the main countries of continental Europe and a quantity of modern works about chapbook literature. More than half the volumes are composite, with an average content of rather more than twenty pieces. The total number of items is therefore very large. Every type and period of British chapbook are represented, as are the imprints of all the major centres, and of many smaller locations, of book production in Britain."[1]

Indeed, the number of items is large, estimated at 4,500 listings. However, a careful analysis reduces the total titles to a more manageable number. The catalogue contains a total of 4,070 entries. Duplicates of exactly the same edition of a chapbook are included in one entry, hence the estimated 4,500 total chapbooks. After deducting the listings of the same titles catalogued separately to reflect different editions of the same chapbook, the initial total of unduplicated entires is reduced to 1,939. Further research confirmed 267 cross references by titles and 112 foreign language entries, reducing the total of British publications to 1,560.

It is very difficult to identify all the cross references in the catalogue. To illustrate, The Story of Watty and Meg is listed nineteen times in the catalogue. Two listings cover two editions of the same story by different publishers.[2] Under the rubric of the author, Alexander Wilson, there are fifteen listings for "Watty and Meg", covering twenty-seven total copies of this

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[1] J. A. Louden, Catalogue of the Lauriston Castle Chapbooks, Preface, Boston, 1964.

[2] Lauriston Castle Catalogue, p. 260, Lauriston Castle Chapbook Volumes 2759 and 2791.

tale contained in twenty-five different volumes.[3] These entries under Wilson's name comprise fifteen of the total 4,070 individual listings in the catalogue. In addition "Watty and Meg" is listed as a sub-entry with other stories appearing in the same volumes. Thus, the confusing cross references make the research difficult. The primary point is that in determining the total number of separate entries, nothing was deducted unless it could be confirmed, but it is probable that not every duplication was confirmed.

As a result the total number of unduplicated entries is reduced to a maximum of 1,560 titles. Of these there are 623 volumes of songs and garlands. It is not possible to determine the number of songs; only the major ones are listed in the catalogue, and many are repeated endlessly in the various volumes. My review encompassed over one hundred different song titles in a variety of volumes.

Of the 937 remaining separate titles, representing a range of stories and religious tracts, I reviewed 582, sixty-two percent. Of these, complete notes for referral or background use in this report were transcribed for 206 titles, twenty-two percent of the total listings. The other 376 titles were read, but notes were not taken when it was determined that the material either was not pertinent to the subject of this study or was redundant.

The titles reviewed were selected based on two criteria: a listing in the catalogue which indicated a relationship to women's issues or one mention in a secondary source publication. Once a Lauriston Castle volume was delivered by the friendly and helpful staff of the National Library of Scotland, all entries in that volume were reviewed and when appropriate, noted. A master list was kept of all stories scrutinized.

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[3] Ibid. pp. 265-6.

Although a large majority of the separate editions are undated, 649, or sixty-two percent of the titles have at least one dated edition. For example, under the various "Watty and Meg" listings only seven of the nineteen entries are dated. In evaluating the dating of the entries, I used the earliest dated copy for my analysis. As might be expected, the later in the period, the more dated chapbooks were found. There are fifty chapbooks in the Lauriston Castle collection from the seventeenth century, with the earliest two listed as 1650. The latest chapbook in the collection is a Scottish edition of The Trumpeter of Fyvie, published in Aberdeen in 1893. Twenty-two of the seventeenth century publications, forty-five percent, related directly to religious themes, including nine sermons by John Hart, D.D. There are seventy-eight chapbooks dated between 1700 and 1749, twenty-eight, or thirty-six percent, of a directly religious nature. The percentage of strictly religious books among the dated editions increases to forty-three percent of the 196 editions for the period 1750-1799, then decreases to twenty-four percent of the 325 publications with nineteenth century dates. The high percentage of religious tracts for the last half of the seventeenth century is not surprising in view of the religious ferment of that period; the increased percentage for the last five decades of the eighteenth century is more puzzling. It may reflect the Church's reaction to the actual or perceived excesses of that period or just be a result of the increased trend toward dated editions. The percentage of dated religious tracts, thirty-three percent, is slightly higher than the total percentage of religious chapbooks in the Lauriston Castle collection, twenty-six percent. That total includes seventy-six published sermons, eight percent of the total collection, excluding songs and garlands. It is not possible to draw general conclusions concerning a changing perspective on women's role in society based on dating, as a large percentage of the chapbooks are undated. In addition, even among the dated books there is no clear pattern indicating a changing perspective on women

in society. Specific comments and observations are made in this paper concerning the chapbook perspective as it relates to particular topics, with reference to indications of change or a maintenance of the status quo, but generalizations cannot be deduced.

The final analysis of the catalogue undertaken was designed to discover the percentage of those stories which identified an author, again excluding songs and garlands. In the Lauriston Castle collection there are 181 male authors of 361 titles, with 107 male authors of 162 religious titles, including sermons. There are eight identifiable female authors of twenty-four titles. Hannah More, under her own name and using the pseudonym "Z" wrote eleven of the twenty-four tales written by women. Nineteen of these stories are religious. It is possible that some of the male authors' names are pseudonyms for women. Nevertheless, the output of identifiably woman authors is extremely low, representing four percent of the authors and, thanks to Hannah More's prolificacy, nine percent of the titles; the total percentage of chapbooks identified with an author is twenty-two.

The British chapbooks contained in the Lauriston Castle collection primarily were published in England and Scotland, with some titles issued in Ireland. The titles were extensively pirated between England and Scotland, although there are clearly identifiable collections of Scottish ballads, and, to a lesser extent, Scottish tales; most of the latter relate to wars and Scottish heroes. In view of the extensive mingling of English and Scottish titles, it is not possible to distinguish different broad themes related to the role of women in the different countries. In this paper specific comments about differences are made when appropriate.

The Lauriston Castle collection of chapbooks is one of the largest and most complete in existence. Its importance can be confirmed by the

observation that virtually every chapbook listed or discussed by historians is available in this collection; the collection includes a broad cross section of the surviving chapbook literature. These stories dealt with every aspect of human life, from infancy to death and the hereafter, providing the modern reader with fascinating perspectives on life in early modern Britain. When evaluated in the context of our other knowledge concerning society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is possible to determine whether the popular literature provided a true picture of life during the period or whether the image was distorted. It is also possible to speculate about why distortions do exist, if they do. Recognizing that we are assessing the first literature available to the newly literate lower classes, other than the Bible, some other purely religious tracts and single sheet broadsides, we can now proceed to determine whether the chapbooks presented a true or distorted image of women in early modern Britain.

CHAPTER TWO

CHAPBOOKS AND THEIR READERS

"KATE: You're a scholar, I warrant, are you not?

JOHN: I can read."[1]

One of the most significant occurrences of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was the spread of literacy in Great Britain. Spurred by a variety of factors and developments, more and more "Kates" and "Johns" learned to read, although literacy by no means became universal. Furthermore, for many who did learn to read, that accomplishment was their terminal educational achievement. Before we examine the chapbooks, their perspective on women's role in society and the extent to which they reflected or distorted actuality, we must determine what chapbooks were, who published and distributed them, if they were read, and by whom. And, most importantly, we must define the term "chapbook." Neuburg provides a succinct and clear definition: "Chapbooks may be defined as the paper-covered books offered for sale by pedlars, hawkers and other itinerant merchants known as 'chapmen'." Chapbooks were the "successors of the jest-book and ballads of the Elizabethan Age,"[2] and of the illustrated broadsheets; some of the latter contained printed messages as well as pictures.

The majority of these publications were twenty-four pages in length; a few were longer, and some contained eight or sixteen pages; the normal page size was six inches by four inches. Most were what are called duodecimos in

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[1] Anon, A Dialogue Between Honest John and Loving Kate, p. 13, London, n.d., Lauriston Castle (hereafter L.C.), Vol. 2736.

[2] V.E. Neuburg, Chapbooks. A Bibliography of References to English and American Chapbook Literature of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century, Vol. 2, p. 1, London, 1964.

printer's terms. The quality of the paper and printing was poor, even by seventeenth and eighteenth century standards; illustrations, when used, were rudimentary woodcuts that often bore only a tenuous relationship to the subject matter. Publishers utilized the same woodcuts for a wide variety of their publications. The availability of the printing press and the development of inexpensive paper enabled the publishers to price the majority of the chapbooks at one penny with discounts to the chapmen who were responsible for delivering the product to the reader.

Chapbooks were the reading material for the lower classes, with a price and distribution system designed for that market. In his discussion of The Rise of the Novel, Ian Watt points out that the novels of Defoe, Richardson and their contemporaries cost as much in real terms in the eighteenth century as they did in the 1960's, effectively pricing the early novels well beyond the purchasing power of the lower classes. The upper classes read the novels and the longer, more expensive religious books, like The Pilgrim's Progress, a book which was extensively published. Watt estimates that over 200 religious titles were issued each year.[3]

LITERACY

Although the very existence of a chapbook industry indicates a reading public, historians continue to debate the extent of literacy in early modern Britain. Keith Wrightson provides a perspective on the stimulus for the spread of literacy. "By the early seventeenth century the unlettered majority of the English population were everywhere faced, in one degree or another, with the applications of literacy and the products of a literate culture." This literate environment included the publishing of "the traditional products of the oral culture," the "romance, fables and old tales" which had

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[3] I. Watt, The Rise of the Novel, pp. 41-49, Berkeley, 1960.

been passed on verbally by past generations. It was not until the nineteenth century, with the advent of compulsory primary education, that the educational level of the "mass of the common people" was "transformed", but the minimum ability to read had spread by the early seventeenth century beyond the middle classes. Reading, and to a lesser extent writing, "had become established as part of the popular culture of England," with "peoples' lives. . .increasingly touched by literacy. . ." Ministers, school masters, and literate neighbours initially provided assistance to the illiterate as they struggled to write letters or prepare their wills. However, the advantage of being able to handle such challenges personally, rather than relying on others, became obvious, as did the desire to enjoy the written versions of the tales and ballads that others were reading. Although the purpose of basic education was to promote increased religious understanding and respect for social order, it became clear that "literacy could liberate the mind"; in addition, for the middle classes it provided opportunities in the professions. For some of the less fortunate, there developed "a passion for print, an intoxication with the world of information and ideas opened to them by literacy."[4]

"Literacy could thus provide access to knowledge of many kinds, to the distant events of the day, to historical facts and interpretations, to the secrets of nature. It could also provide independent access to a body of literature which for many people was of even greater importance, to the Scriptures and to the proliferating vernacular literature of the English Reformation."[5] The religious incentive contributed to the desire of growing numbers of the middle and lower classes to become literate, or at least to provide some education for their children. As we shall see in Chapter Five, the provision

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[4] K. Wrightson, English Society 1580-1680, pp. 194-6, London, 1982.

[5] Ibid, pp. 197-8.

of educational opportunity was uneven, with young girls the subjects of serious discrimination, especially after the elementary years, but even they were often able to read, if not write. The religious groups, particularly the Puritans, recognized the value of the printed word and encouraged the spread of literacy with the vast volume of religious tracts and stories printed and disseminated.[6] "The newly literate 'middling sort' of England, together with the minority of their social inferiors who had learned to read and write thus constituted a reading public from the first. More specifically, they constituted a series of overlapping reading publics, which taken together, provided the mass market for the enormous and variegated outpouring of printed material which followed the collapse of effective government control of the press in 1640."[7]

There is general agreement among historians about literacy percentages throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Laqueur reports that "perhaps as many as sixty percent of men in the large towns of the south and at least thirty percent in the country as a whole could read in the middle of the seventeenth century. By 1754 sixty percent of the men in England and forty percent of women could sign the marriage register; there is evidence that a yet higher proportion were probably able to read. Even in the most illiterate country, forty-six percent of men and twenty-eight percent of women could sign their names."[8] Speck confirms these percentages, stating that by 1760 "even at the lowest levels, however, there was a substantial minority, around forty-one percent, which was literate," with

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[6] M. Spufford, Small Books and Pleasant Histories, p. 10, London, 1981.

[7] Wrightson, English Society, p. 199.

[8] T. Laqueur, 'The Cultural Origins of Popular Literacy in England 1500-1850', Oxford Review of Education, 2 (1976), p. 255.

higher literacy levels in London and urban centres than in many rural areas.[9] As the reading public was more concentrated in urban areas, urban themes predominate in the chapbooks, as we shall see.

Several historians have credited Scotland with greater progress toward universal literacy than England, based on the perception of a stronger commitment to education. Laqueur cites the belief that the Scottish literacy rate was higher than England's, while cautioning that the percentage of students attending schools in Scotland may not have been higher, as previously believed.[10] Cressy is cautious, warning that "historical nationalism" may have influenced the "indirect evidence" that Scotland, by the eighteenth century, may have surpassed England, due largely to the "activities of Protestantism."[11] Stone states that in Presbyterian Scotland "Puritan zeal" for education "found its fullest expression,"[12] adding that "impoverished" eighteenth century Scotland was "educationally superior" to wealthier England, as a result of higher taxation and voluntary contributions for schools.[13]

Houston's recent studies raise serious doubts about these conclusions; he questions the impact of Protestantism on literacy, as contrasted to the social and economic "push" factors.[14] Houston believes that:

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[9] W.A. Speck, Society and Literature in England 1700-60, p. 196, Dublin, 1983.

[10] Laqueur, 'Cultural Origins of Popular Literacy', p. 256.

[11] D. Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order, p. 181, Cambridge, 1980.

[12] L. Stone, 'Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900', Past and Present, 42 (1969), p. 80.

[13] Ibid, p. 96.

[14] R.A. Houston, Scottish Literacy and the Scottish Identity, p. 157, Cambridge, 1985.

> "First, Scotland enjoyed superior literacy to the north of England only during the seventeenth century, a time when the full impact of the introduction of the state education system was only beginning to be felt, but also when the economy and society were said to be comparatively backward. Secondly, the improvements which did occur between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were largely confined to the middling groups in society. . .Scottish literacy is slightly superior to English for some occupational groups and at some points in time, but there still is a clear hierarchy of illiteracy. Social divisions were just as marked as in England, despite Scotland's allegedly open access to education."[15]

In regard to women, all experts agree that women fared badly in terms of the education received, as we shall see in Chapter Five, and in terms of literacy rates, as measured by the ability to sign a document. Recognizing that the ability to sign understates the percentage who could read, it is still clear that the literacy rate for women was lower than for men, just as the rates for the lower class males were lower than for the upper classes. As Houston states: "Women are generally less literate than men, rural people less than urban, the lower socio-economic groups less than the wealthier and more exalted."[16] Nevertheless, O'Day points out that during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in England illiteracy was declining, and so was the differential between men and women. From 1580 to 1640, there were eight literate males for each female; the ratio declined to three to one by the end of the seventeenth century, to sixty percent to thirty-five percent by 1754 and to sixty percent to forty percent by 1800.[17]

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[15] Ibid, p. 35. In his study of English literacy, Cressy concludes that the north and the midlands were behind the south and London. Cressy, Literacy, p. 176.

[16] Ibid, p. 107.

[17] R. O'Day, Education and Society 1500-1800, p. 190, New York, 1982.

What can we conclude from these studies? Although the percentages of literate males and females appears low by present standards, especially the numbers for women, there was remarkable progress during these two centuries. There was potentially a large number of people who could read at least at the level required to enjoy rudimentary literature, such as that provided in the chapbooks.

The evidence that the printing press's output did reach and affect the lower classes is not restricted to literacy percentages. Wrightson cites various examples of the less fortunates' "passion for print, an intoxication with the world of information and ideas opened to them by literacy." His examples include two apprentices who sat up at night reading.[18] Neuburg quotes from the Memoirs of Thomas Holcroft, the author son of a shoemaker, who, when his father's fortunes suffered a "distressing change," moved from London to a "remote" area when Holcroft was about six. His father taught Holcroft to read, and soon the boy was reading "eleven chapters a day of the Old Testament to his father." A gift of two chapbooks led Holcroft to recall:

> ". . .one was the History of Parismus and Parismenes, and the other, of the Seven Champions of Christendom. These were an inestimable treasure. . ."[19]

Other examples quoted by Neuburg include James Lackington, who eventually became a chapbook publisher and who was educated at a dame school; Samuel Drew, "educated" at a school which only taught reading and at a cost of "one penny per week"; William Gifford, whose father ran away to sea leaving his family in poverty and therefore forcing Gifford to be educated at a free school. Gifford, born in 1756, reported on his education:

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[18] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 196-7.

[19] Neuburg, Popular Education in Eighteenth Century England, p. 41, London, 1971.

> ". . .and as soon as I was old enough to be trusted out of her [mother's] sight, sent me to a school mistress of the name of Parret, from whom I learned in due time to read. I can not boast much of my acquisitions at this school; they consisted merely of the contents of the 'Child's Spelling Book'; but from my mother who had stored up the literature of a country town which, about half a century ago, amounted to little more than was disseminated by itinerant ballad-singers, or rather, readers, I had acquired much curious knowledge of Catskin, and the Golden Bull, and the Bloody Gardener, and many other histories equally instructive and amusing."[20]

The Golden Bull and The Bloody Gardener were chapbooks commonly used for elementary instruction. This was the educational start for a poor boy who attended Oxford and who became the first editor of the Quarterly Review. It is fortunate that men like these, and gentlemen of the upper classes, recognized the uniqueness of this new literary genre and preserved examples of the chapbooks, maintaining them in their personal collections.

Although these and other examples tend to confirm that the newly literate poor did read chapbooks, it is difficult to prove this conclusion. As most of these eight or twenty-four page publications cost only one penny or less, they rarely are encountered in the possessions left by the dead to their heirs. Instead of existing until probate, chapbooks often disintegrated or were used as toilet tissue, to light pipes or to line baking pans.[21] Reay criticizes Spufford for her failure to place chapbooks in the hands of readers;[22] and Spufford admits that it is difficult to do.[23] So, there is a

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[20] Ibid, p. 43.

[21] Spufford, Small Books, p. 48.

[22] B. Reay, 'Popular Literature in Seventeenth Century England', The Journal of Peasant Studies, 10 (1983), 244.

[23] Spufford, Small Books, p. 46.

controversy, important to evaluate in terms of the significance of the chapbooks as reflectors or distorters of society.

In addition to the examples provided by Wrightson and Neuburg, the other evidence, combined with common sense, supports Spufford's view that the chapbooks were read and were important influences on the lives of the readers. Speck concludes: "There was also a mass of ephemeral literature which circulated even at the lowest levels of the society. Almanacs and chapbooks produced cheaply by the thousands on coarse paper with crude print and cruder woodcuts reached a very wide audience indeed,"[24] and Neuburg identifies chapbooks, the mass-produced, cheap alternative, as the poor's primary or only source of reading material.[25] Rogers also cites Neuburg, who "has claimed that chapbooks represent a 'unique source' for any exploration of the 'mental universe of the poor in the eighteenth century.' He suggests that they 'made a considerable contribution to the development of mass literacy' in the period, and contends that they reveal to us a public 'which in its attitudes, tastes and values, was very different from the more sophisticated one, and is at least as worthy of detailed investigation'."[26]

Neuburg and others provide the common sense rationale to the discussion of readership. After reporting on John Clare's description of "the books that he saw in a farmer's house" in the mid-eighteenth century ("the Bible, an almanac, The Whole Duty of Man, and some chapbooks"), Neuburg comments:

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[24] Speck, Society and Literature, p. 197.

[25] Neuburg, Chapbooks, p. x.

[26] P. Rogers, Literature and Popular Culture in Eighteenth Century England, p. 183, Sussex, 1985.

> "Does the mere existence of books entail a growth in the reading public? And if books were bought, were they necessarily read? To the former question the answer is 'No' -- the presence of books does not of itself argue for a growth in readership; but an increase in the book supply suggests strongly the existence of a growing number of readers. If therefore, the number of books for the poor, i.e., chapbooks, coming on to the market increased throughout the eighteenth century, then it must be argued that so too did the number of working class readers. There is of course no way of knowing with certainty that the chapbooks bought from pedlars were actually read, but the balance of probability suggests that they were. A penny or halfpenny represented no inconsiderable sum to the poor at this period, and it is unlikely that books which were purchased remained unread. Moreover, there is nothing in the few working class autobiographies of the period to suggest that the possession of chapbooks was in any way unusual or conferred any social standing upon the owner."[27]

Neuburg documents the "steady increase in chapbook productions"[28] and, supporting Spufford's observations, points out that numerous titles clearly indicate "the public for whom it [the chapbook] was intended." His example is a 1703 chapbook in its seventh edition: The Compleat Servant-Maid, or the Young Maiden's Tutor, directing them "to qualify themselves for any of these employments, viz. waiting-woman, housekeeper, chambermaid, cook-maid, under cook-maid, nursery-maid, dairy-maid, laundry-maid, house-maid, scullery-maid."[29] Chapbooks in the Lauriston Castle collection are directed at servants, textile and other apprentices, farmers, poor women, poor men interested in bawdy tales, cooks (recipe books with recipes for food intended to be consumed by the upper classes, pheasant, venison, etc.) and countless others. The very volume of religious chapbooks with themes directed to, and

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[27] Neuburg, Popular Education, p. 94.

[28] Ibid, p. 141.

[29] Ibid, p. 101.

stories about, poor families, also tends to confirm a mass readership of lower class people.

There is additional evidence to support the readership of chapbooks by a large percentage of the public. A significant number of printers earned comfortable, or even wealthy, livings from the proceeds of their publishing companies, and there was steady increase in the number of publishers, in London and, after the Stationers' Company of London printing monopoly was ended in 1695, throughout England and Scotland. As early as 1664, upon the death of the publisher Charles Tias, we encounter in his testament a large inventory of material equal to approximately 90,000 chapbooks, an investment that a successful businessman would hardly make without the prospect of equivalent sale, which in turn was dependent on a satisfied reader spending a significant, for the lower classes, sum to purchase the books. It is also important to note that Mr. Tias' inventory included 10,000 finished chapbooks in stock, with paper available for an additional 80,000, so he was hardly burdened with a large, unsold finished product, in comparison with the "raw material" available. Josiah Blare's inventory in 1707 listed "31,002 great and small books in the shop," another impressive indication of the sales potential when it is considered that Mr. Blare was one publisher in a country with a population of approximately five million, resulting in an inventory of one book for every forty-four families.[30] Mr. Tias was only one publisher; his inventory of 90,000 copies was the equivalent of one chapbook for every fifteen families in 1664.[31]

To summarize, the available evidence confirms the existence of successful chapbook publishers with impressively large inventories which

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[30] Spufford, Small Books, pp. 98-9.

[31] Ibid, pp. 100-1.

hardly would have been maintained to gather dust and tie up capital. We also know that the entire inventory was turned over more than once per year. We also know that many of the publishers were very successful businessmen and that they could count on an impressive distribution network through the chapmen. As mentioned, the expenditure of a penny, or even a halfpenny, by a family earning only a few shillings a month was significant, hardly an expense to be dedicated to an unread book only to be used to light pipes or for toilet tissue or to be left on the seventeenth century equivalent of a coffee table. We also have clear evidence that chapbooks were written for specific audiences and that those audiences were the increasing numbers of newly "literate" middling and lower classes.[32] The impact of the chapbooks on their readers is illustrated by the comments in the autobiographies cited above by Wrightson and Neuburg. There is one final piece of evidence -- the virulent attacks on the secular chapbooks by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, which tends to confirm that the stories in the books were read and made an impact. By 1708, the attacks on that segment of the popular literature considered profane by the religious authors are documented. The anonymous author of The History of Genesis called the chapbooks "vain books, profane ballads," writing:

> "Throw away all fond and amorous Romances, and fabulous Histories of Giants, the bombast Achievements of Knight Errantry, and the like. . ."

As mentioned above, in 1695 "restrictions upon the number and locations of printers were done away with." That Act resulted in the following criticism:

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[32] Ibid, pp. 100-1.

> ". . .since the Expiration of the Act for restraining the Press; and, thro' the greater liberty of printing, which thereon ensued, have the Vicious and Profane had more Opportunities to scatter their Papers, for corrupting the Manners of Men."[33]

That the religious books' authors were confronted with a popular alternative, one that was rightfully of concern to them, is documented in the life story of a tailor's son as described by Neuburg. This description enlightens us about why the chapbooks were popular, providing additional confirmation for the inescapable conclusion that this popular literature was read and absorbed by a mass, middling and lower class readership.

In a small book published anonymously by Charles Knight in 1845 entitled Memoirs of a Working Man, we learn that in the early eighteenth century Thomas Carter "learned to read at home, using the Bible as a text book." Carter criticized this approach: "As a general rule, I think it very fairly determined that the requiring of children or youths to read a given portion of the Sacred Scriptures, at a prescribed time, as a lesson or text, is very unjudicious." The young Carter was exposed to chapbooks by "an old woman who sold cakes, fruits, sweets and chapbooks." Carter was greatly influenced by the latter:

> "It did not in those days seem to be understood that abstract treatises on religious or other serious subjects were not adopted to fix the attention of children and other young persons. There was but little recognition of the fact that the human mind needs recreation as well as instruction. . .I have now -- after an interval of more than forty-five years -- a clear recollection of the little books I read when a child, and which then formed part of the poor child's 'Entertaining Library'."

Carter provides us with a view of the long-term impact of this popular literature:

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[33] Neuburg, Popular Education, pp. 101-2.

> "It may seem to be a little better than trifling to write about farthing or halfpenny histories of 'Tom Thumb', 'Jack the Giant Killer', 'Little Red Riding Hood', and the like; but when it is considered that the human mind generally retains, in mature years, much of the tastes and habits it acquired in childhood, it will not be difficult to believe that important consequences may and often do arise out of circumstances or practices which in themselves are of little worth or moment."

Carter's autobiography provides clear evidence of the general availability of chapbooks in the early eighteenth century and assurance that they were the only alternative to the Bible and religious tracts available to the poor.[34]

If further evidence is desirable, it is provided by John Bunyan, who reported that he was "likely to have got his reading matter from the chapmen, either at the door or at the market," adding ". . .give me a Ballad, a news-book, George on horseback or Bevis of Southampton, give me some book that teaches curious arts, that tells of old Fables; but for the Holy Scriptures, I could not. And as it was with me, so it is with my brother now."[35] Another religious author, Richard Baxter, commented: "I was extremely bewitched with a love of romances, fables and old tales, which corrupted my affections and lost my time."[36]

Thus, the evidence supporting the important role of chapbooks in seventeenth and eighteenth century society is clear. The secular publications provided the alternative to the Bible and the religious chapbooks for a lower class readership newly, if only partially, literate. They also included a large percentage of books with religious "messages", as we shall see. There were

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[34] Ibid, pp. 52-3.

[35] Even as an adult Bunyan continued to buy religious chapbooks for his wife.

[36] M. Spufford, 'First Steps in Literacy: The reading and writing experiences of the humblest seventeenth-century spiritual autobiographers', Social History, 4 (1979), 255.

various other categories of chapbooks, designed for specific audiences and often published with specific objectives. The most complete list I encountered was compiled by Tillinglast in 1905, the "Catalogue of English and American Chapbooks and Broadside Ballads in the Harvard College Library," as cited by Neuburg.[37] The Tillinglast list has twenty-three categories which can be synthesized into nine groups:

1. Religious and moral, including cheap repository tracts;
2. Merry Books, to include jest books, humorous fiction and riddles, amusing historical tales, bawdy tales for the 'ale house' audience;
3. Garlands and Songs, many of which were written versions (without music) of ancient ballads;
4. Historical tales, classics, such as Jack the Giant Killer, fairy tales (Aesop's Fables), legendary romances, and other folk tales (Mrs. Jane Shore) usually adopted from the oral tradition;
5. Condensations of contemporary novels (Moll Flanders, Pilgrim's Progress);
6. "Occult" publications -- dream books, witchcraft, fortune telling, legerdemain, prophecies;
7. Almanacs and "do-it-yourself" guides, including cookery books and other household manuals, guides to fairs and practical publications such as those listing all the Kings and Queens of England, and calendars of events;
8. General fiction, including tales about life (often with moral lessons), romantic and dramatic stories, travel and adventure tales not based on the oral tradition;
9. General contemporary fact concerning actual events, usually murders, trials and punishment.

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[37] Neuburg, Chapbooks, p. 7.

The last category often included religious and moral messages, an indication of the difficulty inherent in trying to define specific groups of chapbooks. Many of these publications could be classified in more than one category. Spufford's analysis of the Pepys' collection and of the trade list of a publisher, Thakery, and six other printers for the period 1684-1688 confirms that forty-eight percent can be described as small merry books, close to twenty-five percent as chivalric histories and double bonds, printed in more than one volume.[38] In terms of subject matter, seven percent of the Pepys' collection dealt with courtship and fourteen percent had historical settings, generally "mythical and fantastic." The remainder were garlands, realistic tales about early life, almanacs, jest books and religious publications.[39] In the Lauriston Castle collection, forty percent of the entries are garlands and songbooks. Of the remaining sixty percent, the two largest categories are original tales and merry books, forty-three percent of the entries, and strictly religious books, twenty-six percent. Fables and tales passed down from the oral tradition represent seven percent of the non-music collection, almanacs five percent, and occult publications four percent. Factual histories, listings of kings and queens and current event records represent fourteen percent and condensations of novels less than one percent of the collection.

Within these categories a reader finds stories presented in prose and poetry, both usually of an unsophisticated and direct nature. Rhyme would have been easier to read and remember for those steeped in the oral culture, and it sounded better than prose when read aloud. The tales are episodal without meaningful character development; we usually learn what happened but little, if anything, about the protagonists' motivations or thoughts. As mentioned, very few contemporary novels were abridged into these short

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[38] Spufford, Small Books, pp. 134-7.

[39] Ibid, pp. 157, 219.

publications, and characters such as Moll Flanders do not come alive. We learn what happened to Roxana, Moll Flanders and Robinson Crusoe. We are not informed in these unauthorized abridgements about the 'moral message' of the author or of his characters, nor do we learn about the individuals themselves. Certainly Defoe's sympathetic views toward women are nowhere to be found in the chapbook versions of his novels. There are no chapbooks containing historical or contemporary plays; the use of dialogue is very limited, the quotation utilized at the beginning of this chapter being one of the few exceptions. For the modern reader, a review of the chapbooks can be tiresome because the declaratory presentation is monotonous, the lack of character development tedious and often frustrating. The limited vocabulary utilized in these books adds to the tediousness and monotony.

However, these publications do provide a fascinating insight into seventeenth and eighteenth century society, as we shall see, and it must be recalled that with the Bible, these were the "doors" to the literary world for a large number of poor people who had just found the key, the ability to read. By the end of the eighteenth century the general appeal of chapbooks began to wane, with magazines and more sophisticated materials gaining popularity among the increasingly literate population, although large quantities of almanacs continued to be sold until well into the nineteenth century.

The varied origins of chapbooks are indicated above. Many were transcriptions of oral tales which had been passed on for generations; a few were the unauthorized abridgements of novels written for upper class audiences. Efforts at literary piracy continued even after the first British copyright law of 1710. Authors such as Defoe and Bunyan did not receive royalties from these and did not approve of these episodal condensations. The group of traditional books included the jest books, which had been

printed since the sixteenth century. Many of these popular publications were by anonymous authors. There was a definite trend in these toward more realistic heroes, drawn from the lower levels of society and designed to have more appeal for the lower classes than the chivalric protagonists of the oral tradition.[40] A poor reader could more easily relate to an apprentice in the clothing trades, a servant or a farmer's daughter than to a knight chasing dragons or slaying villainous "Turks", although the latter did provide escapist themes for those living a dreary life. Also descended from the oral tradition were the garlands, songs without music but sung to well-known tunes, often referred to in the titles, such as Judy Magrath and Blue-Eyed Mary. Ballads like these can be traced to 1550.[41]

The almanacs appealed to a broader reading public and often, with more pages, were more costly than the twenty-four page chapbook. The period of 1640-1700 is described as the "Golden Age of English Almanacs." In addition to dealing with "political, social and religious controversies," these publications often included bawdy tales, violence and sensationalism, subjects designed to stimulate sales. General advice on harvests and diseases established the author's credentials to provide astrological and individualized solutions to problems.[42] Their general popularity at all levels of society is indicated by the fact that "by the 1660's some 400,000 almanacs were being sold every year." This number was sufficient for forty percent of all households in England.[43] The prevalence of plagues, fires and civil war help to explain the great popularity of these publications. They continued to

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[40] Ibid, p. 225.

[41] Ibid, p. 128.

[42] B. Capp, Astrology and the Popular Press, English Almanacs 1500-1800, pp. 20, 24, London, 1979.

[43] Wrightson, English Society, p. 197.

attract a reading public, albeit a sharply reduced one, during the eighteenth century, when the popular belief in astrology was declining. During the eighteenth century Moore's Almanac, often compared to the present-day Farmer's Almanac, became the preeminent almanac. Old Moore's Almanac sold 1.75 million copies as recently as 1975.[44] The almanacs were consulted by political leaders, domestic and foreign, and they did "foster political awareness" among the population.[45] Of course, almanacs often were dated, a rarity among the popular literature.

A large percentage of chapbooks was targeted for urban audiences, in recognition that a higher percentage of literate readers was to be found in towns and villages than in the countryside. Even tales which commence on a farm often conclude with the protagonist in a large town or in London, often serving as an apprentice, servant or fallen woman of the street. Apprentices and servants were favorite subjects for chapbook authors, an indication that this comprised an important reading audience for their literature. Houston reports that "chapmen were concentrated in towns and cities; more than half their number licensed in returns during the years 1697-8 lived in market towns."[46]

AUTHORS AND PUBLISHERS

As we have seen, Hannah More was one of the few identifiable authors in the chapbooks; her very public religious activity made her identity clear, starting with the publication of cheap repository tracts and leading to The Shepherd and similar stories. Only two major authors survived in both "ordinary classics" and in chapbooks: Bunyan and Defoe. Others of lesser

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[44] Capp, Astrology, p. 262.

[45] Ibid, p. 100.

[46] Houston, Scottish Literacy, p. 51.

significance were Delaney, Burns, Allan Ramsey and Pierce Egan.[47] In addition, Swift's Gulliver's Travels was abridged, but not until the eighteenth century and with less frequency.[48] Such Augustan literature as Rape of the Lock and Elegy in a Country Churchyard was "too dense, too allusive, too verbally sophisticated, too independent of 'plot', to be converted easily into popular expression." Dramas such as Beggar's Opera and School for Scandal dealt with "style and subject matter not suitable for chapbooks," while Tom Jones presented a length and technical difficulty that was only tackled in one nineteenth century chapbook, a "crude and lifeless version."[49] Those that were abridged were pale copies: Robinson Crusoe appears as a pure adventure story of survival, Moll Flanders as truncated and episodal. Pilgrim's Progress appeared more often than the others, also in truncated form.[50] Boswell in his London Journal of July, 1763, describes chapbooks affectionately as "literary slumming." His affection for these publications was shared by other upper class collectors, whose interest in this literature was responsible for the availability of the chapbooks for present-day historians. Boswell noted that:

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[47] P. Rogers, 'Classics and Chapbooks' in I. Rivers (ed.), Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth Century England, p. 5, Leicester, 1982.

[48] Rogers, Literature and Popular Culture, pp. 162-3.

[49] Rogers, 'Classics and Chapbooks' in Rivers, pp. 28-9.

[50] In the Lauriston Castle collection there are three biographies of John Bunyan, fifteen copies of several different sermons and stories produced by him plus three excerpted copies of Pilgrim's Progress. There are ten chapbook copies of Moll Flanders, nineteen of Robinson Crusoe and two other minor works by Defoe. Bobby Burns and Allan Ramsey are well represented in the collection, but there is only one copy of Gulliver's Travels. There are no copies of the other works or authors discussed in this paragraph.

> "Some days ago I went to an old printing office in Bow Church-yard kept by Dicey, whose family have kept it four score years. There are ushered into the world of literature Jack and the Giants, The Seven Wise Men of Gotham. . .I saw the whole scheme with a fiend of pleasing, romantic feeling to find myself really where all my old darlings were printed. I bought two dozen of the story-books and had them bound up with this title, Curious Productions."[51]

We have seen that 189 different male and female authors can be identified in the Lauriston Castle collection. In addition to those mentioned above, who were they? At least two were also printers, Thomas Gent and Dougal Graham; the latter was very popular in Scotland and is well-represented in the Lauriston Castle collection.[52] It cannot be proven, but it is very possible that other printers also wrote their own books, or commissioned them from writers who could earn a modest living from such efforts. We do know that "popular literary culture was dominated by almanacs and chapbooks, though even these were written not by, but for, the lower orders. . ."[53] As would be expected urban professionals predominated among the authors. Although many chapbooks were written for a female audience, most of the identifiable authors were men, as discussed in Chapter One. The greater literacy rate for men would indicate that they were the prime readers, even of books written by males for a female public, but there is no concrete way of confirming that assumption. The availability of these books for "the lower orders" depended on the publishers and the chapmen who distributed them.

Dicey was the most successful of the publishers, the biggest printer in London.[54] The Dicey family was in the business for seventy-five years, based

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[51] Rogers, 'Classics and Chapbooks' in Rivers, pp. 29-30

[52] Neuburg, Chapbooks, p. 6.

[53] Speck, Society and Literature, p. 76.

[54] Neuburg, Chapbooks, p. 15.

in London, which was the "pre-eminent centre" of the publishers.[55] In London there were more than two hundred and fifty printers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries,[56] with a steady rise in the numbers of publishers in London and other towns to meet the rising demand of a more literate population.[57] Until the expiration of the Licensing Act of 1695, English publishing was restricted to London, the University towns of Oxford and Cambridge and "the archaepiscopal seat of York."[58] Until the repeal of the Act the number of English printers and the number of presses that each could own was controlled by a monopoly, established in 1557, between the Government and the Stationers' Company, with the publishers also acting as a distributor and jobber and the booksellers as retailers and/or wholesalers.[59] The monopoly held by this small group ended with the expiration of the Licensing Act, when copyright protection "lapsed", and the Copyright Act of 1709 "did not set up an effective machinery for the detection and punishment of copyright infringement." Nor "did the term it specified during which copyrights would be valid give the booksellers the perpetual copyright they had thus far enjoyed, and continued to desire."[60]

At the beginning of the eighteenth century fewer than one hundred London booksellers "controlled a large part of the book trade throughout England."[61] Throughout that century London continued to be the centre, although publishing did spread to the provinces. The wealthy could order

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[55] Neuburg, Popular Education, p. 140.

[56] Neuburg, Chapbooks, p. 15.

[57] Neuburg, Popular Education, p. 141.

[58] Rogers, 'Classics and Chapbooks', in Rivers, p. 6.

[59] Ibid, p. 7.

[60] Ibid, p. 10.

[61] Ibid, p. 11.

directly on credit from London booksellers or by subscription, and urban booksellers were an extremely important segment of the distribution network, as a large percentage of the chapbook market was based in urban centres. The provinces were dependent on chapmen for their supply, whether London or another town was the source of the book. More remote upland areas of the south, the Pennines and the north of England suffered from poor communications and, therefore limited chapbook distribution. In addition, the north, and other more remote regions, also had lower literacy rates. Sources other than London for chapbooks grew rapidly after the expiration of the Licensing Act. Neuburg has identified several hundred different chapbook publishers in thirty-six cities in England and Scotland, twenty-four in England, twelve in Scotland, where the initial publishing centres, Glasgow and Edinburgh, were joined by such other towns as Stirling, Falkirk and Aberdeen.[62]

CHAPMEN

Regardless of where the chapbook was published, the rural reader depended on chapmen for distribution. These men covered even the most remote areas, travelling first by horse, then by wagon, with their stock of chapbooks, courtship gifts, looking glasses, gloves, ribbons, head gear, pins and threads, perfume and masks for the rural gentry, lace and other textiles, but no perishables. These pedlars, whose name, like the names of their books, was probably based on the word "cheap", were known since the 1560's and were the successors of the medieval travelling merchants. Although 2,500 were registered in 1696, when such registration was first required, it is estimated that there were 10,000 or more chapmen in England and Scotland

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[62] Neuburg, Chapbooks, pp. 16-30.

during the 1690's, covering even the most remote areas.[63] The publishers advertised significant discounts for the chapmen, often on the title pages of the books, and special city and country chapmen guides were printed, listing the dates of fairs, market days, distances between towns and other useful information.[64]

Chapmen often stayed in inns which, with ale houses, became mini-distribution centres for their literature.[65] The pedlars also sold at fairs, shops and markets, in addition to calling at individual homes. In the eighteenth century some chapmen opened the first provincial book stores, or general stores with books.[66] With the advent of book stores and circulating libraries in the eighteenth century, women began to enter the trade. From 1726 to 1775 eighty-seven women have been identified as active book sellers; some began in the field with their husbands and continued after they became widows.[67] From all the evidence available, it is clear that chapbooks were available to the readers who wanted them, even in the most remote areas.[68]

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[63] Spufford, Small Books, pp. 115-20. Neuburg points out that the word "chap" may "have been derived from the Old English "ceap", trade. V.E. Neuburg, The Penny Histories, p. 3, New York, 1968.

[64] Spufford, Small Books, p. 113. See also: Neuburg, Chapbooks, p. 8 and Neuburg, Popular Education, p. 112.

[65] Peter Clark reports on the availability of chapbooks for customers of the larger seventeenth and eighteenth century ale houses. "Petty chapmen might not only lodge, but sell or store his commodities" in the ale houses. P. Clark, The English Ale House, pp. 227, 231, London, 1983. Barber shops, and other places where people waited, were promising sales targets.

[66] Spufford, Small Books, pp. 66, 122, 124.

[67] R. Halsband, 'Women and Literature in 18th Century England', in P. Fritz and R. Morton (eds.), Women in the 18th Century and Other Essays, p. 70, Toronto, 1976.

[68] Spufford, Small Books, p. 126.

Richard Baxter reported that "about that time it pleased God that a poor pedlar came to the door that had ballads and some good books; and my father bought of him Dr. Sibb's Bruised Reed."[69] However, not everyone greeted chapmen as gifts from God. Dougal Graham, the Scottish author-publisher, illustrates a hostile attitude toward chapmen and describes some of the dangers inherent in the profession. He depicts "John Cheap, the Chapman," as "lazy. . .and something lecherous among the lasses. . .hater of hard labour." Graham continues:

> "He got the name of John Cheap the Chapman, by selling 20 needles for a penny, and two leather laces for a farthing. He swore no oaths but one, which was, 'let me never sin'. He used no imprecations, but 'let me neither cheat nor be cheated, but rather cheat than be cheated'."

Graham adds that John counselled children to burn the combs sold to their mothers, so he could sell more, reporting that the primary motivation for becoming a chapman was the hope of becoming rich. Much of this tale is crude humour with a variety of references to essential body functions, but the author also provides us with a list of dangers and deprivations confronted by these pedlars: "deep ditches. . .bitting dogs. . .bangster wives. . ." plus sleeping in barns and eating poor food.[70]

In addition to the well-documented availability of chapbooks, it is clear that there was a a newly literate population asking for, and depending on, them. The literacy level increased during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with literacy in this case defined as the ability to read. A wide range of types and titles was written and published, initially in London and eventually throughout the British Isles; between 1557 and 1709 "over three

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[69] Spufford, 'First Steps in Literacy', p. 418.

[70] D. Graham, The History of John Cheap The Chapman, pp. 3-4, Edinburgh, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2811.

thousand ballad titles were entered with the Stationers' Company." In addition, there were countless religious tracts, jest books, chivalric tales, adventure stories, do-it-yourself publications and romances specifically written for a variety of audiences, comprised of the poor and middling classes. These were published by a large number of publishers in London and elsewhere and sold through a distribution network based on chapmen who were able to earn a reasonable living while travelling with a wide range of goods, including books. A "Norfolk Puritan," Nicholas Bownde, "complained that even the illiterate poor bought them and set them up in their cottages 'that so they might learn them as they have occasion'."[71]

The market existed and the need for chapbooks was met. It is now time to evaluate the "message" presented by these publications, to study what they tell us about society and culture, specifically whether they faithfully mirror the actual role of women in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries or whether they provide us with a distorted or incomplete picture. In doing so we will confirm that:

> "Chapbooks, then, represented an ancient tradition which had become petrified in print; they constituted a vital link in a genuine popular culture. By the end of the eighteenth century they had served their purpose, and adult readers had outgrown them. For the historian they remain a window into the world of common people two centuries ago, through which we may discern not only the extent to which ordinary men and women could read, but also something of their culture."[72]

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[71] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 195-6.

[72] Neuburg, Popular Education, p. 122.

CHAPTER THREE

COURTSHIP

"Young virgins by this you may plainly see
Virtue is a jewel recommended to be,
And strive like this maiden your honour to keep
It's better than riches and jewels so great."[1]

Courtship and marriage were major pre-occupations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a fact made very clear in popular literature of the period. It is not surprising that the eternal subject of men, women and their relationships was one of great interest to the authors of this period; it is significant that writers of the popular literature dealt with this subject so extensively and with such a male-oriented outlook. Then, as now, marriage and family were important institutions in society, with the family as a primary unit of consumption, production, socialization, reproduction and welfare. The family unit was the basis of the economic and social well-being of most adults in society. As we shall observe, there was great concern among the upper classes about the class or social status of the marriage partners; there also was wide-spread preoccupation with pre-marital pregnancy and bastardy, a subject discussed further in this chapter. The identity of the father was important for those concerned with inheritance rights, and the birth of illegitimate children among the lower classes had implications for the middle and upper classes, who largely would be responsible for the financial support of those children.

Thus the great concern expressed in many chapbooks about courtship, female virginity and honour is understandable; it also reflects a variety of additional factors. Certainly one of the more important causes for this preoccupation was the lengthy period between puberty and marriage,

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[1] Anon, The Crafty Chambermaid, p. 24, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

providing ten or more years during which an active libido could lead to pre-marital copulation without benefit of birth control protection. The result which often occurred, bastardy, will be examined later. At this point, it is important to note the following average marriage ages.[2]

	Males	Females
1650-99	27.8 years	26.5 years
1800-49	25.3 years	23.4 years[3]

The need for an economic foundation contributed to late marriage throughout the period. Apprentices and servants often would have to complete their commitments and lay aside a modest "nest egg" before undertaking marriage. The only alternative for some was a modest inheritance or gift from parents. Upper class girls and younger sons often were affected by primogeniture, with the bulk of the wealth destined for the eldest son. Stone estimates that the percentage of unmarried daughters of rural and possibly urban elite in early modern England averaged twenty to twenty-five percent, fifteen to twenty percent for younger sons, compared with ten percent for the rest of society.[4] Wrightson reports that from 1580-

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[2] K. D. M. Snell, Annals of the Labouring Poor, p. 345, Cambridge, 1985.

[3] This data is generally confirmed by Keith Wrightson in his study of marriage ages in various English parishes. He reports that the average age of first marriage for men during the period 1600-49 ranged from 26.7 years to 29.2 years of age, for women from 24.8 to 27.3. "Within this pattern of comparatively late marriage, variations were observable between the age of first marriage of people of different occupations and social status. . .It appears that in general members of the aristocracy and upper gentry married younger than their social inferiors, while among the common people, wage earning artisans and labourers married somewhat earlier than landholding yeomen and husbandmen." Thus, individual economic factors influenced marriage decisions. Wrightson, English Society, p. 68.

[4] L. Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800, p. 44, London, 1977.

1680 "perhaps ten percent of women who achieved adulthood passed their lives unwed."[5] The percentage of spinsters varied over time, from below ten percent to between fifteen and twenty percent, fluctuations largely provoked by demographics and the economy, not by any societal reaction to matrimony.

With improved economic opportunity for the lower classes in the eighteenth century, combined with increased mobility and a loosening of parental influence, the average age of marriage dropped. Throughout the period, women were at a disadvantage in the marriage market. More women than men were available. Arriving at puberty earlier than males, females suffered through a long period of potential sexual activity before marriage. These factors provoke Rosemary O'Day to observe that "women's position in the marriage market was generally unfavorable."[6]

This perspective helps to explain why courtship and sex are the themes of a significant number of chapbooks in the Lauriston Castle collection. Spufford reports that seven percent of all the chapbooks in the Pepys' collection dealt specifically with courtship;[7] the figure is estimated at approximately eight percent in the Lauriston Castle collection, not including songs and ballads. Often tales which were not specifically directed to the subject included sections on pre-marital relations between heroes, heroines and villains, making accurate estimations difficult. Courtship and the authors' messages about the "proper" relationship between young women and men were subject matter for romantic tales, religious tracts, "merry books", garlands and songs, and bawdy tales.

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[5] Wrightson, English Society, p. 68.

[6] O'Day, Education and Society, p. 181.

[7] Spufford, Small Books, p. 157.

VIRGINITY: THE DOUBLE STANDARD

The quantity of literature referring to courtship tends to confirm Margaret Spufford's claim that "courtship was a major pre-occupation amongst the humble: that the concept of romantic love was not, as Lawrence Stone has assumed, absent at the popular level."[8] As we shall see, the evidence also supports Spufford's conviction "that sexual intercourse could proceed on the promise of marriage." However, the evidence I have reviewed in the chapbooks does not confirm that "sex was pleasurable for women as well as men." I believe that the authors of the chapbooks did not intend to support that conclusion, true as it undoubtedly was, for it would undermine their support for the double standard, for the concept that it was perfectly acceptable for men to taste the pleasures of serving maids and prostitutes but that "good girls" must protect their virginity at all costs. The authors and publishers of the chapbooks were conservative, middle class and oriented toward the status quo. If they could not deny that women were sexual beings, they could not afford to publicize that fact; it would have undermined their stance against pre-marital sex and illegitimate births and their position in support of parental involvement in the selection of marriage partners. I have been unable to find in the chapbooks a single incident indicating approval for romantic, pre-marital coitus, despite the overwhelming evidence that such activity was widely practiced, although discouraged by English and Scottish authorities.

Certain courtship themes appear consistently in the chapbooks; many of these reflect a strongly sexist bias, as well as an essentially conservative outlook on female sexuality and social class status. Young women were urged to maintain their virginity or face the horrible alternatives of prostitution or death; there was a double standard in regard to chastity, and it

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[8] Ibid, pp. 157-8.

was assumed that men would not be virtuous. Women were expected "to be chaste while being chased" while men were expected "to prove themselves by defeating women's success."[9] "Society trained up its daughters to trap men into matrimony without yielding any of its benefits in advance."[10] As we shall observe, the reality, a high incidence of pre-nuptial pregnancy, did not conform to the image promulgated in the chapbooks. Virginity at the altar was not particularly important to ordinary people.

Keith Thomas provides an insight into the evolution of the double standard, reflecting upon the dichotomy that "it is best if the man is experienced" versus "the star of chastity" for a female.[11] After the Reformation attacks on the double standard began to surface. The Puritans emphasized pre-marital chastity for both men and women; there was a general belief that the sin was equal for males and females, "but that account has to be taken of the more enduring consequences when it [fornication] was committed by women."[12] Kathleen Davies disagrees with Thomas and Lawrence Stone in their view that "there was a new ideal of mutuality in marriage, which was a direct outcome of two theological principles." Davies argues that this was not a new approach but one that developed and stressed existing attitudes already emphasized in church writings.[13] As we shall see, the chapbooks did not reflect the ideal of equal sin for both genders; the

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[9] S. Ardener, 'Introduction: the nature of women in society', in S. Ardener (ed.), Defining Females, The Nature of Women in Society, p. 36, London, 1978.

[10] K. Thomas, 'The Double Standard', Journal of the History of Ideas, XX (1959), 195.

[11] Ibid, p. 195.

[12] Ibid, p. 203.

[13] K. M. Davies, 'Continuity and change in literary advice on marriages', in R.B. Outhwaite (ed.), Marriage and Society, Studies in the Social History of Marriage, p. 59, London, 1981.

spectre of an inheritance passing to a male offspring not sired by the apparent father, "an enduring consequence," was a prime concern. The chapbooks support the widely accepted concept that women were men's property. As Thomas concludes, "the details of the double standard are mere elaborations of the central fact. . .that a woman can conceive and a man cannot."[14] The chapbooks not only maintain the double standard for people with property. Although virginity for the property-less was not an issue, the popular literature supported chastity for all women, including the lower classes, reflecting a fear that illegitimate children would become an economic burden for the middle and upper classes.

The chapbooks urged good women to maintain their honour; they seldom chastised men for their efforts but promised a life of unhappiness and poverty for the fallen woman. These publications sometimes indicated that the virtuous and chaste poor girl could escape from poverty. Finally, the popular literature generally reinforced an active role for parents in the selection of mates. A more detailed examination of society in this period, with a comparison to the material in the Lauriston Castle collection of chapbooks, confirms these conclusions.

"Soft, kind and charming a Creature";[15] "Endowed. . . . . with Grace and Sweetness, which are not to be found among the Men";[16] "Very tall with handsome face";[17] ". . . .cheeks like the roses."[18] Chapbook descriptions of

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[14] Thomas, 'The Double Standard', p. 216.

[15] Anon, The Art of Courtship, p. 8, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2737. An undated edition. Other editions are dated from 1686 to 1825.

[16] Anon, The Present State of England, p. 6, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2737.

[17] Anon, The Gloucestershire Tragedy, p. 2, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2737.

[18] Anon, The Lass of Gallowater, p. 3, Glasgow, 1795, L.C. Vol. 2899.

the ideal maiden, the virgin -- the ideal is always a virgin -- whom the strong and active man should pursue, were consistent in several respects: physical beauty combined with a soft, sweet and passive nature were the desirable attributes. They were in sharp contrast to the "masculine" virtues emphasized: strong, active, powerful. As is the case with all chapbook tales, which lack subtlety and depth, the stereotypical depictions of the perfect maiden were unrelieved by descriptions of character or personality. Fair Rosamond, as portrayed in the classic History of Fair Rosamond was an example of the ideal:

> ". . . .her eyes sparkled like two twin stars, her forehead was like a heaven of cristal, her eyebrows shone like jet, a sprig of roses and lilies were in her cheeks so mixed that nature never before made so fair a mixture of red and white."

Of course, Rosamond was a "charming virgin" with a "tender breast."[19]

There were exceptions to these idealized descriptions. In Chapter Five I will discuss the portrait of the widow, the woman who was so often depicted as a sexually experienced marriage target, especially desirable if endowed with inherited money, property or a business. The bawdy books and garlands, written for the poorly or uneducated male ale house audience, were the other exception, presenting the cruder image of women. Thus, this description of Judy Magrath:

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[19] Anon, The History of Fair Rosamond, p. 4, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2738. The only dated editions of this historic tale are from the nineteenth century.

"You're rich to taste as a fine Irish stew,
Your locks are as bright as the priest's sandy wig.
You're tender and fair as a young suckling pig;
By Cupid's big dart (to complain is no use)
I'm run through the heart like the spit through a goose.
O Judy, sweet Judy Magrath.
O Judy Magrath, won't you pity my grief,
I'm roasted with love like a sirloin of beef;
When basting your mutton, or making a pie,
Your grace makes me just like a hallows to sigh,
But vinegar looks to my signs you oppose.
Your words are like mustard they bite off my nose."[20]

The portrait of the love-sick male, often with unflattering references to the object of his affections, appears in the chapbooks. Men are warned about the seductive wiles of the opposite sex. Guy, Earl of Warwick is cautioned that "love is an idle toy, and feeds poor brains with fancies, leading astray every young giddy-headed lover."[21] Often the seductive woman is the culprit: "The lips of a strange Woman drop as an honey-comb, and the mouth is sweeter than oil; but her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword."[22] Cruder and less poetic versions warn: ". . . .how much does he admire her lofty carriage: the holding up her petticoat enchants him, and the celestial motion of her buttocks makes his teeth chatter." Woman's use of her ultimate weapon, sexual favours, is illustrated in the same tale: ". . . .his mistress condescends to treat him, by letting him taste the charming cherries

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[20] Anon, Judy Magrath, p. 1, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852.

[21] Anon, The Famous and Renowned History of Guy, Earl of Warwick, p. 7, Derby, 1796, L.C. Vol. 2746.

[22] Anon, Youth's Warning Piece: or the Tragical History of George Barnwell, p. 4, Stirling, 1803, L.C. Vol. 2863. This historic tale, dating from Queen Elizabeth's reign, was often dramatized in the eighteenth century and it "was always acted at the minor theatres on boxing night, previous to the pantomime, as a warning to apprentices." J. Ashton, Chapbooks of the Eighteenth Century, p. 432, Hertfordshire, 1969. This is a reissue of the original 1882 publication.

of her coral lips and suck from thence the fragrant breath that far exceeds Arabia's rich perfume."[23]

The Lauriston Castle chapbook collection contains hundreds of publications which depict the beautiful and essentially passive woman, the idealized portrait, and many more, written for men, which warn of women's seductive artifices or contain bawdy tales. However, there are very few references to the average woman's healthy sexuality. As would be expected, men are depicted with sexual appetites, shared by experienced widows, but the maiden's outlook on the subject is virtually ignored. As we shall see, girls are warned about the pitfalls of pre-marital sex and seduction, but there is little recognition that a young adult female might also be occupied, or pre-occupied, with the subject of sex.

Studies on pre-marital pregnancy and bastardy confirm that young men and women were sexually active, not surprising in that "the outstanding feature of the English historical record is that so many people had to wait so many years between sexual maturity and fully sanctioned sexual intercourse within marriage."[24] Wrightson points out that "it is clear that bridal pregnancy was widely tolerated" in the seventeenth century. "Some girls, however, became not pregnant brides, but the mothers of bastards. There tolerance ended."[25] C. R. Quaife, quoting Peter Laslett's study on English pre-nuptial pregnancies as a percentage of baptisms, provides some remarkably high figures, ranging from eighteen percent in the 1650-99 period

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[23] Author Reid, The Pleasures of Matrimony, p. 6, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2847. The identity of the author is recorded but questionable. Other editions, dated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, do not list an author.

[24] A MacFarlane, 'Illegitimacy and illegitimates in English history', in P. Laslett, K. Oosterveen, R. Smith (eds.), Bastardy and Its Comparative History, p. 71, London, 1980.

[25] Wrightson, English Society, p. 86.

to thirty-five percent in the last fifty years of the eighteenth century.[26] Levine and Wrightson conclude that many of the illegitimate births resulted from sex during courtship, without resulting marriage.[27] They also point to a sharp increase in bastardy at the beginning of the seventeenth century and a general rise in the late eighteenth century.[28]

All the studies confirm that sexual activity before marriage was common throughout this entire period, raising serious doubts about Stone's and Shorter's conclusions. Stone viewed the early seventeenth century as a very moral period, with Puritan attitudes seeping down to the plebs, combining with community and parental controls to discourage pre-marital sexual relationships. Shorter believed that "pre-marital sexuality in earlier times was frozen by the command of custom" and influenced by the community's "need for stability at the cost of individuality, and by the dismal grind of daily life."[29] However, Quaife concludes that "the looming presence of God" does not seem to have been a deterrent "and that, at the lower levels

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[26] C. R. Quaife, Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives, p. 57, Somerset, 1979.

[27] D. Levine and K. Wrightson, 'The social context of illegitimacy in early modern England', in Laslett, Oosterveen and Smith (eds.), Bastardy and Its Comparative History, p. 161.

[28] Ibid, p. 158. Quaife's study of pre-marital sex in Somerset from 1645-1660 reveals that six of ten peasant women who consented to pre-marital intercourse did so after the promise of marriage; one of ten agreed to coitus if the man promised to support the child, and another ten percent "lost control," usually as a result of drinking. One in ten wished to "satiate their lust"; bribery was a relatively insignificant factor for single women (ten percent), but more important for widows and married women. Fear and violence was also reported to be a minor factor, reported in only ten percent of the cases studied. C. R. Quaife, 'The consenting spinster in a peasant society: aspects of pre-marital sex in "Puritan" Somerset 1645-1660', Journal of Social History, 11 (1977), 235-40.

[29] E. Shorter, "Illegitimacy, sexual revolution and social change in modern Europe," J. I. H. II (1971), as quoted in Levine and Wrightson, 'The social context of illegitimacy', in Laslett, Oosterveen and Smith, p. 158.

of society "virginity before marriage [was] hardly an issue. . .with sexual amoralism. . .the dominant value among the peasantry."[30]

When coitus with a potential spouse was not the final result, mutual masturbation and the village prostitutes were the release, not the self-control that the church and the chapbooks recommended.[31] Petting is not a subject for chapbook literature. For the lower classes, "chastity was not an economic asset."[32] Levine and Wrightson report that "involvement in bastardy, then, was spread across the social scale," but not "evenly," with the poor more actively involved.[33] Throughout the period, changing economic conditions had a marked effect on bastardy rates, often reflecting the need to postpone marriage due to the lack of financial resources.[34] A vigorous popular culture was replacing the church with the ale house as the center of activity; there was also an increased mobility with decreased parental influence on the selection of marriage partners.[35] The decline in bastardy which occurred in the mid-seventeenth century resulted from a middle-class "promotion of a disciplinary initiative against a popular culture which was increasingly that of the poor," an initiative that came from the middle class yeomen, husbandmen and tradesmen who sat on the court juries.[36] However, the increase in bastardy rates and pre-nuptial pregnancies reported for the eighteenth

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[30] Quaife, Wanton Wenches, pp. 244-5.

[31] Ibid, p. 247.

[32] Ibid, p. 248.

[33] Levine and Wrightson, 'The social context of illegitimacy', in Laslett, Oosterveen and Smith, p. 164.

[34] Ibid, p. 171.

[35] Ibid, p. 169.

[36] Ibid, p. 172.

century indicates an erosion of the middle-class influence on pre-marital sexual activity.

P. E. H. Hair's two studies on bridal pregnancy confirm that pre-marital chastity was not a great concern in early modern England, with a significant increase in bridal pregnancy after 1700, from twenty percent of all brides to thirty-three to forty percent in the eighteenth century. Hair concludes that a sharp increase in bridal pregnancies occurred in the eighteenth century, that it was not a teenage phenomenon but tended to occur at a median age of twenty-three and that such pregnancies were not a result of "betrothal license" but of "courting convention."[37] From all these studies, it becomes clear that pre-marital intercourse was not a rare occurrence, and it was a significant aspect of life throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The lower class readers of the chapbooks were sexually active before marriage, indicating a romanticism that was not treated sympathetically in the literature; in fact, it was viewed as sinful. Perhaps the chapbooks' authors' strong emphasis on virginity is a reflection of a middle class concern about the sexual activity of the lower classes,[38] and the resulting cost of maintaining illegitimate children.

In order to put into perspective the chapbook authors' outlook on sexual relationships, we must evaluate the evolution, or the lack of evolution,

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[37] P. E. H. Hair, 'Bridal pregnancy in earlier rural England further examined', Population Studies, XXIV (1970), pp. 64-5.

[38] Levine and Wrightson provide interesting figures regarding extra-marital sexual activity. Their studies on Terling from 1590 to 1640 uncovered five cases of adultery, one servant exploited by her master, one male with his former wife's sister, one unmarried couple who produced three bastards in six years, ten illegitimate offspring resulting from delayed marriages, eleven children from liaisons which did not result in the anticipated marriage, twelve bastards borne by women who were "particularly sexually delinquent" and eighteen illegitimate children resulting from unknown relationships. Levine and Wrightson, 'The social context of illegitimacy', in Laslett, Oosterveen and Smith, p. 166.

in attitudes during this period. This is a subject debated by the historians. Stone lists four categories of pre-nuptial pregnancies: (1) Betrothal and co-habitation before the Church ceremony; (2) Seduction, with the male often trying to avoid marriage. At times this resulted in a "shot-gun" marriage. In other instances the girl's compliance was actually an effort to seduce a desirable partner; (3) A lower class girl, usually a servant, becoming a mistress of a wealthy man, often the master of the house. He would either avoid any obligation by running away, firing the servant or arranging for his man servant to marry the girl and legitimize the off-spring; (4) Widows, whose libido supposedly required regular intercourse. They were often prize targets, particularly if possessors of some wealth.[39] The authors of the popular literature took a very dim view of all such activity, regardless of the circumstances.

In the seventeenth century the Puritan influence was strongly supportive of pre-marital chastity, with women often suffering the penalty of ecclesiastical punishment. Men suffered the same punishment, if caught, but they often were able to flee. The emphasis continued to be on intercourse for procreation, not pleasure. In the eighteenth century the theologians began to re-define intercourse, emphasizing the "spiritual purpose of marriage itself" as "the union of two human beings for mutual comfort and support."[40] The Protestants led the Catholics in this redefinition. With reduced external interference and control from the Church, betrothal became more important than the Church ceremony in the eyes of the public, with the growing belief that the verbal commitment of the "engaged" couple made pre-nuptial fornication acceptable. Conception often followed.

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[39] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 609.

[40] A. Fraser, The Weaker Vessel, p. 625, New York, 1984.

Wrightson concludes that "the association of illegitimacy with marital opportunity is strongly suggested by the fact that close studies of particular parishes have revealed that the age of women bearing their first illegitimate child was about identical to the average age at which more fortunate women bore their first child in wedlock." Citing several cases with unhappy results, Wrightson writes:

> "These tragic stories reveal a great deal about courtship in the lower ranks of the social scale. They confirm the relative freedom of choice of the young people concerned and the dangers which that freedom entailed. They further make clear the significance of personal and sexual attraction in courtship. Again, they reveal how the restraints upon the sexual activity imposed by the realities of a pre-contraceptive age in which sexual activity led almost inevitably to conception crumbled once marriage was in sight."

Wrightson reports that "in common law a public promise to marry followed by sexual intercourse constituted a valid, though irregular, marriage," although the church "frowned upon this practice," which was punished by the ecclesiastical courts. Wrightson also observes that for those in service, "pregnancy was the signal to actually leave service, get married and set up together," concluding "that popular attitudes, though far from loose, were slightly more flexible than those of society's professional moralists."[41] The authors of the chapbooks were among the "professional moralists", or at least they adopted their views.

With the acceptance of fornication for pleasure rather than for progeny, there appears to have been some increase in efforts for contraception in the eighteenth century, primarily through coitus interruptus. The introduction of condoms in Great Britain may have been a contributing factor, although they apparently were used primarily for disease control in

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[41] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 84-5.

extra-marital affairs, and then only by the elite.[42] Birth control, as defined by modern understanding, was a nineteenth century development. With sin increasingly separated from the law, which became more concerned with the results of co-habitation -- the support of the illegitimate offspring -- than with the act itself, legal involvement and enforcement in the sex lives of the population declined. This decline occurred despite the continuing efforts of the moralists, the ecclesiastical courts in various dioceses and the appearance in the early eighteenth century of societies for the reformation of manners. Their moral standards increasingly were unacceptable to the lower classes.

Quaife comments that "punishment provisions of most [court] orders were directed solely against the women. Punishment of the male was rare" and normally entailed financial support payments for the bastard and, occasionally, public confession. Women were whipped in sixty percent of the cases studied, required to confess publicly, five percent, and confined to a house of correction in thirty-five percent of the cases. Normally the mother kept the child, and of every twenty who did so, only four received full maintenance payments from the fathers; eight received some support, as determined by the authorities, and eight did not benefit from any financial help.[43]

Economic factors strongly contributed to the increase in pre-marital intercourse and pregnancies, especially among the poorer classes. Those without property interests historically had a reduced stake in virginity.[44] With the spread of the enclosure movement and the increasing urbanization of society, which led to additional employment opportunities in cottage

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[42] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 628.

[43] Quaife, Wanton Wenches, pp. 216-17, 225.

[44] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 636.

industries, and later, factories, the lure of apprenticeships and factory jobs attracted growing numbers of young people from the farms to the "wicked" cities and towns. With the rise of a merchant and professional middle class there was also an increasing demand for servants, an attraction for young females. As a result, kinship influence and control waned and the young were able to earn a marital stake earlier. Thus, fornication in anticipation of marriage became more widespread, even though marriage did not always ensue. A financial set-back, the loss of a job, the resulting enrollment in the army or navy, conscription during wars, all contributed to the rise in illegitimate births, as the prospective husband disappeared from the scene.

Finally, pre-nuptial intercourse, often accompanied by illegitimate children, was encouraged by two other elements in society. The twin "demons," gin and rum, provided, with sex, the primary recreational outlets for the lower classes, often followed by planned or unplanned fornication. A large number of chapbooks, directed toward the lower class urban market, virulently attack the "twin demons" and the world's "oldest profession", prostitution; whores could depend on apprentices for a significant portion of their business.

In summary, a variety of factors contributed to the increase in pre-marital sex and pregnancy during the eighteenth century. Among all classes, the legal recognition of espousals as binding contracts, the decreasing influence of a less Puritanical Church and the resulting secularization of marriage had their effect. Social influences which influenced late seventeenth century celibacy were weakened. The literate benefitted from the appearance of romantic novels and plays extolling love for pleasure rather than simply for the production of heirs. The young gentry were provided with increased opportunities for courting at such neutral affairs as balls, while the now more affluent lower classes found the pleasure of the

ubiquitous ale houses. With the increased acceptance of personal choice rather than arranged marriages, combined with the growth of urban job opportunities in industry and households, there was a decline in parental guidance and control, especially among the plebs. The latter, whose property usually was restricted to wages saved and a few personal items, had no economic stake in virginity. With the marked reduction in parental, social and religious controls, there remained little if any reason to remain "pure". In addition, plebeian women recognized that the alternative to marriage, spinsterhood, was a very unattractive option providing limited job prospects and no financial foundation from a husband's earnings. However, as we have noted, the excess of women in the seventeenth century meant that a relatively high percentage of women were, indeed, spinsters. The granting of pre-marital favours in bed was an appealing opportunity to ensure marriage and security. That promise, later repudiated by the wealthy suitor or the poor apprentice, contributed to the increase in illegitimate births. In fact, workers and domestic servants comprised the major groups of un-wed mothers in the eighteenth century.[45]

It was the woman who suffered if marriage did not follow conception, with her honour ruined and the equally guilty male unaffected, except, occasionally, financially. This double standard confirmed the widely held belief that "two maidenheads meeting together in wedlock, the first child must be a fool."[46] Unfortunately, the result often was that "he who takes the maidenhead so often goes on to another."[47] Accompanying society's moral rejection of the bastard's mother were practical problems. The unmarried

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[45] Ibid, p. 646.

[46] Thomas, 'The double standard', p. 195.

[47] A Merry Dialogue Between Andrew and His Sweetheart Joan, as quoted in Spufford, Small Books, pp. 167-8.

mother was left to raise the child, or, as in the case of several chapbook tales, murder the offspring to avoid shame and financial difficulty. Unless the father was found, ultimate support of the child rested with the parish where the bastard was born; there was often great pressure on the mother to move out, and these women were hounded and driven from locale to locale. Eventually, for many, prostitution was the only recourse.

CHASTITY IN THE CHAPBOOKS

The chapbook perspective on virginity can be summarized: "When a woman has lost her chastity, she hath not more to lose."[48] Perhaps the greatest consistency in the cheap literature is the outlook on this subject, in religious tracts, romantic tales and original stories. A we have seen, it was a losing battle, but that fact did not deter the authors of these narratives, songs and poems. I have not found any change in perspective on the subject of virginity over the period of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, an additional indication that this literature is not an accurate reflection of society's social practices. Rather the authors and publishers appear determined to encourage a standard designed to maintain an idealized version of class and gender relationships and the status quo.

In view of the overwhelming evidence of active sexuality among the lower class chapbook audience, it is apparent to this writer that the chapbook publishers and authors were unwilling to modify their views to reflect reality. I suggest that there was a fear that widespread pre-nuptial coitus would produce a significant number of bastard offspring of the poor who would have to be supported in the parishes by the middle and upper classes. In addition, the authors and publishers of this literature came from the very middle class which was most influenced by the religious movements of the

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[48] Anon, The New Academy of Compliments, p. 11, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2342.

period. The producers of this literature also had a share in ensuring the existence of a non-threatening, docile and moral lower class. Even one of the late, dated chapbooks (1799) contains an attack on women for haughty looks and emphasizes the dangers of marrying out of one's class.[49]

A number of chapbooks, reflecting the authors' hopes, present the challenges to a maiden's virtue with happy endings, albeit with difficult challenges to be repulsed and with a heavy dose of morality in the twelve or twenty-four pages. The heroine of The Crafty Chambermaid or Beauty and Virtue Rewarded holds out against the efforts of the young merchant, son of her master, finally winning the approval of the young man's master and ensnaring the boy by maintaining her chastity. The messages included in this tale are typical of the chapbook morality. Said she, when propositioned:

> ". . .noble sir, I am poor and mean
> And you are a person of honour and fame,
> You ne'er do intend to make me your wife.
> I'll ne'er be your harlot as long as I've life."

Thus, we are told, the alternative to virtue is prostitution. And, we are also warned, young servant girls should be aware of the dishonourable objectives of upper class males, while not aspiring to such a social level. In a grove of trees the young man "attempts her chastity" and the crafty chambermaid points out, for our benefit:

> "Beauty is a flower that quickly will fade,
> A woman is nothing when virtue betrayed,
> And if to defile me you do me admire,
> There's harlots enough for to quench your desire."

Again, the harlot alternative is raised; it is fortunate that those poor souls existed. In this case, the young man promises marriage after intercourse, a reasonable offer to many maidens in the eighteenth century, as we have seen.

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[49] Anon, The New Proverbs on the Pride of Women, p. 2, Stirling, 1799, L.C. Vol. 2865.

However, our heroine was aware that such an offer brought no guarantees, especially when presented by a man of higher social standing. In this case a happy marriage is the result, and, typically, the anonymous author cannot resist reinforcing the moral:

> "Young virgins by this you may plainly see
> Virtue's a jewel recommended to be,
> And strive like this maiden your honour to keep.
> It's better than riches and jewels so great."[50]

The Lauriston Castle collection contains numerous chapbooks of this type, many of which hold out the hope that if a poor girl can maintain her virtue, she can escape from the chains of poverty and drudgery. This is the only type of tale that I encountered which offered that prospect; as we shall see, in most cases satisfaction with inherited social status is the message, an indication that alternative means of social betterment were rather limited.

Virtue Rewarded or the Fortunate Servant Maid also extolls the benefits of virtue under pressure, with a different but typical twist. In this case the farmer's daughter is forced to seek a job in the city after the failure of the family farm. Farm girls are usually portrayed as naive "yokels", an appeal to the largely urban chapbook audience. This girl is enticed by a sophisticated "madam" trying to enroll the heroine in her stable of harlots. The heroine refuses to cooperate and runs away. After great hardship she encounters "Sir Harry Sinclair." Once again, the upper class male tries to violate the innocent maiden and make her his mistress. Again, the girl refuses. And, once again, the man's intentions are assumed and are not the subject of condemnation or ridicule. And again, virtue is rewarded, and the girl escapes from her lower class status into marriage with royalty. The happy couple rides off in a coach, a symbol of escape into luxury and

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[50] Anon, The Crafty Chambermaid, pp. 2-8.

happiness. As is often the case in the chapbooks, the story is followed by a series of verses emphasizing the moral.[51]

Most of the books are as lacking in subtlety as these two examples indicate. Many, such as these, "advertise" the moral in the extended title or on the title page. Thus the title page of The Happy Bride proclaims that it will be a "Testimony of the happy results sure to follow from pursuing a course of Honesty and Fidelity."[52] Virtue is often rewarded, as in the garland which predates Shaw's Eliza Doolittle in Pygmalion, Helen the Fair, the flower seller who marries a nobleman.[53] In other cases the virtuous maiden happily marries within her own class, a more realistic prospect. Blue Eyed Mary's sailor lover actually did return from the sea, and this farmer's daughter, who faithfully awaited his return, is rewarded:

> "She went with him without delay
> Forsook her cows and dairy,
> And he made her a captain's bride,
> The charming blue-eyed Mary."[54]

The Weaver's Daughter proclaimed: "Till death I'll tarry, unless I marry, no man alive shall my ruin prove." She lived happily, and married, ever after.[55] Susanna Cope even managed to enlist in the Army and hide her identity and sex in pursuit of her boyfriend. Her virtue and determination are rewarded

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[51] Anon, Virtue Rewarded, or the Fortunate Servant Maid, pp. 1-20, n.p., n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[52] Anon, The Happy Bride, or Virtuous Country Maid Rewarded, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[53] Anon, Helen The Fair, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852.

[54] Anon, Blue Eyed Mary, p. 1, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852.

[55] Anon, The Weaver's Daughter, p. 1, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852.

in a conclusion pleasing to any reader who could only dream of a happier life.[56]

Unfortunately, not all the endings were happy ones. Although many in society believed, as Spufford, that "a promise of marriage gave adequate security for intercourse,"[57] the unhappy ending was the more likely outcome in the popular literature, with the moral message normally directed at lower class women. The popular ballads, the garlands, often portrayed death as the ultimate result of lost virtue. After the soldier conquers and abandons the miller's daughter, "there a corpse lay she" on The Banks of Allan Water.[58] The Lass of Fair Wone, a parson's daughter, becomes pregnant after submitting to a nobleman, who rejects her plea for marriage, beats her and expels her from the house. Her "reward" is not a coach-ride into a glorious future, but suicide, after killing the newborn child.[59] This tragic ending reinforces the vulnerability of the bastard's mother in society. Faced with a future of poverty, lack of child support from the father, moral and practical rejection by a society in which her job opportunities may be limited to prostitution, murder and suicide seem to be the only alternatives.

CHASTITY AND THE CHURCH

Religious warnings concerning chastity are prevalent throughout the chapbook literature. In many instances the fallen woman earned redemption through confession and repentance, often leaving behind a warning for others, the readers. There does not appear to be a variation in the religious tracts over the two-century period studied, although it is often difficult to

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[56] Anon, The Life and Extraordinary Adventures of Susanna Cope, The British Female Soldier, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[57] Spufford, Small Books, p. 167.

[58] Anon, Banks of Allan Water, p. 1, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852.

[59] Anon, Loss of Fair Wone, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852.

pinpoint the dates of the publications. Spufford in Small Books, p. 196, notes that "Puritan propaganda was in part responsible for the religious works produced by the presses," perhaps an acceptable explanation for the seventeenth century but a doubtful commentary on the religious publications of the eighteenth century. As we shall see in Chapter Six, it appears that increasingly the eighteenth century religious chapbooks were reprints of specific sermons and, later, the publications of the Society for the Promulgation of Christian Knowledge.

It is heartening to encounter the occasional reprimand for both men and women, an indication that man's share in the guilt is recognized, consistent with Puritan beliefs. In The Nottingham Tragedy the gentleman's chambermaid is deflowered by the wealthy farmer's son and then killed, with her twin babies, by the bounder, who had sworn to her that "you are my life, my joy, my chiefest aid." After the boy refuses to accept his responsibility, the fallen maiden responds:

> "Curse the man that did me thus enthral,
> And me defile, which sin is worst of all.
> But oh! false man, remember there's a God
> Will scourge you with his heavy rod:
> Tho' you my tender heart do thus betray,
> Remember there will come a judgment day."

The horrible man even calls her a whore, to reinforce the moral message, but, horray!, he is caught and hung -- for murder. The conclusion of this English story is unusual in that it warns both males and females, not just females, about courtship:

> "So, young men and maidens, all beware
> And never strive each other to ensnare;
> Shun Satan's works, and in your love prove true.
> Then God above will ever prosper you."[60]

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[60] Anon, The Nottingham Tragedy, pp. 3023, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

The religious chapbooks presented a consistent message of the fall from grace with the possibility of redemption, usually seized by the sinning maiden as she went to the gallows or stake. The final act of contrition served two purposes. The reader knew that punishment would result from transgression. She -- for these tales seemed to be primarily directed at women -- also knew that confession was possible, with a stern but merciful God forgiving her sins. This was apparently an appeal to the sinner-reader to change her ways before it was too late. There was still an opportunity to obtain God's forgiveness.

A Warning to Youth Especially Young Women Against the Sin of Murder contains an address by "Mr. Justice Hardinge" and appears to be based on an original late seventeenth century case. It illustrates the moral that these books contained. The sermon is directed at Mary Morgan, who has murdered her illegitimate new-born daughter, and the judge's condemnation includes the crimes of murder and illicit sex. The first half of the oration is pure "hell fire and brimstone," the second a plea for confession, with the promise of redemption. The judge advises Mary that she is guilty of murdering the "offspring of your secret and vicious love." He then pontificates:

> "It is true that if the child had lived, it would have proved your crime in its birth, and your shame would have been the consequence of that proof."

Having ignored the fact that it requires a male and a female to produce a bastard, Justice Hardinge adds that shame and poverty would have resulted if the child had lived, continuing:

> "When you had criminal passions to indulge, and criminal pleasures to enjoy, you had no fear of the risk. You began with incontinence, criminal in itself, but full of complicated peril in its tendency to worse crimes. Your next guilt was to mask the world in the concealment of your pregnancy. . . ."

It is interesting to note that sexual appetite is defined as a crime for a woman, but there still is no mention of the man. After pointing out that Mary had "taken the chance of dying impenitent," the Judge thunders:

> "Thus it is that one guilt produces another, especially in your sex, when entered into criminal intercourse with ours. The natural delicacy and modesty of the female character entangles all its progress of guilt, and a succession of accumulated crimes are generated by the fear (if not the sense) of shame. Had you escaped, many other girls (thoughtless and light as you have been) would have been encouraged by your escape to commit your crime, with hope of your impunity."

So, the delicate and modest female "entered" into "criminal intercourse" with a man, not vice versa, leading to a succession of crimes, and she must be displayed as a lesson to other girls, lest they be tempted to follow Mary's example. The Judge pronounces the anticipated death sentence, expressing the hope that Mary will repent and find mercy on judgment day. En route to her death Mary confesses, prays to God for forgiveness and identifies the father. There is no mention of the latter's fate.[61]

For the authors of these religious chapbooks, the final words of the poor girl on the gallows in The Gloucestershire Tragedy were ideal:

> "Kissing his [the lover's] lips she cried aloud,
> Receive a Sinner now I come
> Dear Christ receive a sinful Soul,
> She ne'er spoke more but off she swung."

In this edition the ten page tragedy was followed by a hymn, "To Jesus We Hang Upon the Word," a timely gallows-related title, and a prayer arising from purgatory:

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[61] Hardinge, A Warning to Youth Especially Young Women Against the Sin of Murder, pp. 1-24, Bristol, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

"For my days are consumed away like smoke, and
my bones are burnt up as it were a fire brand."[62]

Fair Rosamond also "with an abundance of tears and piteous wringing of hands. . .begged mercy of God for her youthful sins and failings, desirous that all other stately beauties might be warned by her fall, not to be proud and aspiring, but rather contented with a lowly state and condition."[63]

This example illustrates another theme that is apparent in many of these tales, one that contrasts with the promise of escape for the virtuous poor girl who happily marries the nobleman. In a great many chapbooks the poor youth is urged to ignore the desire to escape from poverty and lower class status by marrying up in society. It is interesting to observe that The History of Fair Rosamond, which concerns the life of King Henry II's concubine, was still popular five to six hundred years after the events described.

Despite the evidence presented thus far, it is an undeniable fact that most women, approximately ninety percent, did marry, often happily, many having participated in pre-marital intercourse, not rarely with a resulting pregnancy. In the next chapter we will evaluate the position of the married woman in the family. First it is important to evaluate how these marriages took place, specifically the role of the parents and the extent of freedom available for young lovers to make their own choices.

MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS

As is the case with other subjects relating to courtship and the family, Lawrence Stone provides his perspective on marriage arrangements, and other historians sharply disagree with Stone. Our evaluation of this subject

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[62] Anon, The Gloucestershire Tragedy, pp. 10, 12.

[63] Anon, Fair Rosamond, p. 21.

begins with Stone's conclusions. In summary, Stone lists four ranges of options in regard to marriage: (1) parental choice only; (2) a child's resistance to, and often rejection of, a parental choice; (3) parental resistance to, and often rejection of, a child's choice; (4) complete freedom for a young person to select a mate.[64] Stone argues that during the early years of this period there was a strong tradition of obeying one's elders, with punishment rather than mutual affection as the basis for parent-child relationships. This tended to reinforce the parental role in the choice of marriage partners, a function supported by the church.[65] In his discussion of the "Open Lineage Family" of the sixteenth century, Stone emphasizes that parental arrangement of marriage was based on economic and social factors, with minimal involvement of the prospective marriage partners. During the seventeenth century, Stone's "Restricted, Patriarchal Nuclear Family" period, he sees a modest shift. He maintains that absolute parental control over partners continued but that the children gained a veto power. Stone's next "Family", "Closed Domesticated Nuclear" marked the switch to children's choice with parental consent, during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[66]

Of course, the foundation for parental concern and involvement was based on the view of "marriage as a means of transferring and augmenting resources."[67] Practical rather than romantic factors were especially strong among all classes during the early seventeenth century. For the gentry, status, title, land and inheritance were of great importance. Among the lower classes the practicalities of married life, the need to have some

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[64] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 270.

[65] Ibid, pp. 270-272.

[66] Ibid, pp. 4-9, 31, 34.

[67] Spufford, Small Books, p. 193.

resources to live on with some financial security, often dictated a practical rather than a purely amorous outlook, although often the two were compatible. The predominance of parental influence was strengthened by close kin relationships. The younger poor tended to remain home, as the job opportunities elsewhere were not yet as attractive as they would become. The younger gentry also tended not to wander, for the cities did not yet offer the attractions for them either, nor were transportation facilities well developed.

In considering parental involvement, it must be remembered that the wife took on the class status of her husband. Parents were very concerned that the male, who was the controller of the property and the recipient of the inheritance, not stray from his social class.[68] Parents were pleased if their daughters could improve their class status through marriage, but the pressure on the males to avoid such entanglements was strong. As Porter points out , for the elites "the happiness of the child was often secondary to family interests."[69] For the middle and lower classes it appears that affection played a greater role than for the gentry, but affection was modified by the need for "an astute bargain in order to set up working household partnerships." Through marriage "women gained the strength, protection, status and earning power of husbands; men got the domestic management and labour of a wife (and the savings nest egg she might bring with her)."[70] That "nest egg" for the poor would often be the savings from work as a female servant or a few personal belongings provided by her parents. For wealthier girls, a more significant dowry would accompany the bride. Spufford reinforces Porter's

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[68] Ibid, p. 162.

[69] R. Porter, English Society in the Eighteenth Century, p. 40, Harmondsworth, 1982.

[70] Ibid, p. 45.

view that although poorer men were freer to select their own mates than their wealthy counterparts, they often did so looking for an "efficient economic assistant rather than an affectionate companion."[71] Of course, those goals were not necessarily incompatible, and the combination of the two was the ideal objective.

Stone concludes that the primary motive for marriage during the period moved toward personal affection and "long-term" compatibility from the primacy of economic, social and political factors.[72] Stone notes a variety of factors influencing the perceived trend: the decreasing influence of a puritanical church, with increased mutual affection between parent and child; the proliferation of romantic plays and novels in the eighteenth century, indications of a more romantic environment; the loosened ties to the family of lower class youth attracted by job opportunities in cities and towns. As a result, Stone reports on a trend toward children's initiative in marriage decisions, with parental veto.[73] The provisions of the Marriage Act of 1753 seem to indicate recognition of the increasing importance of the children's perspective in the choice of partners. The Act required parental consent for the marriage of children under twenty-one and the publication of banns, both provisions designed to discourage quick weddings and liaisons based on excessive romanticism. Stone denies the acceptability of physical attraction, often reserved for relationships with mistresses, and romantic love.[74]

Linda Pollock reports that the evidence does not support Stone's conclusions in regard to personal influence on marriage decisions,

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[71] Spufford, Small Books, p. 193.

[72] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 270.

[73] Ibid, pp. 272, 288, 316.

[74] Ibid, p. 270.

questioning the extent of parental "brutality" to enforce obedience.[75] Ralph Houlbrooke, evaluating Stone's perspective, claims that "the degree of change which took place in thinking about conjugal and parental responsibilities and the importance of affection within the family is exaggerated," claiming that Stone is too confident about the effect of "ideals, practices and experience upon the individual person." Houlbrooke believes that even with his qualifying statements, Stone exaggerates "the speed, extent and uniformity of change."[76]

Wrightson criticizes Stone for devoting "insufficient care to the exploration of the experience of the mass of the population. As a result, his interpretation has been elaborated on the basis of the historical experience of the aristocracy, upper gentry and urban plutocracy with which he is primarily concerned. . . .for whatever their historical prominence, the familial behavior of the English elite was far from representative of that of their countrymen." Writing about the seventeenth century, Wrightson then proceeds to make the ensuing distinction in regard to matchmaking:

> "There can be no doubt that in the opinion of the moralistic authors of the 'conduct books', it was one of the chief duties of parents to 'bestow' their children in marriage. This is not necessarily to say, however, that this advocated parentally arranged marriages. Indeed, the frequent employment of the term 'arranged' by historians, with the implication of unilateral parental choice, may be said to have blurred our perception of this problem."[77]

Wrightson points out that William Perkins, a seventeenth century author of moralistic guides, wrote that "parental duty might be discharged either by

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[75] L. A. Pollock, Forgotten Children, p. 14, Cambridge, 1983.

[76] R. A. Houlbrooke, The English Family 1450-1700, p. 14, London, 1984.

[77] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 71-2.

providing matches for children or by advising children on the suitability of prospective spouses." Wrightson also gives evidence that "the initiative. . . .might come from either parent or child" and that the"consent or good will of all those concerned" is what was important. There were great variations by class: "Among the aristocracy, the urban elite and leading gentry families, as Stone has demonstrated, marriage was a matter of too great significance, both in the property transactions which it involved and in the system of familial alliances which it cemented, to be left to the discretion of the young people concerned." However, for most families, by the seventeenth century, "both child marriages and crudely arranged marriages which took no account of the opinions of the prospective spouses were largely things of the past. Nonetheless, parents commonly initiated marriages and parental influences on the choice of spouse frequently remained decisive, even though the formal consent was willingly given. . . ."[78]

This balanced view is confirmed by others. Mendelson writes: "If any conclusion can be drawn from these examples it is the importance that contemporaries attached to giving all parties the opportunity to consent to the union. In the two extremes of elopement and forced marriage in which parents or children withheld their consent, the union was more liable to founder. Arranged marriage did not necessarily lead to unhappy unions, so long as children were offered a reasonable chance to express their own inclinations."[79]

MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS IN THE CHAPBOOKS

The chapbooks present a mixed picture, although parental involvement in the marriage decision is a constant theme. Overly rigid

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[78] Ibid, p. 72.

[79] S. H. Mendelson, 'Stuart women's diaries and occasional memoirs', in M. Prior (ed.), Women in English Society 1500-1800, p. 194, London, 1985.

parental influence can lead to tragedy, as in the Scottish story of Andrew Lammie, in which the heroine dies broken hearted, never again seeing the lover forbidden to her by her parents.[80] In The Tragic Ballad of the Nobleman's Cruelty to his Son, the young man does secretly marry the servant girl and father her child. The girl's efforts to conceal the father's identity are unsuccessful, and the furious nobleman and his wife send their son off to the navy. This time he dies, and the parents lament:

> "His father said, I have ruined my son,
> His mother cries out, oh! what have I done."[81]

In all these examples there is a social class difference between the lovers, and the unhappy endings underscore the basic theme that marriage outside of class often leads to a tragic ending. Such is also the case in The Gloucestershire Tragedy, but with a slightly different slant. In this story the young girl refuses to marry her father's choice, and our hearts leap with joy and hope when the father proclaims:

> "Thou shalt not wed against thy mind,
> Might I have all that e'er I see
> I would not force my child said he."

Then, the situation is reversed and the message reappears. The heroine falls in love with a suitor beneath her station, a wig maker. Initially, she obeys her father and refuses to marry the man. However, consumed with passion, she later poisons her father. The inevitable conviction ensues. En route to the stake, she provides the moral:

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[80] Anon, Andrew Lammie, n.p., 1788, L.C. Vol. 2899. Other editions in the collection were all printed in Scotland: Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, Falkirk, Stirling and Paisley.

[81] Anon, The Tragic Ballad of the Nobleman's Cruelty to His Son, Tewsbury, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

"All you that are come to see me die,
Behold and see my destiny,
See that the Lord you love and fear,
And honour you your parents dear.
Serve God your parents will obey,
For you have no friends alive but they."[82]

Thus, the chapbooks encourage parents to be reasonable, but affirm the parents' right to be actively involved, a position close to reality and one that does not vary over time, contrary to Stone's thesis.

The most interesting courtship story I encountered, A Dialogue Between Honest John and Loving Kate will be referred to several times in this paper. This is an informative story, with dialogue and revealed inner thoughts. The modern reader does become concerned about the outcome. Kate and John are two servants in love, with kind masters and mistresses who help support their dreams, including their desire to have a beautiful wedding with gammon bacon and ale, the pleb's caviar and champagne. They also hope to own their own farm, purchased with their savings and with the assistance of their bosses, and to have servants. Their courtship takes place in an ale house, not in bed, but Kate expresses the "correct" perspective on ale houses: "I had rather remain a servant still than be a mistress where there is drunkenness and debauchery." Kate has no pretensions about being a lady, for "true love is more valuable than riches," and she maintains her virginity until her wedding night, when she is "conducted to her bride-bed. . . .and they were left to do as their parents had done before them." This gentle story affirms that two young people can happily marry within their class, supported by kind and generous masters. At this level for two servants far from home, the question of parental approval does not arise. Both Kate

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[82] Anon, The Gloucestershire Tragedy, pp. 3, 9.

and John are primarily concerned about accumulating enough savings to support themselves.[83]

The chapbooks, written for a lower class audience, do not generally discuss the marriage dilemmas of the wealthy, except in grandiose romantic tales or, as we have seen, when the poor servant maid does escape a life of poverty in the carriage of her noble spouse. In the eternal dilemma of romantic love in conflict with financial considerations, the chapbooks present both perspectives.

> "Never marry a wife merely for beauty; a fair wife without a fortune is like a fine house without furniture; you may please yourself with the prospect, but there is nothing to keep you warm."[84]

There is no doubt about that message, nor about the one contained in the garland Roger and Nelly (CB-1):

> "Then he said to his dear Nell,
> Let us in wedlock join;
> But first tell me thy fortune,
> And then I'll tell thee mine."

There follows a list of both their possessions, including both what the lower classes could be expected to have (box without top, a spade without a handle) to the dreams (a horse and a house).[85] The heroic Jack of Newbury's second wife is a maid servant who offers her small dowry, which is rejected by the generous Jack, whose own holdings include two hundred spinning looms with two hundred spinning maids and a house with five cooks, a butcher and

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[83] Anon, John and Kate, pp. 2-15. Spufford comments about the realism of this story, which is of two lovers of "modest ambition", a tale which would not appeal to upper class audiences but would attract lower class readers. Spufford, Small Books, p. 60.

[84] G. Gurrell, Rules and Maxims for the Conduct of Human Life, p. 5, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

[85] Anon, Roger and Nelly, p. 1, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852.

various other members of the wealthy's support system. Jack was one of the fortunate.[86] Most had much less and, as the chapbooks indicate, had to be quite concerned about affording marriage. Thus, the villain in The Yorkshire Tragedy -- or A Warning to Perjured Lovers, a grocer's son, refuses to marry the gentleman's daughter unless her father will settle his estate on the boy.[87] Finally, there is one example that I encountered with a specific appeal for the romantic, rather than the practical: "Better to get a fortune in a wife than fortune with a wife" is the advice contained in The Good Mother's Legacy, a conclusion acceptable to the vast majority of young people marrying for love, not money.[88]

THE BAWDY LITERATURE

No report on the chapbook perspective on courtship and women would be complete without reviewing the stereotypes presented in the bawdy and satirical literature directed at the "macho male" audience. With the growing sexual tolerance and freedom of the eighteenth century, there was a marked increase in the feared accompaniments: venereal disease, pornography, and, as we shall investigate later, extra-marital affairs. This increased freedom and the Post-Restoration decline in a rigidly religious influence resulted in the publication in the early eighteenth century of pornographic novels and a large number of amusing and offensively bawdy garlands and tales, many of which cannot be quoted here. Some of these are pointlessly disgusting; although Samuel Pepys reports that he bought one, they are obviously written for a very low class ale house audience and depict

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[86] Anon, The History of the Famous Clothier of England Called Jack of Newbury, pp. 18-19, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2737.

[87] Anon, The Yorkshire Tragedy or A Warning to all Perjured Lovers, p. 3, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

[88] S. (Sarah More), The Good Mother's Legacy, p. 7, Dublin, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2903. Other copies, published in London and Bath, are dated 1795.

only female physical attributes and attractions. The images presented are worth noting.

The songs and garlands were among the crudest anti-feminine offenders. When I Was Young reports on a girl who sold her maidenhead seven times,[89] while The Merry Medley or Dick and Doll's Garland reflects on an insatiable and sexually aggressive girl.[90] As the title might suggest, The Sporting Ladies[91] is disgusting in every respect and very sexist, as are such other "gems" as Long Holly Fail[92], Poor Robin[93], and The Ruff Toupee[94]. Nine Times a Night illustrates the perspective: "For nine times a night is too much for a man, I can't do it myself, but my sister Nan can."[95] In The Fair Penitent the sinful girl is promised redemption by the Friar if she will repeat her sin with him.[96]

Lewd sexism was not restricted to garlands. The almanacs listed predictions in reference to marriage and mate selection, based on the rolls of the dice and playing cards chosen from the pack. These often contained satirical advice such as that found in The True Egyptian Fortune Teller about how "to know whether a female be a pure virgin" and such do-it-yourself instructions as: "To Make True Love Powder"; "To Know If a Young

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[89] Anon, When I Was Young, p. 1, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852. This theme is not restricted to lower class literature but is also incorporated in Defoe's Moll Flanders.

[90] Anon, The Merry Medley or Dick and Doll's Garland, Wolverhampton, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[91] Anon, The Sporting Ladies, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[92] Anon, Long Holly Fail, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[93] Anon, Poor Robin, n.p., 1795, L.C. Vol. 2899.

[94] Anon, The Ruff Toupee, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[95] Anon, Nine Times A Night, p. 1, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[96] Anon, The Fair Penitent, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

Man be Chaste"; "How to Restore a Lost Maidenhead"; and "Signs of Love and Speedy Marriage."[97]

On a less bawdy, more serious level, two themes emerge in the books directed at male audiences. The first is the portrait of the scheming woman, out to ensnare a spouse. In George Barnwell:

> "When youth once gives way to the arts of designing women, he is irrecoverably lost: He who but once submits to gaze upon their sophisticated beauties, puts himself in their power, and is no longer master of himself."

and,

> "Her whole desire was money, and his passion for her got the better of his principles. . . .reason had no place in his mind."

In his last speech George warns all men "to have a care of the wiles of lewd women" and "he desired them to leave off all deceits for the time to come, in relation to women; for it was their own falsehood in debauching them on a promise of marriage and to deserting them that made them give themselves up to all manner of wickedness and do their utmost to ruin every man in their power." The last sentence at least provides a perspective on man's role in fostering the "wickedness" of women.[98]

Some men lamented in frustration:

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[97] Anon, The True Egyptian Fortune Teller, p. 9, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2737.

[98] Anon, George Barnwell, pp. 5-7, 15.

"Come tell me where the maid is found,
Whose heart can live without deceit,
And I will range the world around,
To sigh one moment at her feet.
Show me on earth a thing so rare,
I'll own all miracles are true;
To make one maid sincere and fair,
O', 'tis the utmost Heaven can do."[99]

This illustrates the second theme, the unreliable nature of the woman who is not "sincere and fair."

These chapbooks also provided satirical advice for the scheming woman, reinforcing that image in the process. Mother Bunch's Closet ("How to get good wives and husbands") provides assistance for both sexes, including, for example, the appropriate ritual to be followed on St. Agnes Day (January 21st) to enable a woman to dream of her eventual husband while asleep in a "clean shift" with her right hand under her head, instructions to be carefully followed. The sometimes amusing advice included warnings about men with red hair (cheap), or yellow (jealous) or black ("dogged"). Men are told to beware of women with long noses, "scalding" brows and thin lips, while girls are told to "be sure to hold your legs together 'till the authority is signed, when you may open them as wide as you can." "Authority," it should be noted, seems to refer to contract, not marriage ceremony in Church. Boys and girls are told "kiss and tell is foul play," and the wise Mother Bunch concludes with this warning:

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[99] Anon, Come, Tell Me Where the Maid is Found, p. 1, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852.

Then Mother Bunch went round the room
And told them what would be their doom,
Of they her daughters did betray,
And steal their maidenheads away.
Each should be punished with a Bride
By whom they should be horrify'd."[100]

Mother Bunch did, at least, place some of the responsibilities with the men, while emphasizing the typical author's concern with chastity. These publications placed the responsibility primarily with the female, emphasizing potential rewards for the chaste and severe punishment for the fallen woman, while recognizing male sexual appetite.

This recognition of the double standard faithfully mirrored the general attitudes of society, which looked upon women as men's "property." The chapbook authors' extensive use of passive and docile adjectives to describe maidens, while ignoring the minority of females who increasingly were taking more active roles in society, especially in the eighteenth century, reflected the general outlook on the appropriate positions of the female and contrasted with the strong, masculine images presented for males.

In other ways the chapbooks reflect society quite accurately. These publications discouraged social mobility, portraying young women who married or who had sexual relations with upper class men as sufferers. The only exceptions are found in the unrealistic romantic tales; most of them had their origins in the oral tradition. Written for a lower class, female audience, these romantic tales were essentially escapist, providing an opportunity for fantasy and for a brief departure from the drudgery of everyday life. In addition to extolling satisfaction with social status, as so clearly demonstrated in John and Kate, the middle class publishers and authors of these books

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[100] Anon, Mother Bunch's Closet, pp. 5-6, 16, Burslem, 1797, L.C. Vol. 2718.

accurately portrayed the need for a financial foundation prior to marriage, a definite factor in marriage decisions.

Thus, the popular literature tended to reflect an ideal for the unmarried maiden. To the extent that the ideal included elements which also reflected fact and ideal in society itself, in respect to women's role and in relation to her prospective mate, the chapbooks provide us with a reasonably accurate portrait of the maiden's life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However, in presenting the picture of the passive virgin satisfied with her status, the authors of this literature do not accurately reflect aspects of life that were affecting a large percentage of the population, male and female. Not all maidens who participated in pre-marital intercourse ended up as prostitutes or corpses; many went to the altar, often visibly pregnant, while others struggled to raise their bastard children when marriage did not follow conception. These books do not touch upon these results.

The popular books are reasonably close to Wrightson's position on the selection of mates, when the entire body of literature is taken into account. All the stories reviewed insist on parental involvement in the selection. Some present pictures of extremely dire consequences if parental wishes are not followed, especially if there is a class difference between the lovers. Other books emphasize that the ideal marriage results when both the parents and children are in concord on the selection of a partner. A few enlightened authors warn parents that enforced marital decisions can result in disastrous consequences. In view of the lack of dates for so many chapbooks, it is not possible to determine whether the more enlightened publications were later than the more harsh, but there does not appear to be any significant variation over time.

The most striking omission in the literature from our perspective is the complete lack of any reference to female sexuality. Intercourse for procreation, not pleasure, is the theme, as we shall investigate further in the next chapter. Certainly pre-marital intercourse, presumably undertaken for pleasure not procreation, is presented as a dreadful sin with tragic consequences.

These tales recognize the male urges, and the bawdy tales depict naughty, sinful women as seducers who serve only to relieve the male sex drive. We know from the research that intercourse and "heavy petting" were then, as now, an integral part of courtship for responsible young adults. The figures on pre-nuptial pregnancy confirm the incidence of intercourse. It is not reasonable to believe that all pre-nuptial fornication was always practiced by immoral women or was always an effort at entrapment. It is also unreasonable to believe that only males derived pleasure from such activities, yet healthy female sexuality is not recognized in the popular literature.

In summary, the chapbooks portray the ideal woman as an ornament, arriving as a virgin to a wedding bed shared with a hard working male of her own social class. Sexually, he is experienced. Her virginity is treated as a "social fact" not just a biological status. She is depicted primarily as an object, with virtually no recognition as a multi-faceted personality. Why is this so?

The final answers to that question must be evaluated in the context of the subsequent chapters, which deal with a woman's life after courtship. Here we can consider some tentative conclusions. Some of this literature is escapist, offering fantasy for women and men ensnared in the dreary life of the lower classes, a majority residing in urban areas. Certainly the

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[101] K. Hastrup, 'The semantics of biology: virginity', in Ardener, p. 50.

chapbooks were marketed as entertainment. However, the predominantly male publishers and authors also recognized self-interest. In addition to selling books and maintaining their more pleasant middle class standard of living, they had an interest in supporting a value system in which they believed. They also benefitted from a non-threatening, docile and accepting lower class. It was not in the publishers' and authors' interest to write about or encourage ideas and activities that could threaten their status in society, nor was it in their interest to encourage an increasing population of illegitimate children who had to be supported by the middle and upper classes. It was in their interest to combat the threatening reality, known from the studies, that pre-marital pregnancies did pervade society. To the credit of the publishers and authors, they did recognize that a reasonable parent-child agreement on the appropriate marriage partner was a positive contribution to a stable society, provided that the marriage was between two from the same class.

The ultimate result, as it relates to courtship and the maiden, is a reflection of middle and upper class ideals concerning the role and status of the lower class woman. This portrait is incomplete, as it ignores the reality uncovered by the social historians. As we move beyond courtship to the more mundane subjects of the family and the working world, we will evaluate whether these tentative conclusions are valid.

CHAPTER FOUR

WOMEN, MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

> "In your conduct as a wife, be not above the duties of that important station. Be scrupulous to avoid every advance toward impropriety and unchastity. Your fair fame is a jewel of inestimable value, ennobling the most humble, and the mother of female virtue. Be courteous, and mild of speech, not disputing about trifles, nor obstinate in having your own way. Overlook your husband's failings, and reprove them by setting him a better example. Prefer neatness to tawdriness, and adopt frugality with neatness."[1]

The prevailing view of woman's role in marriage in the chapbooks largely supports the perspective of seventeenth and eighteenth century society:

> "As a sailor's all one as a piece of the ship,
> So a wife is a piece of myself."[2]

As we shall see in this chapter, the popular literature emphasized a passive role for married women. That function is described by Porter as "wife, mother, housekeeper, domestic servant," with the single woman's alternative as "maiden aunt."[3] Although custom and law did provide for a somewhat more attractive alternative for the married woman who was sufficiently forceful to take advantage of it, the chapbooks extolled the submissive, compliant, dutiful image, virtually ignoring any alternatives.

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[1] Anon, The Lover's Guide to Matrimony, p. 4, Newcastle-on-Tyne, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2770.

[2] Anon, The Gentlemen's Concert, p. 1, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[3] Porter, English Society, p. 36.

THE ALTERNATIVE ROUTES TO MARRIAGE

In view of the great number of chapbooks dedicated to courtship and pre-marital virtue, it is surprising that there is so little mention of the marriage process and the alternative routes to union that so confused the picture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. To understand the significance of that omission, we must evaluate the extent of the options. Wrightson[4] and Ingram[5] discuss marital options in some detail. Both describe the three forms of marriage recognized under ecclesiastical law as "lawful conjunction."[6] In the church's view, the ideal was a church wedding, conducted after the calling of the banns three times. In some cases a license could be procured, in lieu of the banns, an expensive but fashionable alternative. Both options were designed to ensure that the two parties were legally able to be married and that the union was not proscribed by impediments, i.e., consanguinity, affinity or a prior marital contract. Although the ecclesiastical courts had jurisdiction in cases regarding the marital bond while the secular courts were largely concerned with the spouses' property rights, "the fundamental principal was that an indissoluble bond was created (assuming that no basic impediment existed to bar the marriage) solely by the present consent of the parties, rather than by the act of coitus or by solemnization in church."[7] This rationale existed until the Marriage Act of 1753 and meant that two other forms of marriage were also condoned and recognized by law. Espousals based on the promise to marry expressed in the future tense ("per verba de futuro") were the least binding

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[4] Wrightson, English Society, p. 67

[5] M. Ingram, 'Spousals litigation in the English ecclesiastical courts c1350-c1640', in R. B. Outhwaite (ed.), Marriage and Society, Studies in the Social History of Marriage, p. 37, London, 1981.

[6] Wrightson, English Society, p. 67.

[7] Ingram, 'Spousals Litigation', in Outhwaite, p. 37.

option. As we observed in the preceding chapter, the chapbooks warned the unwary maiden about men using such vague promises to entice a girl into fornication. The pledge of future marriage "did not at once create an irrevocable union" but "could be dissolved by mutual consent, by the continual absence of one of (the parties to the promise), and by fornication with a third party."[8] "De futuro" contracts were legally binding if sexual intercourse between the parties took place, but in practice it could be difficult, if not impossible, to uphold an espousal if one partner, often the male, disappeared or was unwilling to consent.

A "de futuro" espousal was also negated by a "per verba de praesenti" contract, the third form of legal marriage. This promise of wedlock was expressed in the present tense, in the presence of one or more witnesses. Matrimonial contracts could have conditions which had to be met before the union was binding. These normally related to parental consent and/or to property and wealth provisions. The church tried to ensure that the marriages were public in order to reduce fraud, to prevent marriages where impediments existed, and to guarantee the validity of the union. However, in practice, the church's efforts were often circumscribed with the assistance of individual bishops and priests, and the canon law of marriages was not difficult to circumvent. The granting of a license without publishing the banns, with "de praesenti" vows at the church door and immediately ensuing marriage by the priest with witnesses, undermined the church's position. Couples with impediments could flee from their parishes and be united in

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[8] Ibid, p. 38.

matrimony by priests far from their home, providing attractive income for the priests involved.[9]

Eventually, in the eighteenth century, the official church position had deteriorated to the point that Fleet marriages had become a popular alternative, especially for the labouring classes. Confronted by widespread confusion concerning what was, or was not, a "legal" marriage, common law lawyers adopted the position that the presence of a clergyman equalled the presence of the church and a church wedding negated all other impediments. In view of inheritance questions, these barristers wanted more than the reassurance of the partners or witnesses as proof of a legal marriage; consent alone was no longer sufficient, unless a minister had officiated. Although this wedding option required neither banns nor license and "lacked full ecclesiastical privileges," it was legally acceptable for the common law lawyers. For clergymen who were having a difficult time making a living, the appeal was obvious. For the marriage partners, the cost of the ceremony was similar to that for a "normal" church wedding, but the expense of taxes and banns could be avoided, with a speedy and private marriage guaranteed, far from the interference of family, neighbours, masters and parish priests. This approach to marriage was useful as a disguise of pre-nuptial pregnancy and as a means to circumvent parental veto. Although these were considered irregular marriages, church courts ruled that they were valid and were reluctant to act against the offending clergy. These marriage centres existed throughout the country, but the Fleet prison area was the primary locale.

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[9] This alternative was more difficult to achieve in Scotland, where the kirk tried to enforce its definition of marriage by requiring a certificate from the minister who officiated at a marriage if the couple wanted to move from one parish to another.

Brown estimates that from 1694 to 1754 between two hundred and three hundred thousand such unions were legalized in the Fleet prison area.[10]

After years of controversy and responding to the abuses which often accompanied these unions, such as questions about prior marriage contracts and bigamy, the Marriage Act of 1753 successfully put an end to these clandestine marriages, forcing those who could afford it to travel to Scotland to achieve the same result as that offered by Fleet and other wedding centres prior to 1753. In Scotland it was not until 1855 that this approach to matrimony was unacceptable, for the Scottish doctrine recognized the legality of marriage between two consenting, unmarried people of legal age (fourteen for boys, twelve for girls) if "physically capable of marriage and not within the prohibited degree of kinship."[11]

Thus, throughout this period the marriage laws were complex and archaic. To add to the complexity the church, which strongly supported parental approval of marriages, did not make such consent a requirement for a union. The clandestine marriage alternative provided the means for the partners to avoid parental control and other prohibitions, including the law against church marriages during Advent and Lent and on holy days. Spousals also provided a method to make a tentative commitment, attractive to a prospective partner uncertain of the suitability of the match but unwilling to forego it; desertion and remarriage would be easier without a church wedding.

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[10] R. L. Brown, 'The Rise and Fall of the Fleet Marriages' in R. B. Outhwaite (ed.), Marriage and Society, Studies in the Social History of Marriage, pp. 117-18, London, 1981.

[11] T. C. Smout, 'Scottish marriage, regular and irregular 1500-1940' in R. B. Outhwaite (ed.), Marriage and Society, Studies in the Social History of Marriage, p. 206, London, 1981.

MARRIAGE IN THE CHAPBOOKS

It is interesting to note that the chapbooks reviewed in the Lauriston Castle collection do not mention the various marital options. Even the bawdy tales that I reviewed did not refer to Fleet marriages; the only oblique references to "per verba de futuro" marriages were contained in the warnings to maidens discussed previously. It might be reasonable to assume that the conservative authors of this popular literature, influenced by the religious values of the period, did not want to publicize the clandestine alternatives. Certainly the glowing descriptions of the wedding celebrations would encourage a reader to marry openly. That alternative was the best for a lower class citizen who might need poor relief, for it led to baptism, legitimacy and for the well-off, the resulting protection of inheritance rights for those who had material goods to pass on.

Wrightson describes the wedding ceremony as "a very public and joyous occasion"[12] while Spufford terms it a "ritual event" with a wedding dinner and party.[13] No matter how poor, every effort went into a grand party; servants and apprentices were often helped by their masters, who might underwrite all or most of the expenses. Guests might also contribute to the cost of the food, drink and dancing, as at Scottish "penny weddings." Gifts were exchanged, including a gold ring if the couple could afford it. The gala event would end with the bedding of the bride, throwing the stocking and the ritual consumption of the sack posset, a hot drink of spiced, sweet milk curdled with dry French white wine. The honeymoon would follow, with a trend during this period away from a trip (if it could be afforded) accompanied by relatives to, in the late eighteenth century, the isolation and

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[12] Wrightson, English Society, p. 89.

[13] Spufford, Small Books, p. 159.

privacy of the modern honeymoon.[14] The extent of the honeymoon was determined by the social class and wealth of the couple.

There were no elopements, nor any small, quiet weddings in the Lauriston Castle chapbooks. The description of the wedding in Argulus and Parthenia is almost endless, and the event was a very lavish one;[15] the party in Johnny Armstrong only could have fed the imagination of a poor reader,[16] also the case with Jack of Newbury's "sumptuous" wedding party.[17] Honest John and Loving Kate, those appealing virgins, were helped by their masters, who paid for the dinner party of gammon bacon and beer, for the poorest classes a more modest and obtainable celebration than those portrayed in the other classics. The virtuous Kate had maintained her chastity until:

> "Then was Kate, by her friends' assistance, with all the merriment that could be made, conducted to her bride-bed; and soon after came John to the same place; their friends departed, and they were left to do as their parents had done before them."[18]

The most complete, albeit somewhat bawdy, description of a wedding is in The Pleasures of Matrimony, which contains several revealing points. It is the only tale uncovered which specifically mentions a church wedding and a parson. It does report that once consent was given, "the lover now has free access to his mistress, and may kiss above board (a reference to bundling boards?) as much as he pleases" before the church wedding; this appears to confirm a "de futuro" aspect to matrimony. This story continues with a

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[14] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 334.

[15] Anon, The Unfortunate Lovers or the History of Argulus and Parthenia, London, 1777, L.C. Vol. 2433.

[16] Anon, The Pleasant and Delightful History of Johnny Armstrong of Westerland, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2737.

[17] Anon, Jack of Newbury, p. 20.

[18] Anon, John and Kate, p. 24.

discussion of the marriage vows ("I take thee to be. . .") and a description of the wedding dinner and toasts to the couple. This possible reference to bundling boards is unique in the literature I reviewed; I encountered no evidence that bundling was the norm in British courtship.

The author of this chapbook advocates a gentle approach to consummation, although in a rather crude manner:

> "Dinner being over, the parson blesses them; when the midwife comes to the bridegroom, saying, Now, happy man, for a maidenhead; but there is a great discretion to be used in the gathering of it; it must be gently cropped for fear of spoiling; for if you go too boisterously to work you'll pull it up by the roots; but if you do it just by degrees, it is young and tender, and you'll find it coming."

After the dancing is over, the bride is accompanied to bed, but the groom must wait for the sack posset to come up, to "make the bridegroom kind and lusty too." After the stocking is thrown and the sack posset removed, the bride kisses the women goodbye, and the couple is locked in by the bride's mother.

In the morning, the mother returns to inquire about the wedding night experience. She brings sweet meats to the couple and offers wine with a newly laid egg in it, an obviously symbolic potion. A midwife is also present as the mother asks how many times the couple made love. Outside the bedchamber the party starts up again, with the bridesmen then responsible for another celebration.[19] This tale and several others, ends with the message also contained in Argulus and Parthenia:

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[19] Reid, The Pleasures of Matrimony, pp. 7-11.

"And when three times three months are run
Be Father of a hopeful Son:
That may from thee all Good derive,
And unto Ages hence survive:
Making the splendour of his Fame,
Perpetuate Argulus' name,
Raising to thee a Pyramid of Glory,
When Fame shall want a Trump to sound thy Story."[20]

This detailed chapbook description of the wedding festivities is not confirmed in the secondary sources reviewed; no reference to wedding night or next morning customs was encountered, although the tone of the festivities described in the chapbooks is consistent with the observations of Margaret Spufford and Keith Wrightson. The chapbooks indicate that marriage was a public event. They portray the "ideal" wedding celebration of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, whether it be the sumptuous parties of the aristocracy, about which a poor reader could only fantasize, or the more restrained but still lively festivities of the "Honest Johns" and "Loving Kates" to which a poor reader could aspire. Once again the popular literature does not reflect the unhappy side: the wedding parties of those who could not afford any celebration or of those who wed clandestinely or of the penny bridals. No tales were encountered with a pregnant bride at the altar, nor were there any descriptions of the church ceremony itself, with only the one mention cited above. There is no indication in the Lauriston Castle collection that there were various routes to matrimony, although there are warnings about placing too much credibility in commitments to future marriage, promises often used as a ruse to deflower a maiden.

Maidens were alerted to the importance of chastity; wives were advised that the chase was over, and procreation should begin immediately, to populate the world with more "Argulus" progeny, with emphasis on male offspring. All the authorities reviewed agree that procreation was one of the

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[20] Anon, Argulus and Parthenia, Book 4, p. 138.

prime motivations for marriage. Wrightson adds the "perpetuation of the church, the containment of sexual desire and mutual assistance and comfort" as the three additional ends of marriage as ordained by God.[21] The chapbooks in the Lauriston Castle collection deal with all four of these ends in a variety of ways.

In his studies of parish registers in England, P. E. H. Hair reports that in the seventeenth century "over a third bore their first child within twelve months of marriage, while between two-thirds and four-fifths had done so within two years."[22] Houston, in his study on women in Scotland from 1500 to 1800, estimates that wives were pregnant approximately twenty-five percent of the time that they were married and able to conceive, producing seven children with twenty-five to thirty month intervals between pregnancies. Procreation may have been "the major function of marriage," as stated by the moralist writers,[23] but in a world without effective contraceptive aids, pregnancy was almost unavoidable unless abstinence was practiced.

There were no efficient ways to prevent pregnancy; the only contraceptive options available were abstinence, abortion, coitus interruptus, the less effective options of prolonged breast feeding and and the use of herbs. Families faced a complex dilemma. Through temporary abstinence and prolonged breast feeding, births could be spaced out a bit but were unavoidable, and too many children could be a financial burden. Parents never knew how many of their children would survive the rigours of life to become adults, so effective family planning was extremely difficult, indeed virtually impossible.

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[21] Wrightson, English Society, p. 67.

[22] Hair, 'Bridal Pregnancy', p. 60.

[23] R. A. Houston, 'Women in the Economy and Society of Scotland, 1500-1800', p. 17, unpublished.

Wrightson reports on the subject from the perspective of one father, Ralph Josselin, a seventeenth century Essex clergyman:

> "Given the comparative frequency of confinements and the dangers attending childbirth, it is scarcely surprising that the diary of Ralph Josselin contains some suggestions that, as his family grew, anxiety for his wife's safety, coupled with the economic costs of raising his children, led Ralph to regard new pregnancies with diminishing enthusiasm. That others probably felt the same is strongly suggested by demographic statistics, produced by family reconstitution, which provides clear evidence that some form of family limitation was practiced in many families in the seventeenth century, probably by the use of prolonged lactation or by the practice of coitus interruptus."[24]

Children were seen as a "blessing of God," the desire for heirs (particularly males) was strong, and the high infant mortality rates virtually guaranteed a sad population control. It is estimated that in the seventeenth century twenty-five percent of all children died before reaching the age of ten.[25] Of course the great number of pregnancies that so often resulted put women at risk, for death in childbirth was a constant threat, although the outlook may have improved in the eighteenth century with the introduction of improved obstetric-gynaecological techniques. Often medical intervention may have been counter-productive. Caesareans were not re-introduced until the late eighteenth century, and with the lack of modern medicines, the risks for the

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[24] Wrightson, English Society, p. 105. Shorter suggests a rather startling alternative route to birth control: "The logical way to demonstrate that eroticism was unimportant in the life of the traditional couple is to show that they stopped having sex after they had ceased to want children." Shorter's "shadow of evidence" is based on the lack of effective contraceptive alternatives and on his claim that children stopped appearing. Shorter also claims that adultery was a "minimal" factor for husbands and "almost non-existent" for wives, claiming there was no real sex for pleasure motive. It is difficult, if not impossible, to accept these conclusions in view of the clear evidence discussed in this paper about pre-marital pregnancies and adultery. E. Shorter, The Making of the Modern Family, p. 246, London, 1976.

[25] Wrightson, English Society, p. 105.

woman were still very high, with a life expectancy of thirty to thirty-five years normal, but dramatically improved if a woman survived childbirth. The latter was one of the major causes of death for women aged fifteen to fifty.[26]

I did not encounter a single chapbook which dealt with childbirth, maternal or child mortality, or any reality related to birth. As we shall see, many tales pertaining to parent-child relationships were published, but none concerning how the child arrived, nor what the mother in labour confronted. Capp's study of the almanacs describes the instructions provided for marriage partners in regard to sex: intercourse was to be undertaken in moderation and avoided during menstruation and after blood letting, as deformed children could be the result. Various "astrological taboos" were listed, and sex during the summer months was very risky.[27]

The chapbooks, having "preached" virginity for single women, while virtually ignoring the arrival of children, assume that progeny will be a part of life. Children were conceived in bed by the marriage partners after, in the chapbooks' ideal world, the maiden lost her virginity on her wedding night. Shorter described traditional woman as "sexually cowed and emotionally brutalized by men," finding it "impossible to escape intercourse." While emphasizing that the primary objective of intercourse was procreating,

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[26] Houston, 'Women in the Economy', p. 15.

[27] Capp, Astrology, p. 120. Seventeenth century authors generally "depicted menstruation in language which at best might be neutral but was generally negative." Although there was a decline during the seventeenth century in "magical beliefs" concerning menstruation, the belief in taboos, including abstinence from intercourse during menstruation, continued. Patricia Crawford points out that "beliefs about the inferiority of women shaped ideas about menstruation and beliefs about menstruation helped reinforce the idea that women were inferior." P. Crawford, 'Attitudes to menstruation in Seventeenth-Century England', Past and Present, 91 (1981), 47-73.

Shorter describes it as "brief and brutal," a "duty not a joy" for women, with men always the initiators, even immediately post-partum.[28]

What do the chapbooks reveal? Very little of real substance concerning the female outlook on intercourse, other than its inevitability in marriage, with an emphasis on the production of children. While the bawdy tales directed at male readership tend to emphasize sexual pleasure for men, the more serious books refer to happy marriages and the production of heirs rather than female sexuality. Under certain set, unvarying conditions based on marriage within one's own social class and abstinence before marriage, a woman can expect a happy marriage. Otherwise, unhappiness, even death, are the forecasted results. The only exceptions to this generalization are found in the romantic, escapist books, many based on the oral tradition.

As was the case with maidens, there is very little indication of a positive or sensitive nature that married women are sexual beings, with appetites and needs. Two examples will suffice to support the conclusion that such references tended toward the scatological:

> "The blood beginneth now to rise,
> which makes some maids to scratch their thighs"

and

> "Maids wanton, wives willing, widows willful
> Bring hope, horns and harm to the unskillful."[29]

The popular literature's unsympathetic portrayal of women's sexuality is not consistent with the trends in society, as reported by the social historians. There was increased recognition and glorification of sexuality and a denial of previous "Christian suspicion and hostility." This accompanied the concept

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[28] Shorter, Modern Family, pp. 9-16.

[29] Capp, Astrology, p. 124.

that marriage was a means "to channel the powerful but potentially disruptive instinct of sexual desire." Increased privacy for the upper and middle classes resulted from architectural developments in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including the introduction of corridors replacing contiguous rooms; special function rooms, including upstairs bedrooms, were separated from the prying eyes of servants; 'dumb waiters' were introduced; increasingly apprentices and agricultural workers lived at home, not in the master's house.[30] These factors contributed to a healthier environment for intercourse and a greater acceptance of a healthy female sexuality. As the chapbooks were written for the lower classes, they would not be expected to comment upon these changes as they affected the upper classes. However, it is interesting to note that there is no indication in these publications that a healthy female sexuality was an acceptable concept for women of any class in society. Increased privacy for masters and mistresses in their homes also meant increased privacy for the servants.

WIVES AND HUSBANDS

The popular literature is a mirror to society's attitudes toward the relationship between husband and wife. While emphasizing that sex for women is a function of procreation, the almanacs emphasize that man was identified with his job, women with her children.[31] Social historians are consistent in their evaluation of marriage partners' roles.

Wrightson describes the ideal marital relationship as one whose "most essential element was the recognition of the supreme authority of the husband," as a "King in his own house." The good qualities of a wife were submissiveness, patience, love, sweetness, modesty, quietness and obedience;

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[30] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, pp. 5, 8, 90-1.

[31] Capp, Astrology, p. 122. All the chapbooks emphasized specific and different roles and attitudes for men and women.

the undesirable wife was "assertive, capricious, quarrelsome, scolding, inconsistent, foolish and extravagant in dress." He continues that the male moralists of the period (seventeenth century) based the ideal on "Eve's role in the fall of man and the opinions of St. Peter and St. Paul." The husband was supposed to "mould" his wife to the ideal, with the legal right to moderate correction over his wife as well as his children, servants and apprentices.[32]

Despite the "emotional and sexual awakening" of women in the increasingly enlightened eighteenth century, reported by Miriam Benkovitz[33], Katherine Rogers quotes Bishop Fleetwood's sermons on The Relative Duties of Parents and Children, Husbands and Wives, Masters and Servants in which a woman is instructed "that she owes her husband first of all absolute chastity. Secondly, she owes him obedience and is to obey without dispute, and comply with calmness and great readiness, even under doubt, suspicion and uncertainty of what will follow. She must not presume to judge her husband's decisions nor so much as to see his infirmities. . . .All these writers assumed that the wife was alone responsible for keeping her marriage harmonious." Richard Steel, an eighteenth century author, made the connection between femininity and inferiority, one that is consistently presented throughout this period.[34]

In Tom Jones, Fielding wrote: "Right thinking woman is too aware of the limitations of her sex to presume to judge the intelligence of any

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[32] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 5, 8.

[33] M. J. Benkovitz, 'Some observations on women's concept of self in the 18th century', in Fritz and Morton (eds.), Women in the Eighteenth Century, p. 40.

[34] K. Rogers, 'The feminism of Daniel Defoe', in Fritz and Morton (eds.), Women in the Eighteenth Century, p. 4.

male. . . .contempt for stupidity suggests superiority."[35] Not only did women pass from the domination of their father to that of their husband, they also confronted the concern that they might challenge the "balance of social order,"[36] and there was an underlying assumption that women's interests coincide with their husbands'.[37] Porter mentions the descriptive words for men in the eighteenth century -- reason, business, action, decision; and for women -- passive, maternal, submissive, modest, docile, virtuous, reporting on men's fear of shrewish, active, positive spouses.[38] Even a liberated woman author, Sarah Jinner "did not want to animate our sex to. . . .usurp the breeches."[39] Mary Astell, even while recognizing that men "tyrannized their wives," never challenged their right to rule the family, while appealing that the rule be "just." She attacked two arguments supporting male superiority, strength of body, and the history of men's deeds. "The sturdiest porter is not the wisest man," and "they [men] make worlds and ruin them, form systems of Universal nature and dispute eternally about them." However, while Mary Astell, along with Hannah Woolley and Lady Mary Chudleigh, appealed for "equality of souls" and "equality of the rational facilities God had given to men and women," she accepted the distinct "nature of men and women," the "different temperaments, different sensibilities, and different gifts" possessed by each gender. She concluded that men's role was in public life, women's in the home.[40]

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[35] Ibid, p. 8.

[36] Capp, Astrology, p. 112.

[37] C. N. Degler, Is There a History of Women?, p. 8, Oxford, 1975.

[38] Porter, English Society, p. 37.

[39] As quoted in Capp, Astrology, p. 126.

[40] J. K. Kinnaird, 'Mary Astell and the conservative contribution to English feminism', Journal of British Studies, XIX (1979), 62-74.

The literature is replete with additional confirmation concerning the role of women in the family. Keith Thomas states that the place of women was "determined in theory, and to a great extent in practice, by a universal belief in their inferior character and by reference to the specific commands for their subjection to be found in Genesis and the Epistles of St. Paul." Woman's destiny is described as "marriage and hazardous childbearing," to manage the household with "no say in church or state"; her chief "armament" is "silence," and her "sole duty" is "obedience to her husband under God."[41] Quaife concludes that "within each of those peasant worlds there was an inferior sub-world -- the world of the women."[42]

Wrightson warns us not to accept blindly "the doctrine of male authority," proposing the "private existence of a strong complementary and compassionate ethos, side by side with, and often overshadowing, theoretical adherence to the doctrine of male authority and public female subordination."[43] The diaries available, primarily those of the upper classes, indicate strong bonds of mutual affection and respect, as our contemporary knowledge of human nature would lead us to expect, and as is consistent with the Puritan emphasis on reciprocity in marriage relations. However, there is no question that the bulk of the literature read and absorbed by the literate members of the lower classes reinforced the concept of male superiority and female passivity. The chapbooks promulgated that message and emphasized the wife's role as child-bearer and rearer, housekeeper and passive companion. These are her duties as described in Kathleen Davies' article on "Continuity and Change in Literary Advice on Marriage":

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[41] K. V. Thomas, 'Women and the civil war sects', Past and Present, 13 (1958), 43.

[42] Quaife, Wanton Wenches, p. 14.

[43] Wrightson, English Society, p. 92.

Husband	Wife
Get goods	Gather them together and save them
Travel, seek a living	Keep the house
Get money and provisions	Do not vainly spend it
Deal with many men	Talk with few
Be intermeddling	Be solitary and withdrawn
Be skillful in talk	Boast of silence
Be a giver	Be a saver
Apparel yourself as you may	Apparel yourself as it becomes you
Be lord of all	Give account of all
Dispatch all thing outdoor	Oversee and give order within."[44]

The chapbooks' confirmation of the wife's role and status is presented in a variety of publications. The Rule of Life covers a range of desirable attributes:

> "The utmost of a Woman's Character is contained in Domestick Life; first, her Piety towards God; and next in the Duties of a Daughter, a Wife, a Mother, and a Sister."
>
> "A prudent Woman is in the same Class of Honour as a wise Man."
>
> "The plainer the Dress, with greatest Luster does Beauty appear. Virtue is the greatest Ornament, and good Sense the best Equipage."
>
> "A Woman had need be perfectly provided of Virtue, to repair the ruins of her Beauty."
>
> "An inviolable Fidelity, good Humour, and Complacency of Temper, in a Wife, outlive all the Charms of a fine Face, and make the Decays of it invisible."
>
> "Let a Woman be decked with all the Embellishments of Art, and cares of Nature; yet if Boldness be to be read in her Face, it blots all the lines of Beauty."

"Piety," "duties," "prudence," "virtue," "good sense," "fidelity," "good humour," "complacency of temper," submission, not "boldness" -- an appealing but sadly incomplete list of virtues for a woman, but one that is consistent with the

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[44] K. M. Davies, 'Continuity and change in literary advice on marriages' in Outhwaite (ed.), Marriage and Society, p. 67.

expectations for female conduct in this period. In case the message is not clear, the concluding paragraph of this publication re-emphasizes the point:

> "In all the Characters we read of excellent Women, there is not a more illustrious Instance of filial Piety, than in the story of Cimonus; who being cast into Prison, and then adjudged to be stoned to Death, his Daughter Xantippe fed him through the Iron Grate with the milk of her own Breasts."[45]

Even "Loving Kate's" position is made clear by "Honest John":

> "Here, Kate, take the key, and fetch a couple of bottles; you may as well wait on honest John, for I think ere long you must wait upon him as a dutiful and obedient wife. . . ."[46]

The concept of the wife as a part of one entity, rather than as a separate human being, appears in The Gentlemen's Concert where the sailor's wife is described as a "piece" of her husband, for "we've only one heart, one maxim, one pleasure, one fancy."[47] Long Meg of Winchester's husband humbles her, our heroic female warrior:

> "As he had heard of her womanhood, he was determined to try her. But Meg held down her head, whereupon he gave her three or four blows, and she in submission fell down on her knees, desiring him to pardon her. For, said she, whatever I do to others, it behooves me to be obedient to you."

She continued, "use me as you please" and "they grew friends, and never quarrelled after."[48] This is the only description of wife-beating I encountered; no example of husband-beating by wives was discovered,

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[45] Anon, The Rule of Life, pp. 21-24, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2733.

[46] Anon, John and Kate, p. 20.

[47] Anon, Gentlemen's Concert, p. 1.

[48] Anon, The Whole Life and Death of Long Meg of Winchester, p. 21, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2736.

although there were humorous references to shrewish wives in the chapbooks.

The chapbook authors did recognize that not every marriage was as free of strife as Kate's and John's. Domestic violence and wife beating was not unknown in this period, as will be discussed later. These books did recognize that "marriage is like a Sea Voyage; he that enters into the ship, must look to meet with Storms and Tempests."[49] In the Scottish History of James Allan the Celebrated Northumberland Piper, it is the wife who is lacking the requisite virtues:

> ". . . .he was precipitated into an unfortunate marriage with a young woman, who, by her violent temper, thriftless housewifery, and unfaithful conduct rendered him miserable."[50]

If temper, lack of thrift and unfaithfulness are the perceived shortcomings of the female, debauchery, bad conduct, keeping bad company with "lewd companions" and extravagance are the sins of the husband.[51] In An Explanation of the Vices of the Age, the wife is left without bread for the family while her spouse is enjoying beer and tobacco in the ale house, the symbol of debauchery in the chapbooks.[52]

Compared with those publications discussing women's faults, these stories are among the few pointing out undesirable male attributes which, in the chapbooks, revolve around the ale house, other women and extravagant

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[49] Anon, The Rule of Life, p. 22.

[50] Anon, The History of James Allan the Celebrated Northumberland Piper, p. 5, Newcastle-on-Tyne, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2770.

[51] Anon, The Dreadful Example for Wicked Husbands, or the Virtuous Wife in Distress, p. 1, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006. Taken from a sermon preached by "Rev. Mr. Thompton."

[52] Anon, An Explanation of the Vices of the Age, p. 1, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

spending. In contrast to the shortcomings of women described in these tales, male faults tend to focus on activities outside the house, not on direct, personal relationships with a wife and children.

The popular literature did present an image of the wife's role in a marriage that was consistent with the expectations of many in society. Common sense, reinforced by the diaries of several upper class husbands and wives, confirms Wrightson's view that private relationships between husbands and wives often were based on a more companionable and mutually supportive interaction. However, it does seem probable that in seventeenth and eighteenth century marriages few women were expected or encouraged to pursue a path independent of the husband's interests. The chapbooks reviewed in Edinburgh present no examples of such independence. They do provide the indications mentioned above that marriages would encounter "Storms and Tempests." Unfortunately, the popular literature does not go beyond those warning signals to reveal the unhappy options to unfortunate marital decisions. So, divorce or annulment, dissention and the legal chains and inequities confronted by wives were not explored; in the chapbooks marriages end in the death of a spouse, not in separation.

There is one exception to this generalization: cuckoldry. The "horns" symbolism appears often in this literature, undoubtedly an indication that the dominant male in society was concerned about his image and that the wife could strike back by using one weapon available to her: her control over her body and its participation in intercourse. Keith Thomas in 'The Double Standard' summarizes society's perspective on extra-marital relations, writing that "the view that unchastity, in the sense of sexual relations before marriage or outside marriage, is for a man, if an offense, nonetheless a mild or

pardonable one, but for a woman a matter of the utmost gravity."[53] Renee Hirschon points out that the "other woman" is the object of attack by the wife whose husband is unfaithful, while "it is believed that, given sufficient moral quality, a woman, unlike a man, can restrain her sexual drives indefinitely with no ill effects." Thus, "the question of control (for a woman) is simply a moral one. . .both as daughter and later as wife, the woman should be a paragon of the family's honour;. . . .if she falters or fails, then the family is ruined."[54]

Cuckoldry is dealt with by various historians, an indication of the level of concern in it caused in society. Quaife reports that an adulteress usually arranged her liaisons in the home, when her husband was absent, with markets and fairs as other popular meeting places. Spinsters often fornicated in anticipation of marriage; wives consented for a variety of reasons: sexual desire, often provoked by the illness, age or absence of a husband; younger second wives often found older husbands unable to satisfy them. Some wives continued pre-marital activity with men to whom they were not married, others consented under the influence of bribes. Finally, violence, fear and blackmail were used by some men. Quaife's studies tend to reinforce the concept that women then, as now, were sexual beings with active libidos and seeking fulfillment.[55]

Cuckoldry was one of the causes for charivaris in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. These were "a set of popular customs. . . .which characteristically involved a noisy, mocking demonstration usually

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[53] Thomas, 'The Double Standard', p. 195.

[54] R. Hirschon, 'Open body, closed space: the transformation of female sexuality' in S. Ardener (ed.), Defining Females. The Nature of Women in Society, p. 70, London, 1978.

[55] Quaife, Wanton Wenches, pp. 131-4.

occasioned by some anomalous social situation or infraction of community norms." These could be "mild and good hearted" or "hostile derision" with "mocking laughter" as a "basic" element. Riding Skimmington was a popular derision of the cuckolded male; in this event, either the victim, an effigy, or a neighbour portraying the victim, rode backwards on a horse while being beaten by women with ladles and, sometimes, while being pelted with filth. "Rough music" and "mocking rhymes" would accompany the event, and for the cuckolded male, symbolic horns were hung on the horse.[56] In a period when neighbours still intervened to try to ensure tranquility and order, charivaris were still seen as a "quasi legal response of society and to set examples for others." They were a "cathartic relief of tensions" and dealt with the real relationships between males and females.[57]

Of course, the concern about cuckoldry extended beyond the question of honour. In a period when rights of inheritance, even for the middle classes, and the right to title for the aristocracy were so important, male-oriented society was very concerned that bastards not inherit the earth. Then, as now, women suffered from the fact that they can conceive, and men cannot.

There are numerous references to extra-marital relations in the chapbooks, some humorous, some tragic but all indicating a pre-occupation with the subject. One of history's more famous mistresses, Jane Shore, provides us, in the twenty-four page version of her life, with "the message":

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[56] M. Ingram, 'Ridings, rough music and the reform of popular culture in early modern England', Past and Present, 105 (1984), 81-86. See also Quaife, Wanton Wenches, p. 200.

[57] Ibid, pp. 93, 98.

> "Nor would I desire to live in the splendour, pomp, and glory of Edward's court. No, I am happier now on the dunghill than ever I was in his arms, for O it was an adulterous bed indeed!. . . .What floods of sorrows have my sins occasioned? O learn by me good people to beware of vain delights that promise fair, but leave bitter stings behind them. . . .Sincere repentance has secured by happiness above. But O where repentance is not given, what seas of torment rack the soul. O happy dunghill, how I embrace thee! From thee my pardoned soul shall soar to heaven, though here I leave this carcass. . . .O that the name of Shore may be an antidote to stop the poisonous and foul contagion of raging lust forever."[58]

Although it is difficult to imagine anyone embracing a "dunghill," the message is clear, as it is in the chapbook version of Moll Flanders, who is described as "17 times a whore, 5 times a wife."[59] Wanton Tom's wife has a remunerative extra-curricular position in a whore-house,[60] while the pretty young wife of the old man in Thomas of Reading finds satisfaction with young Cuthburt.[61] The challenge for Tom and his companions in The History of Four Kings is to tell a story, "pass gas" or "call his Father a Cuckold," an interesting commentary on the social ranking of adultery.[62] The heroine's priorities are clear in The English Lady's Complete Catechism; she sends her family to church while she cuckolds her husband, clearly stating

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[58] Anon, The Life and Death of Mrs. Jane Shore, p. 23, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2736.

[59] [D. Defoe, but not listed as author in the chapbook], The Fortunes and Misfortunes of Moll Flanders, p. 1 (title page), London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006. This is an eight page version of the classic.

[60] Anon, Wanton Tom; or, The Merry History of Tom Stitch, the Taylor, pp. 9-10, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2734.

[61] Anon, Thomas of Reading, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2734. This tale reinforces the belief that often a younger wife turned to a young lover when she was married to an older husband.

[62] Anon, The History of Four Kings, p. 2, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2735.

her priorities: "I give poor tradesmen ill words, and the rich I treat civily, in hopes to get further into their debt."[63]

The theme of the lustful and unwary man being seduced by the scheming woman appears in Galloping Dick:

> "Her cold treatment, or perhaps worse, compelled them to hazard their lives for the purpose of again enjoying those favours which any thinking reasonable man would have spurned at."[64]

And again in The Christian's Closet-Piece:

> "The paths of whoredom pray at all times shun,
> And from the company of harlots run;
> For they like painted snakes appear in view,
> To sting our very souls and bodies too."[65]

In fact there are chapbook tales which portray the faithful wife's suffering as a result of a husband's philandering. John Jones' exploits with a harlot lead to his wife's murder in The Wiltshire Tragedy[66], a fate, death, ultimately suffered by John.

If, as Wrightson states, one purpose of marriage was "the containment of sexual desire," the popular literature indicates what we would expect:[67] such "containment" was not always achieved, a fact confirmed by the social historians' evaluation of the period. The chapbooks also confirm that the responsibility for virtue largely rested with the female, who was generally the

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[63] Anon, The English Lady's Complete Catechism, p. 8, Stirling, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2863.

[64] Anon, The Life and Remarkable Transactions of Richard Ferguson Alias Galloping Dick, p. 5, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

[65] Anon, The Christian's Closet-Piece, p. 3, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

[66] Anon, The Wiltshire Tragedy, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[67] Wrightson, English Society, p. 67.

condemned party when adultery did occur. Even those women who suffered from the debauchery of their husbands, such as Mrs. Jones in The Wiltshire Tragedy, went to an early grave. In adultery, as in other aspects of life, the chapbooks confirm that indeed, the "double standard" did exist.

WIVES' LEGAL RIGHTS

Other than the type of reference previously mentioned, in which Kate and John save their wages in order to afford marriage, the chapbooks are sadly lacking in regard to women's property, dowry and legal rights. As the examples cited above indicate, the wife in the popular literature is often seen as being virtually the property of her husband. However, the chapbooks do not reveal the legal and economic disadvantages of being a married woman. This omission undoubtedly is purposeful, for such negative realities, if discussed, would neither enhance book sales nor encourage our "ideal" maiden's trek to the altar. In addition, the complexities of the laws did not pertain to the life of the poor reader, for so much of the law related to property and inheritance. The lower classes primarily were concerned with existence, not inheritance and property, though for some of the poorer folk, the husband's responsibilities for a wife's debts could be of concern.

Houlbrooke points out that property arrangements in the marriage contracts of the wealthy were of considerably greater significance than for the poorer classes, when the dowry might consist of a bed and a few pots. For the latter, a verbal agreement would normally replace the negotiated written contract of the well-to-do; some rights specified in the law could be altered in the marriage contract. In return for her dowry, a wife could expect her husband's life-time support and a widow one-third of his land, or, under a jointure, the income from jointly owned property.[68] As Stone explains, the

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[68] Houlbrooke, The English Family, p. 83.

marriage contract determined a woman's legal right to manage her own property, which she could hold in her own right independent of her husband. In practice, as the husband and wife often were viewed as one person in the law, the husband held control over his wife's holdings, at least until the male pre-deceased his spouse. The husband's control over his wife's property declined in the eighteenth century. Dowries of the upper classes were apt to be invested in land for the benefit of both partners, rather than presented to the groom's father, and "pin money" clauses guaranteed a wife an "independent fixed income at her exclusive disposal." Widows' rights were broader, and they received increased protection for their inherited property, with a recognition of the legal doctrine of a "wife's separate estate."[69] Propertied widows ran the risk of losing control over possessions inherited from their deceased husbands or other relatives, reverting, after re-marriage, to the more restrictive legal position of a wife. Women could enter into contracts and write wills; their rights in regard to land were stronger than in other areas. However, these were modifications, not revolutionary changes. A woman's status under the law did not undergo significant transformation until the second half of the nineteenth century. The improvements that did occur benefitted the wives of the wealthy and middle classes; poor women were still completely dependent on their husbands for support. All couples were still seen as "one person in law."[70] The wife, therefore, would have to consider her financial situation and exposure very carefully, often finding her weapons restricted to the granting and withholding of sexual favours, her control over household affairs, her influence on the couple's children and a sharp tongue.

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[69] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, pp. 195, 230.

[70] Ibid, p. 332.

VIOLENCE IN MARRIAGE

Sharpe's study indicates that some husbands did utilize violence to try to control their spouses. Recognizing that husbands often would not report attacks by their wives, the evidence available indicates that wife-beating was more prevalent. One-third of the victims in family killings traced by Sharpe were spouses, with women outnumbering men by two to one as victims. Sharpe's evaluation indicates that such external and virtually uncontrollable factors as the limited availability of divorce and a desperate financial situation, often accompanied by an escape into alcohol or extra-marital relationships, were prime motivations for domestic violence and homicide.[71]

We also must remember that illness was common and that effective drugs and pain-killers were virtually non-existent; the resulting irascibility undoubtedly contributed to domestic violence. However, most sexually based homicides resulted from infidelity and the resulting jealousy, although there are some recorded cases of deaths resulting from "villanies contrary to nature" (buggery) and one of a wife killed by the husband who infected her with venereal disease. Complicating factors mentioned by Sharpe included wives "wanton and shrewish" and husbands who were "wastrels, habitually drunken or intrinsically violent." Sharpe's research confirms that females normally had to resort to "verbal violence," although there were some cases of husband-beating, while males often utilized "physical violence," undoubtedly at times in response to a shrewish wife.[72] Society took an overly benign view of wife beating, preferring "personal intervention by a Justice of the Peace, binding the husband over to be of good behavior," or an informal settlement arranged by neighbours or clergy outside the courts. These

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[71] J. A. Sharpe, 'Domestic homicide in early modern England', The Historical Journal, 24 (1981), 45.

[72] Ibid, pp. 42-3.

approaches were "considered more effective remedies against wife beating than formal prosecution."[73] Then, as now, it is questionable whether such an outlook provided an effective deterrent.

The chapbooks, while ignoring the legal ramifications of this subject, did consistently warn of the unhappiness which results from marriage to a shrewish wife who might use the weapon of "verbal violence." There are also examples of male violence, as in The Wiltshire Tragedy in which John Jones, a gentleman's son, under the influence of alcohol and a harlot, ran through all the family fortune and then killed his wife and children. This example incorporates the major factors provoking domestic violence, but such tales are rare. The religious books tended to list the sins without depicting the tragic conclusion in such graphic detail.[74]

As mentioned previously, the popular literature which I have reviewed did not become involved in the question of divorce, rare in any circumstance, and virtually unknown among the lower classes. Here again the woman was at a disadvantage. In addition to her financial dependence on her spouse, she faced society's passive acceptance of wife beating and male adultery, and she knew that the Anglican Church would not permit remarriage if a divorce was granted. A divorced female who wanted to relieve her sexual appetite was considered a whore; men were not viewed as harshly. During the early years of this period, until the late seventeenth century, the church only permitted judicial separation, not divorce,[75] and Church courts insisted that married couples should live together if at all possible. Later grounds for divorce, which could only be granted by Private Act of Parliament and was

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[73] Ibid, p. 31.

[74] Anon, The Wiltshire Tragedy, pp. 5-11.

[75] Houlbrooke, The English Family, p. 119.

therefore only available for the wealthier classes, were limited, and annulment was granted for pre-contract to another spouse, consanguinity, male impotence over a three-year period, and a missing spouse for seven years.[76] The response to reported and proven adultery was separation of bed and board with a financial settlement, the only grounds for separation.[77] For the poor the only options to an unhappy marriage were desertion, bigamy or divorce by mutual consent with a resulting wife sale to a previously arranged suitor, a practice almost unknown in Scotland.[78] For the couple who could not afford a Private Act of Parliament and would not resort to the options for the poor, there was no official or legal escape from an unhappy marriage.

PARENTS AND CHILDREN

Fortunately, most marriages were not unhappy and did not end in violence, death or divorce. And, if one of the prime motivations for marriage was reproduction, then, quite obviously, it is appropriate to evaluate the relationship between parents and children. As mentioned previously, the chapbooks pay little attention to the risks and pleasures of childbirth; they also do not delve into the sensitive bond which can exist between mother and newborn, with one exception which does reflect upon the strong ties of affection that develop between a nursing child and a mother.[79] This bond would have been shared by most mothers and children, with the exception of

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[76] In Scotland proof of a spouse's death was required in order to remarry.

[77] Davies, 'Continuity and change' in Outhwaite, p. 74.

[78] Menefee reports that ". . .wife selling was an established British institution" as a form of divorce. Although not sanctioned by law, evidence of wife sales from 1070 is recorded, with scattered cases in the twentieth century. Incompatibility was the prime cause for such agreements to separate. S. P. Menefee, Wives for Sale, pp. 1-2, 66, Oxford, 1981.

[79] Anon, A Short but Tragical History of an Unfortunate Young Girl, p. 2, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

those upper class parents who could afford the services of a wet nurse, an option which began to lose favour in the eighteenth century, partially in response to concerns about disease and sanitation but primarily as a reflection of a more affective relationship between parent and child. Children tended to be fed on demand, swaddled for one month or more and weaned between the ages of one and three.[80] This late weaning was an indication of the mother's perception of the desirable contraceptive benefit of nursing.

Wrightson points out that there is little information available about child rearing from the woman's perspective, confirmed in part by the lack of mention of the early years in the chapbooks.[81] However, there certainly is no dearth of instruction on how to raise a child, as we shall see.

Any evaluation of parental attitudes towards children must keep in mind the high incidence of infant death. One view is that this contributed to an attitude of coolness and distance which began to evaporate in the eighteenth century with the acceptance of a less rigid religious morality, greater affection between spouses who had more influence in the selection of marriage partners and a decrease in infant mortality. Parents were responsible for raising their children, for their physical welfare, and for providing the education and the financial support in marriage that could be afforded. Wrightson's review of seventeenth century diaries confirms that parents were concerned about their children's welfare, had an "emotional investment" in their progeny, often were concerned to educate them or

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[80] Wrightson, English Society, p. 106. O'Day challenges the view, held by Stone and others, that swaddling was extensive and was a barrier to parent-child affection. She concludes that swaddling provided "warmth and security" and that by the seventeenth century an English child was swaddled only until three or four months of age. O'Day, Education and Society, p. 5.

[81] Wrightson, English Society, p. 106.

prepare them for apprenticeships and even in their wills guide them toward a successful life.[82]

Wrightson's perspective, which is in conflict with Stone's views on parent-child affection, is supported by other historians who agree that the high infant mortality rate did not cause parents to feel cool and distant from their children. Reporting on Stuart women, Mendelson notes that "daily journals offer a glimpse of the rewarding side of the maternal role," commenting that one diarist, Mary Woodforde, "proudly chronicled her family's comings and goings, noting her sons' progress at school and college." The May 1617 entry in Lady Clifford's diary affectionately records her daughter's first steps.[83] Pollock reports that parents in the seventeenth century enjoyed "coddling their children" and began to realize that the latter should be treated specially, for they were "innocent and weak."[84] In contrast, Shorter states that "good mothering is an invention of modernization."[85] Both Shorter and Stone felt that parents "endured" but did not "enjoy" children during childhood and that parents were more interested in controlling their surviving children than in displaying affection.[86] In the fifteenth through early seventeenth centuries, Stone reports that parents believed in strict discipline with "obedience enforced with brutality."[87]

Pollock concludes that recent evidence indicates that even poor families did not live "unaffectionate lives" and did not "brutalize" their

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[82] Ibid, pp. 108-112.

[83] S. H. Mendelson, 'Stuart women's diaries' in Prior, p. 198.

[84] Pollock, Forgotten Children, p. 2.

[85] As quoted in Pollock, Forgotten Children, p. 3.

[86] Ibid, p. 7.

[87] Ibid, p. 14.

children. According to Pollock, "love, joy and warmth" were factors in parent-child relations, a view supported by Mendelson's evidence. Although there may have been more violence among the lower classes, their children generally "passed through similar developmental stages as modern children." Her evidence is drawn from diaries which reflect a depth of affection, especially between mother and child, and true "parental anguish" when a child died.[88]

The evidence that Wrightson cites is quite convincing. While admitting that "the authors of conduct books laid considerable emphasis upon the authority of parents and upon the duty of children to honour and obey their fathers and mothers," Wrightson points out that some books stressed parent obligations and "gave advice which was much less harsh and much more aware of the needs of children than is commonly alleged." He cites Alan MacFarlane's analysis of the family life of Ralph Josselin which demonstrates "an utterly contrasting picture of great parental care and warm emotional bonding." Wrightson continues:

> "Parents, as we have seen, were very conscious of their children's mortality, and it is often assumed that this bred a degree of resignation, even a general indifference to children's deaths. There is much evidence, however, to suggest that it led not to indifference but to a persistent anxiety for their children in the face of hazards of illness and accidents."

The author then cites a variety of examples, including Ralph Josselin's concern about his children's illness and his grief, bitterness and sense of loss upon their death.[89] The chapbooks do not portray the suffering and loss related to childhood deaths, a subject that probably was not of great appeal

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[88] Ibid, p. 70.

[89] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 107-9.

to the readers. The chapbooks did place great emphasis on obedience and respect for parents and other elders.

What was expected of children in the household of the lower classes? Work. Prior to entering service, apprenticeship or other employment, children did work. When in service or apprenticeship, it appears that some children would remit a portion of their wages to help the parents, but they rarely provided financial support for elderly parents. Parents did hope for "respect, gratitude and obedience" and tried to instill those qualities "by both emotional pressure and, on occasion, physical punishment."[90] The essential conflict resulted from the question of emotional pressure versus physical punishment, a controversy which appears in the chapbooks. Wrightson feels that the "severity of discipline" attributed to this period is exaggerated, with moralists advocating admonition first and the rod as a last resort, and then only in "moderation" and with an explanation.[91] The man's right to exercise moderate correction over his wife, children, servants and apprentices was legally recognized.

Although the use of excessive force was not accepted, many grammar schools did not spare the rod, and the use of moderate violence was not condemned by society. Houlbrooke concludes that while children were "welcome gifts from God" and parental love was "deeply rooted," especially the mother's, it was widely accepted in the seventeenth century, by the moralists particularly, that a child had "inherited original sin" and this inheritance grew with intelligence, so correction with the rod was acceptable. At puberty, or shortly thereafter, children were turned over to others to be educated in school or as apprentices or servants. Houlbrooke observes that

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[90] Ibid, pp. 113-15.

[91] Ibid, p. 116.

there was a difference between the more severe outlook of some parents, perhaps influenced by a stricter "original sin" interpretation, and the more affectionate approach of more humanistic parents, who believed that children's impulses were neutral and their innocence worthy of protection. Parents then, as now, had to exercise judgment in finding the path between over-indulgence and excessive corporal punishment.[92] Chapbook literature reflected this dilemma.

> ". . . .as it is well known most of her sex have too tender a regard for Infants. . . ."[93]

> "Reverence your Parents, submit to your superiors, and despise not your Inferiors."[94]

> ". . . .Discretion and Mildness will teach a child, but passion and punishment will frighten away its wits."[95]

The anonymous authors of the first and third quotations above would agree with the objectives stated in the second extract, but they obviously disagree on the approach. These two quotations illustrate that dichotomy between the cold, original sin perspective and a very, perhaps overly, humanistic point of view. It is possible that the quotations represented viewpoints affected by social class or the authors' backgrounds. The harsh perspective is supported in other publications: The Christian's Closet-Piece is a religious exhortation which lists "Disobedience to Parents" as a "sin",[96] and The Aged Father's Blessing or A Catalogue of Divine Lessons contains an entire poem entitled

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[92] Houlbrooke, The English Family, pp. 155-6.

[93] Anon, The Whole Remarkable Life and Transactions of that Wicked and Infamous Strumpet and Stroller Anne Martin, otherwise Bristol Nan, p. 7, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2737.

[94] Anon, Directions for Reading with Elegance and Propriety, p. 21, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2733.

[95] Gurrell, Rules and Maxims, p. 5.

[96] Anon, The Christian's Closet-Piece, p. 4.

"A Poem of Reasonable Advice to Children's Point of Duty and Obedience to their Parents."[97] The religious foundation for submission to parents is presented in The Affectionate Daughter: Mary's "meek submission to her parents was in cheerful obedience to that command of God, 'Honour thy father and thy mother'. . . ."[98]

Chapbook authors and publishers managed to include the theme in various fables directed at young audiences. A 1781 edition of Aesop's Fables includes "The Boy and his Mother" in which a mother rewards her son after he has stolen a horn book; the boy ends up living a life of crime, is caught and executed.[99] Select Tales and Fables with Lessons of Morality in Verse and Prose spells out the message on the title page: "Children like tender Others take the Bow, And as they first are fashion'd, always grow." The fable of "The Monkey and her Cub" advises:

> "Hence let fond mothers know, the child
> That is indulged too much is spoil'd."

This literary effort, while stating that "over-fondness is perfect cruelty," claims that over-indulged children become "either an idiot or a debauchee," so "strict discipline" is required.[100]

The reader of this report will have noted that in every single case cited, it is the mother who is involved with the discipline or who suffers from

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[97] Anon, The Aged Father's Blessing or a Catalogue of Divine Lessons, pp. 7-8, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

[98] Anon, The Affectionate Daughter, p. 8, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2742.

[99] Aesop, Fables of Aesop and Others, p. 83, Aberdeen, 1781, L.C. Vol. 2447. This is an unusual volume, containing various "books" of fables, with pages numbered consecutively to p. 141. The price is not listed but was clearly more than one penny.

[100] Anon, Select Tales and Fables with Lessons of Morality in Verse and Prose, title page, p. 8, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2734.

the lack of discipline and respect. I could not find one example of a father's involvement and suggest that this fact tends to confirm that it was the mother who was responsible for rearing children, with the father only participating when strict punishment was deemed necessary. Thus, the disobedient child in The Bloody Tragedy or A Dreadful Warning to Disobedient Children is spoiled by his overly fond mother, who tries to correct his faults with "good advice and gentle means."[101]

The conduct books of this period spelled out expectations for children's behavior in great detail. The extraordinarily rigid rules became more relaxed after the Reformation, when relationships between parent and child became less formal and more affectionate, but reverence for parents was a constant theme. Children were expected to address their parents formally, to speak only when spoken to and "at coming into company always bow, and remain uncover'd, especially in Presence of Parents, or Elders." Other instructions in the chapbook include:

> "When you speak to your Parents, always begin with Sir, or, Madam, and never delay to do as they shall order or command you; nor to presume to enter the Room where they are, if Strangers be there, 'till you are sent for."[102]

The admonitions in these publications cover every aspect of a child's life, as the list of chapter headings in one of them illustrates:

> "Short and Mixt Precepts; of Behaviour at Home; of Behaviour at the Church; of Behaviour at the Table; Rules for Behaviour in Company; Rules for Behaviour in Discourse; of Behaviour in the School; Rules for Behaviour Abroad; of Behaviour amongst Boys."

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[101] Anon, The Bloody Tragedy or a Dreadful Warning to Disobedient Children, p. 2, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

[102] Anon, Directions for Reading, pp. 21-2.

The author of this book on manners, a seventeenth century school master named John Garretson, summarizes society's expectations for children in his concluding chapter:

> "Be humble, submissive and obedient to those, whose authority by Nature or Providence, had a just claim to your subjection; such as Parents, Masters or Tutors, whose commands and laws have no other tendency than your truest good; be always obsequious and respectful, never bold, flighting or fawcy [sic], either in words or gestures. Let your body be on every occasion pliable, and ready to manifest in due and becoming Ceremonies the inward reverence you bear toward those above you."[103]

It is discouraging to point out that with very little modification these instructions could be directed at the wife of a seventeenth or eighteen century male. As Wrightson points out, "parents hoped for respect, gratitude and obedience."[104] So did many husbands, and others in this period. Davies quotes William Whateley's sermons in the seventeenth century: "mine husband is my superior, my better." William Gouge, author of Of Domestical Duties (1622) counselled that a woman "may do nothing against God's will, but many things against her own will, if her husband require her," and Whateley describes a perfect wife: "when she submits herself with quietness, cheerfully, even as a well-broken horse turns at the least turning, stands at the least check of the rider's bridle, readily going and standing as he wishes that sits upon his back."[105]

As Wrightson correctly warns, it should not be assumed that all spouse relationships were based on the horseback analogy, nor that all children were subjected to physical abuse to ensure obedience. Certainly

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[103] J. Garretson, The School of Manners or Rules for Children's Behaviour, p. 59, London, 1983.

[104] Wrightson, English Society, p. 115.

[105] Davies, 'Continuity and change' in Outhwaite, p. 69.

these attitudes were also modified in the eighteenth century, and some historians indicate that there may have been more long-term continuity in companionable relationships and less change in the eighteenth century than Stone, for example, believes. However, the evidence prescribed by the historians indicates that the role that society expected wives to play in marriage, in relation to their husbands and children, was as depicted in the chapbooks.

However, not every chapbook author was willing to accept society's mandates. The anonymous author of A New Academy of Compliments or The Lover's Secretary may have been a woman, or a man mocking society's perception of a woman's life-time objectives. This author tries to persuade women that they should not act as described below. He or she felt the effort hopeless, but the willingness to try is encouraging, although the portrait depicted is not. The author writes that women assume that "a Husband is the Summum bonum of all sublunary blessings, and the want of a husband is the greatest affliction." She adds that women are led to believe:

> "that a noble fortune, with all its agreeable accommodations, such as a charming dwelling, a pompous equipage, a rich furnished table, fine dress, a sincere and ingenious She friend, with whom you may divide your sorrow, and double your joys, and in whose breast, as a sacred repository, you may communicate the very secrets of your soul over a Pot of milk or tea: This and more than all this, viz. Dominion over yourselves, happy Freedom and dear loved liberty, is all nothing, it signifies nothing without a Husband. . . .This is the theme our sex have so well improved and so cunningly managed, that you ladies verily believe it yourselves as you do your Creed.[106]

In the seventeenth century few listened to that cry. In the eighteenth century more responded.

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[106] Anon, New Academy of Compliments, p. 70. This book is 148 pages long.

From our vantage point it is tempting to wonder why a woman would want a husband and a family in early modern Britain, other than to avoid the stigma of being single, a subject to be discussed in the next chapter, or for financial support. The chapbooks, presenting a moralistic view on the ideal marriage, depict the wife as the husband's property with her prime responsibility to be procreation, with no indication that sexual enjoyment was acceptable. The woman was expected to restrain any sexual feelings and was condemned if she participated in pre-marital or extra-marital relations, while a man's philandering was treated more benignly. The popular literature depicts the female as compliant, submissive and dutiful, with her attentions directed toward her home, spouse and children, specific and limited female duties. Marriage in this literature is presented in the most simplified and largely incomplete manner, with no indication of the alternate routes to marriage, no hint about pre-marital intercourse, no discussion of childbirth and infant death, no real discussion of the harsher realities of women's life and no mention of healthy female sexuality. Criticism of male conduct is restricted to drinking, extravagance and extra-marital relations, and even these mentions are limited and presented with little punishment ensuing for the male. The emphasis on parent-child relations is directed toward obedience, not affection, although the diaries of the period demonstrate that affectionate relations and parental concern for a child's health and welfare were definitely present.

Returning to Keith Wrightson's list of the four purposes of marriage, we can summarize the chapbooks' perspectives. They supported the concept of intercourse for procreating, while ignoring all references to sexual pleasure. They did not deal with the hazards of childbirth nor with the subject of infant mortality. Wrightson's second purpose of marriage, the perpetuation of the church, was supported throughout the literature, with its

emphasis on religious education of children, a subject to be investigated further in Chapter Six. The third purpose, the containment of sexual desire, is supported in the chapbooks' recognition that extra-marital affairs were destructive, but virtually the entire emphasis was on the sinning woman, not the offending male. Finally, there is very little recognition of the importance of mutual assistance and comfort. Rather than portraying companionable relationships based on friendship, there is an emphasis in this literature on a wife's duties and ownership by her husband.

We can conclude that in reference to relations with the family, the chapbooks reflected a distorted "reality", one preferred by some male moralists, perhaps, but one that does not fully portray the actuality uncovered by the social historians. We know that intercourse was not practiced only for procreation, that there were a variety of routes to marriage, and that parents displayed affection and concern for their children, not only requiring blind obedience and deference. We know that women had to deal with such hard realities as childbirth and infant mortality, subjects not touched upon by this literature. We also have learned that a more companionable relationship existed between spouses than this literature depicts. The chapbooks presented an incomplete and unrealistic image of reality in family life, supporting the belief that "happy freedom and dear loved liberty is all nothing, it signifies nothing without a Husband."

CHAPTER FIVE

WOMEN IN THE WIDER WORLD: EDUCATION, WORK, LEISURE

> "Of all the foolish inventions and new-fangled devices to ruin the country, that of teaching the poor to read is the very worst."[1]
>
> "Train up a Child in the way he should go;
> And when he is old he will not depart from it.
> Receive my Instruction, and not Silver;
> And Knowledge rather than fine Gold:
> For Wisdom is better than Riches."[2]

We have seen that the married woman was generally considered to be a single entity with her husband. It was expected that women would marry, so woman's status did not improve with marriage. However, as Porter puts it: "marriage would bring a man full membership of society, but the wife only switched superiors."[3] Writing about the eighteenth century, Porter discusses the basic assumption governing relations between the sexes: "men and women were indelibly different in nature and capacity and so ought to play quite distinct social roles. . .anatomy determined over destiny," a perspective supported by law. He continues to describe the "four cardinal functions" of a middle and upper class wife in polite society to "obey the husband, produce heirs, run the household and be ladylike."[4] Lower class wives were supposed to assume the passive attributes implied in the "ladylike" description and to produce children who could help in the family economy, while obeying the husband, running the household and often undertaking cottage industry tasks to augment the family income.

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[1] Anon, The Sunday School, p. 14, Dublin, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2903.

[2] Anon, Directions for Reading, p. 1.

[3] Porter, English Society, p. 164.

[4] Ibid, pp. 37, 41.

Simone de Beauvoir, as cited by Helen Callaway, wrote that the male "remodels the face of the earth, he creates new instruments, he shapes the future. . .he transcends life." The female gives birth.[5] It is important to evaluate whether the chapbook authors recognized a role for women other than their commitment to husband and children. Were women educated to aspire for and fulfill a life outside the family? Were there options for the spinster and widow, the single women who were not responsible for, or dependent upon, a male? Finally, did the chapbooks' perspective on the woman's world beyond the family coincide with reality? Were these books instruments for change or supporters of the 'status quo'? Did they mirror, exaggerate or distort the facts as we know them?

The Lover's Guide to Matrimony provides a portrait of the chapbooks' perspective on marriage, one that was reasonably consistent with society's expectations. In the section entitled "Advice to Men" appears the following counsel:

> "Don't marry a lady who destroys her time in dress, frivolous entertainment, public spectacles, or unprofitable reading. . .and contemplate the misery which will ensue where beauty, that perishable flower, is the only foundation on which your happiness is built. On the contrary, if you meet with a girl of sensibility, soft in her manners, unaffected, and agreeable to your fancy, consider her as a treasure, and take her home, for she is worthy to be your friend, your companion, and your partner for life."

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[5] H. Callaway, 'The most essentially female function of all: giving birth', in S. Ardener (ed.), Defining Females: The Nature of Women in Society, p. 164, London, 1978. Callaway also added that labour for women related to birth and housework, for men to work in a job. For many, "femininity tends to be passive and receptive, masculinity to be more active, restless. . .", Ibid, pp. 164, 169.

> "Remember, always, that she will be endeared to you by kindness. She is the mistress of your house, therefore respect her, and your friends and servants will do the same. Being the partner of your disquietudes, let her also be the companion of your pleasures. Have no secrets apart from her, and she will confide in you. Be faithful to her bed for she is the mother of your children. Your wife shall be your companion in joy, your physician in sickness, your comforter in adversity. Thus shall your happiness be increased with the augmentation of her's."

This counsel about middle and upper class women, when viewed in the perspective of this book's advice to women to be "courteous, mild of speech, not obstinate in having your own way, and to overlook your husband's failings," presents an encouraging view of a shared marriage, with the husband also expected to be sensitive to the wife's feelings and needs. However, it also presents the wife as a depressingly passive individual with responsibility only for home and spouse, specifically warning against a "lady who destroys her time in dress, frivolous entertainment, public spectacles, or unprofitable reading." The wife should be "friend", "companion" and "partner", but the implication is that she should not have a life of her own. For example, there is no mention of work, other than "mistress of [the] house," and the only reference to literacy is a negative one. With some exceptions, the male-dominated society of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries supported this "ladylike" view, and the chapbooks were mirrors of that expectation.[6]

Of course, these descriptions would have to be modified for a lower class woman who did not have servants and could not "destroy her time in dress" and "frivolous entertainment." However, the passive attributes and the lack of a life of her own also applied to poorer women, many of whom had to contribute their earnings to the family economy under the direction of the dominant male spouse.

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[6] Anon, Lover's Guide to Matrimony, pp. 3-4.

EDUCATION -- A PERSPECTIVE

Education could help a woman to establish her independence in thought and action. As discussed in the first chapter, we know that a significant percentage of the female population could read. Speck reports:

> "as one would expect, that women were more illiterate than men, and that illiteracy increased as one went down the social scale. It was not, however, as marked as might be assumed. By 1760 about sixty percent of women were able to sign marriage registers compared with about seventy percent of men. The gentry, business and professional men at the apex of society were almost all literate, most tradesmen and craftsmen could apparently read, while the majority of servants and labourers could not. Even at the lowest levels, however, there was a substantial minority, around forty-one percent, which was literate."[7]

Throughout this period the poor faced the dilemma of the necessity to keep children at home, to help on the farm or in the cottage industry versus the desire to educate offspring in order to open doors for financial and social advancement or simply to provide an opportunity to maintain the financial and social status quo. Often the doors opened for the boys and remained closed, or only partially open, for the daughters. For the wealthier families, including the middle classes, the development of more companionate relationships in the eighteenth century led to improved quality in education of girls, made available to greater numbers.[8]

Nevertheless, any improvement must be kept in context. Universal education for the poor and for women was a contentious issue, and there was definite discrimination in the curriculum for both. As Stone points out, the invention of the printing press and the wider distribution of books increased the "social and cultural gap between those who could read and those who

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[7] Speck, Society and Literature, p. 196.

[8] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 343.

could not." This gap could be partially bridged when a literate family member or neighbour read aloud to an illiterate person. In Elizabethan England, women had been at a distinct disadvantage as learning was virtually a male monopoly, a disadvantage only partially corrected in Stuart and Hanoverian times.[9] As for the poor, Johnson reported to Boswell that "no-one argued that a classical education would be of any benefit to them [the labouring classes] as individuals or members of society" for "they might be tempted to despise or neglect their daily occupations."[10] Although some believed that classical education below the University level was desirable for tradesmen so that leisure time could be more productively used, many agreed with Johnson's perspective about education below the upper classes, that "teaching the poor to read is the very worst." Both those in favour of education for the poor and those opposed in the eighteenth century still agreed that it should be designed to "preserve the rigid class structure of society intact."[11] Gradually those in favour of education for the poor and for women prevailed, but the curriculum provided for both was designed to ensure that an upper class, male-dominated society was not threatened. Porter's comment about education in the eighteenth century sums up the prevailing attitude: "In this educational free market, the instruction children got, determined by parental choice and pocket, tended to reinforce existing social, cultural and gender distinctions," and "polite society did not take girls' minds very seriously."[12] Or, as Fielding wrote in Tom Jones, ". . .right

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[9] Ibid, p. 158.

[10] G. S. Rousseau, 'Science books and their readers in the eighteenth century' in Rivers (ed.), Books and Their Readers in Eighteenth Century England, p. 73, Leicester, 1982.

[11] Neuburg, Popular Education, p. 139.

[12] Porter, English Society, pp. 180, 183.

thinking woman is too aware of the limitations of her sex to presume to judge the intelligence of any male."[13]

There were those few who cried out for a recognition of women's right to a meaningful education. Harriott Edwards advocated a choice for women in education and marriage in order to "define her own emotional needs and seek their satisfaction," to enable women to escape the role assigned by society and to achieve "self-development and self-fulfillment." Mary Astell developed a plan for a "religious retreat" for women, "an academic sanctuary to which women weary with the parade of the world might escape for peace and study and self-improvement."[14]

Mary Astell complained about "male oppression" which ignored "the equal intellectual capacity of the sexes" and "the injustice of barring women from higher learning." She, along with Hannah Woolley, Aphra Behn and other women, reflecting on the intellectual development of the eighteenth century and especially affected by Descartes ("I think, therefore, I am"), "felt a special intellectual affinity to the new philosophy."[15]

> "The grand design of the universe -- its rationality and lawfulness -- seemed to underscore the lack of meaning and the lack of purpose in their own lives. The Cartesian philosophy fostered an introspective psychology, a radical consciousness of self-importance to the growth of feminism by its insistence on the thinking I, or the touchstone of all knowledge and even of existence." Mary Astell claimed "boldly": "God had given all mankind the same intellectual potential, whether ancient or modern, rich or poor, male or female."[16]

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[13] As quoted in Rogers, 'Daniel Defoe', in Fritz and Morton, p. 8.

[14] Benkovitz, 'Women's concept of self' in Fritz and Morton, pp. 39-40.

[15] Kinnaird, 'Mary Astell', pp. 53, 60.

[16] Ibid, pp. 60-2.

Not all such advocates were women. Defoe felt that "women have capacity to be independent and should be given educational and economic opportunities to become so," believing that females' "apparent folly came from poor education, rather than natural inferiority." Defoe was not prepared to suggest that woman should encroach on the world of man, in government, for example, but he believed that woman's judgment would improve with education.[17] Various humanists, optimistic about human character and potential, appealed to male self-interest, claiming that "female learning. . .could create a new bond between husband and wife."[18] Fathers were seldom directly involved in bringing up their daughters, a responsibility which largely rested with the mothers, who often played central roles in the religious and moral instruction of children. Many fathers did recognize the self-interest inherent in some level of education, for service and/or marriage, as well as for "the preservation of their honour and good name"; these interests coincided with the mother's.[19] As a result, increasing numbers of girls and a growing percentage of the poor received at least some education, but how complete and meaningful was it? What was it designed to accomplish?

As we shall investigate in greater detail, the chapbooks presented a limited perspective on the importance of education. The History of Susan Ward describes a poor girl who was "neglected by her parents in her youth, as, alas, many are; so that she was not taught even to read."[20] Other

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[17] Rogers, 'Daniel Defoe' in Fritz and Morton, p. 3.

[18] Houlbrooke, The English Family, p. 32.

[19] Ibid, p. 185.

[20] Anon, The History of Susan Ward, p. 2, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2742.

publications place a vocational perspective on female education, emphasizing the need for reading and writing to function in a job.[21]

Education of the poor was seen by many as a threat to society; de Mandeville was against it (especially the teaching of writing), for society needed the uneducated poor "to do the drudgery." Those in favour saw education as an opportunity to modify the ignorance of the poor, to enable them to read the scriptures and learn a useful but humble living. Those in favour did not see education as a force to modify society, expecting that the poor would remain "grateful to their superiors and conscious of their duty toward them."[22]

By the mid-eighteenth century elementary education for the lower classes was available at independent "Dame" schools and at "charity" or "free" schools.[23] There was clear discrimination against girls in the curriculum. Spufford lists the objectives of a girl's education as instruction in reading, sewing, knitting and spinning, while boys concentrated on reading, writing and mathematics.[24] Lower class girls often learned to read sufficiently to deal with such servant responsibilities and household necessities as understanding recipes.[25] Instruction in writing skills for girls was still an issue; mathematics was seen as unnecessary, except for the daughters of tradesmen who might help with, or inherit a business. For them writing and

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[21] Anon, The Unfortunate Young Girl, p. 3. The vocation of interest is the grocer's trade.

[22] Neuburg, Popular Education, pp. 2-3.

[23] For the children of the working poor, such learning as was provided often was available only through Sunday schools, when the children were released from working in the fields.

[24] Spufford, Small Books, p. 34.

[25] Ibid, p. 61.

elementary arithmetic were added in view of their potential commercial responsibility.

David Cressy observes that teaching methods varied little from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century, with the emphasis on the "oral process", using "voice and memory", with learning based on a "secular catechism." Primers and catechisms were the basic textbooks for rote learning.[26] O'Day comments that "creativity, individual development, free expression were concepts unknown to the Tudor and Stuart educators."[27] O'Day also observed that "schools flourished when it became necessary to communicate to the younger generation knowledge and skills which few of the older generation possessed, but which many believed to be important. No new skills had been added to the list of accomplishments which the young girls must master." The skills required by girls, "sewing, cooking, medicine, all manner of housewifery, accounting and, in the case of the lower classes, certain agricultural skills" could be learned from mothers.[28]

Prior to and during the period of "formal education", poor boys would normally work with their fathers on the farm, as members of a rural family, while the girls were helping mother with the housework. The education of both would end with only basic rudimentary skills, when they would be sent off to service or apprenticeship. Children of the upper classes would be placed in the hands of governesses to learn reverence to God and "deference to earthly superiors." Parental responsibility was largely confined to contributing to religious education. By the age of six or seven, a child was expected to read, normally the Bible, and to write by eight to nine. At the

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[26] Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order, pp. 20-1.

[27] O'Day, Education and Society, p. 75.

[28] Ibid, p. 183.

age of seven, formal education would commence, with a tutor at home for those who could afford it. By the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, boarding schools began to flourish, an option more often provided to middle and upper class boys than girls, who tended to stay home to learn what they "needed" to run a household.[29]

"The more refined girls' schools" were finishing schools, preparing the students for a "compliant and decorative role in fashionable society, teaching manners, deportment, religion, French, arts and graces. . ." wrote Mary Wollstonecraft about the eighteenth century curriculum for girls.[30]

The situation in Scotland was similar. As in England, boys and girls studied in separate schools, with the ratio of boys to girls in schools reported to be five to one in the highland schools; in the low lands, the ratio was more equal, although boys predominated in the more advanced classes.[31] In the sixteenth century Scottish girls were roughly equal in literacy (percentage of population literate) with boys, with illiteracy for both sexes still a normal condition; by the mid-seventeenth century the girls had fallen behind, with the rate of improvement for males being considerably higher. The girls were learning to read, but writing skills were weak, albeit improving in seventeenth century Scotland. Upper class girls received musical instruction, home economics courses and some mathematics instruction, but no foreign language courses. "The education offered girls made few demands on their intelligence because it was not designed to develop intellect or earn a

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[29] Houlbrooke, The English Family, p. 147.

[30] Porter, English Society, p. 188. Rosemary O'day confirms this observation in her comments on girls' boarding schools in the late eighteenth century, calling them "finishing schools". O'Day, Education and Society, p. 189.

[31] Houston, 'Women in the economy', p. 29.

living."[32] Curriculum for girls was designed to focus on practical skills and social accomplishments, including cooking, sewing, dancing and singing, similar to the courses offered south of the border.[33]

Although French was part of the curriculum of upper class English girls, offered for ornamental not practical purposes, there was not universal acceptance of that subject, and there were limited opportunities to study the classical languages, deemed essential for educated males. One eighteenth century girl, Fanny Burney, reported that her father cancelled her Latin lessons, for they were considered "too masculine for misses."[34] The teaching of mathematics was so limited that a popular eighteenth century women's magazine, The Ladies Diary, ran articles introducing women to the subject.[35] Most grammar schools formally excluded girls.

There were curricular changes in the eighteenth century, in part a reflection of more leisure time and the increased availability of servants for the prospering middle classes. Unfortunately this often meant a shift in emphasis from preparation for domestic duties to time-filling "acceptable" activities such as needlework and lace-making. The acceptance of French in the curriculum increased, with some girls in Scotland receiving exposure to geography, music lessons, dancing and rudimentary bookkeeping (often not true mathematics).[36] Porter points out that middle and upper class women in the eighteenth century had the time available to develop the "feminine

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[32] R. K. Marshall, Virgins and Viragos, p. 134, London, 1983.

[33] Ibid, p. 205.

[34] Benkovitz, 'Women's concept of self', in Fritz and Morton, p. 48.

[35] Capp, Astrology, p. 245.

[36] Marshall, Virgins and Viragos, p. 205.

graces" -- "her toilet, arts of tea, shopping, paying calls, philanthropy, the vapors, scents and sensibility."[37]

This discrimination was not universally accepted. Sympathetic articles in Gentleman's Magazine discussed the "lack of educational opportunities for women, with the resulting lack of career options outside of marriage (leading to) inequities of the married state and inequality of the sexes." These publications pointed out that contemporary education did not prepare women to be "the wife of a man of sense" and, unable to converse intelligently, wives were poor companions. The need for improved household management skills for married women and widows was recognized, as was the desirability for improved job opportunities for widows and spinsters. One such article reflected upon the problem: without appropriate education, women were not prepared for responsibility and found it difficult to earn the respect of males; without the respect of males, education was limited in a male-dominated society.[38] "By 1710, English women were not merely reading more books; they also wanted to read books about 'male subjects', especially about science." Unfortunately, as with mathematics, it was necessary to find such information in magazines like Ladies Diary; the works of Newton, Boyle and others were only available to women in synthesized form in such magazines.[39]

Unfortunately, it appears that many women in society accepted a doll-like role, as Mary Wollstonecraft lamented. In a letter to her friend Jane Arden she describes her employer's sister:

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[37] Porter, English Society, p. 43.

[38] J. E. Hunter, 'The 18th-century Englishwoman: according to the Gentleman's Magazine', in Fritz and Morton (eds.), Women in the 18th Century and Other Essays, pp. 80-83, Toronto, 1976.

[39] Rousseau, 'Science books' in Rivers, p. 214.

> "She is rather too fond of dissipation and brings up her daughters in a stile I don't approve of -- that is, she seems to wish rather to make them accomplished and fashionable than good and sensible, in the true sense of the word: in this she follows the crowd, and it is much to be lamented, that the stream runs so rapidly that way."[40]

Of course, the daughters of the poor suffered an even worse fate. As we have observed, an increasing but still relatively small percentage were at least partially literate by the eighteenth century. However, financial necessity often dictated a very limited education for both boys and girls. Spufford writes about late seventeenth, early eighteenth century "society in which a boy even from a relatively poor family might have a year of two's education to the age of six or eight. His almost invisible sister, historically speaking, sometimes was taught to read."[41] Even in the eighteenth century many supported Lord Chesterfield's view that "women are children of a larger growth -- a man of sense only trifles with them."[42]

EDUCATION IN THE CHAPBOOKS

Educational issues are not dealt with directly in the chapbooks. There are no references to the debate about women's education nor to the subject of curriculum. There are some positive references to educated women, but other publications refer to education in a male context. Education for a trade and to ensure knowledge of the Bible is referred to in the Lauriston Castle collection, as is the rote learning orientation of the school masters and mistresses. There are chapbooks which provide instruction on such basics as how to write a letter, but none that deal with more sophisticated subjects, an indication that letter writing was the primary or only use of writing for many.

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[40] R. M. Wardle (ed.), Collected Letters of Mary Wollstonecraft, p. 74, Ithaca, 1979.

[41] Spufford, Small Books, p. 36.

[42] Porter, English Society, p. 38.

Mrs. Jane Shore, "not wanting any education that was proper to her," had a very "airy natural temper."[43] Parthenia was a beautiful maiden with a mind of "wisdom, wit and piercing judgments."[44] It is interesting to note that both of these references refer to historic, not contemporary "upper class" women. Unfortunately, we have no record of what was a "proper" education for Mrs. Shore, but her history indicates that her beauty, not her mind, was of greater lifetime significance.

The poor mother of four in The Contented Villager is enlightened, sending her daughter to a neighbour to learn to read; this tale also advises the reader to get diverting books, "if you can read."[45] While confirming the importance of learning by rote, A New Academy of Compliments encourages women's education while warning of the dangers of marriage to a "self-opinionated Fool" who ". . .speaks more by Winks and Signs than Words," advising that you will learn "when to hold up your Head, Miss; how to stand and kneel at Church. . .the more you get by Rote, the better he will esteem you; his grave Reprimands will often remind you of your Schoolmistress. . ."[46]

The other non-religious book that refers to women's education emphasizes learning for a trade, along with the ability to read and write. The parents of The Unfortunate Young Girl sent her "to a day school, where she might be taught to read and write, as they wished to bring her up to their own trade, that of grocer." Unfortunately, she selects a different trade, prostitution. This lower middle class family is of the trades, and this book indicates that such a group could aspire to literacy, if not to a well-rounded

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[43] Anon, Jane Shore, p. 2.

[44] Anon, Argalus and Parthenia, p. 11.

[45] Anon, The Contented Villager, p. 4, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2742.

[46] Anon, New Academy of Compliments, p. 72.

education.[47] This tale is unique among those I reviewed, for it suggests a slightly broader view on female roles and training that is generally true in this literature.

As can be expected, the religious chapbooks emphasize literacy as a means to understand the Bible. The Rule of Life summarizes the perspective of this group of publications:

> "The great Business of Man is, to improve his Mind and govern his manners. . .the Educator's Care, above all Things, should be first to lay in his Charge the Foundation of Religion and Virtue. . .the Subject of Duties is the most useful Part of all Philosophy. . .What Sculpture is to a Block of Marble, Education is to a human Soul. The Philosopher, the Saint, and the Hero: the Wise, the Good, or the Great Man, very often lie hid and concealed in a Plebeian, which a proper Education might have disinterred, and have brought to Light. . .Sensual excess [provides] Bodily Pains and Diseases. As it transgresseth the rules of Reason and Religion, it breed guilt and Remorse in the Mind. . .The two greatest evils in the world are a diseased Body and a discontented Mind."[48]

It is heartening to observe the plea for education of the "Plebeian". This tract states that "an industrious and virtuous Education of Children" is a "better inheritance" than wealth.[49]

The Rule of Life projects great suspicion about the eighteenth century's upper class commitment to foreign education, a strong xenophobic view:

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[47] Anon, Unfortunate Young Girl, p. 3.

[48] Anon, The Rule of Life, pp. 3-4.

[49] Ibid, p. 4.

> "Many of our young gentlemen, who are sent abroad,
> bring home instead of solid Virtue, Formalities, Fashions,
> Grimaces, and at best a Volubility of talking Nonsense:
> Yet some perhaps think them well educated; and that
> Foreign Vanity is preferable to Home Discretion. . .it
> being impossible for him who is a Fool in his own
> Country to become wise by running up and down."

The author of these "Rules" then criticizes learning French, dance and behavior, observing that "Education is generally the worse in Proportion to the Wealth and Grandeur of the Parents." He (she?) also supports women's education: "many of the misfortunes in Families arise from the trifling Way the Women have in spending their Time, and gratifying only their Eyes and Ears, instead of their Reason and Understanding."[50]

We can applaud this support of education for the poor and for females while recognizing that the limited perspective of curriculum implied in these words was not unusual. In case we should have any doubts about the objective of the education, we learn that:

> "The end of learning is to know God, and out of that
> Knowledge to love Him, and to imitate Him, as we may
> the nearest by possessing our Souls of true Virtue."[51]

In Hannah More's tract, the hero (the shepherd) "submits to the lot that is appoint me," reporting that he learned to read when he was a boy, "though reading was not common when I was a child." He learned to read to be able to understand the Bible, reinforcing the view contained in The Rule of Life. The Shepherd reported that he read in his Bible every day for thirty years. There is no mention even at that time that education was designed to

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[50] Ibid, pp. 4, 21.

[51] Ibid, p. 8.

progress beyond the ability to read, and there is the specific mention about accepting the "lot that is appointed me."[52]

The author of The Sunday School is equally direct. This chapbook refers to those schools, largely started by women, which were designed to keep poor children from "idling away their Sabbath in the fields, or in the streets," to keep them away from the "tricks" with which a day of leisure can tempt, while teaching them to read the Bible. In fact, the author points out that it is better not to read than to read the terrible penny books and ballads (i.e., chapbooks) that are available. A local farmer fears that his workmen will "fly in his face" if they learn to read. The response is that "the whole extent of learning which we intend to give the poor, is only to enable them to read the Bible, a book in which every duty is explained, every doctrine brought into practice, and the highest truths made level to the meanest understanding," for the "best security the farmer can have to guarantee industry and obedience" of his works is the Bible. The admonition is that reading is like wine, "still a good cordial, though it is too often abused to the purpose of drunkenness."[53]

In the Aesop fable, "The Cock and the Jewel," we are told that virtue and learning are to be preferred before other "objects of the senses" and that a woman should ignore the "crowd of empty frolic, conceited admirers" for a "man of sense." That "crowd" was composed of "idle, fauntering young fellows of the age" who opted for fancy clothes and debauchery rather than education.[54] It is also clear that Kate cannot read and respects those who

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[52] H. More, The Beautiful and Interesting Account of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, pp. 5-6, Edinburgh, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2809.

[53] Anon, The Sunday School, pp. 4, 14-19.

[54] Aesopus, Aesop's Fables, p. 29.

can. Kate asks John: "You're a scholar, I warrant, are you not?" John replies: "I can read."[55]

That exchange, between Kate and John, indicates that we should not underestimate the importance of reading, of basic literacy for the poor of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, despite our twentieth century concern about the limited curriculum available for the poor and for women. By our standards, those two groups were under-educated, a fact confirmed by an analysis of the chapbooks. Generally, those publications do support a limited education for females and the underprivileged while emphasizing status quo, rather than advancement in the social strata. In view of the religious orientation of many of these tales, it is not surprising that great emphasis is placed on the Bible as the publication to be read, a perspective shared by many during this period. Other than the occasional objection to education per se as in the quotation from The Sunday School at the beginning of this chapter -- and it should be noted that the farmer who made that statement was converted to education for the poor -- the authors of the chapbooks generally support a universal, if limited, education. Perhaps the fact that they were writers affected their view, but they were ahead of their time in comparison to such as Lord Chesterfield, Samuel Johnson and many of their contemporaries. In their specific or implied support of literacy, if not a well-rounded education, the chapbooks that dealt with this subject did mirror the prevailing attitude of society.

WORK

Literacy and a simple education designed to provide a woman with the ability to read, to handle the upper class social graces or to participate in a basic trade, such as spinning and sewing, did not prepare women for a

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[55] Anon, John and Kate, p. 13.

professional life, in politics, religion and the professions, opportunities which were not available for females. Thus, another "trap" existed. The opportunities were not available, so there was no stimulus for the educational system to prepare women for careers. Without the appropriate education, women were not ready to become M.P.'s, doctors or bankers, and women were specifically barred from universities and higher educational opportunities because of their gender. A few did pursue careers in literature and the arts, as we shall see, but they were the exceptions.

The chapbooks did support the concept of a basic education for women, mirroring the trend in society. However, these publications reflected the status quo, home-oriented outlook on professional opportunities for women. An analysis of The Affectionate Daughter illustrates the popular literature's perspective on the appropriate roles for women in seventeenth and eighteenth century British society.

The mother "took care of the family, attended also to their little farm, and minded the dairy, and when all her other work was done, she used constantly to sit down to spin," and the eldest daughter "worked with the mother at the spinning wheel"; she sometimes "accompanied her work with a cheerful hymn." The second daughter, Mary, accompanied her father and brother to the coal mine;[56] Mary started when she was five, her brother at seven years of age. The two children jointly did the work of one man, known as a "drawer", earning seven shillings a week "for their parents."

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[56] It is interesting to note this reference to mining, a vocation for some women in east central Scotland but rarely known in England during this period. This chapbook was published in London, and there is no way to determine from its content whether the author is referring to England or Scotland.

> "Mary and her little brother, so far from being a burden, were bringing a little fortune to their parents, even when they were eight or ten years old; all the family were now getting forward by the help of these little creatures, and their worldly comforts were now increasing on every side."

After the father's death in the coal mines -- "but the most grievous afflictions are appointed for wise ends" -- Mary tackles a double shift to release her mother from the "Parish burden," raising her earnings to three shillings and six pence per day. By this time Mary's older sister is married, so the burden rests with Mary, who does not excuse herself "on account of her sex." Fortunately, Mary's virtue was safe due to the "religious nature" of the men in the mine. Unfortunately, Mary becomes sick from over-work and grief, but the author reassures us that her illness is one of "the peculiar blessings of Heaven," commenting that wealthy women would be better off if they followed Mary's example rather than contracting their diseases from "the abundance of their riches and from the want of exercise." Following her recovery Mary enters service, is an excellent maid and able to help support her mother.

In addition to the religious admonitions scattered throughout the twenty-four pages of this tale, the message is transmitted that "Mary requited her parents for the care of her." We also are exposed to examples of the acceptable range of jobs for women: spinning at home, working on the farm or in the mines or household service. At the same time we are reminded that wealthy women were "idlers" contracting diseases from "the abundance of their riches and from the want of exercise."[57]

Marriage was a financial necessity for many of the poor. A woman needed a man to ensure a living, with limited opportunities for herself as a

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[57] Anon, The Affectionate Daughter, pp. 3-8.

single woman, and the man needed the additional income, sparse as it often might be, to sustain life as a peasant, artisan or labourer, and to look after household affairs.[58] As Houlbrooke points out:

> "The matrimonial partnership brought together material and personal resources. The former had the greatest relative importance at the upper levels of the social scale, the latter at the lower, but most gentlemen hoped to marry competent housewives while even poor girls were expected to bring their husbands a portion. The roles of husband and wife were different but complementary. They were most closely integrated on small farms, in shops and the workshops of some types of craftsmen. Economic partnership was looser in that a growing proportion of households whose dependence on wages forced the husband to work away from the home. Among professional men the domestic sphere was often completely divorced from work for a livelihood. Among the gentry neither partner worked for a living, but both often needed to cooperate in the oversight of the family's affairs and the defense of its interests; the wife might need to perform 'masculine' tasks in time of crisis, especially in the first half of our period. The nature of a marriage's economic basis flavoured the companionship of husband and wife. At one end of the spectrum were the small farmer and his wife, most of whose time together was spent in toil in a shared enterprise which must nearly always have been in the forefront of their minds. At the other end we find a bureaucrat-like Samuel Pepys, whose wife was the companion of his leisure hours, and whose office and home were close but separate worlds."[59]

To a significant extent, women's participation in the labour force from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century fluctuated, primarily as a result of population stagnation. Even during periods of increased female employment, Houlbrooke describes the relationship between husband and wife as "an unequal partnership"[60] with the wife "conventionally supposed to occupy a separate but subordinate sphere in the family economy. Although

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[58] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 5.

[59] Houlbrooke, The English Family, p. 26.

[60] Ibid, p. 46.

the tasks performed by husband and wife were largely separate, the overlap between their responsibilities was often large, and their cooperation very close, especially on the farm. The separation of spheres became more marked with the growth of wage -- and salary -- earning groups."[61]

Snell comments that until 1750, women's work on the farm extended to such masculine tasks as "reaping, loading and spreading dung, ploughing, threshing, thatching, following the harrow, sheep shearing, and even working as shepherdesses."[62] He describes the decline of the pre-industrial family economy to economic change occurring in the latter half of the eighteenth century, not to a modification of social attitudes. Snell argues that "autonomous changes in the structure of the economy. . .were the historical determinants" of woman's role in the economy and that these pre-dated Victorian attitudes. Snell describes the development of the scythe as a "major excluding factor in relation to the harvest," with women becoming restricted to such less significant farm labour as weeding, the care of the animals, spinning and carding.[63] T. M. Devine concurs with Snell's view. Whereas the sickle was widely used by women, who could bend and cut low to the ground, the scythe, introduced in the latter portion of the eighteenth century, primarily was used by males. Devine also emphasizes the trend toward larger farms, rather than the dependency on sub-tenants; the former encouraged the use of better-controlled, male farm labourers.[64] Snell reports that in Dorset before the 1840's families were hired on farms as a unit, and paid as a unit; with the spread of enclosures and the decline of

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[61] Ibid, p. 119.

[62] Snell, Annals, p. 52.

[63] Ibid, pp. 65-66.

[64] T. M. Devine, 'Women workers, 1850-1914' in T. M. Devine (ed.), Farm Servants and Labour in Lowland Scotland 1770-1914, p. 99, Edinburgh, 1984.

small farmers and owner-occupiers, the large farm owners hired males to use the new technology, while women were reduced to "driving bullocks. . .cleaning out their houses, and bedding them up. . .washing potatoes and boiling them for pigs. . .and anything that came to hand like a boy."[65]

Shortage of labour also helped to stimulate female participation in apprenticeships during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. With an increased labour supply, a "glutted artisan labour force," men took steps to protect their jobs and to exclude women, who either as daughters, by marriage, or independently, had been able to participate more freely in a variety of crafts and professions. The increased capitalization of the trades provoked a further decline in "artisan family economics" and the move to the employment of journeymen outside the home, while females concentrated on the domestic scene.[66] Snell concludes that even up to the present time we have not returned to "the fuller economic participation of women in the pre-industrial period."[67]

Houlbrooke, reflecting the separation of spheres between males and females, describes the traditional roles of husbands and wives of different social levels in their "unequal. . .economic and social partnership." The wife's domain "embraced the kitchen, the garden, the care of small children and the cure of minor ailments." Among the nobility and gentry, while the husband was responsible for administering the estate with travel and politics as additional commitments, his wife was involved with yarn, linen, kitchen tasks, household accounts, servants, the garden and tending to sick family, servants

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[65] Snell, Annals, p. 406.

[66] Ibid, pp. 304-312.

[67] Ibid, p. 405.

and neighbours. When a man also had a craft, such as a weaver, a more companionate economic relationship would sometimes ensue, with both partners working together. With the growth in the labour supply and agricultural specialization, women were forced into "less skilled and less well paid work" which "widened the gap between male and female earnings." In such small scale trades as retailing, brewing and baking, outlets which became increasingly important with the growth of cities, a meaningful partnership often existed. However, craftsmen and retailers were fewer in numbers than journeymen and labourers who left home for work, and separation was also the norm for the professional classes.[68]

Most of the chapbooks reviewed related to the woman as housewife and participant in the cottage industry. Poor Robin reports that "now I goes whistling to my plough, To card and spin my wife knows how,"[69] while The Contented Villager raises four children, earning her living by spinning wick yarn for candles.[70] In very poor families, such as that described in The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain the whole family must pitch in:

> "Though my wife is not able to do any out of door work, yet she brings up our children to such habits of industry, that our little maids, before they are six years old, can first get a halfpenny and then a penny a day knitting. The boys too little to do hard work, get a trifle by keeping the birds off the corn; for this the farmer will give them a penny or two pence, and now and then a bit of bread and cheese into the bargain."

The boys also "glean and pick stones" and pick up pieces of wool rubbed off by the sheep to make stockings while their mother cards the wool and the oldest daughter spins it. The boys knit while keeping the crows from the

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[68] Houlbrooke, The English Family, pp. 106-9.

[69] Anon, Poor Robin, p. 5.

[70] Anon, The Contented Villager, p. 3.

fields or when home at night.[71] It is interesting to note that this is a late eighteenth century chapbook, written by Hannah More (1745-1833); the description is also timely for the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

As The Good Man of Auchtermuchtie in a Scottish garland discovered, housework could be difficult, an indication that the farmer's wife's responsibilities were respected. After a day of ploughing in the pouring rain when he is very envious of his wife at home, the farmer switches roles with his spouse. She was "strang and tough, and of her trade she took nae fear." The farmer discovers that he cannot handle housework nor the domestic animals; he can't even make butter, is gored in the buttocks by a cow, burns the kiln and the corn. He laments:

> "But all shall turn to wrack indeed.
> I wish I had my plough-stilts keeped,
> Let never better come of sead,
> With that he sat down and weeped.
> While the poor man was in despair,
> Not knowing what to say or do,
> For everything did backward fair,
> That he put his hand unto."[72]

Unfortunately, not all chapbooks display such respect for domestic chores. Saturday is cleaning day in No Peace About the House, and the frustrated husband, unable to stand the din and not allowed to walk on the floor, gains his revenge at the ale house on Saturday night, with his male friends.[73] Although the popular literature, especially that with religious perspective or overtones, did not look kindly on ale houses, there was recognition that couples did own and manage establishments, as in Mary the Maid of the Inn.

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[71] More, Salisbury Plain, pp. 9-10.

[72] Anon, The Good Man of Auchtermochtie, p. 3, n.p., n.d., L.C. Vol. 2899. This satirical approach is refreshingly sympathetic about a wife's duties and responsibilities.

[73] Anon, No Peace About the House, p. 2, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852.

In this case the owners had been in service.[74] Kate and John, who also had been in service, rejected that wicked option for a healthier life on their own farm. Kate and John made a better choice, for Mary's early and tragic death is a result of a chain of events precipitated at the inn. Kate's expectations after marriage were to milk the cows, make butter and cheese, bring the poultry to market (for "pin" money), brew and bake -- and have babies.[75] Apparently, Kate was a resident of the post-scythe era. It is not clear in the chapbooks whether a wife's extra income was divided for use by the family or reserved for her personal use.

The fact that young children were expected to contribute to the poor family's economy is reinforced in Dame Andrews:

> "The children early taught to spin
> Added their little gains,
> And though their earnings were but small
> They amply paid the pains."

This tale is interesting in that it provides a happy ending with a meaningful occupation for Dame Andrews; with the assistance of a wealthy neighbour, she becomes a school mistress, to teach poor children "God to fear and love, to be both good and just."[76] The only other citation of a school mistress is found in the previously quoted A New Academy of Compliments: "His grave Reprimands will often remind you of your school-mistress," a not very flattering but accurate (for many) reference.[77] Prostitutes and servants are mentioned often in the popular literature, as we will discuss, but other than unrealistic and almost mythical references to women soldiers (Susannah

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[74] Anon, Mary The Maid of the Inn, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2770.

[75] Anon, John and Kate, p. 12.

[76] Anon, Dame Andrews, p. 3, Burslem, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2718.

[77] Anon, New Academy of Compliments, p. 72.

Cope and The Female Soldier) and other such heroines (Long Meg of Winchester), chapbook authors generally do not recognize that there were other, albeit limited, opportunities for women. Only three exceptions can be cited to that statement. One, mentioned above, refers to working in the coal mine.[78] Another, in Fatal Rashnels, portrays a nineteen year old girl working outside the house in a "draper's line," an indication that women working in textiles were not confined to the house.[79] The final such reference is contained in The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping. The latter is the subject of a number of unflattering references in these publications; this particular tale is satirical, and it is difficult to judge its accuracy. However, it does list women's clubs in which gossiping is apparently a major part of the agenda. The list, if at all representative, includes many of the trades which would occupy husbands, and perhaps their wives. Some are specifically wives' clubs: Weavers, Butchers, Shoemakers, Tailors and Penny Barbers, all followed by "Wives' Club." Others may indicate the direct participation of the women: Milliners, Mantua Makers, Fish Women, Quilters and Basket Weavers. The latter group represents trades that women could be expected to pursue.[80]

The mention of the trades is consistent with such references to male occupations in the chapbooks. As Spufford points out, there was a trend starting in the late sixteenth century popular literature from "neo-chivalric" protagonists to "clothier" heroes, a more realistic appeal to the aspirations of poor tailors and labourers, who just might hope to become Lord Mayor of London, like Jack of Newbury. At least they might be successful in their

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[78] Anon, The Affectionate Daughter, p. 3.

[79] Anon, Fatal Rashnels or The Unfortunate Servant Girl, p. 4, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

[80] Anon, The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping, p. 1, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2737.

field, like Kate and John, the faithful servants whose loyalty and dedication earned their masters' financial support to become farmers.[81]

LEISURE

As the chapbooks' audience was primarily lower class, perhaps it is not surprising that chapbook authors took a dim view of the leisure pursuits of the wealthy, including the greatly expanding interest in literature. As previously quoted, The Lover's Guide to Matrimony rails against "a lady who destroys her time in dress, frivolous entertainment, public spectacle, or unprofitable reading."[82] The Rule of Life specifically condemns the eighteenth century interest in romantic novels:

> "In reading Romances, Women (who are mostly addicted this way) do not only learn the Evil they should be ignorant of, but also the most delicate Ways of committing it."[83]

The English Lady's Complete Catechism sets forth "the Pride and Vanity of the English quality," describing the typical day of an aristocratic woman who, as a teenager, thought only of men and who, after marriage, lies in bed until noon, spends the afternoon dressing and the evening dining and playing cards until midnight, while talking only of "fashions and plays." Attending Church only twice a year or when her husband gives her new clothes, she spends the Sabbath in "chit-chat." She reads plays and novels; she loves herself, her foreign money, her lap dog and her foreign page, anything "French or foreign," bestowing her charity only on "French whores," not the poor at her own door. She converses with "those like myself, who make pride and pleasure their devotion: new fashions their daily prayers, laugh at all below

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[81] Spufford, Small Books, p. 145.

[82] Anon, Lover's Guide, p. 3.

[83] Anon, Rule of Life, p. 24.

them, and deny those above them." Finally, she cuckolds her husband, scorns "poor neighbours" and "backbites the [other] rich."[84] Although this portrait is designed to present a very negative image of women's life at the top, one has to wonder about the reaction of a poor married mother who must commit most of her life at the spinning wheel, kitchen and dairy to help make ends meet, the positive female contributions valued in the chapbooks. This publication tends to confirm Rogers' observation that the poor were interested in the leisure pursuits of the rich.[85]

Among those pursuits was gossip, a subject of great interest to the authors of the popular literature. Houlbrooke confirms that "gossip groups" existed in seventeenth century England,[86] tending to underscore the male stereotype discussed by Shirley Ardener in The Nature of Women in Society that "surplus, frustrated verbal energy" led women to "nag and prattle on."[87] Both Maxine Berg[88] and Houston[89] point out the fear that gossip could affect males' reputations, especially in relation to their sexual exploits, or lack of the same. Gossip was joined by household management decisions and the granting or withholding of sexual favour as the only weapons available to the weaker sex. And how the chapbook authors feared the effects of, and attacked the use of gossip, although gossip did provide a useful service, often leading to community intervention to resolve family or neighbourly conflicts

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84 Anon, English Lady's Catechism, pp. 1-8.

85 Rogers, Literature and Popular Culture, p. 3.

86 Houlbrooke, The English Family, p. 110.

87 Ardener, 'Introduction' in Ardener, p. 21.

88 M. Berg, The Age of Manufactures 1700-1820, p. 165, London, 1985.

89 Houston, 'Women in the Economy', p. 40.

without the need to resort to legal action. MacFarlane reports on this self-policing system of justice in seventeenth century England.[90]

The subject of gossip was almost ubiquitous in the popular literature, and proclamations about gossip encompassed all classes of society, but did not refer to men as gossips, an interesting omission that clearly reflects the gender of the publishers and most authors. The moral accompanying the Aesop's fable, "The Eagle, the Cat and the Sow," points out that gossip can ruin families, for it can "magnify the gnat to the size of a camel, and swell a mole hill up to a mountain."[91] Gossips often are portrayed accompanied by liquid refreshment. As is to be expected, gin is a co-vice with prattle, as in An Explanation of the Vices of the Age, which condemns "idle tea and gin-drinking women who can find little else to do but gossip from neighbour to neighbour."[92] The story of Will and Jean provides a humourous perspective on liquid refreshment in eighteenth century Scotland:

> "Port makes man rude; claret civil,
> Beer makes ilk wife a Devil,
> Rabby Burns, in many a ditty
> Loudly sings in whiskey's praise,
> Sweet his song, the mair's the pity,
> E'er on it he war'd sic lays."[93]

It is interesting that tea, seen by much of the world as the benign British drink, is also linked to vile gossip in several chapbooks. It is impossible to ascertain whether the linkage of tea and gossip is a xenophobic reaction to the foreign origin of the substance or a reflection of male concern about what

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[90] A. MacFarlane, The Justice and the Mares Ale, p. 197, New York, 1981.

[91] Aesopus, Aesop's Fables, p. 83.

[92] Anon, Vices of the Age, p. 3.

[93] H. MacNeil, Scotland's Skaith; or the History o' Will and Jean, p. 11, Stirling, 1795, L.C. Vol. 2865.

really transpires at ladies' tea parties, which became increasingly popular during this period. It is also interesting to note that there is no mention of gossip in men's ale or coffee houses. The males' concern is evident. The Sunday School, recorded the author's pleasure when the adult women began to attend Sunday evening services, with the pubs suffering and "gossiping and tea drinking" in decline.[94] The wife's revenge on a philandering husband in A New and Diverting Dialogue utilizes two of women's weapons:

> "I'll kill two birds with one stone, graft a pair of large horns upon his head; and if he gives me a teaser, then I shall have something to drink tea with my gossips and neighbours."[95]

One entire story, The New Art and Mystery of Gossiping, is devoted to gossip, with the plea that "If these be the Pleasures of their Lives, Fate keep us from tea-drinking wives." The description of a "tea drinking" wife is that "their tongues like perpetual clockwork run on, Till their budget of lies is exhausted and gone."[96] What could a man do about a gossiping wife? Perhaps the same remedy as suggested for a scolding wife in The Scots Piper's Queries: "Nail her tongue to a growing tree."[97] Did women have any defenders? Yes, as stated in the only supportive tale I encountered:

> "I shall conclude. . .not withstanding the many Reflections thrown upon the Fair sex on account of their Weakness in point of Secret, the Conduct of our Heroine in this Particular is plain and demonstrative Proof of the Truth that a Woman is not only capable of confining a Secret in her Bosom, but actually does so upon sundry Emergencies. . ."[98]

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[94] Anon, The Sunday School, p. 22.

[95] Anon, A New and Diverting Dialogue, p. 2, n.p., n.d.

[96] Anon, Gossiping, p. 7.

[97] D. Graham, The Scots Piper's Queries, p. 3, Edinburgh, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2809.

[98] Anon, The Female Soldier, p. 24, London, 1756.

The picture of the use of leisure time as represented in the chapbooks is incomplete and therefore a distortion of reality. Despite the increased separation of the spouses, as wages and salaries increasingly replaced the joint economic partnership of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, "at every social level, man and wife shared much of their leisure."[99] As we have seen female gossip groups did exist, but married couples, depending on what they could afford, enjoyed food and drink together at ale houses or in others' homes, danced and listened to music, joined with friends to play cards or guessing games and shared hunting experiences. Church attendance was predominantly female, sometimes a joint venture, as was religious study at home, often with the children. More educated women were able to converse on more interesting subjects with their normally even better educated husbands, or the latter would read aloud to their wives while they sewed.[100]

During the first half of the eighteenth century, "rising material wealth" affected "the way people lived, their material belongings and surroundings, their life-style. The growth of well-being filtered down, albeit unequally to improve the standards and quality of living of much of the population. . .but heightened the contrast between haves and have-nots." Discretionary income often went to entertainment, travel and enjoyment, with an 'easy come, easy go' attitude. "Noisy, effusive and public pleasures" with commercially organized theatres, concert halls and other places of amusement designed to appeal to wider audiences, became the vogue for those who could afford them.[101]

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[99] Houlbrooke, The English Family, p. 119.

[100] Ibid, p. 111.

[101] Porter, English Society, p. 232.

A 1753 Scottish chapbook provides the contemporary religious perspective on the leisure attractions of the gentry and upper bourgeoisie, describing them as "derived from the Devil to the worship and service of Heathen Gods, spectacles of filthiness" and as "breakers of the third and seventh commandments. Balls and plays bring always along with them an itching after amorous and lascivious books and romances, idle visits, over-costly, curious, vain and conceity dressings and deckings of the body, to the wasting of much precious time, and sometimes to the ruining of their estates and fortunes by extravagance."[102]

After 1720 increased wealth, combined with the waning influence of the Calvinist Church against "idle frivolity", led to attendance at theatres, balls and concerts in Edinburgh, with mixed theatre parties and intimate suppers now acceptable outlets.[103] The same trend is apparent in England. In both England and Scotland increased wealth permitted more families to employ more servants to run the households, thus contributing to the growth of leisure time for growing numbers of families.

Other than these negative comments mentioned above, the chapbooks do not depict the very important life-style changes that were occurring in society. We do not learn how the middle and upper classes spent their shared time, or the effects of increased shared time in the relationship between marriage partners. We do know that for those who could afford it, the eighteenth century increasingly became a pleasure-oriented period with the growing commercialization of leisure, eventually resulting in the Victorian reaction. However, although some chapbooks warn against pleasure-oriented pastimes, we do not learn about what transpired to

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[102] Anon, The Iniquity of Balls and Stage Plays Discovered, pp. 3-4, 7, Glasgow, 1753.

[103] Marshall, Virgins and Viragos, p. 167.

provoke that reaction, nor are we enlightened about the positive effects their increased leisure undoubtedly provided in a more companionate marital environment. We are not even informed about reading as a form of leisure; in the chapbooks reading is mentioned only as a method of instruction. It is understandable that publications written for those who generally could not aspire to such pursuits would not dwell on the benefits of increased leisure time. We also may surmise that publications authored by those who were interested in presenting a strongly religious viewpoint and/or in maintaining the status quo would not glorify theatre, concerts, balls, novels, travel and other such offerings. Nevertheless, the unescapable conclusion is that the chapbooks do not present a complete picture of the leisure time pursuits of the eighteenth century citizen of increased wealth and, therefore, do distort our view of the reality of eighteenth century leisure time.

However, that reality -- of concerts and plays, travel, tea parties and balls -- was not available to the eighteenth century poor. There were profound changes in the working family's lives, but these were not all for the better. Two-thirds of their income was dedicated to sustenance -- food and drink -- and the remaining third was required to cover rent, fuel and clothes. The urban poor lived in shanties, cellars or rundown houses vacated by the better off; the rural families resided in shacks of wattle, turf and road scrapings. Their diet was substantially unchanged from the seventeenth century, with cheese and bread predominating. There was little meat, and that was often fat bacon, not venison or pheasant. Increased potato production marginally improved nutrition, especially in Scotland and Ireland. Liquid refreshment included water, which often was contaminated, tea made with reused tea leaves, and ale or cheap wine. Although increased wages led to some improvement in the standard of living, luxurious leisure time did not become an option. An occasional night in the ale house had to suffice.

Although the chapbooks depicted the church as the ideal outlet for the poor's free time, the "public domain grew increasingly secular, independent of the church," with pubs and coffee houses the focus.[104] As we have seen, the chapbooks present only a negative image of such places, admitting their importance only via the vehemence of the attacks on them.

These vitriolic assaults are an indication of the importance of drinking establishments in British society. In The English Ale House, Peter Clark discusses the "hostile publicity that ale houses received," adding that from the sixteenth century ale houses "had become a ubiquitous and essential feature of the social world of ordinary folk."[105] Clark's studies confirm that only 6.6 percent to 10.2 percent of the customers were women, primarily accompanying their husbands or going to celebrate such events as christenings. Younger women were "morally and swiftly" suspect in ale houses.[106] Quaife reports that "wayward wives" and "wanton widows" were more apt to use ale houses for purposes of seduction than maidens.[107] The link between bar work and prostitution was also evident in Scotland. Women, normally the wife of the male owner or, sometimes, his widow, were the "pivotal figures" as bartenders.[108]

Clark illustrates the importance of these women, quoting the description of the famous woman bartender, Mother Bunch:

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[104] Porter, English Society, pp. 233-4, 243.

[105] Clark, Ale House, pp. 34, 39.

[106] Ibid, pp. 75, 79, 131.

[107] Quaife, Wanton Wenches, p. 76.

[108] Clark, Ale House, p. 205.

> "Nearly as round as she was tall, a famous story teller, whose peals of laughter echoed from Aldgate to Westminster while her farts demolished Charing Cross."[109]

As Thomas points out, the upper and middle classes feared that ale houses and such establishments would corrupt their customers and result in absenteeism and lateness.[110] The religious leaders saw taverns and ale houses as competition for the churches and provokers of dancing and whoredom.[111] The chapbooks supported the views of the upper classes and the church: "no blessings could be expected from going to ale houses."[112]

It is important to maintain a perspective on the opportunities for leisure and work during the eighteenth century. Porter describes the England of 1700 as still "a minor rustic nation of hamlets and villages" with eighty percent of the population in the countryside and London as the only very large city. Porter reports that ninety percent of the population of five million worked in agriculture or in "processing rurally produced raw materials." Malcomson estimates that in 1700 at least seventy-five percent of the people still depended on agricultural work.[113] Life was greatly affected by weather and the harvest, and industry was based on spinning, weaving, tanning, processing wood and other rural cottage industry. Although there were no longer the extensive famines that existed in earlier times, many still lived at subsistence (or worse) levels, with "deprivation and suffering. . .the basic facts of life" for most working people. Porter describes England of that

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[109] Ibid, p. 83.

[110] K. Thomas, 'Work and leisure in pre-industrial society: conference paper', Past and Present, 29 (1964), 61.

[111] P. Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, p. 203, Oxford, 1982.

[112] Anon, Moral Tales, p. 13.

[113] R. W. Malcomson, Life and Labour in England 1700-1780, p. 22, New York, 1981.

period as a "hard-working, hard-living, plain-speaking nation," one that gradually became refined during the eighteenth century.[114]

From the 1740's onward the economy started to expand, in part a result of population pressures. The increased national product benefitted farmers, land owners, small and large capitalists but was "a mixed blessing" for the masses. Increases in population "destabilised" wage rates and undermined the apprentice and guild organizations; with the influx of less skilled labour, the formation of a proletariat began. This economic growth benefitted many, but not the labourers at the bottom of the base, who were condemned to a life of "toil and poverty."[115] The increased opportunities were primarily for males. This period also saw the "integration of agricultural and industrial labour" with "families pursuing multiple modes to earn a living."[116] For women, closed out by education and tradition from more rewarding and meaningful pursuits, domestic work was often the only alternative so they took in washing, became seamstresses or food purveyors.[117] At the beginning of the century, women worked alongside men in the fields, or with husbands in cottage industry. Later in the century the coming of factories affected cottage industry and domestic spinning, forcing those women who could obtain positions other than in service to the factories, where at least the pay was better although the work was less skilled.[118] However, family units were affected by these trends, which foreshadowed the coming of the industrial revolution.

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[114] Porter, English Society, pp. 25-33.

[115] Ibid, p. 230.

[116] Ibid, pp. 201, 212.

[117] Ibid, pp. 149-51.

[118] Ibid, p. 46.

Malcomson estimates that in the late seventeenth century, seventy-five percent of England's population was comprised of "labouring people," with "regular, full-time employment and a single job not the norm."[119] Under the impact of engrossing and enclosure, with the increasing disappearance of the small farm, the percentage of the total population living in rural areas decreased from seventy-five percent in 1700 to sixty-six percent by 1800, with London's mid-eighteenth century population of 675,000 reported to be the largest in Europe.[120] Malcomson concludes:

> "Undoubtedly the economy was vigorously expanding, but there is little evidence that much of this newly created wealth was trickling down to the working people. Labouring men and women bore the brunt of the dislocations, disruptions and personal upheavals that were associated with economic growth -- the agricultural revolution, the mechanization of manufacturing, the undermining of customary practices -- while other people, in the short term (perhaps up to the 1840's), reaped most of the benefits of this growth."[121]

Under these conditions work was a necessity, not a choice, for many women, who could expect to receive fifty percent of a male's wages for performing the same job.[122]

Among the middle and upper classes, few women were prepared educationally for meaningful pursuits nor did they find significant opportunities available. Some, finding "notoriety easier to achieve than power" found other outlets for their "miniatured lives" of dependence and frustration. Some used their talents in the "sex trades" as courtesans, dancers

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[119] Malcomson, Life and Labour, pp. 19-23.

[120] Ibid, pp. 51-56, 137.

[121] Ibid, p. 158.

[122] Ibid, p. 37.

and actresses, receiving the admiration and respect of men.[123] Others began to write, not in diaries but for publication, although many initially wrote under male pseudonyms in order to achieve more widespread acceptance in a male-dominated world. It is interesting to note that The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women lists five female authors during the Middle Ages and Renaissance, including Queen Elizabeth I, who may have been the best educated woman in England before the twentieth century. Six women authors are included who wrote exclusively in the seventeenth century, including Aphra Behn and Anne Broadstreet as the only writers with more than two titles to their credit.

The Anthology includes four authors whose output spanned the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Anne Finch and Mary Astell, and five more who wrote primarily or exclusively in the eighteenth century; Lady Montagu, Fanny Burney and Mary Wollstonecraft were the most significant. The output of the latter two groups is considerably more extensive than that of their predecessors.[124] As mentioned in Chapter One, it is possible to identify only seven female authors producing a total of twenty-three titles in the Lauriston Castle chapbook collection. Hannah More, writing under her own name and as "Z", was responsible for eleven of those titles.

No chapbook reviewed for this study recognized or even commented upon the contributions to the arts and letters of any female. In addition, there is no indication in the popular literature of the metamorphosis in English society that was underway, with only the very few indications discussed previously of work outside the house, i.e., in the mines' and

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[123] Ibid, p. 47.

[124] S. Gilbert and S. Guber, The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women, New York, 1985.

drapers' lines. The only other references to women at work refer to single women.

THE SINGLE WOMAN

The single female did not fare well in chapbook literature. As we have observed there was a great preoccupation with the sexuality of the unaccompanied woman, whether she be a young servant, older spinster or a widow. The chapbook outlook on widows can be summarized:

> "He that marries a widow for pels, had better marry a whore if she be handsome and wholesome; for the widow will be upbraiding him with the wealth and pleasure she had with her former husband, who is always the best, because he is gone."[125]

This period did tend to confirm the age-old outlook that women were "incomplete in themselves and as existing primarily for the sake of men," with a resulting contempt for old maids and the belief that "women's function is to cater to the needs of men" with chastity as the "essence of female virtue." There was real concern that female households were "open to lewdness" as they were not controlled by males. Wrightson estimates that ten percent of women in the seventeenth century never married. For them, opportunities were limited, with the role of mistress "an emotional escape hatch," one of the options, with a wealthy husband often preferring the mistress to having more children. For some, it was "better to be a mistress to a gentleman than a servant or wife in the lower classes," although this option was not chosen

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125 Anon, The New Proverbs, p. 4.

126 Thomas, 'The double standard', pp. 213-14.

127 Berg, Age of Manufactures, p. 154.

128 Wrightson, English Society, p. 68.

129 Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 182.

often. Actresses and dancers were depicted as easy sexual targets. The growth of brothels was impressive; by the mid-nineteenth century there were 3,325 houses of ill repute in metropolitan London alone, not including those who were "part-time" prostitutes due to inadequate wages. These establishments would seem to confirm St. Augustine's quote: "Remove prostitutes from human affairs, and you would pollute the world in lust," or, as Lacky phrased it: "But for [the prostitute] the unchallenged purity of countless happy homes would be polluted."

Quaife comments upon the promiscuous activity of "merry wives, widows and experienced spinsters," listing four categories: the "vagrant whore" solicited at "inns, fairs, markets and crossroads." The "public whore operated from a particular inn or bawdy house." The "private whore gave her services over a larger period of time to a particular man, or couple of men, yet after a few weeks or months tended to move on." The final category was the "village whore" who ranged from slut "to the almost respectable protector of the chastity and fidelity of other village women." The "village whore" was quite often a widow.[132]

The chapbooks did not take a benign view of the "oldest profession." As we have seen, there was great concern in the popular literature about the virtue of the single woman. We are advised that "she lives in vain that leads a single life."[133] The strong, moral servant girl rejects "Sir Henry Sinclair" and is rewarded with marriage and a coach.[134] On the other hand, the

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[130] Porter, English Society, p. 281.

[131] Thomas, 'The double standard', p. 197.

[132] Quaife, Wanton Wenches, p. 146.

[133] Anon, Argalus and Parthenia, p. 17.

[134] Anon, Virtue Rewarded, p. 22.

gentleman's chambermaid in The Nottingham Tragedy is deflowered and is killed with her illegitimate twins.[135] The "fallen" woman in The Bloody Tragedy becomes a whore and leads a boy astray,[136] while the harlot in The Penitent Female repents just before her early death.[137] The bawdy tales present a sexist view, with The Sporting Ladies "known very well by the way of their tail,"[138] and the prostitute in The Ruff Toupee advised to "stand up always for your fee."[139]

The "widow's willful" theme is also apparent in the popular literature. Despite the confusing double negative, the message of The Doating Mother's Garland is clear: "For she without a bed fellow cannot no longer lie,"[140] and the widow in The Charming Widow wants "he that is both brisk and young."[141] In A New Academy of Compliments, the "suddenest and most successful way of addressing a widow" is to "briskly tell her you are come to plough her up, that she may lay fallow no longer."[142]

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[135] Anon, The Nottingham Tragedy, pp. 4, 8.

[136] Anon, Bloody Tragedy, pp. 2-4.

[137] A. Z. Newport Pagnel, The Penitent Female, p. 8, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2742.

[138] Anon, The Sporting Ladies, p. 1, Wolverhampton, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[139] Anon, The Ruff Toupee, p. 1.

[140] Anon, The Doating Mother's Garland, p. 2, Tewksbury, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2901.

[141] Anon, The Charming Widow, p. 1, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2852.

[142] Anon, The New Academy of Compliments, p. 15.

The chapbooks present very little evidence that single women and widows did have options other than those discussed above.[143] Textile trades, domestic service, prostitution and limited references to being a school mistress were supplemented by one reference to wet nursing,[144] and several negative mentions of women as ale house keepers. Jack of Newbury presents a typical perspective on the working widow, who inherits both her husband's cloth business and Jack as the apprentice. The widow rejects various suitors: the parson is "too much. . .devoted to his study," while the rich tanner is "too old for her young and lusty desires." She finally tricks Jack into her bed and deflowers him, forcing marriage.[145]

The popular literature's perspective on single women is summed up in the song Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow:

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[143] Watts comments that the already limited opportunities for spinsters were further eroded from the late seventeenth century onward, specifically mentioning that it is rare to encounter a spinster author and that opportunities to enter religious orders were fewer than in earlier periods. Watt, The Rise of the Novel, p. 145. It must be recalled that single women were a significant population factor. Malcomson estimates that during the eighteenth century widows represented eight to nine percent of the population and almost thirteen percent of all household heads; widowers comprised four percent of the population and slightly over five percent of household heads. Malcomson, Life and Labour, p. 79.

[144] Pagnel, The Penitent Female, p. 1.

[145] Anon, Jack of Newbury, pp. 3, 8.

"A fair maid is like a ship sailing,
She knows not how long she'll safe go,
For in every blast she is in danger,
You pretty maid milking your cows.
An old maid is like an old almanack,
Useless when once out of date;
If her ware is not sold in the morning,
At noon it goes at a low rate.
The fragrance of May is soon over,
Garnish'd with beauty you know;
All blooms are consum'd in October,
You pretty maid milking your cows."[146]

Although the literature did reflect the ideals held by much of society for the appropriate role of women in this period, it presented an incomplete portrait of society. Ivy Pinchbeck is quoted by Snell as follows:

"In the days of the Elizabethan system (i.e., until 1814), girls were bound to many of the skilled trades in London. In 1675 a girl claimed admittance to the Carpenters' Company by right of apprenticeship. . .In the seventeenth century women were not infrequently admitted to the Wheelwrights' Company by right of apprenticeship. . .and in the eighteenth century the records of the Clockmakers' Company show that it was not uncommon for its members to receive girls as apprentices."

Pinchbeck continues with the observation that such apprenticeships were not restricted to London but were also known "in the country and provincial towns. . .throughout the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries." Pinchbeck provides an extensive list of trades "to which women were apprenticed:" including "goldsmith, gilder, furniture maker, stone mason and engraver, clothier, weaver, hairdresser and peruke maker, linen cloth bleaching, doctor, oculist, surgeon, dentist, nailmaker, set maker, chape tiler, screw maker, bit and stirrup maker, blacksmith, miner and. . .a wide range of cottage industrial and needlework trades."[147]

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[146] Anon, Pretty Maid Milking Her Cow, p. 5, n.p., n.d., L.C. Vol. 2898.

[147] I. Pinchbeck, Women Workers, as quoted in Snell, Annals, pp. 273-7.

Although it was a definite minority of women, both single and married, who participated in such commercial activity and in the retail trades, we would never know about those opportunities from the chapbook literature, with the few exceptions mentioned previously, exceptions which deal primarily with textiles and cottage industry. Nor does the popular literature provide a tangible picture of the opportunities for spinsters, those women who found themselves in "no-man's land between family and servants."[148] We know from the life of Mary Wollstonecraft that such often unrewarding but real occupations as lady's companion, governess and school mistress existed in addition to the trades listed above, the arts and the sex trades. Other than a few oblique references to school mistresses, the chapbooks do not refer to those opportunities, nor to the factory opportunities developing in the eighteenth century. We also know that Mary Wollstonecraft and Sarah Jinner, for example, were at the forefront of a small group of women crying out for improved opportunities. Generally, these trends were ignored in the popular literature, although there is one counter-attack which is directed toward the religious basis of the prejudice which existed in this period:

> "One of the gentlemen, an Oxford scholar, took on occasion to discourse on the Garden of Eden, many happiness therein, and exclusion from thence, reflecting on the serpent's subtlety and temptation, and the woman's credulity and compliance, with the miseries and corruption of the human race, occasioned thereby; and in time concluded that it had been better for man both then and now, to have been above (so fancied his resentment carry him) than to have been plagued by a simple woman; calling them silly, intractable, perverse, useless, imperious creatures, unworthy as well as incapable of any offices, ecclesiastical, civil or military.

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[148] Porter, English Society, p. 40.

> . . .Miss Ward, a young gentlewoman of sixteen years of age, but very learned, studious and ingenious, her age and sex considered, broke silence and thus replied, 'Sir, you are not the first, that has been ungratefully as well as unjustly, thrown dirt in the face of our sex, like the cuckoo, that picks out the eye of those very birds that hatch and bring them forth. Yet, one of our authors will tell you, that man has sucked a sow, who gives a woman an ill word.'
>
> Indeed, the men usurp an unjust dominion over the women, and the better to tyrannize and keep them in vassalage, they debar them of learning, as much as possible, as the Romans kept the laity from the Bible; yet mangre [sic] all their policy there have been women in all ages, as famous for learning, conduct, courage, valour, virtue, and other endowments of body and mind, as any men whatever; and now would be so, if they had the same opportunities to improve, which the men kept in their own hands."

Miss Ward then lists such famous women as Joan of Arc, Queen Elizabeth and Mrs. Behn, "and a thousand others, famous in scripture and history, who have equalized or even surpass'd the men in the ages they lived in, because these things are known and acknowledged among the learned world."

> "And as to your charge, that the serpent beguiled the woman and not the man, you should also consider Adam was to blame, in leaving his wife alone, without assistance, to withstand the subtle serpent. . .[Eve] was beguil'd by a crafty devil, but man was deceiv'd by a silly woman."

Women are described "as the most perfect piece of the creation, surpassing man in those excellent qualities attributed to the Angels. . .piety, charity, love, modesty, innocence, beauty of body, fineness of voice, and other external and internal virtues and properties. . ."[149]

This eight page tale is unique among the chapbooks that I reviewed in its call for the recognition of women. It is unfortunate that the attributes

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[149] Anon, The Maiden's Prize or the Batchelor's Puzzle, pp. 3-4, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2744.

listed in the final paragraph so clearly reflect those respected by society and contained in most of the chapbook literature. These passive virtues led to the expectation that a woman would assume a passive role in relation to the men in her life and in relation to her role beyond the home and family. As so little was expected beyond the four walls and the commitment to the family, many in society did not comprehend the need for female education beyond basic literacy, and many found it difficult to accept even that limited need. Few supported an education that included the sciences and mathematics, preferring preparation for the family role or the social graces. A man should or could be an "Oxford scholar"; few women were expected to be "very learned, studious, and ingenious, [their] sex considered." To that extent the chapbooks did mirror the expectations and reality of society.

However, as we have seen, this picture is too simple to be faithfully representative of the world, particularly in the eighteenth century. There were women who struggled and successfully obtained a broader education, albeit at times supplementing the female's "basics" via science and mathematical articles in popular magazines. There were women authors, actresses, musicians, apprentices in the trades, and these were single and married, maidens and widows. These were largely ignored in the popular literature. That vacuum could well reflect the chapbooks' authors' desire to maintain the status quo and to discourage the expectations and dreams of females who chafed at the status quo. To report on such successes was to encourage them. A few -- very few -- authors presented the limited alternatives of "Miss Ward," and even then clothed her in such virtues as "piety, love modesty, beauty and innocence." To the extent that the chapbooks do not mention the changes underway and do not reflect the challenges and the aspirations of women, they present a limited picture of

life in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It is accurate up to a point, but incomplete and therefore distorted.

It is tempting to condemn the popular literature for its limited and distorted portrait of society. However, it then becomes necessary to condemn society itself, for most men and women accepted an early eighteenth century chapbook's version of the ideal life for a gentlewoman:

"Question: What do you particularly admire in those laudable customs?

Answer: The decency of Attire, the modest Gesture, Constancy, Temperance and Prudence of a true Virtuous English Woman.

Question: What do you think of the French?

Answer: . . .vain, whimsical. . .

Question: How was [sic!] you educated?

Answer: Under the watchful Care of a Pious indulgent Mother: with the necessary Assurance of a good English School.

Question: What did you learn there?

Answer: Needlework, Raising of the Past, Painting upon Glass, mark, quilt and such like things as was necessary in the government of a Family: and if I learnt to Dance, 'twas more to attain the Decency of Behavior than anything else; at 16 I return'd from School, and began to put in practice what I had learnt there, to take upon me the Government of a Family, that I might know how to govern my own; to be good humour'd among the Servants. . .At four and twenty my Father propos'd marriage to me, and in obedience to his Will, I submitted to his Choice; I loved the Man as he was to be my husband (for every Virtuous Woman will love her husband) and the Conjugal Tye encreas'd it to an ardent affection; and as we married to make one another happy, we found it so.

Question: How do you spend your time now?

Answer: I rise in the Morning, and employ my care in the Family, I allow a little time for Devotions and I dine as the honest custom directs, at Noon; after Dinner I divert myself an Hour in harmless Conversation, and sometimes give myself the liberty of reading a Diverting Book; in the Evening I pleasure myself in the Garden, or perhaps visit some Virtuous neighbour."[150]

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[150] Anon, The Country Gentlewoman's Catechism, pp. 3-5, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2744.

The chapbooks did tend to reinforce "existing social, cultural and gender distinctions," refusing to "take girls' minds seriously." In that respect, they mirrored the prevailing view of a male-oriented society. However, by largely ignoring the changes underway during this period and the very real achievements of a minority of women, the popular literature also distorts the perspective.

CHAPTER SIX

THE RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

> "Considering this ungrateful age abounds with so much infidelity, impiety, and unbelief, as to make some so obstinate as to affirm, That the spirit of man vanisheth with his breath, and that death alone is the only end of his life, and not the beginning of another; I thought it highly necessary, as well as proper and convenient, in order to awaken the hardened and drowsy consciences of such, to some lively though brief, touches upon the Four Last Things, viz DEATH, which is most certain; JUDGEMENT, which is most strict; HELL, which is most dismal; and HEAVEN, which is most delightful, ALL which we shall briefly instance."[1]

The "Four Last Things" are discussed "briefly" in this twenty-four page publication but endlessly in the popular literature of the seventeenth centuries. Twenty-six percent of the chapbooks that I researched deal directly and specifically with religious themes, and many that relate to other subjects, the maiden, the family, and the working world, manage to include some religious reference, often one of fear and retribution. James Bowd, who lived in the nineteenth century, reported that "the Bible and chapbooks between them provided the only imagery from print that [he] ever knew."[2] The imagery of the Bible was strongly supported by the imagery of the chapbooks available to Mr. Bowd and his predecessors. Spufford reports that one-third of the trade lists of this period were religious books.[3]

Laqueur reports that by conservative estimate "well over 500,000 copies of the Bible. . .had been printed by the start of the eighteenth century" and "60,000 copies of various catechisms were printed between 1580 and

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[1] Anon, A Gold Chain of Four Links, p. 2., London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2735.

[2] Spufford, Small Books, p. 2.

[3] Ibid, p. 197.

1640." Between 1678 and 1792 Pilgrim's Progress appeared in 160 official editions, excluding pirated and chapbook versions.[4] There are three of the latter in the Lauriston Castle collection. Sommerville points out that "books were creating a new order of family prayers and private devotions, leading eventually to spiritual and intellectual autonomy.[5] The English reading public had shown itself more interested in religion that in any other subject."[6] Hill comments that "in the seventeenth century, the Bible was the accepted source of True Knowledge."[7] Sommerville adds that in Restoration England the "cheap religious press" easily published a sufficient number of copies to provide "one book per household."[8]

In her analysis of the Pepys' collection, Spufford reports that fifty percent were "calls to repentance, deathbed testimonies and meditations on death and on the Last Judgement, with sin and conversion the themes, salvation the carrot."[9] Sin, fear and death are all pervasive in this type of book. Of the close to eighty strictly religious chapbooks analyzed in the Lauriston Castle collection, only three dealt consistently with a loving and merciful God; others did include a reference to the Supreme Being but in the context of sin, fear and death.

Another general category of religious publications includes the manuals of instruction or catechism. In this analysis of the popular

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[4] Laqueur, 'The cultural origins of popular literacy', p. 262.

[5] C. J. Sommerville, Popular Religion in Restoration England, p. 2, Gainesville, 1977.

[6] Ibid, p. 31.

[7] C. Hill, Change and Continuity in 17th Century England, p. 59, London, 1974.

[8] Sommerville, Popular Religion, p. 32.

[9] Spufford, Small Books, p. 200.

literature's religious message, we will also encounter various sub-themes, many with strong political overtones, such as virulent anti-Papism, accompanied by attacks on the French and Spanish. Other books warn against such religious novelties as the civil war sects and provide strong support for the maintenance of the social class hierarchy.

WOMEN IN THE RELIGIOUS BOOKS

Most of the publications refer to the reading public at large, adults and children, with few specific references to women.[10] There was not a single religious chapbook uncovered which questioned or refuted the image of women discussed in previous chapters. The religious tracts that do refer to women support the male perspective in regard to subservience to the husband as the dominant partner, an unkindly view toward activities beyond the home, and, of course, the over-riding necessity for women to maintain their virtue before and during marriage.

Other than the brief reminders which follow, it is not my intent to review in depth the chapbooks' perspective on the maiden, the wife, women in the wider world, the spinster or the widow, subjects covered in previous chapters. Much of this chapter will refer to religious messages intended for both men and women, adults and children, wealthy and poor. It is important to review the religious chapbooks' views on society in order to present a full picture of the popular literature's communications to its female readers. Keeping in mind that the religious message was usually intended for both males and females, we also must remind ourselves that the often fearful

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[10] It is interesting to contrast the few specific references to women in these publications with the fact that women predominated among church-goers, although shut off from church governance, except in a few sects. The gender inspecificity undoubtedly relates to the universality of the messages in those books and may reflect a belief that in contrast to expectations concerning the role of women in temporal life, male and female souls were treated equally, a belief promulgated by the dissenting sects.

perspective conveyed in these publications struck females already burdened with the viewpoints contained in the popular literature about their subordinate role in society as maidens, wives and spinsters.

The world according to the chapbooks was not lacking serpents bearing apples with which to tempt women into a fall from grace. The concern about virginity and the temptations to transgress from that virtue have already been explored. In A Warning to Youth, both murder (understandably) and "secret and vicious love" are identified as sins;[11] Charles Jones the Footman is warned to avoid female servants, for "an awful intercourse of this kind will ruin your body and soul."[12] The Rule of Life states the general expectation in a direct manner:

> "The utmost of a Woman's Character is contained in Domestick Life; first, her piety towards God; and next in the Duties of a Daughter, a Wife, a Mother, and a Sister."[13]

In fact, "piety towards God" is often represented in the popular literature as based on fear. "Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but the woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised."[14] The woman that "feareth the Lord" will also be wise: "The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom."[15] Some might contend that wisdom begins with education, but not the chapbook authors. The "perfect" women in this literature is the Widow Adams, who, although quite poor, was a "treasure", for "her extraordinary degree of piety"

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[11] Hardinge, Warning to Youth, p. 2.

[12] Anon, The History of Charles Jones the Footman, p. 11, Dublin, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2903.

[13] Anon, The Rule of Life, p. 21.

[14] Anon, The History of Tom White the Postilion, p. 16, Bath, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

[15] Anon, A Conversation Between William and James at a Country Wake, p. 4, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2742.

made her cheerful and good humoured. She never bargained with the "gentle folk" customers for the price of her produce and never cheated them.

By not bargaining with her social superiors, Mrs. Adams not only received external recognition, but temporal rewards as well. She was the first to sell her goods, and the inspectors never weighed her produce; they trusted her. Her response to those who did cheat was the Golden Rule, and she regularly contributed six pence to help the sinners in prison, commenting: "If there were no laziness, there would be no want; and if there were no drunkenness or theft, there would be no prisons."

Mrs. Adams' leisure time was spent with her seven children and servants. "Whilst they were sitting round the fire at work, making and mending the family linen, her eldest son George would read a chapter in the testament, after which she [Mrs. Adams] would read a bit of a sermon, such as the Curate recommended, one that was more religious than learned, such as people would understand who had but little education; after which she read a good family prayers, and then all went cheerfully to bed, blessing and praising God for his mercies." Mrs. Adams is the perfect example of the deserving poor, grateful, Godly and good, someone who believes exactly as her betters would want her to. Her acceptance of the station assigned to her is confirmed by her comments about her good daughter Mary:

> "Her dress was neat, modest and suitable to her station; for as to ruffles and flounces, long tailed gowns and hair curled half way down her back, she thought their way very unbecoming a farmer's daughter, whose business it was to carry a milk pail."

The revelations concerning Mrs. Adams' children reinforce the expectations about Godliness, poverty and attitudes. While Mary, the eldest, remained happily on the farm, Molly "procured a good husband," even though poor, for "it was better to get a fortune in a wife, than a fortune with a wife." Susan

entered service with a respectable family, and "by her obliging behavior soon acquired the love and confidence of her master and mistress." Susan was rewarded with Christmas preserves and wage increases, eventually becoming a "wealthy" servant. She always sent half her salary home to her mother.

Unfortunately, Betty was a problem. She became friendly with a servant who practiced "riotous living." Betty cursed, dressed in a "flaunty" manner and looked "upon herself as altogether one of their betters. . .proud and fancy because she was ignorant." Despite her mother's warnings, Betty fell in love with a butler, who enticed her to dream of card parties and balls. Betty's life then followed the predictable path: impregnated and abandoned by the butler who had promised marriage, Betty struggled home in a snowstorm. Her baby died, shortly followed by Betty, who was "absolved" of her sins by Mother Adams, who recognized that "there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

Mrs. Adams held clear views on sin: "I love to see young people cheerful and happy, but I trouble to have them dancing in ale houses, which takes away their modesty -- or getting drunk, which turns them into brutes -- or prophanely cursing or swearing, to the endangering of their immortal souls." During her difficult life as a widow with seven children to raise, Mrs. Adams learned to withstand adversity: "If afflictions had not been useful to our soul's good, our heavenly Father would have withheld them from us." She also suffered ridicule with patience and understanding, for "if you lead a regular, sober and religious life, you must expect to be jeered and laughed at; but it is safer to win God's favour, than the world's love. . .and the only way to avoid sorrow, is to flee from sin." Mrs. Adams' children learned where she expected to receive her reward: ". . .the good things of this world never made them lose sight of those better things they looked forward to possess in the

world to come." She also received the reward from her children who blessed "God for sending them so good a Mother."[16]

It is interesting to speculate on the popular reaction to this and similar stories. Certainly The Good Mother's Legacy reinforced the values of the already Godly. As we shall see, literature of this type, accompanied by a plethora of sermons, catechisms and other religious tracts, had only a limited success in its efforts to inculcate strong, internalized religious values in the lower classes. Despite its straightforward, even heavy-handed by our standards, approach, it is quite likely that tales such as these did offer some succour, holding out some hope for eventual reward in the midst of a dreary life of drudgery, even for the reader who did not internalize the religious messages contained in the story. For those who were prone to full acceptance of these messages, their strength and consistency must have been reassuring. The events that occurred would have been meaningful to the readers, who could relate to them in their own lives and could admire the example set by Mrs. Adams, while sympathizing with Betty's plight. This tale is quite similar to those written by Hannah More (1745-1833) during the late eighteenth century, many under the auspices of the Religious Tract Society, which she helped to found. These stories represented an effort to convey a religious message in the context of events to which the lower class reader could relate.

FEAR AND DEATH

Preoccupation with fear and death during this period is understandable. The spectre of death from normal causes was a constant companion through infancy, childbirth and middle age. To this were added a series of seventeenth century natural disasters, such as the Great Fire of

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[16] Anon, Good Mother's Legacy, pp. 2-24.

London in 1666 and three serious outbreaks of the Plague.[17] To these factors, of course, must be added the uncertainties and death resulting from the Civil War period and periodic famines. Anxiety and fear were hand maidens to the seventeenth century. To those fearful factors shared by both genders must be added the additional, devastating concerns for women of death in childbirth.

In the chapbooks the death and fear perspective was supported by fearful references to the devil or Satan. The concept of a wrathful, angry God is pervasive, with very few references to a kind, loving Supreme Being. Virtue in the chapbooks is rewarded, but often in the next world, and repentance to earn redemption is essential. Your choice was clear: "You must be converted or condemned,"[18] or, as Defoe defined the theme, Providence was a "moral force which visits retribution on sinners" and rewards to those who repent.[19] The popular literature combined fear and reward. A contemporary of Mary Wollstonecraft, William Paley (Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy) defined virtue: "the doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness."[20] The implied fear of unhappiness in disobedience "to the will of God" is unstated but just below the surface.

One of the more widely published chapbooks illustrates these points. Dedicated to the "Christian Reader", A Gold Chain of Four Links opens with

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[17] J. P. Kenyon, Stuart England, p. 22, Middlesex, 1985. The three seventeenth century plagues of 1603, 1625 and 1665 claimed 145,000 lives in a total English population of approximately five million.

[18] Spufford, Small Books, p. 207.

[19] Speck, Society and Literature, p. 97.

[20] Wardle, Collected Letters, p. 33.

the quote at the beginning of this chapter. It next proceeds to provide a rather compelling rationale for avoiding sin in its proclamation that:

> "The death of the wicked is the end of all comfort, and the beginning of all misery; but to the godly it is a happy discharge and freedom from sin and sorrow, and the only in-let to peace and happiness; the saint's enjoyment shall be incomparable, when the sinner's torment shall be intolerable. When a saint leaves the world his flesh returns to dust, if his spirit returns to rest; when a sinner leaves the world, his body goes to worms to be consumed, and his soul into flames to be tormented. . .when you go out of the world you do but die to live again. He that lives well, can not die ill. . .Thou art not sure, when thou goest to bed at night to take thy rest, whether thou shall ever wake again. . .Therefore, dear soul, put not off thy repentance until another day, for thou art not sure to see the end of this."[21]

REPENTANCE AND JUDGEMENT

Stories written in the late eighteenth century presented a picture consistent with those from an earlier time: The Penitent Female refers to events in 1799 and is about "the Conversion and Happy Death of a Noted Harlot," who, while dying from what may be venereal disease, finds salvation through repentance.[22] The cynical view of repentance is expressed in Mary, the Maid of the Inn: "The last day is a long way off; besides repentance on a deathbed makes all clean."[23] Since all the characters in this tale suffer early and horrible deaths, we are warned against that approach. One consistent message is to repent early, as in The Trembling Sinner[24] or in The Rules and Maxims for the Conduct of Human Life which advises that repentance on the

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[21] Anon, A Gold Chain, pp. 4-5.

[22] Pagnell, The Penitent Female, p. 2.

[23] Anon, Mary, p. 9.

[24] Anon, The Trembling Sinner or the Hazard of a Death Bed Repentance, n.p., 1712, L.C. Vol. 2744.

deathbed is no guarantee of heaven; only virtuous life can fulfill that promise.[25]

However, the popular literature is not consistent in regard to late repentance. While calling for a virtuous life and immediate penitence, the authors also continued to bring forth stories in which a deathbed confession of sins results in a "happy" death. Thus, Justice Hardinge appeals for the poor harlot-murderer to repent as he announces the death sentence.[26] Once again, it is a woman -- how often they are portrayed as sinners -- in The History of Mary Wood who dies at eighteen of grief and shame, managing to repent of her sins, lying and stealing, at the last moment.[27]

Another late eighteenth century story, a Scottish chapbook entitled The Last and Great Sermon of the Rev. Dr. William Dodd, dated 1777, confirms that the message did not vary by the end of the eighteenth century. Dodd was a prisoner, condemned to death for a capital offense. Just before his own execution he advises us that "Salvation is promised to us Christians on the terms of faith, obedience and repentance, with Faith requiring one hundred percent confidence in God's word in the scriptures." Those "who obey his call, however late, will not be rejected," for Jesus "died to save sinners, but to save only those sinners that repent"; we are advised to work for salvation with "fear and trembling," to "humbly implore forgiveness and solicit mercy." Repentance is defined as a "disposition of mind, which he who stole, steals no more. . .the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness and doth that which is lawful and right" and "to that man thus formed it is expressly promised that he shall save his soul alive." Those who die without

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[25] Gurrell, Rules and Maxims, p. 2.

[26] Hardinge, Warning to Youth, p. 6.

[27] Anon, The History of Mary Wood, the House Maid, Dublin, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2903.

repenting of their sins are described as reconciling "their consciences to falsehood" and as people who cannot die "with courage."[28] Facing execution with dignity and in grace was important to commoners, as it had been (and was) to contemporary royalty.

It is interesting to contemplate the impact of the many tales and sermons about executions. J. A. Sharpe's study is illuminating. He reports on the hanging of John Marketman in the 1680's. Marketman was executed for murdering his pregnant wife in a fit of jealousy and suspicion, while drunk. He performed at his end as the religious chapbook authors and the ministers in the pulpit would have wanted, asking to be executed in the town where he had committed the dastardly deed. Marketman repented, reporting that "he had been disobedient to his too indulgent parents, had spent his youthful days in profanities of the Sabbath and licentious evils of debaucheries beyond expression. . .and desirous that all should pray to the eternal God for his everlasting welfare." He also, having forgiven his wife's lover, exhorted him to repent.[29]

Sharpe points out that chapbooks and pamphlets describing such executions provide "numerous insights into past wisdoms and mentalities" concerning the "nature of authority and obedience in Stuart England," adding that public executions were a "judicial" and "political ritual" designed to display power and act as a deterrent. Executions are described as "an imposing demonstration of state power," an effort at "effective internalization of obedience."[30] It is clear that public executions often were not an effective

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[28] W. Dodd, The Last and Great Sermon of the Rev. Dr. William Dodd, pp. 5-11, Edinburgh, 1777, L.C. Vol. 2809.

[29] J. A. Sharpe, 'Last dying speeches: religion, ideology and public execution in seventeenth century England', Past and Present, 107 (1985), 145.

[30] Ibid, p. 166.

deterrent, for there are numerous examples of murders committed shortly after executions by individuals who had recently witnessed a public execution. Perhaps the example of the execution provoked crime, rather than discouraging it, much as today one teen-age suicide in a community often leads to a series of suicide attempts. Sharpe also reports that men began to refuse repentance, believing that it signified nothing. While it is understandable that chapbook readers might enjoy reading about the details of an execution, it is doubtful that a reader would be deterred from crime by such literature, particularly as the witnesses themselves rarely were restrained. Sharpe's final word on the deterrent effect of public executions is to quote a 1725 saying: "There is nothing in being hang'd, but a wry neck, and a wet pair of breeches."[31]

In the section on Judgement, the second of the "Four Last Things" in A Gold Chain of Four Links, the author provides his list of sinners: "drunkards, swearers, liars, whore mongers, covetors and oppressors of the poor." Concerning Judgement:

> "Meditate upon Judgement, which is most strict. We must all appear before the judgement-seat of Christ. . .O this great day to sinners will be a terrible and ghastly day, when they shall behold Christ coming in the clouds, being crowned with dignity, and guarded with the Angels, and enraged with anger, and enabled with power to bring forth high and low, rich and poor, to his bar, where he will judge them not by the whiteness of their countenances, but by the blackness of their consciences. . .God's wrath will be a terror to you, which will make your hearts sink within you, your countenances to change, your joints to be loosened, when the terrors of the Almighty at this time shall seize upon you."[32]

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[31] Ibid, p. 167.

[32] Anon, A Gold Chain, pp. 6-8.

The concept of a wrathful God, one to be feared, is pervasive in this literature:

> "God's wrath and vengeance fall upon those who to parents are cruel, unjust withal."[33]
>
> "Fear God and you will not be afraid of man."[34]

In A Cordial of Comfort we note the husband image of God, reinforcing the dominant role of the male while presenting God in a personal relationship. Note also the advice on how to deal with children, who are seen as God's gifts:

> "Have you a wife that's virtuous, fair and kind,
> And by her children that's to good inclined?
> Yet don't give back whenever God doth call
> Let duty tell you, you must suffer all.
> Are you a childless mother full of grief,
> Or else a widow that doth want relief?
> God is your husband, and will love most tender,
> He has promised thy sorrows to remember,
> And tho' deprived of your children dear,
> Consider this, they are but lent you here,
> And what he lends you must give back again,
> Be sure you don't against his will complain.
> Children are blessings if God be pleased to give,
> Then life and grace, that with us they might live,
> But if our children we do make them Gods,
> Those proffered blessings he can use as rods."[35]

HELL AND HEAVEN

The third of the "Four Last Things", Hell, is described as "a most dismal and dreadful place, where the devil is the gaoler, hell the prison, damnation the punishment, eternity the time, brimstone fire-men, and infernal spirits the fuel: to endure this will be intolerable, and to avoid it

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[33] Anon, The Wicked Reproved, p. 2, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2734.

[34] Anon, Charles Jones, p. 10.

[35] Anon, A Cordial of Comfort, or the Afflicted Man's Consolation in These Sorrowful Times of Trouble, pp. 3-4, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

impossible. . .the wicked shall live as long in hell as there shall be a just God in heaven. . .eternity. . .fire and brimstone [are] kept in the highest flame by the unquenchable wrath of God. . .There is a way to keep a man out of hell, but no way to get a man out of hell." Fairly direct and powerful, to say the least.[36]

In regard to Satan, the usual approach is to provide this type of warning: "Satan your ruin will prove"[37]; "Shun Satan's work"[38]; "the devil put it in her head"[39]. The devil/Satan threat and the fear of hell and damnation are important weapons in these writer's religious arsenals and may relate to the demonic interpretation of witchcraft, described below. References are utilized to provide support for the "message", virtually always from the Old Testament. Jesus Christ is mentioned, in passing in several stories, and I found four tales -- from the eighteenth century from all appearances -- which told about His life in an episodic manner, the four chapbooks that did have New Testament material. These did not provide a real picture of Jesus the individual, confirming Spufford's conclusion that Christ is a "nebulous" figure in the chapbooks, which also contain virtually no mention of the sacrament -- only one (below) that I found.[40] The "use" of Christ by these authors really borders on the unacceptable, for He is essentially a vehicle for the message: The Sufferings of the Blessed Christ and the Sacrament in Rememberance of Him, "showing what is the sin against the Holy Ghost"[41]; Christ's Last

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[36] Anon, A Gold Chain, pp. 9-13.

[37] Anon, Yorkshire Tragedy, p. 7.

[38] Anon, The Cruel Lover, p. 8, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

[39] Anon, Gloucestershire Tragedy, p. 5.

[40] Spufford, Small Books, p. 212.

[41] Anon, The Sufferings of the Blessed Christ and the Sacrament in Rememberance of Him, title page, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2732.

Sermon, which is taken from Matthew (one of the few New Testament references and includes a discussion by John Hart D.D.) on how to drive out the Devil[42]; The Saint's Duty and Exercise, the last sermon of the Rev. M. Jones, which refers to Jesus and also includes a "message" on "Directions to DIE well"[43]; The Passion of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by Doctor J. Hornbeck, a "Dutch theologian," includes a dialogue between Jesus and His soul, with a sermon on ". . .the sting of death is sin."[44] The use of author's names and titles or degrees ("D.D.," "the Rev.") lends credibility to the chapbooks and often correctly indicates the identity of the author of the publication or the deliverer of the sermon upon which the book is based. At times the reference to the author is sufficiently vague -- "Dr. Bacon" -- as to make the attribution questionable.

The fourth "Last Thing" in A Gold Chain of Four Links is Heaven, the description of which makes it a very appealing alternative to the hell described previously:

> "Heaven, which is most joyful. There is no care, sorrow, toil, labour, nor vexation to disturb your quiet. There is all peace, divine souls as angels, saints, prophets, martyres, seraphims, cherubims, and all the celestial choir breathing for their hallelujahs and songs of praise to the Almighty and everlasting God, blessed for evermore. There every righteous soul that departs hence, gets and receives a white robe and an everlasting crown of glory, and dwells in the land of peace, and drinks of the rivers of pleasures; and not for a time, but for eternity: there they behold the beauty of God, seated on a throne of divine majesty, with his beloved son, Jesus Christ on his right hand. . ."

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[42] J. Hart D.D., Christ's Last Sermon, London, 1660, L.C. Vol. 2732.

[43] Jones, Rev. The Saint's Duty and Exercise, p. 3, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2732.

[44] J. Hornbeck, The Passion of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, p. 2, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2732.

When considered in contrast not only with the description of Hell, but with the actuality of life on earth for most chapbook readers, this is a positive appeal for a virtuous life and a reward in the hereafter for women, as well as men.[45] A Gold Chain of Four Links sums up the message: "He that departs the world in faith, shall be saved; but he that departs from the faith shall be damned."[46] The representation of heaven makes it a very appealing destination; of Hell, a spot to be avoided at all costs.

WOMEN AND THE DISSENTING SECTS

As mentioned earlier, the number of specific references to women in the religious chapbooks is limited. However, there are some worth noting. A few authors, perhaps in recognition that messages expressed through the female persona could appeal to other women, and even to their husbands, utilized characters like The Distressed Lady to express the message: "By this we see the unsearchable wisdom of God Almighty."[47] Two of the chapbooks reviewed tell of prostitutes who were reformed after entering Magdalen House, a religious refuge for fallen women. Both protagonists are "reborn into a life of piety and humility and endlessly express the advantages of virtue and religion."[48]

Susan Ward, a "Poor Ignorant Woman Who Could Not Read," provides a message exhorting all "to seek the Lord" through prayers, the Bible and "by learning the word where it was preached with faithfulness."[49]

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[45] Anon, A Gold Chain, pp. 15-16.

[46] Ibid, p. 20.

[47] Anon, The Distressed Lady, p. 24, Newcastle, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2754.

[48] Anon, The Magdalen or the History of the Reformed Prostitute, Dunbar, n.d.; the other chapbook referring to Magdalen House is in Anon, Maria or the Wanderer Reclaimed, Dunbar, n.d. Both are in L.C. Vol. 2796.

[49] Anon, Susan Ward, title page, p.3.

Christian Kerr is a dying eleven-year-old girl in 1702. In a 1776 edition of this tale, she reports that she is "glad to leave this world." As she moves about with her message, she reminds the healthy that "religion and godliness is no vain and fanciful thing."[50]

In The Shepherdess of the Alps we encounter a very interesting commentary on the status of women in early modern Britain:

> "A man under misfortune, replied Adelaide, has a thousand means to extricate himself; but a woman in such cases, has no recourse but in the honest servitude; and in the choice of one's masters, methinks, tis best to prefer the good and the virtuous."[51]

This tale reaffirms women's dilemma, lacking "the means to extricate" herself, a condition that extended beyond temporal life into her relations with her church. Thomas points out that women's place was "determined in theory, and to a great extent in practice, by a universal belief in their inferior character, and by reference to the specific commands for their subjection to be found in Genesis and the Epistles of St. Paul."[52]

Although the Puritans had improved the lot of women slightly, with an "exalted conception of married life" and "protests against wife beating and the double standard of sexual morality," they still believed implicitly that the wife was an "inferior partner." "God's Fatherhood" was a theme of Puritanism, with a structured society "divinely ordained" that was not to be tampered with. To question the family, the place of women, or any other

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[50] Anon, An Account of the Last Words of Christian Kerr, pp. 13, 16, Edinburgh, 1776, L.C. Vol. 2809.

[51] Anon, The Shepherdess of the Alps, p. 3, Newcastle, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2754.

[52] Thomas, 'Woman and the civil war sects', p. 43.

part of the social order, was to "flaunt nature, reason, and above all, the will of God."[53]

The only opportunity for meaningful participation by women was found in th Civil War sects. These groups, including the Baptists and Quakers, were "the successors of the separatists who first appeared in Elizabethan England." "They met secretly, then 'reappeared' in great numbers in the early days of the Long Parliament, after which they enjoyed a large measure of practical toleration throughout the Interregnum." The Quaker, George Fox, expressed the belief that "women's subjection, decreed at the Fall, had been eradicated by the sacrifice of the Redeemer." Generally, the sects believed in the "spiritual equality of the two sexes," and women shared in church governance, often playing leading roles in the "formation of independent congregations." The Baptists permitted women preachers, and women were active Quaker leaders. Wives were known to leave their husbands if the latter would not follow them into a separatist religion, a threat to which many Puritans and Anglicans reacted strongly. This female participation was in contrast to the situation in the Church of England and the Catholic Church, which did not provide opportunities for women in church governance. The Presbyterians did admit women into a minor office, "church widows", and the Puritans only allowed women to provide religious instruction in the house.[54]

Active women Quakers included Jane Holmes, Susannah Pearson, Sarah Wright, Lady Eleanor Douglas and Anna Trapnell.[55] I did not encounter a single reference to these women in the chapbooks. During the

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[53] Ibid, pp. 43-4.

[54] Ibid, pp. 44-50.

[55] Ibid, p. 48.

seventeenth century, forty percent of the religious best sellers were written by dissenters.[56] I encountered one dissenter's sermon, by Richard Russell, in the Lauriston Castle collection.

An evaluation of the beliefs of the sects confirms the conclusion implied in the previous paragraph: the chapbooks are essentially Anglican or Calvinist in outlook, not Baptist or Quaker. The separatists opted for "self-government of individual congregations" and "deprecated the role of the ministry and outward ordinances," relying on the "direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit." Private judgement, not public and published repentance, lay preaching and the "Quaker doctrine of the spirit dwelling in all men" were not the messages of the chapbooks. In fact, the sects "believed in a pure church: they made spiritual regeneration a condition of membership and insisted upon separation from a rational church which contained ungodly elements."[57]

An analysis of the themes contained in the religious best sellers confirms the conclusion about the source of the chapbook religious literature. The Puritan manuals and such Puritan-authored books as The Great Assize by Samuel Smith emphasize "absorption in sabbatarianism," temptation and sin, daily devotions, sickness, death, "the near approach of judgement," as well as virulent attacks on Popery. The most popular religious work in Restoration England was The Whole Duty of Man, which expressed a fear "for the survival of an Anglican piety." This book set forth "the whole of Christian religion under the agonizing principle of man's duties." This Anglican book was written under Puritan rule.[58] Among the

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[56] Sommerville, Popular Religion, p. 31.

[57] Ibid, p. 44.

[58] Ibid, pp. 37-38.

earlier best-selling religious authors was John Hart, D.D., who wrote a series of chapbook tracts and who also published under the pseudonyms of Andrew Jones and William Jones; he is well represented in the Lauriston Castle collection with eleven titles by Hart and two by Andrew Jones. Hart's constant themes relate to the "growth of blasphemy, atheism and libertinism" plus the "imminence of God's judgement." He clearly associated "poverty with blessedness and riches with judgement."[59] Another popular author of the period, Jeremy Taylor, emphasized "contentment in one's station, religious duties and sobriety."[60] Those themes appear consistently in the chapbook literature.

Sommerville describes Restoration religious literature as "written on a popular level," with "unoriginal imagery" which often compares Christian life to "warfare or pilgrimage." This literature, unlike the chapbooks, made little use of "folk culture, witches, prophecies, portent, prodigies, apparitions and magic."[61] The image of a vengeful God, which is pervasive in the chapbooks, is a Puritan one; "rewards and punishments in the after-life remained the primary motive for the performance of religious duties."[62] Dissenters and Anglicans both felt that "they formed islands in a sea of indifference or unbelief."[63] The Dissenters tended to emphasize "conversion, the happiness of the Godly, the control of thoughts, the person of God," while the Anglican thrust was toward "judgement and persecution."[64] The latter emphasis is apparent in the chapbooks. As Blair Worden summarized the outlook:

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[59] Ibid, p. 46.

[60] Ibid, p. 37.

[61] Ibid, pp. 57-8.

[62] Ibid, pp. 76, 84.

[63] Ibid, p. 115.

[64] Ibid, p. 134.

> ". . .there was one perception which dwarfed all others: that to ignore or disobey God's will was to invite the likelihood of retribution and disaster."[65]

In the seventeenth century "Englishmen knew that God intervenes continuously in the world He made."[66] That intervention affected both women and men; in respect to retribution and disaster, both sexes were equally at risk, for they were considered spiritual equals.

What was the status of "the world He made"? It is desirable to recall what was transpiring during these centuries in order to try to comprehend the motives which spurred the publishers to issue such a number of religious publications and in order to evaluate whether these chapbooks accurately reflect society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The message in these publications, that life is transient, a "sense of sin" and repentance essential, and an "obsession" with both pervasive,[67] was issued throughout the seventeenth century as described earlier. It was a time of plague, fire and civil war. Proceeding beyond that obvious observation, we must also begin with a reminder that the seventeenth was the century which was most influenced by the impact of the Puritan movement: "While initial conformity to the Protestant settlement of 1559 had been fairly rapidly established, the greater and more fundamental task of bringing home the teachings of the Reformation to the mass of the population remained

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[65] B. Worden, 'Providence and politics in Cromwellian England', Past and Present, 109 (1985), 99.

[66] Ibid, p. 55.

[67] Reay, 'Popular literature', p. 245.

unfulfilled." The "devotional habits" of the population had not fully conformed to the tenets of the Anglican Church.[68]

We only need to refer to the opening lines of A Gold Chain of Four Links for confirmation of the church's concern about the penetration and acceptance of its theology. "Considering this ungrateful age abounds with so much infidelity, impiety and unbelief. . ."[69] Or, as Collinson writes: "Protestants and Puritans knew that the multitude was not on their side." The "potential" for the lower classes to become "the people of God had yet to be realized." One seventeenth century writer, John Darnell, estimated that only five percent of the population was "Christian indeed," for an "intense and fully internalized" Protestant religion was not popular. What was popular? "The prayer book religion of the parish church" had become "part of the fabric of their lives." It advocated deportment based on neighbourliness, and offered panaceas to deal with the problems of the day.[70]

Wrightson concludes that the "religion of the word" had not yet replaced the "Catholic and sub-Catholic rituals" of the medieval period. Although only a minority of the citizens remained Catholics, many Protestants clung to their beads, for the rituals, in addition to having become habit,

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[68] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 199-200.

[69] Anon, A Gold Chain, p. 1.

[70] Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, pp. 190-2.

> "afforded [the people] reassurance, protection, support and comfort in the face of a hostile environment and the unpredictable whim of supernatural powers. . .To the Reformation theologians, the daily events of life were not random. All happenings, all blessings and misfortunes, reflected the workings of the providential purposes of an omnipotent God. Accordingly, they instructed their flocks to see in misfortune the judgement of a just God upon their sins or the testing by God of the faith of the godly. Alternative explanations of misfortune, in terms of the operation of good or evil spirits, the neglect of omens and observances, the caprice of fortune or the malice of those powers to curse and ban, were played down if not actually denied. . .Providence provided the godly with a coherent explanation of the ups and downs of daily life. . .often the purposes of God could seem strange, and his judgements out of all proportion to the sin of the purposes on whom he visited them. . .It was a doctrine which provided no sure means of relief save by prayer and repentance. Moreover, it was an explanation of misfortune which posed a fundamental threat to the self-esteem of the sufferer, the more so to those of the poor whose constant insecurity and deprivation could be interpreted at best as a testing of their faith and at worst as a judgement on their unworthiness."[71]

Wrightson describes the "profound alienation" that Puritan believers had "from the customary culture of their neighbors, their withdrawal from that culture, that world of shared values, meanings and practices, and their seeking of an alternative guide to learning in the word of scripture." He speaks of this alienation as a symbol of the "growing cultural differentiation within English society which was one of the most significant developments of the age."[72]

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[71] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 200-2.

[72] Ibid, p. 184. A number of authorities comment on the estrangement of the Puritan from society, the "cultural wedge" between the "few and the multitude." Collinson states: "The Puritans who composed the Godly community were mentally and emotionally separated by their radical estrangement from conventional society and its mores and recreations, and by the fervour and strength of their own exclusive fellowship." Collinson, The Religion of the Protestants, pp. 239, 268.

Wrightson also makes the direct connection between the spread of literacy and the resulting "access. . .to the scriptures and to the proliferating vernacular literature of the English Reformation." That literature "was above all a religious literature and the books possessed by the growing minority of testators whose inventories listed books which were above all bibles, prayer books, psalm books and devotional works."[73] Much of the popular religious literature produced by the publishers was provoked by the Puritans, who had a clear recognition of the value of the printed word.

It is remarkable that the Puritan perspective is so consistent and that it continues to be the primary theme in the chapbooks throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, despite the reaction to Puritanism that occurs later in the seventeenth century. Essentially, the religious chapbooks are mirrors of only one of the religious perspectives of the period, albeit a very powerful one, and as the reaction to Puritanism sets in, the perspective in the religious books does not vary significantly. The facts that the Lauriston Castle collection is a Scottish one and that Calvinist theology remained strong in Scotland does not explain this phenomenon, for a large majority of the religious books reviewed were of English origin. The consistency of the message is clear. Of course, some of the tenets in the literature did appeal to the Baptists, and perhaps others, but the literature does not reflect the basic messages of the dissenting sects and does not vary with time. It is not possible to analyze the consistent religious message in the chapbooks by evaluating the dated publications in the Lauriston Castle collection. As society became increasingly secular, the percentage of religious mainstream books decreased. Of the 397 different religious books and catechisms evaluated in the Edinburgh collection, only 162, forty-one percent, are dated. Only thirteen religious publications are dated in the

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[73] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 196-8.

seventeenth century, twenty-three between 1700 and 1749, sixty from 1750-1799, and sixty-six were published in the nineteenth century. It is probable that this data reflects the increased use of dates in later publications rather than any significant trend.

WITCHCRAFT AND ASTROLOGY

If "Providence provided the godly with a coherent explanation of the ups and downs of daily life," many "preferred other, older explanations," with "misfortune. . .attributed not so much to the judgement of God as to ill-luck at best, or at worst the malign practice of witchcraft."[74] Believers did not attribute major disasters to witchcraft, popularly provoked in untutored minds by the Papists. On the contrary, individual or family disagreements and problems, with resulting misfortune, were often attributed to neighbours, "usually women" and "commonly old and often widows." In his study of witchcraft in Essex Alan MacFarlane comments on the "high proportion" of widow witches, although widowhood alone was not sufficient to raise suspicion, and married women were "not safe from suspicion."[75] It is clear that witches were almost always women. Of the 291 accused witch cases reviewed by MacFarlane, covering a period from 1560-1680, only twenty-three were men, "eleven of those were married to women witches or were jointly accused with their wives."[76] MacFarlane's study confirms that those accused of witchcraft normally were of a lower social standing than their neighbour-accuser. From 1560 to 1680 in Essex, twenty-three accused witches were married to labourers and eleven to husbandmen, out of a total of forty-eight accused witches. Only six victims were from the labouring

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[74] Ibid, p. 202.

[75] A. MacFarlane, Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England, p. 164, New York, 1970.

[76] Ibid, p. 160.

class; twenty-three were yeomen or yeoman families. Usually the victims were humans, with accusations of death and illness the predominant spur to action. Some victims were animals, usually dead ones, and in a few cases the witches were accused of causing property damage, such as a barn fire.[77] Christina Larner comments that "the common element in all witch beliefs is that witchcraft is a general evil power," a "supernatural evil." She reports that eighty percent of the witches in her study of witchcraft in Scotland were women. Larner confirms that large scale disasters were not attributed to witches:

> "The characteristic ingredients of an act of witchcraft are that the witch should feel malice toward an individual who has offended her, and that through cursing, incantation, sorcery, or the sheer force of her ill will, should cause illness or death to the livestock, family or person of the individual concerned."[78]

Larner reports that the best estimate for the total number of executions for witchcraft in Scotland is 1,337, a number that may be high by as many as 300; in England it is unlikely that more than 500 witches were executed. The last legal execution for witchcraft in Scotland was in 1726, with a few isolated persecutions into the eighteenth century; in England the last execution was almost fifty years earlier.[79]

Larner states that witch hunting is a "synonym for woman-hunting" and suggests that the "popularization of Christianity, a patriarchal form of

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[77] Ibid, pp. 150, 153.

[78] C. Larner, Enemies of God, p. 7, Baltimore, 1981.

[79] Ibid, pp. 60-65.

religion" was a factor in the spread of witch hunting[80]. Larner adds that "witchcraft was not sex-specific, but it was sex-related," based on the "Aristotelean view of women as imperfectly human -- a failure of the process of conception -- and the Judeo-Christian view of women as the source of sin and the Fall of Man." Women were seen as "intrinsically and innately more prone to malice, sensuality, and evil in general. . .less capable of reasoning than men were. . .to be feared by men." The fear was based on the "strange and dangerous powers" of women's "life-bearing and menstruating capacities." Women were also feared in the sexual act as "receptors" who could "receive indefinitely, whether pleasurably or not," thus generating "the myth of insatiability" as contrasted with the male's "incapacity," enabling witches to cause male impotency.[81] Larner concludes that witch hunting was "the hunting of women who do not fulfill the male view of how women ought to conduct themselves" and that it became significant during the Reformation and the Counter-Reformation, when women, for the first time "fully responsible for their own souls," were confronted with patriarchal religious attitudes which conveyed a sense of "ritual and moral inferiority of women."[82]

The treatment of witchcraft in the chapbooks I reviewed is limited; the popular literature's perspective is illustrated by The Famous History of the Lancashire Witches which relates witches to the devil, reports that hanging is the appropriate and normal punishment and emphasizes that a

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[80] Ibid, pp. 3, 11. In addition to the historic, Roman-based distinctions of white and black (maleficium) witchcraft, there evolved between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries the theory of the demonic pact, a belief also based on Christian theology and Satan. C. Larner, Witchcraft and Religion, p. 4, Oxford, 1984.

[81] Ibid, pp. 92-93.

[82] Ibid, p. 100.

belief in God is the requisite perspective.[83] The only other witchcraft references in the Lauriston Castle collection are one publication on the witches of Ayrshire and one on the witches of Pittenween, plus a tale about the witch of the Woodlands.

The other quasi-religious explanation for fortune and misfortune was based on astrology, which remained popular throughout the early part of the seventeenth century but which had lost much of its religious and scientific respectability by 1700.[84] Among the chapbooks the almanacs continued to be very popular; "by the 1600's, 400,000 were being sold every year," representing "two-fifths of the households in the kingdom." These contained "astrological predictions," as well as "a calendars information on fairs, roads and posts. . .farming hints, popularized scientific knowledge, historical information, sensational news. . .and a good deal of social, political and religious comment."[85] Almanacs are ubiquitous in the Lauriston Castle collection, with such titles as Nixon's Cheshire Prophecy, The True Egyptian Fortune Teller and Aberdeen's New Prognostication; I encountered one copy of the latter issued in 1793, so there was some market for almanacs in the late eighteenth century, as suggested by Capp. These were the only publications I encountered which suggested that fate or fortune, not God, might influence the ups and downs of life, providing a welcome relief to the dour message of the religious chapbooks concerning the "straight and narrow path to salvation" which was espoused by the Puritans.[86]

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[83] Anon, The Famous History of the Lancashire Witches, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2736. As quoted in Houston, 'Women in the economy', p. 48.

[84] Spufford, Small Books, p. 131.

[85] Wrightson, English Society, p. 197.

[86] Ibid, p. 204.

However, the general orientation of the almanacs was conservative and supportive of the status quo in regard to the status of women and the social hierarchy, perhaps an indication that the authors were aiming primarily at middle and upper class male readers. Capp describes the outlook of the almanac authors as "conservative paternalism," with their indications that the "social hierarchy was ordained by God," their condemnation of those who threatened the social order and their support of a subordinate role for women.[87] Almanacs often included satirical and scatalogical references to females, as well as extensive discussions of cuckolding, gossiping and how to punish a wife. Although some almanacs did provide limited information useful to women, including mathematical dates and times of events and fairs, almanacs generally were insensitive to women, with references to maidens "scratching their thighs," broken maidenheads, and "maids wanton, wives willing, widows willful."[88]

CATECHISMS

Although the Puritan influence was widespread, it was not universal in the Church, and many recognized that more intelligent and better educated clergy was required as the Reformation emphasis swung from ritual to pastoral duties and to understanding the word of God as contained in the scriptures. During the first half of the seventeenth century, this initiative and the more severe Puritan perspective "proceeded side by side," with the emphasis on ecclesiastical and parliamentary discipline accompanying the preaching of the religious message. However, the penetration of the Reformation was spotty, geographically and in its effect on the parishioners, with "inattentive church attenders," especially the poor, of great concern. "Under Archbishop Laud and the Armenians, the church was prepared to

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[87] Capp, Astrology, pp. 102-112.

[88] Ibid, p. 124.

settle for decency and formality in public worship. . .Theology was liberalized, moving away from the daunting Calvinism of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Church and towards a gentler, more comprehensive road to salvation" in the 1630's. The Puritan approach to Reformation had a renaissance during the Civil War period. However, in the long run most of the people were "sermon proof," and the church was unable "to communicate meaningfully with the common people," in part a reflection of the educational levels of a mass who had difficulty with "abstract concepts and the vocabulary."[89]

To many the effort to overcome the poor person's ignorance of church doctrine was to be achieved by emphasis on catechisms, as reflected in the chapbooks. As discussed in Chapter Five, the rote learning approach to education was widely practiced in secular education, just as religious instruction was based on the catechism. Some of the chapbooks are directed at the young, many at adults. All emphasized the father's responsibility as head of the household to direct the religious training of the family, especially the children, further strengthening the predominant role of the husband in the family.

Houston, writing about Scotland, discusses the Calvinist belief that "education would lead to Godliness via reading, with the Calvinist church prepared to back up its general desideratum for literacy as a path to individual spiritual renewal by requiring specific attainments as a precondition of access to the privileges of the church. Catechism was to be the main foundation of religious knowledge for the young, the poor and the ill-educated who had neither the time, ability nor inclination to grapple with

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[89] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 208, 213-216.

proper religious literature."[90] Religious education was designed to achieve Calvinist, capitalist values. "Godliness" was likely to make "workers more docile and industrious," in the eyes of one "coal owner." "Moral conformity" was the objective in Scotland and England, and the catechism was designed to enhance the patriarchal structure of society."[91] However, as Collinson observes, rote learning of "the catechism did not necessarily mean an authentic and meaningful experience."[92]

Some of these books were educational; The Seven Champions of Christendom provides the religious messages in the context of a discussion of the lives of such saints as St. Patrick.[93] Most of these books used a strictly rote approach to instill the messages. For example, Ordinary Day Well Spent quotes the Old Testament extensively while advising the reader how to spend his day in prayer -- from arising to going to bed -- with instructions of what to pray and when -- and includes a detailed description of how to keep the Sabbath holy.[94] The Substance of Christian Religion lists the sins which "cry to heaven for vengeance,"[95] and A Prayer Book for Families provides prayers for every occasion.[96] In all cases, the father's patriarchal role as the leader of the prayers is emphasized, a subtle tie to "God the Father." The use of these catechism books continued through the eighteenth century.

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[90] Houston, Scottish Literacy, p. 150.

[91] Ibid, p. 224.

[92] Collinson, The Religion of Protestants, p. 234.

[93] Anon, The History of the Seven Champions of Christendom, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2732.

[94] Anon, Ordinary Day Well Spent, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2732.

[95] Anon, The Substance of Christian Religion or The Whole Duty of Man, p. 4, London, n.d., L.C. Vol. 3006.

[96] Anon, A Prayer Book for Families and Private Persons, Glasgow, n.d., L.C. Vol. 2847.

However, their efforts did not bear the fruit that the Puritans had hoped. ". . .what the interregnum saw was not the transformation of England. . .but the disintegration of English Puritanism into a multiplicity of denominations and sects. Side by side with that process went the alienation from what remained of the national church of those common people who found themselves both the object of the cultural aggression of the godly and at the same time excluded from the communion of the faithful." Many members of the middle class, increasingly involved "with the central issues of the day," decided that they could make their own decisions concerning faith, and they responded to the Baptist evangelists and Quaker pamphlets. "A century of education improvement and religious change had bred up individuals who had sufficient self-confidence to find their own paths of the spirit and to judge for themselves the requirements of salvation." In addition to the proliferation of various sects, this period, reflecting "the emotional exhaustion of the Interregnum experiment and its failure," led to the triumph of "sober respectability" over "radical enthusiasm."[97] Form rather than substance, attendance at church for marriage, baptism and burial, largely had replaced spiritual and emotional commitment. The "rejection and resentment of Puritan interference" led to the increasing secularization of society after 1660.[98] Throughout the eighteenth century social life became more involved with the public domain, with increasing secular connotations stimulated by pluralism, toleration and the post-Civil War pursuit of pleasure. The church lost its position as the focus of community life.[99] The result for most was "a secular life with religious fancy wrappings."[100]

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[97] Wrightson, English Society, pp. 217, 219.

[98] Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage, p. 625.

[99] Porter, English Society, p. 243.

[100] Fraser, Weaker Vessel, p. 298.

THE CHAPBOOKS' PERSPECTIVE

The chapbook literature does not reflect the religious pluralism that was developing in Great Britain after the Civil War period. The only references to options other than the Church of England are the negative ones, with warnings about "novelty in religion." There were limited efforts to present the message in a more palatable form. In the late eighteenth century Hannah More undertook to combine "evangelical theory" with "practical experience," to provide a "fictional disguise" for the "dreary message."[101] In The Beautiful and Interesting Account of the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain we encounter the story of a poor shepherd. The same themes are presented in the context of the poor man's life, rather than in a fearful "sermon" or dreary catechism. The messages are familiar: "There is no day this last thirty years that I have not peered into my Bible" which is "meat, drink and company to me." The shepherd is rewarded with a "promotion" to minister's clerk; that step upward is a reward for his servility and acceptance of his status, another consistent theme in the chapbooks. "What pleases [God] pleases me." The shepherd lives in a hovel but does not mind, even though the rain pours through his roof, for "how many better men have been worse lodged, how many good Christians have perished in prisons and dungeons, in comparison of which my cottage is a palace."[102]

Support for the status quo, in poverty and for women, is a constant theme throughout this literature. We have already seen that God is a "husband",[103] and many references to the role of women in "Domestick Life," i.e. "piety toward God. . .duties of a daughter, a wife, a mother and a

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[101] Newbury, Popular Education, pp. 13, 128.

[102] More, Salisbury Plain, pp. 6-9.

[103] Anon, Cordial of Comfort, p. 3.

sister."[104] In The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain, the wife "breeds up [the] children to. . .habits of industry." Her responsibility is for these eight children and the housework, but that is all.[105] The virtues of poverty -- for men and women -- are loudly and consistently proclaimed:

> "Or may boldly be affirmed, that good then generally reap more substantial Benefit from their afflictions, than bad men do from their Prosperities, and what they lose in Wealth, Pleasure, or Honour, they gain in vast advantage in Wisdom and Goodness, and Tranquillity of Mind. . . Contentment is the truest Riches and Covetousness the greatest Poverty. . .Humility is the pre-eminent virtue."[106]

This theme is repeated in a variety of approaches in other popular publications. A Cordial of Comfort proclaims that God knows best and that even if you are oppressed, it is alright for you will have "everlasting rest" and God "will take care of you." Heaven is your home "'tis where your pleasures lie, where you will be happy when you come to die," so "make sure of heaven," and you will be happy on earth.[107] The Life of the Blessed Mary extolls "virtuous poverty,"[108] while The History of Charles Jones the Footman urges the over-worked and underpaid servant to "learn to put up with some little inconveniences," emphasizing that to fear God will ensure happiness and a fulfilled life on earth for the poor.[109]

It is interesting to speculate about who bought the religious chapbook. If the courtship and marriage stories seem to be directed to the young and to their concerned parents, to whom were the blatantly religious books, the

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[104] Anon, The Rule of Life, p. 21.

[105] More, Salisbury Plain, p. 10.

[106] Anon, The Rule of Life, pp. 15, 18.

[107] Anon, Cordial of Comfort, pp. 4-5, 8.

[108] Anon, Blessed Mary, p. 5.

[109] Anon, Charles Jones, p. 5.

sermons and the fearful warnings about death and repentance directed? The biographies of the times, predominantly written by males, provide reasonable support for the assumption that these publications were introduced into households by fathers and husbands. The basic theme of God the Father, combined with the books' support of the dominant male role in society, lends further support for that conclusion, as does the consistent message concerning the inferior status of women. To a great extent the religious books did not differentiate between genders in their overall themes, but they did clearly support the concept of the dominant male. These publications also reaffirmed class distinctions, with an emphasis on acceptance of, and satisfaction with inherited class rank. This indicates that the religious chapbooks were published by the middle class for consumption by the lower classes or that the lower classes were prepared to accept middle class values. Even the few female religious authors of the time, like Hannah More, did not challenge the established social system nor the concept of male dominance, preferring to concentrate on a "Godly" message of submission and repentance.

The very volume of the religious books published indicates that they were widely circulated. Undoubtedly they were bought by the convinced and, one can speculate, by those who wanted to be convinced by the messages contained in the books. The "sugarcoating" of the religious themes in later stories like The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain may indicate a limited acceptance of the printed sermons and catechisms, the more straightforward vehicles for the messages, after the Civil War period. It was easier and more comfortable for the lower classes to relate to, and receive enjoyment from a story about a shepherd than to be struck by the lightning bolts of the vengeful God tossed down from the pulpit via a penny publication, and even many of the earlier, apparently secular tales included moral messages. Whether

harsh and direct, or "sweetened" in a somewhat more subtle story, the message was delivered endlessly in the chapbook literature, a further indication that indeed the newly literate were more interested in religion than in any other subject, even if that interest did not result in the internalized religious commitment that the authors and preachers sought.

Religious themes pervade chapbook literature, including many which are not purely religious publications. In assessing the message, we must keep in mind the events of the period. The "Godly" books did endeavour to support the efforts to expand the Reformation to the general public, emphasizing that a supreme and controlling Being acted in Judgement on the individual sinner and "saint". The chapbooks did reflect the fact that the citizen of the period was living in a period of uncertainty. Death from natural causes and natural disasters was a constant handmaiden to life. This literature also cried out against the "ungrateful age" which abounded "with so much infidelity, impiety and unbelief," promising vengeance for sins and salvation through virtue and repentance. These books reflected a male-oriented society's emphasis on male dominance and an increasingly wealthy society's desire to maintain an economic and social status quo. The chapbooks strongly supported the fears of "novelty in religion." Thus, to a great extent, the religious chapbooks did mirror society -- or a portion of it.

That portion was clearly the Puritan element. Nowhere do we find acceptance of, or support for, the changes that were underway. In fact, it is only the vehemence of the message supporting the status quo in religion that indicates a concern about possible challenges to the religiously "acceptable". The authors and publishers were unwilling to consider a message based on love, rather than fear, let alone accept a religion of "sober respectability." They were unwilling to recognize that the church was rapidly losing its place as the centre of community life or that secular life outside the church could

be meaningful. They maintained their "radical enthusiasm" for a puritanical view of religion as the centre of life with a vengeful God as the great judge in the sky; natural disasters did not happen naturally, misfortune was the "judgement of a just God," but also a fearful Being. To the extent that the religious literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries continued to portray the perspective of the early seventeenth century, the chapbooks present the modern reader with the same distorted perspective as that received by the readers of the period. The latter were adopting new ideas and perspectives and abandoning old precepts, an indication that a great many of the readers did not accept the message presented in the literature. Once again, the chapbook literature presented a conservative, rigid and increasingly unrealistic view of what was actually transpiring in contemporary society. Lest we have any doubts about these conclusions, we return to the words of A Gold Chain of Four Links:

> "There is no man but receives more good than he deserves, though he suffer much evil. A Christian is to submit to the disposing and commanding will of God, and whether God gives him riches or poverty, he takes it willingly at his hands. . .What if we suffer a little here; is it better to partake of the pleasures of this world here, and be damn'd for ever hereafter. . .He that departs the world in faith, shall be saved; but he that departs from the faith shall be damn'd."[110]

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[110] Anon, A Gold Chain, pp. 18, 20.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

> "The utmost of a woman's character is contained in Domestick Life; first, her Piety towards God; and next in the Duties of a Daughter, a Wife, a Mother, and a Sister"[1]

> "Don't marry a lady who destroys her time in dress, frivolous entertainment, public spectacles, or unprofitable reading."[2]

These two quotations provide a very accurate summary of the chapbook perspective on the role of women in Stuart and Hanoverian times. According to the popular literature, as we have seen, a woman was considered to be a piece of property, "owned" first by her father, then by her husband. She was expected to maintain her virtue before and during marriage, a victim of a double standard which did not anticipate the same level of fidelity from her father and husband and did not recognize her own sexuality. Her commitment to housework, the farm or cottage industry (for the lower classes) and to her family was to be total and complete. Her education, if any, was to be designed to provide her with the basic necessities for her anticipated role and to instill, through fear, a commitment to God; it reinforced an acceptance of her place in society and her social class. As Porter so accurately states the situation: "Anatomy determined over destiny. . .men and women were indelibly different in nature and capacity and so ought to play quite distinct social roles". Porter describes the eighteenth century women's roles as "wife, mother, housekeeper, domestic servant, maiden aunt".[3]

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[1] Anon, Directions for Reading, p. 21.

[2] Anon, Lover's Guide to Matrimony, p. 3.

[3] Porter, English Society, pp. 36-7.

This is also an accurate description of the chapbook perspective on women. Porter's list of the adjectives attributed to male and female is enlightening. Men were expected to be reasonable, business-like, active and decisive, while women were described as "passive, maternal, submissive, modest, docile and virtuous".[4] The chapbook literature is replete with descriptive adjectives and phrases projecting that imagery. Women are portrayed as ornaments, "jewels" and "flowers". The literature is saturated with such images as: "virtue is a jewel"; "soft, kind and charming"; "cheeks like roses"; "tender breast"; "charming virgin"; her face is a "jewel"; "courteous and mild speech"; "the natural delicacy and modesty of the female character"; "contented with a lowly state and condition". The constant use of such nouns, adjectives and phrases could only emphasize the chapbook's message, one that was seen to be based in the scriptures. The popular literature justified the perspective on women's roles on various Old Testament writings, including the story of the Garden of Eden:

> "One of the gentlemen, an Oxford Scholar, took an occasion to discourse on the Garden of Eden, man's happiness therein, and exclusion from thence, reflecting on the serpent's subtlety and temptation, and the woman's credulity and compliance, with the miseries and corruption of the human race, occasioned thereby; and in fine concluded that it had been better for man both then and now, to have been alone (so far did his resentment carry him) than to have been plagued by a simple woman, calling them silly, untractable, perverse, useless, imperious creatures, unworthy as well as incapable of any offices, ecclesiastical, civil or military".[5]

Although this is a rather extreme perspective, even by chapbook standards, it is indicative of the viewpoint contained in the ubiquitous religious publications. Whether expressed in frightful and threatening sermons and tales of executions and other punishments or clothed in the softer, more

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[4] Ibid, p. 37.

[5] Anon, The Maiden's Prize, p. 2.

mundane tales of every-day life such as those produced by Hannah More, the religious chapbooks provided a constant message of passivity, fear, obedience to God and husband, acceptance of feminine status and social class. Nowhere in the chapbooks do we receive a message inimical to the Calvinist and Anglican interests; the chapbooks do not reflect the religious pluralism of the period. Nowhere in the chapbooks do we read of any acceptable alternative role for women, as a spinster, in the workplace, in literature or the arts. Even the few women writers represented in the Lauriston Castle collection repeat the same messages as those contained in the stories written by males.

We must recognize that this literature was widely available, was read and presumably was influential. As Houston states: "In England by 1700 printed ballads, chapbooks and plays had already made an indelible mark on oral tradition".[6] Was the literature reflective of the ideal or the actuality of society, or both? It is clear that the chapbooks did reflect an idealized perspective, one clearly supported by many, undoubtedly the majority in the upper classes of society. The literature and society supported a passive, male-dominated role. Both agreed on the importance of a woman's virtue, fearful of the consequences which could result in this pre-contraceptive period. Society and the penny literature emphasized acceptance of the social status quo, as well as the secondary, passive position of women; both began to accept the necessity for a limited education for females, designed to prepare them for a clearly defined, secondary and passive status in society, based on the home, family and religious commitment. The chapbooks generally supported the concept of a joint parent-child decision on the selection of marriage partners but always insisted on parental involvement. The chapbooks also agreed with those in society who believed that, other

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[6] Houston, Scottish Literacy, p. 206.

than supporting a husband's business employment on the farm or in the cottage industry, a woman should not actively participate in the economy, accepting that she was "unworthy as well as incapable of any offices, ecclesiastical, civil or military".

How reflective was the chapbook version of society? Very -- up to a point. The popular literature did convey a series of messages on the role of women which coincided with the prevailing view of the church and the upper classes throughout the period. During the Stuart years, a time of unrest, even chaos, there was a longing for tranquility, represented in part by passive and obedient, ornamental women in their divinely, pre-selected class and role, secondary partners to dominant and forceful males. Any variation in standing, based on gender or social class, only would have added to the unrest of the period.

However, as we have seen, even during the seventeenth century reality was different from the ideal. Not all women who became pregnant ended up dead or as prostitutes; many lived happily married, having recognized that the lower classes had no economic stake in virginity. Stone reports on the trend toward a more companionate relationship in marriage, and Wrightson's reports on contemporary diaries indicate that there was a more equal partnership between spouses throughout this period than the popular literature reflects. Especially during the eighteenth century, women were more active in the world outside the home, as married wives and as spinsters, participating in the trades and in the religious sects, enjoying new leisure pursuits, participating in the arts and, even during the Civil War, serving as protectors and defenders of the upper class family interests during the absence of their husbands. Educational and employment opportunities were improving for women, and writers such as Mary Astell (1666-1731), Aphra Behn (1640-1689), and Hannah Woolley (b.1623) were writing,

although often using male pseudonyms to hide their gender.[7] Hannah Woolley urged women to strive for an education which centered on accounts, not on household chores. She expressed an opinion which did reflect the feelings of a small but growing segment of society, a position ignored by the chapbooks and completely contrary to the message contained in the popular literature:

> "The right education of the Female Sex, as it is in a manner everywhere neglected, so it ought to be generally lamented. Most in this depraved later Age think a Woman learned and wise enough if she can distinguish her Husbands Bed from anothers. Certainly Mans Soul cannot boast of a more sublime Original than ours, they had equally their efflux from the same eternal Immensity, and therefore capable of the same improvement by good Education. Vain man is apt to think we were merely intended for the Worlds propagation, and to keep its human inhabitants sweet and clean; but by their leaves, had we the same literature, he would find our brains as fruitful as our bodies. Hence I am induced to believe, we are debas'd from the knowledge of human learning lest our pregnant wits should rival the towering conceits of our insulting Lords and Masters".[8]

This plea, written in the late seventeenth century, highlights the general attitude of the "insulting Lords and Masters" and of the chapbook authors and publishers. We know little about the former but have seen that the publishers, who often may have been the authors, came from the class in society which had a great stake in tranquility and status quo. They had no reason to encourage change and social unrest, which could challenge their status, for the chapbooks were published by the 'middling sorts'. Speck reports: "Popular literary culture was dominated by almanacs and

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[7] For an excellent account on seventeenth century women authors, see: A. Goreau, The Whole Duty of a Woman, Garden City, 1985. For an exposure to "Five Women's Pamphlets from the Renaissance", see: S. Shepherd (ed.), The Women's Sharp Revenge, London, 1985.

[8] H. Woolley, The Gentleman's Companion, London, 1675, as quoted in Kinnaird, 'Mary Astell', p. 53.

chapbooks, though even those were written not by, but for, the lower orders."[9] Unfortunately, in addition to ignoring the legitimate questions about the role of women and the significant changes underway during this period, the publisher-authors also ignored the unpleasant aspects of a woman's life, conditions which might contribute to unhappiness about her status. The various marriage options confronting a lower class woman, the agony of her death in childbirth, the pain at losing a child, the anguish and ecstasies of female sexuality, widowhood, old age, these are not touched upon, nor are the true realities of lower class life. Nowhere do we learn of a couple's struggles to raise a family and make financial ends meet. The literature does not report on the woman's medical role, nursing sick and dying husbands and children. In summary, the chapbooks support an idealized and ideologically biased perspective; they do not reflect on the realities of the difficult lives endured by the lower classes nor on the changes during this period as women became more active in the world outside the home. They present an incomplete, and therefore false, image of society.

That being the case, why was there a market for these publications? Why would the lower class spend a hard-earned penny on a chapbook? From our current perspective it is difficult to imagine why many of these tales would be appealing, especially to lower class women. It is easier to understand that in a male-dominated society, the strong reinforcement of the male's dominant role would be attractive to the men. In evaluating the appeal of these publications, we must start by recognizing that for the lower classes the chapbooks, along with religious tracts and broadsides, were the only affordable literary alternatives to the Bible. For the newly 'literate', i.e., those who had just learned to read, these publications were the option. As such the chapbooks provided an affordable and appealing opportunity for

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[9] Speck, Society and Literature, p. 76 .

escapism from the pain, the rigour, the oppressiveness of daily life. For a few moments lower class readers could escape from their environment into a life about which they could only dream, or the readers could reflect upon their relative good fortune, in comparison with the sufferings of the sinners portrayed in the chapbooks. It is also likely that most of the chapbooks purchased were introduced into the household by the fathers and husbands, who largely controlled the expenditures. The messages contained in the stories reinforced the father's perspective on his daughter's legitimate aspirations in terms of virginity, marriage and the commitment to family, home and the husband's farming or cottage industry. The husband would hardly argue against such messages. The various diaries mentioned in this report all report that it was the fathers who introduced the diarists, usually their children, to the penny literature.

However, those reasons by themselves are insufficient. Many of the chapbook stories are written versions of the oral tradition, primarily adventure stories. These continued to have a universal appeal in written form. The contemporary stories, such as John and Kate, often presented the message in a scenario to which the lower class reader could relate. The more blatantly religious books would appeal to those already committed to the messages contained in them, for they strengthened the beliefs of the believers. In a society undergoing the religious, political and moral stresses that confronted the citizens of Great Britain during the early modern period, the chapbooks presented a stable message. The lower class reader was reassured that his or her status in life was acceptable and to be accepted. In the popular literature there was a reward beyond economic and social progress, one that was to be sought above any earthly desire for riches, to be found in the next life, if one was "Godly". These books reinforced the already existing values of many of their readers and confirmed that their status was

an honourable one, to be accepted with satisfaction. That message was communicated in terms of social status and in terms of the rightful place of women in society. If a reader is unable to change the circumstances of life, it is reassuring to learn that the circumstances are acceptable. The chapbooks only chastize those who do not accept their inherited and gender specific roles and who wander from the "acceptable" path. Thus, to many, the chapbooks presented a message with values that they already possessed; to those who might question the dreary circumstances of their lives, the popular literature reassured them that acceptance of their lot was not only the unique, viable alternative available but was to be welcomed, for they would be rewarded in more meaningful ways if they remained on the correct path.

Of course, that path was a narrow and unchanging one, at least in this literature. As we have seen, the chapbooks were faithful mirrors of an idealized society but presented an incomplete, and therefore insufficient image of the realities of life in early modern Britain. They did not deal with many of the unpleasant verities of life, and they were constant in their message, not reflective of either the changes underway in society nor of the outcries against the status quo. Greatly influenced by the Puritan and Calvinist attitudes of the day, they did not indicate that women had options, that women could consider a life that was not reflected in the messages contained in the chapbooks. The popular literature faithfully reflected a rigid ideology which left no room for women to grow beyond the boundaries established for them, nor to question those boundaries. Thus, this "Augustan literature does not document reality so much as contemporary ideology."[10] It is an ideology reflective of the interests of the upper classes and of the church, the predominant segments of society. However, it was a literature

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[10] Ibid, p. 13.

sadly limited and incomplete as revelation concerning the reality of the lower class woman's life in early modern Britain.

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