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THE TREATMENT OF THE UNMARRIED WOMAN IN COMEDY

from 1584-1921.

Thesis

submitted in accordance with the regulations governing  
the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Glasgow.

by

Krishna Gorowara

June 1961



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## PREFACE

It is commonly supposed that the unmarried woman just serves a role in the wooing theme. She has, however, been gripping and startling, amusing and annoying her audiences from age to age to an extent that goes beyond the strict requirements of this role. Yet what could have been the playwright's purpose in treating her as he does, is little thought over. Down the ages, there is something beyond the wooing theme that weighs heavy on his mind. What that something is, he releases alongside of the wooing theme, through the fictitious character of the unmarried woman.

The field of the present study is comedy. Nevertheless, the treatment of the supposedly fictitious character met within plays might serve as a supplement to a well-documented sociological or an anthropological study of the unmarried woman in actual life, when that comes to be written. 'Supposedly fictitious', I say, for the fictitious, it is important to note and consider, need not be false. What is true in the mind, no matter at what height of fine frenzy the author fabricates plot after plot, cannot all be false. Is there not more than a grain of truth contained in the Aristotelian theory that art is an imitation of life: even if it be granted that art and life cannot be reduced to any simple equation? Is there not to be found food for thought in the fool's folly: even though what he says may pass as mere conundrum? And the proverbial "many a true word is spoken in jest" may in fact be drawn out to a good part of the comedic theory.

Comedy strictly defined, nanby-pamby farce, unrestrained burlesque, unclassifiable serio-comic theatre ware - all cohere. What the more sensitive, skilful artist is able to convey in a few, subtle words gains a decidedly different value when blunter, lesser known works in the same sphere are borne in mind. In fact, no complete answer to any question can be obtained (such has been my experience while at the present study) unless the good and the bad are from time to time, if not always, taken together.

In portraying her stage history, I prefer the approach by building evidence from within the plays themselves. Not that I eschew works of history and criticism entirely; it would be sheer arrogance to do so. But, except for the general framework and foundations, as a glance at the footnotes would reveal, I have found these little to my purpose. Often, to avoid mere rebuttals which I feel detract attention from the subject, I drop them soon after picking them up, even though I am aware of the fact that in doing so I take away some

academic polish and perhaps some of the usually admired weight of verification.

Under compulsion have I had to stretch this work beyond both ends of the eighteenth century at which I had started my exploratory operations. I discovered in due course, to my dismay, that I was getting nowhere. I was, on the one hand, neither finding the roots, nor on the other, any distinct fruits of my labour. And so I gradually edged both backwards and forwards. I simply had to allow myself to be led on by a particular tradition or trend until I had reached its beginnings and until I could discern it trailing off of itself. Hence 1584-1921. But since every move in any direction has involved the breaking of new ground, I have inserted a marginal heading which may serve as a guide-post to assist the reader in observing traditions and types during their formative years. The question of dates must always be debatable. These too are likewise put in as a convenient support for ideas. Occasionally though, I have gone on an excursion beyond the boundaries, 1584-1921, as indeed I have crossed the pale of comedy proper.

As regards the plan of the thesis, the first three chapters are on the younger unmarried woman and the next two on the older. In the sixth and last however, are combined the case and cause of both together; but since the predominant note is on the latter, a sort of equilibrium is thus established and maintained.

I attack the subject with "Apes in Hell", since the curse was coined with due deliberation for the maid who did not marry. Beginning with the year 1584 when first traced in comedy, I seek to find out how exactly she has been "treated" with it and pursue it as far as possible into the eighteenth century. Chapter II deals with the question of religion in the same period. When her outlook on life was limited, could therein lie an alternative course for one who did not marry? Why specifically I narrow it down to the nunnery is because innumerable references to the same occur. Perhaps, it is a vivid figure of speech for one who turns her back upon the world. Nevertheless, it all demands looking into, I feel. Chapter III I switch off at 1700 since the examination of the question as to how or why the widow's remarriage seriously affected the position of the maid, seems to get stale - if not lost - at that date.

The movement of thought and intensity of interest with regard to the "old maid" from the time of her "discovery" during the Restoration period, is more or less rhythmic. Hence according as the dramatist of the corresponding years of the next two centuries concentrates

on her, so do I shift the burden of my research. The difference however lies in the fact: that while Chapter IV deals with the hammering of certain "types" into shape, the period 1660-1700 is compact enough. But since in Chapter V I have not only to reckon with other changing social forces and opinions that fit out the earlier created types to suit the new times, but also have to consider other disharmonious elements, the chapter turns out to be rather a sprawling one. There is a certain degree of overlapping in the sections into which it is cut and parcelled; but that cannot be helped. The later major division into the First Cycle (1760-1827) and the Second Cycle (1780-1890) is again not quite of my own making. I am merely acting as the "medium", in allowing myself to be dictated by my material.

Thereafter I pick up the threads for Chapter VI. Why I continue up to 1921 is because the last vestiges of Victorianism are traceable to this year. Throughout the course of this chapter or the ones preceding, I ask and reason out ways and means whereby the unmarried woman evolves as a stock stage type to serve certain functions in comedy. At the same time I take up the verdict down the ages: that through the romantic and idealistic wooing theme of the young maid, or the ridicule and satire of the old maid, through other theatrewares that may or may not combine the young and old cases together, - the playwright reveals the guilt of domestic and social masters of the unmarried woman.

I do not make any claim to any ability to answer fully any of the questions I pose, nor do I assume that all the interpretations I give to plays will be accepted. But if thought is stirred thereby that in order to understand the problems and treatment of the unmarried woman the most outstanding playwright has to be studied in relation to his contemporaries, that an author generally ignored has contributed to a general movement, that views regarding the Restoration, sentimental or non-sentimental comedy need modifications and so on, - I shall be quite content.

But I must end where I <sup>should have</sup> begun. My list of debts, ~~in fact~~, extends to almost the entire Department of English of Glasgow University. It has been a rare treat to have had a few hours with Dr. Sarah Davies; it has been invaluable advice that I have had from Miss Hannah Buchan and Mr. K. P. A. Drew; it was time ungrudgingly given by Mr. E. A. J. Honigman, Mr. C. H. Salter and Mr. J. A. M. Rillie that I valued; it was interest in my work that brought me helpful suggestions from Mr. J. W. R. Purser, Mr. J. C. Bryce and Mr. T. C. Livingstone. My expression for

my regard for Professor Peter Alexander and appreciation of the guidance and encouragement received from Mr.J.F.Arnott have however, to be through another self-imposed task already well in hand.

## APES IN HELL

The Maid's position  
against the Social and  
Religious background  
round about 1584.

"Marry!" came the imperative to the maid, "or else lead apes in hell!"  
Marry whom? The ardent lover or the man of noble parts at any rate was  
scarce. The Elizabethan stage army of suitors trooped in together -

knights of carpet consideration, travellers with minds as dry as biscuits, continental mis-  
cellanies, Proteuses, greybeards, dumb shows, imbeciles, clowns, louts, rogues, rascals and  
ne'er-do-wells. Such was the choice. The maid had to accept any he that came along  
preening himself on the proverb, or wait to be cast into the flames of hell with the  
dehumanised creatures of Christian conception. Never indeed had the price of man been set  
so high or the price of maid so low!

Whatever its origin, howsoever diversely applied, the expression ostensibly had been  
coined to coerce her into marriage, to instil fear into her heart about life here-after, if  
she failed to conform to the creed. But why with such impassioned zeal did the humanist,  
the philosophical agnostic and the rational naturalist make marriage so imperative an issue?  
Unmarried chastity, as the tide ran, could not lead to salvation. Any step in that direc-  
tion was erroneous - indeed a waste of purpose mainly because faith had been shaken not only  
in the medieval concept of religion, but also in the possible coexistence of unmarried  
chastity with the unbridled lust and foul air rampant at the time. Sweeping statements  
as Erasmus's

now-a-days you can scarce know a Dutchess from a Shop-Keeper's Wife;  
a married Woman from a Maid, or a Widow or a Matron, from a Whore. 1.

and Latimer's in greater vituperative form

Once yet, as old as I am, to see the day that lechery shall be punished:  
it was never more in need, for there was never more lechery used in England  
than is at this day and maintained ..... 2.

with recurring epithets of 'Sodome and Gomorre' in sermons, pamphlets and other works con-  
tinued. Gascoigne's The Glasse of Government (1575), Greene and Lodge's Looking-Glasse for  
London and England (1592), Shakespeare's Measure for Measure (1599) formed only a fractional  
part of that strain.

This state of social affairs apart, the maid could claim little recognition in view of  
of what the holders of the new faith were propagating. Referring to one of Erasmus's  
Colloquies again, while the wife and the widow held their respective degrees of state in the  
Order of Womanhood, and while the mistress was given a hearing for consideration of her  
I. N. Bailey, Erasmus' Colloquies, Vol. II, p. 208. 2, Last Sermon.

case for inclusion, the maid was simply brushed aside as an incomplete object. Positive preaching ran to the tune

As it is a part of your penance ye women, to travail in bearing your children, so it is part of your penance to be subjects unto your husbands. You are underlings, underlings, and must be obedient ..... 1.

A set of twelve homilies or sermons published by the authority of Edward VI in 1547 were re-issued in 1562 by Queen Elizabeth and added to by twenty-one more. In the eighteenth homily 'Of the State of Matrimony' St. Paul was quoted

Let women be subject to their husbands, as to the Lord: for the husband is the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the church....2.

The spirit of all of which is fully developed in The Patient Grissell<sup>3</sup>. Grissell, the ideal maid, inclined to be unwilling, is converted into the ideal wife. Gautier teaches her that marriage is the goal of a woman - "S. Paul doth plainly prove" (1.171). She obeys him and she obeys the parents who so do their duty by her. Though, alas, her "porfit love" in marriage, her trials and sufferings because of her children and her husband, require the patience of Job. But it is therefore that she is declared to be the ideal submissive woman who does not, despite everything, lose her faith in God.

Quite legitimate it is to consider the essential background picture round about 1584 whereafter the present study commences, since it really matters little whether "apes in hell" had travelled down from the medieval times<sup>4</sup> or across from the continent<sup>5</sup>. What is to be borne in mind is the fact that there was adequate reason for its spreading "with the rapidity of a plague" in the 1570's<sup>6</sup>. Indeed, it was a forceful enough expression both of the intolerant attitude towards the unmarried state and of the urgent desire to end it. Howsoever pure of heart and self-contained the maid may have been, when only the male approach to problems and man's rule of law prevailed, in the eyes of the religious and social reformer she still could be an object of temptation. Or else, there ever lay the possibility of her falling prey to it. Either way - the unmarried state appeared perilous indeed.

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1. Last Sermon.

2. Latimer, Last Sermon, (quoted - D. Stenton, The English Woman in History, p.104).

3. J. Phillip, 1565.

4. W. Hayley, Essay on Old Maids, 1787, Three vols. III, 156 ff; B.J. Whiting, Englische Studien, 1955-6. (i.e. possibility of medieval märchen)

5. H.W. Janson, Apes and Apelore, Narrenschiff, Basel, 1494. p.207.

6. E. Kuhl, Studies in Philology, XXII, 1925.



The use of the phrase in Comedy. With due deference to the inquiring mind roving around in all directions for source, history, and elucidation of the proverb, one wonders why conjectural analysis has not gone into this peculiar climate that the campaigner for marriage created. Especially, since all are agreed that the specific punishment was for the unmarried. Of course, there is no guaranteeing that all such factors will be quite so directly put in the plays. Nor should it be surprising, considering how circumstances have to be narrowed down to scene and situation. It may not be possible to transfuse the entire atmosphere of the age. Maybe, of greater significance to the discerning judgment of the playwright is his evaluation of the personal problems emanating therefrom.

One must first and foremost be aware of the point that in comedy "apes in hell", directly or indirectly, is applied exclusively to a woman. Secondly, particularly in the first few decades, not only is there an interpretation almost always to it but some idea too as to its impact on her mind. Thirdly, may be discerned the dramatist's own power in liberating her, inferentially the age from such a damnifying belief. Lastly, despite the flexibility to which it is put, it is not irrelevant to the question of marriage or morality.

Over a superstition or a popular saying one does not set out to dogmatise. One only feels that the dramatist is not unaware of the confusions it causes - that it goes instead against the original intent and purpose of its institutor, and that if it does not lead to mischief, it can scarcely serve for inculcating law and order. He subtly shows how a character may sophistically pull at it in different ways. Peele is among the first to make this point, perhaps because he is in the habit of paying court to the Virgin Queen on the throne. As such, it would be blasphemous to have thoughts of "hell" weighing down hearts and leading them away from Diana's cult.

Nymph..... you wot it very well.

All that be Dian's maids are vowed to halter apes in hell.

Bacchus. I'faith, i'faith, my gently mops, but I do know a cast,

Lead apes who list, that we would help t'unhalter them as fast. ...1.

In Bacchus's rejoinder comes the meaningful comical reversion. Grossly put, since the only way of escaping the punishment is by yielding virginity, why worry about the form of marriage which implies as much? Not less pointedly does he solicit the Nymph with "lead apes who list." That is to say, the curse is for them who give ear to it!

If "apes in hell" was meant for the correction of the "Venus-Folly-Vanitas"<sup>2</sup> type,

1. The Arraignment of Paris, IV.i, 1584.  
2. H.W.Janson, Apes and Apelore, p.207.

defiently thus she glides past it, singing "rounds or merry roundalays" in the full spirit of "country mirth". Equally, on the other hand, the simpleton quite desirous of the marital state, may in the event of its delay or improbability, contemplate instead forestalling the curse or start showing signs of panic.

Lying alone they muse but in their beds,  
How they might lose their long-kept maidenheads.  
This is the cause there is so many scapes,  
For women that are wise will not lead apes  
In hell;

1.

Particularly under the tutelage of a bawd and matron such as Temperance, many a 'Lucretia' "loth to lead apes in hell"<sup>2</sup> as a safety measure could meantime lose her maidenhead. In each case, the comedian makes a superbly classic hit to provoke thought. Thus it is calculable how such a superstition works. For, if one maid goes epicurean, a second tears her nerves to shreds over thoughts of hell, a third spares herself suffering at the very outset, all ultimately on the highroad to hell go. A fairly literal rendition however, is given in the case of Mopsa,<sup>3</sup> daughter to a bawd, who keeps the "losse" of her "Maydenhead" a closely guarded secret for fear of losing Dorus, thereby, a "husband". That means she is to "lead apes in hell" not on account of her transgressions, but simply because she is unmarried.

If an historian<sup>4</sup> accuses the man in the pulpit in the year 1562 pouring forth the homily on the state of matrimony, and preachers in the years after because "no teaching was directed to the praise or encouragement of independence in a woman", so that it was "the unmarried woman who suffered most", one would like to add that if he had ignored her only, less guilt would have been attributable to him. But whichever of the extirpators of malpractices lent their voices, and whichever of them held their tongues, between them they were letting "apes in hell" flourish fat on the ignorance of the masses and morality run riot to boot.

Wherefore the satiric commentator<sup>5</sup> sets before the public gaze "the virginity o' the parish" with the words -

- 
1. H.Porter, The Two Angry Women of Abington, II.i, 1599.
  2. G.Chapman, May-Day, V.ii, 1611.
  3. I.Day, The Ile of Gvls, 1606.
  4. D.Stenton, The English Woman in History, p.117.
  5. B.Jonson, The Gipsies Metamorphosed, Pt.II, 1621.

Fear not: in hell you'll never lead apes,  
A mortified maiden of five 'scapes.

And Puppy in the Masque educes that the "arrant learn'd men" have "touched the virgin string" "a little too hard".

An interesting comparative observation to be made at this stage is, that allusions in general literature also vary considerably (for example, in the ballad The Maid and the Palmer upon which Professor Kuhl remarks that the leading of apes was a punishment for "unchastity" and in the Scriptural sense adultery). But in comedy, the foregoing are some of the instances indicating that such may be the penalty, either for dying without a husband or for dying a virgin. It would be hard to resist the assumption that at times the dramatist is not so much putting the phrase to false construction as reflecting the mass untutored mind.

But he also takes upon himself a much heavier responsibility than displaying conscientiousness in merely holding up the mirror. He educates the young victim into disbelieving the curse, letting us witness too thereby how one glimmer and another culminates in the enlightened mind. She may marry out of her own inclinations and desires consequently, not out of the fear of apes. In contradistinction, she may also remain unmarried despite the current belief. As likely as not, she may be graded higher still so that any mention of it would be unthinkable. But the most refreshing surprise of all is in his permitting her to maintain her state. By this progress from the maid's emancipation to that of the simple and right rebuttal of "apes in hell" is to be marked the dramatist's modernity of mind and his feminism. For the character is suppressed by society and oppressed by unwritten law.

Regarding Shakespeare's treatment of the phrase, one cannot help alluding again to Professor Kuhl, who writes that the situation in The Taming of the Shrew<sup>1</sup> calls for no comment and that in Much Ado<sup>2</sup> there is "magic in the web" of it - the proverb "gives color and life to an unsurpassed scene". Demurring at these points one would like to submit that the lines ask more a study in character contrasts than of hues and tones in scenes and situations, and that through the characters, Shakespeare is giving an interpretation.

1. 1584-1592.

2. 1594.

Katherine is "a fiend of hell", a "hilding of a devilish spirit" any man would run away from. Beatrice has wit and charm, is highly impeccable in her taste, either the man is not for her, or she is not for him. But both, one for her ill-nature, the other for her pride in discrimination, may ultimately cry "Heigho for a husband" and repent. These two traits are the causes of forfeiture of opportunity as mostly opined. Shakespeare, however, is tolerant and understanding. Even the exulting, insulting Phoebe<sup>1</sup>, with no more beauty than "without candle may go to bed", has the privilege of going up to the same altar as the exquisitely charming Rosalind. So far as the "ape" maids go, they are young and beautiful, he will not deny Katherine a man, but he will teach her to be more deserving before he can fulfil her desires. For Beatrice, he will send a "valiant" bachelor. That is according to his creed, as a strong supporter of the institution of marriage. So though they could have led apes, they do not.

Possessed with the devil as she is, a person like Katherine can well be expected to believe in such superstitions. Surprisingly, Beatrice also, who almost on the verge of despair, is prepared to start with the punishment right away, for all that is said about the bear ward associated with the "apes" then, and lead his apes into hell. "Well, then, go you into hell?" asks Leonato. Nimble-witted and alert as she is, "into" opens her mind. She too had said "into hell"<sup>\*</sup>. But the emphasis on or the repetition of the preposition<sup>\*</sup> leads her therefore only "to the gate". As clouded as Katherine before in the acceptance of the belief, the veil is rent with that tiny preposition. And she denies the belief now and interprets that there is "no place" in hell "for maids". In other words, while the woman who is not chaste may be asked to account for her sins in hell, she who is pure in thought and heart will go to heaven; and that even if her desires remain unfulfilled in this world, she will still get her reward and compensation "there where the bachelors sit".

Shakespeare's own mind is much the maturer since the day he wrote The Shrew and though he wastes not words, presumably he knows how or why the belief was held, hence his eradication of it. He would have been horrified at the thought of maids spiralling down to hell with obnoxious creatures. Fancy Warburton calling it all "impious nonsense!"

1. As You Like It. \* Beatrice's use of "into" instead of the usual "in" gives initially a different turn to the saying.

As others, Beatrice marries. Yet notwithstanding her success in the battle against "apes" and "hell", she has to yield the palm to a contemporary - Julia <sup>1</sup> who, in indignant and vehement protest against the same, is more thorough in her job. She questions the soundness of the institution of marriage, vivisects the "apes in hell" notion in relation to that, and rejects both. It is a defiant, withal reasonable, stand. In the play in which she figures, on either side of the pair of scales are patient Grissil and the wrangling widow, Gwenthyan. While she, Julia the maid, holds the balance. She pleads Grissil's case and remonstrates with her husband for his callous behaviour. Equally vocal is she in decrying Gwenthyan's forwardness. Maturing in her judgment on marriage and married life therefrom, when her suitors approach her, and Farneze (one of them) on her disavowal of the Venus tribe, quotes the curse, she gets exasperated.

That spiteful proverb was proclaimed against them that are married upon earth; for to be married is to live in a kind of hell. 2.

She does not turn the tables over out of childish peevishness or giddy-headedness. On the contrary, lest her non-conformity with the marriage principle be misinterpreted as prejudice, she goes into lengthier explanations, not the least of which is that she would not have her vision blurred. Nor, for that matter, would she have any desire to be fettered if her suitors have nothing more to offer or prove their worth by than a lame quotation of the scripture of "apes" and "hell". She gives them a chance to advocate their defence after she has led them around to see for themselves how the married ones fare. They have no answer. Notwithstanding, she is not the ranting iconoclast,

But you err Onophorio, in thinking I hate it: I deal by marriage as some Indians do the sun, adore it, and reverence it, but dare not stare on it, for fear I be stark blind. 3.

Broadmindedly, she steers clear of the fallacy that single life is a solitary one. It is "idleness and love" that give rise to that belief. In counterbalancing the forces of married woes (weal questionable) with individual composure, she ascertains how best to rest in enduring bliss. Finally, she admonishes all defendants and devotees of marriage because they are so undeserving and worthless. The tyranny of the first play of 1565, is recalled to mind in contrast, for though "Grissell" after St. Paul's ideal wife

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1. Chettle, Dekker & Haughton, Patient Grissil, 1600.

2. Ibid., II, ii.

3. IV, ii.

remains where she was, "Grissell" the maid who did not want to marry and was not allowed to have her will, gains position through Julia because of modernism. When the time comes for Beatrice (Much Ado) however, she, like Julia, has her train of dolts and duds whom she cannot stand; she has her reasoning faculty clouded for a fleeting moment by the proverb. But Julia does not falter. Nor does she pitch hopes on the despatch of a Benedick for her from the wars. She knows she has to face reality. She has to be brave in not deviating from her well-weighed final assertion,

which is rather to die a maid and lead apes in hell,  
than to live a wife and be continually in hell. 1.

Patient Grissil requisites the right to length<sup>2</sup> treatment on the ground that it is the Magna Carta of the unmarried woman's fight for emancipation. It is not a subtle study of human character, but a vivid portrait in realism and a daring stand against marriage as a trap for the blind in circumstances as they exist. As per romantic tradition of the wooing theme, a Bassanio or Benedick may well have been churned out, were the authors not involved with the problems of marriage reform and the paganistic superstition that held the maid in thrall. Some finesse that could have been effected is thereby foregone as a trivial issue. One service to the stage is rendered, namely, the maid is presented as a considerably larger-dimensioned figure than hitherto known. The other two characters of wife and widow are more or less in the conventional style familiar to the Elizabethan audiences, also as standing representatives of proverbial types.

For an example of the middle-of-the-road view perhaps Tis Merrie when Gossips meete<sup>2</sup> would be a correct choice. "The old graue Prouerbe" is quoted -

Such as die Maydes, doe all lead Apes in hell:

and though the maid meets it with a rebuff,

I pray what Prouerbe is it that allowes  
The Diuel's picture on your husbands browes.

she is won over in the end. Sixteen years later appears an enlarged edition of the same play with the chain-advice of the age, "Maydens take heed, be wife" coming from her, just as praise of the virtue of submission comes from Katherine, the Shrew. But the maid Julia has no failings for which she is to be punished. She is not tamed or toned down either as is the tendency. In taking up her cause, the authors convert her into the rightfully

indignant platform speaker, which also is a reversal of the usual order. And in not only permitting her to maintain her state if she so desires it in view of the ditched marriages, but in giving her a thundering ovation as it were, for declaring not the burden of maidenhood but the burdens of marriage, they stand her high by herself - and second to none. <sup>¶</sup>  
From the maid destined to lead apes in hell, thus evolves the first free woman in drama!

Not denying either the "emphatic denial"<sup>1</sup> of the proverb in The London Prodigal, I would nonetheless in this matter give priority to Patient Grissil which Professor Kuhl<sup>2</sup> passes aside as "amusing" and which does not fit in with Professor Whiting's<sup>3</sup> article and so finds no place at all. The authors of this play conclusively win the cause of the unmarried woman's right of self-determination, which the author of the other play does as well. But there the proverb is not spun to the full length of the plot nor does the maid herself contradict it. It is important to remember that of the odd few plays through which her cause is advocated, Patient Grissil leads in the name of "apes in hell" and is seconded by The London Prodigal both chronologically and for reasons stated above. <sup>+</sup>

Furthermore, though Patient Grissil is written in collaboration with two other authors, the dominating spirit, it is imagined, is Dekker's. For, a couple of years after the play in question, he is still chewing the cud upon "apes in hell". In Satiromastix<sup>4</sup>, he upholds two distinct attitudes as if he were debating the proposition as upheld by common types. (Julia's is an individual case). One is the dogmatic, represented by the Gentle-woman instancing the average weak-willed woman,

2..... Caelesthine (hey ho) will neuer come to lead Apes in hell.

1..... I see by thy sighing thou wilt not.

2..... If I had as many Maydenheads, as I haue hayres on my head,

Ide venture them all rather then to come into so hot a place. 5.

1. Studies in Philology, xii, 1925.

2. Ibid.

3. Englische Studien, 1935-6.

4. 1602.

5. I, i.

¶ U.M.Ellis-Fermor (The Jacobean Drama, p.125) writes, "The patience of Dekker's women exasperates where that of Greene's wins us utterly." However, she skips over Julia in her analysis of Patient Grissil.

+ 1. Ch.Dek. & Haughton, Patient Grissil, 1600.

2. The London Prodigal, 1605.

3. B. and Fl., Philaster, or, Love Lies a Bleeding, 1608.

4. Fl., The Faithful Shepherdess, 1609.

5. Fl., The Pilgrim, 1621

6. Dek. & Mid. The Roaring Girl, 1611.

7. Mass., The Parliament of Love, 1624.

8. Mass., The Emperor of the East, 1631.

9. Chap. & Shir., The Ball, 1632.

In the next act, the radical viewpoint in Beatrice's style (Much Ado) is taken up by Caelestina.

King. But she that dyes a Waide;-  
Cael. Thrice happy then.  
King. Leades Apes in hell.  
Cael. Better leads Apes than men;

1.

Dekker divides the proposition another way and makes man as much a party to the retributory punishment, if punishment at all there is to be, and which had been dismissed in Patient Grissil.

Sir Adam..... if love should bee turn'd away, and goe to serue any beast,  
it must be an Ape and my reason -  
Sir Vaughan..... Sir Adam, an Ape? there's no more reason in an Ape, than  
in a very plaine Monkey; for an Ape has no Tayle, but we  
all know, or 'tis our duty to know, loue has two tailed...2.

There could be more to it than a quibble. If the "man" turns "love" away, he is the cause of the woman remaining unmarried. Evidently the "two tailed" (i.e. tales). If the woman as a consequence, has to lead apes in hell, and man for turning love away goes to serve the 'Ape',<sup>\*</sup> inferentially they both are to suffer the punishment. We are made aware of the injustice of making one only the culpable party.

Thus, much as one would like to halt interminably at every "apes in hell" stop and start annotating, scope enough though there is in each instance, one is digressing from the "tale".

Delia, in The London Prodigal, admittedly is another independent woman on whom the saying snaps. "A stranger in her course of life." Indeed, "seven of the worshipfull 'st" she has refused. But if persons like Weathercock are Nature's select bounty to pick and choose from, they may all slide past. Or is it her Kentish pride?<sup>+</sup> (The suitors have been refused in Kent.) She does not dwell upon the proverb which Weathercock, like one of Julia's suitors, tries stilting himself on, calling her a "foole".

Lance. What, is it folly to loue Chastitie?  
Wea. No, mistake me not, Syr Lancelot,  
But 'tis an old prouerb, and you know it well,  
That women dyng maides lead apes in hell.  
Lance. That is a foolish prouerb and a false.

3

1. II, i.
2. Ibid.
3. I, i.

Cf., Raven's Almanac, 1609, Grosart, pp.255-6. Richard the rope-maker tells of his vision, that he shall have to "lead apes in hell". Man to Dekker apparently is a failure as lover or husband. Particularly, in view of what he says about the strong-charactered woman in Patient Grissil, Moll Cutpurse (D.& Mid).

+ Referred to in many plays up to e.g., T.Baker, Timbridge Walks, 1702.



The contradiction of the proverb over, the rest of the play is to prove how Lucy becomes a 'Patient Grissil' and how poles apart from her, the third sister Frances grows in overweening pride and arrogance. Delia does not go about with a lantern like Julia to knock sense into suitors' heads. About them, she is unconcerned. She is the type who would do good in a quieter way. But unable to love a man as "wife", and unable to bear "the care and crosses" "the trouble in this world that children bring", she breaks away from marriage without condemning it, without being sacriligious. Which, however, is a parallel attitude to Julia's.

It certainly is a counter-Reformation <sup>\*</sup> move, if the most balanced and wisest women remain unmarried and do not lead apes at that. It is also evident that the most laboured and learned attempts in the 20th century at exploration and interpretation of the phrase have failed to take account of the full dramatic context in which it occurs. Despite all they said and did, time and again have scholars since believed that maids who gave up opportunity, or who made dupes of men, or those who escaped the plague of having children and so forth, were thought to suffer this punishment. So much effort could be spared, if in our attempts to enter into the thought of the 1600's (should one roughly say), we bore in mind also the expositions and analyses in comedies which are the epitomes of the times.

Of course to be misled by Beatrice, a dumb part, with an ape in Eastward Ho! <sup>1</sup> is possible. Yet she could not be at a virtual enactment of a "hell" scene, not only because it is a single ape <sup>+</sup> that she leads, but because she is attendant to Gertrude who is struggling to rise above her class and following the fashion for women to keep pet monkeys. Would not the 'ape' if not 'monkey' and Beatrice as 'attendant woman' give her complete status?

It pays us however, to take more direct account of facts to realise how closely plays fall one upon the other, substantiating the point that both major and minor playwrights are fairly realistic in their approach to the maid's marriage problems. The probable cause of her leading apes - that is to say, of her unmarried state - they consign in train to the common heap of elders and guardians. To wit, the cause of Moll Barnes's

1. Chapman, Jonson & Marston, 1605.

\* In that "apes in hell" was invented by reformers to induce women to marry, e.g. N & Q. 3rd S.V. Ap.2, 64; A.Wright, Modern Language Quarterly, VII,16; H.W.Hanson, Apes and Apelore, p.207; etc.

+ Surely she was not the 'actor' proper, only the 'bear'ard'.

plight (The Two Angry Women of Abington) is the wrath of her mother; of the Mayde's ('Tis Merrie when Gossips Meete), is her mother's counsel,

She alwaies saies when young men come a-wooing,  
Stay daughter, stay: you must not yet be doing. ;

of Maria's (The Family of Love), her uncle's avariciousness,

and wealth I'll have, or else my minion shall leadsapes in hell. 1

And so on. "Now in good faith", the playwright were almost heard asking the question of the populace, "if fate it ultimately is, who is to blame?" Particularly since his most effective propaganda, it is known, he conducts through the stage.

What, for instance, does the entire plot and situation of Englishmen for my money lead to but nationalism and marriage? One sister categorically makes the statement, "I'll be no Nunne"; a second, "Why was I made a Mayde, but for a Man"; and so the third. As craftily however as the author is setting them to overturn the stupid foreigners being imposed upon them, just as wittily is he winning credit for the casting of his prayer for this occasion. 2

Well, if I quit him [the Dutchman] not, I here pray God,  
I may lead Apes in Hell, and dē a Mayde; 3

By any manner or means, the effective refutation of the belief also thus continues. Seldom by another (than the maid herself) though when so, it certainly is a responsible party. To wit, the father in The London Prodigal. Otherwise, the initial comment or the counter-retort of the maid is by far the most important aspect in the expression of the dramatist's idea of tutoring unenlightened minds. Carried out at length in 'Tis merrie when Gossips Meete, it is an appreciably novel method adopted in an otherwise most confusing play, The Wit of a Woman. 4 When for instance, the girls of the school get together to scheme how soon and surely they can manage to come by husbands to be "the treasures of their charge, the commanders of their service, the comfort of their hearts, the honour of their thoughts, and the ioy of their spirits", Gianetta - the only one who is lacking in initiative, who is sceptical of woman's power and progress, the type to whom such a creed clings - butts in,

Then I fear yee will lead Apes in hell.

she has her mouth shut with the words:

"No, tush, that's but a nest of devill in the world" 5.

1. T. Middleton, III, ii. 1608      2. W. Haughton, or A Woman will have her Will, entered  
3. Ibid., II. 1309-10. 4. 1604.      5. II. 121-2.      Henslow's Diary, 1598; pp. 1616.

She has to have her brain washed before they can proceed with their wits and can fit their wills to the full. Whereafter, she has not to be silenced again. Citing further from A Contention<sup>1</sup> betwixt the conventional trio wherein each waxes eloquent over the glory of her respective state, the usual fling of "apes" at the maid is scornfully bypassed. Indeed, to her is yielded "the honour and the place", as much as to say, she is restellified, as the virgin was of yore.

But if the medieval virgin got seclusion for Cold Chastity, the post-Reformation maid gets the world for Honour Bright. And the dramatist builds a new faith around her. He takes delight in emitting sparks of her wit. He gets puckish pleasure out of letting her exercise her will and admits with satisfaction that her wit and will are superior to man's. Devastatingly, to spite the age, he goes on with a creed that absolves her of the curse. In all, the most chivalric type of defence conceivable does he set up for her and leaves it to posterity to misconstrue that he is a romanticist. Whereas, in his clemency, judgment and power, he is literally asserting his modernity.

It being so, and known as he is for fecundity of thought and for his vastness of vision, he could not very well have gone in for elaborate dramatizations of the maid-cum-apes-in-hell theme in the manner of Patient Grissil and The London Prodigal. It may have boiled down to something stale, even ludicrous in effect. Consequently, he visualises the possibilities of projecting his heroine's personality in various fields. Fletcher for example, attacks the emotional side in The Faithful Shepherdess. Clorin has loved and lost her love<sup>‡</sup>. There is no belief in a nunnery where she may sit and sigh the remainder of her days. Instead has grown faith in her funds of life that she herself is not aware of yet. To teach her that new faith, that the world is not lost for love, the author sublimates her passions in an altruistic creed. In sooth, Clorin had retired to the "holy rites" existence<sup>+</sup> but is summoned forth to heal and cure patients back to brimming health, to put her herb-lore to use, and to develop another self through a vocation. The first note at the end of Act I Scene i

.....Then, strong Chastity  
Be thou my strongest guard, for here I'll dwell  
In opposition against fate and hell!

1. J. Davies, A Contention betwixt a Wife, a Widdowe and a Maide 1608.

\* Because the Euphrasia-Bellarion theme, complicated by the disguise element, in Philaster would fall into the romantic love proper category, space has not been given to it.

+ In tracing sources, critics suppose Spenser's influence predominant. W.W. Appleton (Beaumont and Fletcher, pp. 17-18) explains moreover, that Clorin is "so dedicated to the memory of her dead love that she has effected in herself a complete purgation from 'all heats and fires of love'."<sup>‡</sup>

dominating the whole play as it does, leads one to aver, that the direction opposite to "fate and hell" not only is a novel rendition of the curse, but a significant milestone in the maid's progress. In a further application, coming out from under the "curious twist"<sup>1</sup> observed in The Loyal Subject, is the moral intonation to which attention had been drawn earlier. That is to say, the worst of punishments will not restore lost honour.

When you have got my maidenhead, I take it,  
'Tis not an inch of an ape's tail will restore it.

2.

Going into critical celebrations over the maid proper (young Archer in The Loyal Subject is in disguise), another instance of note is the love-mad Alinda in The Pilgrim, who too like Florin does not shriek about apes in hell. Indeed, she "dwells" in "Heaven", in

.....a fine little house made of marmalade,  
And I am a lone woman and I spin for Saint Peter;  
I have a hundred little children, and they sing psalms with me. 3.

Are they her dream children? Are they the cherubs in Heaven? Or, once again, are they the "apes" translated into psalms-singing children? In addition to the allusion to the phrase illustrating one purpose, Fletcher marks out another in a newer line of life. Thus while Juletta's diagnosis and remedy for Alinda is "Faith, marry, and be merry!" for herself when Alphonse offers to give her hand away in marriage --

No, I beseech you, sir, my mistress is my husband;  
With her I'll dwell still.

4.

Therefore, finding the house "but a cage to whistle in" after Alinda has quietly escaped her father's meaningless religion, Juletta allows him no rest nor respite. In driving him down ditch, up hill and into the mad house itself to endless persecution, she teaches him how to end his injudicious sway. En route, believe it or not, this "decidedly <sup>exhilarat-</sup> ~~amazing~~ ing"<sup>5</sup> soubrette puts no less than a band of outlaws in fright and to flight!

Such indeed is the courage of the newly discovered maiden that Middleton and Dekker audaciously make Moll Cutpurse<sup>6</sup> the leader of her people. Through her they expound the socialistic creed that knowing inside out as she does low company, rogues, cheats, cowardly gallants, bombastic sergeants -- in short, all characters of the town, she alone can carry

1. B.J. Whiting, Englische Studien, 1935-6.

2. The Loyal Subject, III. iii, 1618.

3. IV, i.

4. V, vi.

5. A.W. Ward, English Dramatic Literature Vol. II, p. 106.

6. or The Roaring Girl, 1611.

out any programme of reform in their midst. Fancy threatening her with "hell" when she boldly declares

..... I have no humour to marry,  
.....I fear me  
I am too headstrong, to obey; 1.

"Marriage" to her, is but a chopping and changing.

.....where a maiden  
Loses one head, has a worse i' th' place. 2.

If Moll was a freak of the times as reports go, the authors, in dramatising her as they have done, ennoble her in giving her a robust philosophy of life - so complete that she cannot but open the eye to the wrongs done to her sex and the scandalous injustice everywhere. Shakespeare could not accept so highly individualised a type. The nearest he goes to it is in Isabella (Measure for Measure), halts awhile between the nunnery and marriage, and constant to his creed, leads her to Hymen's altar. Moll is a rough-hewn Portia (Merchant of Venice) and Isabella in one. No appeals in the name of "mercy" come from her. She is the indignant judge of righteousness. Ape beliefs do not hold with such modernism. Much less with her masculinity, drawn with kindly feeling as it is<sup>2</sup>.

And the reformer must surely have been thinking what a wise fool he had been! He thought he was doing the unmarried woman a good turn in saving her name and honour from being sullied and in yoking her to marriage with an iron hand. And he thought he was doing the society a better turn since the unmarried woman to him was just another tempting Eve responsible for the "Sodom and Gomorre" he was obsessed with. And so he had started scaring her with "apes" and "hell". The irony of it is, that the unmarried woman to the dramatist appears to be the person to cleanse from home (Patient Grissil, The London Prodigal), country (The Faithful Shepherdess, The Pilgrim) and town (The Roaring Girl) the diseases of mind, soul and body.

One field has been left unexplored, as vile and corrupt as any. Massinger rectifies this error of omission. He moves not from the orbit of the court, the patrons

1. II, ii.

2. Ibid.

3. ~~He~~

4. That The Roaring Girl is "artificial", and the plot creaks "loudly" (T.S.Eliot, Selected Essays, pp.167-9) is the weakness of all the plays in which the cause of the unmarried woman is upheld. Strongly disagreeing with the critic moreover, I would credit to Dekker as much share in the inspiration if not in the style of the play as Middleton.

and the public, in the main, of the stage. Madam Bellisant<sup>1</sup>, like Blanche Parry of Queen Elizabeth's court, may have been the dream of many a court-maid, but few had strength, the tasseled temptations to resist. She has many a "notorious" gallant daily visiting her, clamouring for her hand. But the scurrilous world has to live and learn of

.....a young lady (some say fair) at court,  
To keep her virgin honour.

2.

who not merely denies Cupid's "mother for a deity" but has the probity and rectitude to render ineffective all his "new artillery".

Yet every burning shot he made at me,  
Meeting with my chaste thoughts, should lose their ardour;

3.

Thus, in his dream of glorifying the court with a perfect race of Man, Massinger finds hope in such a woman only. Chapman and Shirley incidentally, go to the extent of putting the strength of Honoria and Rosamund to proof in The Ball<sup>4</sup>. But though man learns about himself at the hands of these maids, the authors apparently have no broadly, chalked-out programme for the latter. Whereas Massinger returns to this theme some years later. He finds the embodiment of perfection this time in Pulcheria<sup>5</sup>, "a phoenix who disdains a rival", who converts the court into a "kind of academy" and who

.....knows her strength  
To rule and govern monarchs, scorns to wear  
On her free neck the servile yoke of marriage;  
And for one loose desire, envy itself  
Dares not presume to taint her .....

6.

Why he does not give her the full credit of a title-role, even an alternative one, eludes the observer. (He is not being loyal to the Byzantine historical source anyway). However, 'apes in hell' could not find way in this play, not even in connection with the two younger sisters craving for husbands. But, in City Madam<sup>7</sup>, when the author descends to the average marriage theme, it indeed does, as it does likewise in Middleton's The Family of Love and not in The Roaring Girl.

The scrupulosity of all these playwrights in the usage of the idiom should now be evident. One is set a-thinking why after a sort of heavy-weight championship in Patient Grissil, Dekker also, let alone Middleton and Massinger, avoids it particularly in the play sonorously ringing in the unmarried woman. Fletcher's making filigree work out of it

1. The Parliament of Love, 1624.

2. ~~Ibid.~~ The Parliament of Love, I, ix.

3. Ibid.

4. Chapman & Shirley.

5. The Emperor of the East, 1631.

6. Ibid., I, iv.

7. 1632.

perhaps may be deemed pure craftsmanship. But, he and his contemporaries as discerningly upholding their respective lodestars of the unmarried type as if each was working in silent harmony with the other, evoke intenser interest. Consequently one picks out Madam Bellisant, Rosamund and Honoria, Pulcheria, Moll Cutpurse and Juletta as rather too strong for such beliefs. Therefore too one asks a simple question - Had the authors any further principles? For, though of the same marriageable age as the "maid", why is it not even once that the "lady" is afflicted with thoughts of the curse? Is it because she is freer and more independent and because her mind is more polished and refined? Beatrice and Katherine have not the dignity of a Portia who not less is despairing of a husband, but could one think of her being haunted by "apes" and "hell"? Much less, heroines of plays as The Honest Man's Fortune and The Scornful Lady.

It would be inexpedient to carry speculations any farther. The idea set afoot in 1584, gathers momentum, suffice it to say, in the early 1600's. Throughout this whole period, the dramatist serves the maid a good turn in allowing her to maintain her independence. In the years following 1630, on a broad generalisation its usage is as under.

a) Depicting chamber-maid (tavern-maid) morality:

Hell I fear not, for I have prevented leading apes  
or in comical reversion still, when coming out of all from Strephon, who by no means is  
above censure or reproach:

Perish in your Virginity, and lead Apes in Hell for't. 1.

b) As a phrase expressive of the unwedded state simply, when the moment of remorse and fear sets in over loss of opportunity:

Ann. I ever thought it would come to this.  
Mary..... We may/Lead apes in hell for husbands. 3.

or when the situation is hopelessly entangled for another brace of sisters, deeply loving each other as they do, with the one man between them:

.....some counsel would do well;  
'Tis pity we two should lead apes in hell, 4.

Brome suggests however, that it is no uncommon penalty and by no means an unusual calamity

1. T.Nabbes, Microcosmus, V.1637.
2. H.Glapthorne, Argalus and Parthenia, III,i,1639.
3. P.Massinger, City Madam, II,ii,1632.
4. J.Shirley, Love's Maze, IV,iii,1631.  
Changes, or Love in a Maze 7

"one of the Devil's ape-leaders".<sup>1</sup> He drops the term 'hell' and replaces it with a variation by 'Devil', or "ape-leader in Limbo".<sup>2</sup> And another author uses it as a simple simile ~~in~~ in everyday language - "I do not intend to die the whining way, like a Girl that's afraid to lead apes in hell."<sup>3</sup>

c) A refutation in the course of a purposeful trial scene brings out the moral implication and the view that it is the honest innocent type to whom such a belief clings.

Inf. What are you?  
 Delia. Sir, I am a chambermaid.  
 Inf. What are you damn'd for?  
 Delia. Not for revealing my mistress' secrets, for I kept them better than my own; but keeping my maidenhead till it was stale, I am condemn'd to lead apes in hell.  
 Inf. Alas, poor wench! Upon condition you will be wise hereafter, and not refuse gentlemen's proffers, learn pride everyday, and painting, bestow a courtesy now and then upon the apparitor to keep counsel, I release you; take your apes and monkeys <sup>away</sup> with you, and bestow them on gentlewomen, and ladies that want play-fellows.

4.

Cryptically -

Curds. Pray, leave off your suit; I have no mind to marry; I'll always live a virgin.  
 Bud. What, and lead apes in hell? What pity would it be to see you chained to a monkey!  
 Curds. Or tied to you! (aside)

5.

With regard to The Sledge,<sup>6</sup> I am afraid I do not understand Professor Kuhl when he remarks,

Cartwright gave one solution when he wrote that women on ceasing to be old maids left hell to lead apes in heaven.

The playwright, in fact, is more intent on satirising the character than on presenting mere solutions. Elpidia, that is to say, has gone to the utmost limit in trying to catch one at least of the myriad suitors to her mistress, a thoroughly unprincipled widow. Having failed, she nevertheless has the audacity to declare,

.....I think I shall  
 Be sav'd by my Virginity, whether  
 I will or no; and lead an Ape in Heav'n.

7.

In contrast, may be observed the maid to the virtuous Leucasia, as loving and loyal as Julietta (The Pilgrim) heretofore seen. Adequately indemnified she is too, when the

1. R.Brome, A Jovial Crew, II, 1641.
2. R.Brome, The Convent-Garden Weeded, 1659.
3. A.Cowley, The Cutter of Coleman Street 2, Sc.8, 1641
4. J.Shirley, ~~Love in a Maze~~ Love Tricks, or, The School of Compliment, III, V, 1631.
5. Dodsley, XII, The London Chanticleers, Sc.ii, 1636.
6. W.Cartwright, 1651.
7. IV,v.



converted tyrant offers to find a worthy match for her. But she declines to sacrifice her ideal of service, yet has no comment on "hell", "heaven" or "ape". Thus is the moral fully well reflected.

A rambling elucidation ushers us into and initiates also the freer expression of the Restoration years,

Ped(ler): Why Sir, ther was a virgin off 12: or 13: yeares olde,  
that dide a mayde, thats the truth onte,  
Gar(uis): I'll be hangde then 13: & dide a mayde, what a scandalus  
worlde This Is, to abuse a poore mayde so, & after her death  
to, why none should speake Ill off the Deade,  
Sisley: Poore hearte shoes nowe leadinge Apes in Hell,  
I woulde fayne goe to her, -  
Gar: I Coulede one gess wher Hell was, that was sumthinge you  
sayde, butt nott knowinge the plase, wher shoulde you  
finde her,  
Sisley: Wee woulde Indeuor,  
Gar: To Indeuor, shewes Godlye & Charetable maydes, thats trewe,  
none can denye thatt; butt heare my maydens, & take my  
Counsell; First & for+moste, I hope shee had more Grase  
then to dye so, I speake like a Christian; iff shee did dye so  
Merreye off her saye I; thats charetable I'me shure, & dionge  
So, lett Itt bee a warninge to you towe Maydes, for to shun  
all such Abominable wayes, Fough, Itt stinkes off fier, &  
Brimstone Hell, And I woulde have mayds nott burnte before  
their Time, Good mayds, shun all such abominations & wicked  
wayes, For you see whatt Itt commes to - 1.

If one view of the critics is that the curse was evolved to check immorality and that marriage was a preventive, the present rendition is,

It were better for us that our Husbands should be Cuckolds,  
than we lead Apes in Hell. 2.

Likewise is Lady Dunce's<sup>3</sup> advice to buy a husband for "five thousand" and live incontinent-ly with him than to "hereafter" go in for "the innocent recreation" (!) "of leading Apes".

The comical reversion of Peele's time (The Arraignment of Paris) and Ben Jonson's (The Gipsies Metamorphosed) is thus continued. To give another example:

Lucia. There are a great many monstrous families in Spain then.  
Eugenia. With whores in 'em.  
Lucia. Whores, ay, Mothers and Daughters, Sisters and Nieces, up to  
the third and fourth Generations of them, that hate chastity,  
and abhor all civil Rule and Government.  
Eugenia. Thou art so wilde an Ape; there's no talking to thee.

- 
1. W.Cavendish, A Pleasante & Merrye Humor off a Roge.  
(bet.1655-60) (Welbeck Miscellany, No.1, 1933.).
  2. M.Cavendish, The Publick Wooing, III, Sc. 31, 1662.
  3. T.Otway, The Soldier's Fortune, I, 1. 1681.

Lucia. I had rather be a wilde Ape my selfe here, than lead Apes hereafter, for all that. 1.

and

Villaretta. ....if one would be a Mistress, I should chuse Italy; If a wife, England, but a Maid shou'd live in France, for there she may have all the Enjoyments of the other two, and keep her character.  
 Emilia. Upon such terms indeed one might live a Maid all one's life.  
 Villaretta. Hal hal without, repining at leading Apes hereafter.  
 Emilia. The curse wou'd be a little moderated. 2.

The coquette theory advanced by Craig<sup>+</sup> and Nares<sup>+</sup>, as seen through the history of comedy at least, gains support mainly from this time. And the evidence in support of it might be taken not only from passages such as the preceding, though these well contribute to the atmosphere, but also association of the phrase with the stock stage character as she appears from 1660. The high-mettled heroine not unknown to Shirley and Fletcher does not advance the "apes" idea. Whereas at this time, occasionally, she does. The types represented in the following two passages, are surely coquettish -

Hang't, why should we young women pine and languish for what our own natural Invention may procure us; let us three lay our Heads together, and if Machivel with all his Politicks can out-wit us, 'tis pity but we all lead Apes in Hell, and die without the Jewish Blessing of Consolation. 3.

and

If you had the ordering of us, I am apt to think we shou'd all lead Apes. 4.

The implication however is more fully brought out in Cibber's<sup>5</sup> ironic question: "why is not it High Treason for any beautiful woman to marry? " He curbs Clarinda to modest and restrained behaviour but in the process draws up the brief badger:

Clar. What, wou'd you have us lead Apes?  
 At. [all]. Not one of you, by all that's lovely -  
 Do you think we cou'd not find you better Employment? 6

1. D'Urfey, The Banditti, or, A Ladies Distress, V, ii. 1686.
  2. W. Burnaby, Love Betray'd, I, i. 1703.
  3. Mrs. A. Behn, The False Count, II, i. 1682.
  4. W. W. Burnaby, The Ladies Visiting Day, III, ii. 1701.
  5. C. Cibber, The Double Gallant; or, The Sick Lady's Cure, IV, i. 1707.
  6. C. Cibber, The Double Gallant, IV, i. Ibid.
- + New Ed. 1904, p. 500. i.e. that the saying was directed against coquettes who made fools of men and led them about without the real intention of marriage.
- ≠ Bond, The Shrew (Arden ed.)
7. C. C. Cibber, The Lady's Last Stake, or, The Wife's Resentment, III. 1707. Lord George advises about the hoydenish Miss Notable that she should be immediately disposed of in marriage. Else "before she's five weeks older she will be totally unqualified for an ape-leader". (Interpretation by A. Sherbo, English Sentimental Drama, p. 117. "she will have lost her virginity").

The young coquette answering to the theory nevertheless, is seen in action in The Artful Wife<sup>1</sup>: treating her suitors light-heartedly despite criticism. She exhibits an over-weening sense of self-importance in that she will have a husband made "on purpose"

.....if I don't lead Apes with you, on purpose, for as they say,  
Marriage was first made in Heaven o' purpose, tho' its often  
broke upon Earth o' purpose.

A pre-Restoration maid's refusal arose out of a genuine dislike of the suitor in the offing not out of inexplicable hauteur. At all events, she had not the same freedom to determine her career to roam around as this Restoration legacy to the eighteenth century.

And if there is this failing of hers responsible for her present unwedded state, the additional blame is laid upon the man. Sophia and Aurelia for instance, in The Gentleman Cully<sup>2</sup> are nauseated by his multifarious ways of cheating the innocent and the credulous. Hence "'tis hard I must lead Apes to bear you company" (v.i.) when they decide on "single life". In The Wife's Relief<sup>3</sup>, likewise, the theme of a debauched man occurs. He, however, is a married man, who occasions the maid's remark to his wife,

Sooner than marry thy untoward Help-meet I wou'd be  
reduc'd to Mortar and Cynders, and after that lead Apes.

Other reasons for her having to lead apes run in continuation with the earlier years. To wit, in Sir Giddy Whim<sup>4</sup>, the guardians offer a husband from a crazy collection; in Bold Stroke for a Wife<sup>5</sup>, a sum of "thirty thousand pounds" is not easily to be released.

.....poor Girl.....she must certainly lead Apes as the saying is....  
one of the piece-guardians sheds his crocodile tears! "A reduced pay officer", however endeavours well to "avert that curse"; in The Modish Couple<sup>6</sup> there is revulsion against the man:

How dar'st thou to make Love to me with that moth-eat'n Face of Thine?--  
Marry Thee! no, if there was no other Male Creature in Being, and thou  
were to be my Hobson's Choice, I'd sooner die a Maid, and Lead Apes in  
another World than be lead by such a Baboon as thou art in this. 7.

7 Variations no doubt, but little more of new thought to them. There is little that

1. W.Taverner, III, 1717.
2. C.Johnson, V, i, 1701.
3. C.Johnson, or, The Husband's Cure, III, 1711.
4. II, iv. 1703.
5. Mrs. Centlivre, II.i, 1718.
6. C. Bodens, 1732.
7. III, i.

could be compared with the dramatists of the post-Reformation group. In their plays, the institution of marriage was something forceful, binding, unavoidable at which they therefore had to strike hard. In plays such as the above, the maid's decision apparently is a personal concern.

Conclusion. Making allowances for more phrases that may be unearthed from the lesser known plays of all ages, and which may ask for closer scrutiny, ignoring a simple application such as

I'll pass my Word none of you design to lead Apes in Hell. 1.

two concluding remarks are,

(a) The first phase starts with a sneer "Lead apes who list" (Peele, The Arraignment of Paris, 1584), an acceptance (Sh., The Taming of the Shrew, 1584), fear (Porter, The Two Angry Women of Abington, 1599), and such mixed reactions. But it leads on to moods of wrath, condemnation and rejection. Important, because the maid's lips too move to it. It is "a spiteful proverb" (Ch., Dek. & Hau, Patient Grissil, 1600), "it is a foolish proverb and a false" (The London Prodigal, 1605), "a jest of the devile" (The Wit of a Woman, 1604) and therefore has been deposited at the devil's door by Beatrice. (Sh., Much Ado, 1594). "In opposition against fate and hell" (Fl., The Faithful Shepherdess, 1609) the maiden lives her life. And so, forth it goes through a severe court trial (Shirley, Love's Tricks, 1625). "Stale virginity" too is vindicated! Conspicuous also by its absence in certain plays, it is all not inconsistent measure and endeavour on the part of the dramatist to prevent its taking root.

Parallel to this rationalism, runs his idealism and feminism. With certitude it could not be said however, that it accrues solely from the coercive weapon of "apes in Hell" with which they sought to lead the maid to the marriage mart. He grants the right of independence to her who has strength of character to freely consort with members of the social family, to deter her, as will be seen in the following chapter, from entering the nunnery. Therefore have both the factors to be considered consecutively. These influence to no little degree his "romanticism" as it is normally thought to be. He is mentally involved with the situation created by the Reformation tide for the maid.

1. Pamela, I,vii, 1742.

(b) Not attaching unmerited importance to the period bordering on the Restoration, when one steps into the eighteenth century, one is dismayed to find that "apes in hell" is uttered without demur. There is no doubt, no attempt at elaborate explanation, because it is settled belief. 'Tis hard" but the maid "must venture" her "virginity" (C. Johnson, The Gentleman Cully, 1801), "she must certainly lead apes" (Mrs. Centlivre, Bold Stroke for a Wife, 1714) -- mark the difference in attitude and expression that the decades in between have brought.

That however, is not so important as the later thought conditioned by the character of the "old maid". The earlier viewpoint is that any maid who dies unmarried, suffers the particular penalty. Though going into the factor of age even, she ranges from the fifteenth year to the seventeenth on the average. To wit, in The Two Angry Women of Abington (1599) and 'Tis Merrie when Gossips Meete (1608) where it is specifically mentioned. In The London Chanticleers (1636) Nancy Curdwell is "six and Twenty .... and that's young enough to play with a baby". To go to the other extreme, in A Pleasant & Merrye Humor off a Roge (W. Cavendish, 1655-60) "a virgin off 12: or 13:" is "now leadinge Apes in Hell". That is to say, age is no bar. The very accident of maidenhood is sufficient to qualify her for the occupation of the nether world.

Some idea however, of the changing trends with the passage of years can be obtained from Tilley's Proverbs:<sup>1</sup>

1575:..... I may go lead Apes in Hell!  
1659:..... Coy Mayds lead Apes in Hell.  
                    Maydens above twenty lead Apes in Hell.  
1735:..... Old Maids lead apes there, where the old  
                    batchelors are turn'd to apes!

Referring to plays, only one has come to hand in which an old maiden aunt (The Play is the Plot)<sup>2</sup> scrambles for a hasty wedding with the worthless Peter Pyrate, for obviously she would not have got another chance. And the rhymed couplet significantly on her exit,

What tho' they'll say below my birth I fell;  
'Tis better still than leading Apes in Hell.

is really the dramatist's castigation of folly-fall'n age. In other words, he much

1. A dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries.  
2. J. Breval, V, 1718.

rather would have her descend to hell! Because of the intolerant social attitude towards the senior unmarried women as such, the question of finding "ideal" types either obviously does not arise. Rather, as one advances from the Restoration years, the newly founded curse of "old maidenhood" replaces the old belief. Compromises such as the following are exceptions:

The men will all fly  
And leave you to die  
Oh, terrible chance! an old maid.

'Twere better on earth  
Have five brats at a birth  
Than in hell to be a leader of apes. 1.

and in

Sour Grapes  
Lead Apes. 2.

even the stock character of the eighteenth century "sour old maid" is further ingrafted.

A late coquette of the century, wherefore, in resurrecting the old faded curse is dragging really the one better understood.

It would mortify me prodigiously to die an old maid.--  
No, no, I assure you, I have not the least ambition to lead apes,  
no more than I have at present to be led by one myself --  
I wou'd play with the male creatures, as a skilful angler  
does with the fish..... 3.

It follows that the heavier task of the contemporary and subsequent dramatist is to silence "old maid" execrations and to change tone and temper towards the character herself. Also maybe to "save" a maid from becoming an "old maid", and not from the fantastic fate of "leading apes".

An interpretation. Though I have been concerned with the superstition as applied by the dramatist, and not with its origin, it may not be out of place to conclude with an interpretation, in a summary form only, as going into greater detail would not be to my present purpose. Radically opposed to the arm-chair philosophy started from the nineteenth century it is submitted that (1) To say "old maid" leads apes in hell puts the cart before the horse. For if in the medieval times the "young virgin" was the ideal for the nunnery and in the modern times beginning with the Reformation the "young maid" was the ideal for marriage, and if in contemporary literature of the 1560's-90's (much before and after), words and phrases as "hot lust", "fuel of nature", "burning fire" etc. abound, by

1. I. Bickerstaffe, Love in a Village, II, ii. 1763.

2. Midas, 17-?

3. R. Hitchcock, The Coquette; or The Mistakes of the Heart, 1776.

simple deduction, address was to the unassuaged heat of youth. More so, when ill-governed appetites ruled feudal society. To king, courtier and clown, mistresses and wenches were the chief diversion. In years of the Reformation, inside the monasteries or outside, things were no better. Advice was therefore to the young character, during the years she could be disciplined, through the socio-religious institution of marriage to man or to God.

(2) It does not take sufficiently into consideration the "hell" factor. Except perhaps the "picturesqueness" of it to the medieval mind (unchanged in 1590's too in the content). But "Hell" as I take it, (besides of course, the antonym of "Heaven") was a term synonymous to and symbolic of "ignorance". The maid not marrying remained ignorant about the facts of life. Hence the condemnation of the maid in Erasmus's Colloquy - in his words, on grounds of "insufficient knowledge". (Mistress is not so condemned a character!).

(3) "Apes" meant neither lovers,<sup>1</sup> governess' children<sup>2</sup> (nineteenth century mind!) d'animaux immondes etc., but simply the animal self, associate with "devil's craft", "wild desires" and things of that sort, of which she had not purged herself (through marriage and children). Hence the underlying fear that she would be carried down by the impure, unclean soul that could not indeed lead to salvation.

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1. N & Q, 5th S.V. Feb. 26, '76.

2. N & Q, 3rd S.VI. Nov. 12, '64 etc. Fully referred to in Professor Whiting's article, hence omitted.

THE NUNNERY QUIZ.

The way to salvation lay through marriage. Inquiry now to be instituted along certain symptomatic trials leading from the previous chapter is as to how much room was left for a life of religion. For, whichever of the hypotheses as to the origin of 'apes in hell' be assented to, whether it be credited to the medieval monk or the reformer, it is to be noted that the time-honoured sentiment for the "virgin" associated with the "vow" was not attacked when the superstition was evolved of the "maid" going down to "hell". This is not wheedling out nice points of distinction. The comic artist pertinently making mince-meat of both as illustrated, raises the suspicion that the attitude to the virgin ideal is not exactly what it used to be.

Long, long ago, in the fourth century with the first strong wave of Christianity, Orléans, a single city contained no less than "twenty thousand virgins" who had taken the vow of "perpetual virginity".<sup>1</sup> If such a story to-day is difficult to swallow, the Medieval Ages unquestionably believed that the titles "Virgin" and "Martyr" were deemed "most desirable".<sup>2</sup> Living faith was there then indeed in the spirit of purity and in the soul of holy prayer. To the which she who got wedded, acquired a charm not of the earth earthy. The maid, on the other hand, inspired a romantic tradition. She bequeathed for instance, a place-name like "Maiden Lane" (since "frequented by maidens" for indulging "their fancies unobserved"<sup>3</sup>); Maid Marion for her fun and frolic won colours at the maypole green and the nut-brown maid ~~~~~~~~~ (contd.)

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1. W. Alexander, History of Women, Vol. II, p. 415.
  2. D. Chadwick, Social Life in the Days of Piers Plowman, p. 100.
  3. A. H. Smith, English Place-Name Elements, Pt. II, pp. 31-2.



was told a tale under the hawthorn shade.

These two traditions then, the post-Reformation dramatist binds together. Hence is thought provoked. For, between medieval and modern times, however religious and romantic airs blow and flow, however "apes in hell" spreads its roots and grows, he consciously effects the applicability of each to each. Does he demote the "virgin" to promote the cause of the "maid"? Does he suggest that the elements are so mixed in either that neither need claim superiority? Or does he declare that such distinctions are rather out-of-date and that the sooner the "virgin" reconcile herself to the commonweal, the better?— are but the same question, differently put. Partly has it been answered in the previous chapter, the rest is attempted in this.

Why the Nunnery? Alongside of the preceding issue— whatever state of ferment his mind is in over life contemplative— the dramatist's thought constantly returns to the nun and nunnery. Possibly, the gathering force in the field for the campaign of compulsory marriage subsequent to the Suppression has kept up discussion of the nunnery question to a certain degree. But if medieval and romantic convention gets welded together without the least friction, it is due to two other factors. First<sup>1</sup>, the nunnery was essentially for the "aristocratic", and the full-bodied institution of post-Reformation drama deals in the main with the same ranks. Secondly, the religion of the nunnery was often enforced, even if there were medieval monks who sought disinterestedly to metamorphose the maid into the virgin-spouse of God. Frequently, they as much as the parent, guardian or any other body converted the nunnery into a place of "refuge"<sup>2</sup> or "prison"<sup>3</sup> for a victim to their power. When in plays of the present time, the two themes, namely, of enforced marriage and 'the course of true love never did run smooth', quarter thought and action on a house of religion, an old account is thereby brought forward. This, as will follow, takes a while beyond the Restoration to the far end of the eighteenth century, to settle.

Background to 1594. It would not be untoward to indicate forthwith that when the full flow of the argument proceeds from a case of enforced marriage to enforced religion, it should not be surprising to occasionally to come across parallel lines, thick and thin,

1. E. Power, Medieval English Nunneries, p.4.

2. Ibid. p.4.

3. Ibid., p.37.

between earlier Moralities and post-Reformation plays. A couple or so of <sup>these</sup> ~~which~~ may suffice as instances here to prove that humour fundamentally arises over the same flaws. The very foundation of comedy indeed was laid with Folye finding "felowes" in "abbeys and in-to nonnery -es also" as he went grazing throughout the length and breadth of "Englande", and with Lybert<sup>2</sup> similarly exulting in his conquests,

I am so lusty to loke on, so freshe, and so fre,  
That nonnes wyll leue theyr holynes and ryn after me;

Whereupon the two-handed axe of Henry and Wolsey<sup>3</sup> was reared, Chastity then came forth with her suggestion of drastic reform as she happened to be not in quite good countenance with the nuns; and the Prioress<sup>4</sup> made the confession~~at~~ that she had been compelled into the habit by her friends, and that it was due to the greed of some that she had been installed in that office. Therefore had she to enunciate the new tenets

To Christis Congregation,  
Nunnis are nocht necessair,  
Bot I sall do the best I can,  
And marie sum gude honest man,  
And brew gude aill and tun;  
Marriage, be my opinioun,  
It is better religioun,  
As to be freir or nun.

And apart from childhood impressions and the desire to be among her friends, 'The Virgin Averse to Matrimony'<sup>5</sup> stated the most humorous reason for accepting nunhood:

I am troubled to see so many Entertainments at my Father's House, and marry'd Folks are so given to talk smutty; I'm put to't, sometimes when Man come to kiss me, and you know one can't very well deny a kiss. \*

Of course, the poet-laureate of Henry VIII, by virtue of his position, had understandably to chronicle the deeds of the Papal hierarchy- particularly the story of "an old nun and Carm", who, together with an "old frier" made it

A simple problem of bitchery.<sup>6</sup>

Such is the dramatic inheritance that the Elizabethan and Jacobean playwright comes to. While the religious position may be inferred from one of the records,

1. Mundus et Infans, 1. 603, 1520?

2. J. Skelton, Magnyfycence, IV., xxxiv. 1522?

3. D. Lyndsay, Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis, 1535.

4. Ibid., 11. 3678-85.

\* Though Magnyfycence is believed to have been "aimed against Wolsey and the policy of luxuriousness and ostentation which his opponents thought corruption." A.P. Rossiter, English Drama from early Times to the Elizabethans, p. 116.

5. N. Bailey, The Colloquies of Erasmus, Vol. I, p. 230. 1548.

\* Note, "Erasmus-however little he may have wished later on to be associated in men's minds with the anti-humanistic Reformers-certainly inaugurated in two of his Colloquies the first appearance of the Reformers' peculiar vituperation of the nun in England." M. Byrne, The Tradition of the Nun.

# in England, p. 178.

At the Dissolution(1534) there were 73 houses in England and Scotland belonging to the Franciscan Province... the numbers scattered... survivors were reassembled at Greenwich(1553) by Cardinal Pole. They were expelled in 1559 by Elizabeth, some seeking refuge abroad while others remained in concealment in England... The English Province was completely and formally restored in 1629.

it is obviously otiose to allude to the political trials and triumphs in the atmosphere at the time.

Against this background however, <sup>as</sup> far as the subject-matter in this section goes, concentrating on select plays of <sup>each</sup> the major dramatist chiefly, one's aim is to see what concessions he gives ~~for~~ a life of religion. In case he has not written very much, his point of view is linked up with that of another, to assist in inferential analysis of a prevalent attitude towards the leading questions, namely, virgin chastity and the forces necessitating a maid's retirement into the sombre shades of the nunnery. Last, but not the least, is the 'nunnery' a symbol associated with one who turns her back upon life?

Shakespeare, his contemporaries and successors. Shakespeare craves wary walking. Him, one nevertheless dares approach because of the conviction of his tolerant and benevolent nature. What one fears is the scowls and sneers of philosophical professors over the sage and prophet.

Treatises are written on his religion and cases are made out for his Catholicism and non-Catholicism in the dogmatic sense of the term. Whereas Shakespeare said what he did to the Gobbos and Dogberrys, to those sweating, swelling audiences who understood his dramatisations because they lived and loved life full heartily and well and were glad to know more of what he taught of it. And there were the lettered few- the noblesse- cultivated to varying degrees of excellence, to whom he spoke too. Through contemporary conventions and beliefs he spoke to them all first and to us after, and he solved the problems that concerned them all first and us after. The two creeds or ten claiming and losing ground during his day, he soared high above, taking the good of each into consideration while he did so. That is why he has reached out to us, to the minds of all ages, across all frontiers of race and religion.

That is why a different perspective to the pattern of his thought is daringly solicited. In that "nocturne" of his, A Midsummer Night's Dream,<sup>2</sup> for instance, he introduces right at

1. Introduction, Catholic Record Society, Vol. XXIV, (1619-1821).

2. 1,1, 1594.

the beginning, the enforced marriage theme.\* Egeus is the tyrant-father of early and late time, with his mouth full of "ancient privilege" and what not--in order to dispose his daughter Hermia off as it pleases him, if you please. "Full of vexation", he makes his application to the Duke:- Lysander "hath bewitch'd the bosom" of his child, "interchang'd love-tokens", "by moonlight at her window sung,"

And stol'n the impression of her fantasy  
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,  
Knacks, trifles, nesebags, sweetmeats.

The penalty she shall have to pay for disobedience, "according to our law" is "death". The alternative to "death" is the Duke's tactful explanation of a sort of living death in the nunnery. Would she, Hermia, the nut-brown maid brand "abjure forever the society of men"? Could she "endure the livery of a nun"? Should she in "a shady cloister be mew'd", to be "a barren sister" all her life.....?

So will I grow, so live, so die,

declares the vixen, undismayed. And why not? Lysander is as well "deriv'd", as well "possess'd", in every way ranks equal with Demetrius. Felicitously, the Duke leads the father and his find away for "private schooling". Of course, to leave the lovers at their game.

With policy and good sense, "Thrice blessed they can master so their bloods," says Shakespeare, but he is for the "earthlier happy", the "rose distill'd" philosophy that nature enunciates and religion defies.+ So, while he works the spell of music, moonlight, and dews of the summer night on/us, he hacks at irrational, callous laws of family tradition and religion.

\* In Romeo and Juliet, a play of the same group, with double the emphasis does he work it out to be on the same theme. But while he takes up the issue of the nunnery from that angle in the play above, in this, he touched on its emotional probability. After Romeo's death, the "good" and "holy" friar consoles Juliet with the words

Come, I'll dispose of thee

Among a sisterhood of holy nuns.

Stay not<sup>10</sup> question, for the watch is coming; (V,3)

"Go, get thee hence", shouts back the grief-stricken girl. Her "restoration" is the poison on Romeo's lips, the dagger by his side. She will not be hidden away. Indeed, it seems as if priests, "good and holy" lurked around for such ready prey. Death to meaningless life is however preferred by Shakespeare. Or that souls once united cannot be rent in twain, is his belief.

+ Shakespeare pays homage to "the sublimity and piety of ascetic life" (Mitöschmann and Wentersdorf, Shakespeare and Catholicism, p.292) but he does not accept it as a way of life for any of his maiden characters. The authors moreover, have no interpretation to the lines from Romeo and Juliet quoted.

Hernia marries Lysander. Latimer had preached moralising sermons on marriage and Erasmus had converted nuns through his Colloquies. Is not Shakespeare's resilience and sanity to be wondered at?

That is not an end to the argument. Nor is inference being drawn to the effect that Shakespeare was not a Catholic. His soul was far too expansive to be cabin'd, cribb'd and confin'd to this stamp of religion or that. To continue. If he is against the nunnery, what is ignored by critics is, that he weighs in the same balance, the cult of Diana. The Duke in A Midsummer Night's Dream sweeps on from "death" to "nunnery" and in the same breath

Or on Diana's altar to protest  
For aye austerity and single life.

Likewise in As You Like It, when Rosalind speaks of Orlando's kisses being "as full of quality" as "the touch of holy bread",<sup>1</sup> Celia retorts in two measured sentences

(i) "He hath brought a pair of cast lips of Diana", (ii) "A nun of winter's sisterhood kisses not more religiously". The qualification "the very ice of chastity is in them", might be applicable to both. Shakespeare thus spoke to the common untutored minds as much as he did to the refined courtly minority. And coldly cynical too he was towards those beholden to such faiths and creeds. Indeed, burning topics then, to add any fuel or flame to.

But <sup>he</sup> knew that that was neither enough nor the right attitude. He also knew that if he yet had so much more to say, he was not to prejudice non-conformists or conformists. Of utmost concern was the mass mind. Hence the eloquences and silences in the next group of plays. In All's Well that Ends Well,<sup>2</sup> he comes down to the fundamentals. Helena tries to curb and conceal her "idolatrous fancy" as well a meek and modest medieval maid perforce bound for the virgin ideal (of the nunnery) might have. Quick to perceive and penetrate, forthwith on his entry Parolles splutters over "virginity". Seventeen times at the least! "It is not politic in the commonwealth of nature" to preserve it, the "rational law of increase" admits it not, put out to interest, "within ten years it will make itself ten".

1. III, 4, 1594.

2. I, 1, 1599.

+ G. Siebel, The Religion of Shakespeare, pp. 6-10, states in answer to Chateaubriand, Lilly... that had the dramatist been a Catholic, he would not have penned (or quilled?) these lines.

57 however, he is one with Gervinus in that Shakespeare thought freely and clearly religious subjects. Mutschmann and Wintersdorf, Shakespeare and Catholicism, p. 217, refer to same as "a fairly obvious reference to transubstantiation".

It else

breeds mites, much like a cheese; consumes itself to the very paring.... your virginity, your old virginity, is like one of our French wither'd pears: it looks ill, it eats drily;

till it well-nigh chokes his breath. He <sup>has</sup> ~~breaks~~ no patience with so much as thought of the stagnant, unnatural, unhealthy state, let alone ~~any supporting~~ ~~his side~~, it in any way.

To say that Shakespeare does not "exalt with Milton" the sage and serious doctrine of virginity<sup>1</sup> is a gross understatement. To say rather that he is radically opposed to it, would be closer to the truth. To accept the above passage as a "paradox", the "devil's advocate"<sup>2</sup> making strong case for the weaker side, one must shut one's eyes to the passages in which Shakespeare's thought turns to the nunnery. None too pleasant memories it brings either in Act II,ii, when the Clown rattles off inconsequentially that he has an answer to serve every question. One simile for each as his mind wanders from object to object, but when it comes here, it halts doubly profoundly

as the nun's lip to the friar's mouth; may as the pudding to his skin.

With his savoir faire he gives the complete recipe to the proverbial quizzical "pudding for the friar's mouth".\* If Shakespeare talks bawdy, it is simply because certain things cannot be so quickly erased from his people's hearts and heads. Besides he himself cannot believe in what perforce obstructs nature's design/ and that is virginity, nunhood, Diana's cult/ call it what you will. Even if the "devil's advocate" or fool takes up the cause, he acclaims him for preserving his mother wit in declaring the law/ man needs must be drawn to woman and woman to man/ be she nun or be he friar.

Therefore, reverting to the first scene between Parolles and Helena that bewildered Dr. Johnson, that Clark and Wright condemned as "a blot", that another critic called "idle chat", and yet another an "interpolation", -it seems clearly none of these. Nor is it "abrupt, unconnected and obscure" as it appeared to Malone. On the contrary, the master's thoughts and convictions stretch smoothly and coherently from not only

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1. D.A. Stauffer, Shakespeares' World of Images, p.122.

2. A. Harbage, As They Liked It, p.79.

\* Cf. John Eliot, The Parlement of Pralters, 1593.

i.e. the "Frier" in "The Inne" when stating his preferences for fish, fowl and flesh- the last of which being no less than "the buttocks of a Nunne."

sentence to sentence, and scene to scene within the same play, but from one play to another. In point of fact, he pours out all at once what he had only been coming out before. Virgin chastity is "too cold a companion", it is made of "self-love, which is the most inhibited sin in the canon"--

But hush! Not a word about it in Measure for Measure.<sup>1</sup> He approaches the problem now directly. His semi-serious tone he has left behind with his awesome description of nunnery life to Hermia in the first flush of love. No joking again about the probability of the nut-brown maid type in nun's garb. He takes Isabella "a thing ensky'd and sainted", right into the nunnery itself and brings her out post-haste on plea of strategy. Questions of life and death and "earthlier" happiness she alone is designed by nature to solve. The world is as bad as bad can be, and has he left anything unaid about it? But mark the abysmal silence pervading the world of the nunnery. He opens the portals to let his spectators feel its mystifying and mysterious darkness, to let register upon their thought processes its barren womb and ~~of~~ its sterilizing power in turn on the wombs of those who <sup>wander</sup> ~~pass their days~~ into it. (cf. "barren sister" in M.N.D.) And a few soft words raise some suspicion too. Isabella's first concern on entering is

rather wishing a more strict restraint  
Upon the sisterhood. 2 \*

Yet Shakespeare will not stoop to the mud-slinging of weaker and pettier minds. Nor resolutely will he have anything to do with its reform. Isabella herself, an embodiment of the virtuous charm that had gone with the medieval virgin and nun, is not hammered into shape by the religion of the nunnery. Which is as much as to say, that if the houses and their discipline are in a state of decadence, the sooner they crumble, the better. What is of utmost concern is, that the bad world has to be set right. The true nun is wanted. She is not to engage herself, but to go about with the same desperate urgency as the true friar-- the Duke. How more imperatively could the artist reform the disjointed world, preach sermons on the necessity of the improvement of marriage laws framed by a feudal society

1. 1599.

2. I, 4. (cf. Isabella in D'Avenant's The Law against Lovers.)

Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, Shakespeare and Catholicism, p. 285,

only refer to "the novice Isabella...receiving instruction from Sister Francisca". (!).

And proud that Shakespeare should have gone "to the trouble of making his heroine"

a member of the order, trace the "origin" of the name to "Isabella, prioress of Wroxall (died 1504)"; p. 291.

(Claudio cannot marry because of the problem of the release of the "dower"), and carry on his campaign against a shut religion all in one play? One question is still asked by critics. Does Isabella accept the ducal heart and palace? She is relenting, otherwise the Duke would not have diminitived her endearingly to "Isabel" in the end. But her love is too sacred for the world to see and too deep for expression. More important than all this is, the world must have a "copy". Unblemished characters are joined for the salutary general design.

Shakespeare leaves his heroine silent, but he did not leave his audiences "guessing". If to-day we feel that way, it is not because Shakespeare was too down-hearted to bother about answering enigmas, that is, if Measure for Measure is evaluated as a "dark" or "problem" play. Professor Chambers 'fights a good fight' (paradoxically over this play of 'forgiveness' and 'charity') with critics in launching the accusation that they are "more Papistical than the Pope", because they feel outraged that Isabella should 'throw her novitiate head-dress over the mill' and marry the Duke. Even "the sober A. E. Bradley", continues he, "thought that there Shakespeare lent himself to "a scandalous proceeding". Speaking for himself, he is satisfied that Isobel will do her duty in the state of life unto which it shall please her Creator to call her, "whether as abbess or duchess". Indeed, it was not a question of 'whether-or' with Shakespeare. He would not have made an abbess of Isabella or of any other of his creations. He would not have aligned himself through a heroine even to church or chapel. Where then would have been his universality? Where would have been the seer seeing through the flaws of each? Warring sects did then exist, and in the name of religion were busy with fissiparous activities. Hence the need for him to keep his character independent. In the light of the preceding evidence of the play, that must be considered in correlation with others, it would be apparent that Isabella is on no "zig-zag course" and that her creator is not amusing us with "phantoms". He is contending with far too grim issues to <sup>lose</sup> let <sup>grip</sup> grip of his sanity, as we might suppose he once had in A Midsummer Night's Dream.

And since Shakespeare does not insert his full-stop at the end of Measure for Measure,<sup>3</sup> a word or two about Hamlet too. Both plays indeed are complements to each other (and All's Well an overture to them combined). The first is the corrupt body politic, the second is the rank

1. Annual Shakespeare Lecture, Proceedings of The British Academy, Vol. XXIII, 1937.

2. A. Harbage, As they Liked It, p. 92.

3. 1599.

\* I do not include The Comedy of Errors, because Aemilia is a married woman. Even so, she is withdrawn from the "sanctuary". Of course, Shakespeare appreciates whatever good there is in it and concentrates on that, e.g., the care of the insane practised by the nuns as Raich. (Shakespeare's Stalling our Religion) points out



and rusty mind and soul, including Hamlet's, that is too enervated to act despite the fact that it has the power to perceive what has to be done. However, had he any passion in his love, Ophelia would not have been the reed for her meddling father to play on. She returns his tokens under instructions (which Hermia in A Midsummer Night's Dream did not), which she would not otherwise have, even though Hamlet's errant thoughts leave a vacuum in her heart. Unnecessary controversy arises over statements as "Ophelia has never really loved him. The utmost she may have done is to tolerate his homage," Homage? She must have woven all her romantic fancies around him and with the passing of each day must have grown fonder and fonder of him. It is unimaginable that a young girl such as she, living with an old father, such as Polonius, did not want Hamlet to make up her mind for her. She loves him intensely, having known no other man, there having been none other by. He too receding, the probability is she will land in a nunnery. Even if she runs mad there. Already she is at her devotional exercises of a kind.

Shakespeare had all along, since the time he wrote A Midsummer Night's Dream and Romeo and Juliet, been <sup>inquiring</sup> ~~probing~~ into the causes of 'maidens' stumbling into that <sup>trap</sup> ~~receptacle~~. Rosalind, en passant, had given utterance to a gem of truth—"Leander would have liv'd many a fair year, though Hero had turn'd nun." Emotional crises in the circumstances, at a time when there was scarcely any future conceivable to a woman but in marriage, indicate that second and last resort. Though not for Rosalind, or Beatrice who are positive types, who rather infuse love and inspire man to requite it. Ophelia is the negative type, who requires an ardent lover. And here is Hamlet oppressed by thoughts of matters beyond her powers of comprehension. There are types and types. Shakespeare contrives well the union of two good souls in Measure for Measure, but since he cannot repeat himself, since he cannot hoodwink himself, frail creatures do exist, he gets Hamlet to shout the "nunnery" at her—there is no mention of the word in the play dealing with it, mark you—then will

1. L. Sychucking, Character Problems in Shakespeare's Plays, p. 69.

2. As You Like It, IV, 1.

3. Much Ado about Nothing.

\* Taraknath Sen, in answer to critics in Modern Language Review, xxv, 1940, goes into the time factor 'many a day' in III, 1. Ophelia might have met him "yesterday", but it seems long enough for her. Cf. Rosalind to Orlando, if he stays a whit more than "two hours" away, he will be the most "pathetical break-promise." Note also, Hamlet says that his father died "within two hours". Ophelia corrects him "Nay, 'tis twice two months, my lord." She may not speak about her frustration over the fact that he does not draw his thoughts away from all else to her. Simply and submissively, she nonetheless suggests how futile it is to love him.

"drown" her "like a kitten".<sup>1</sup> Good old Collier says Shakespeare is "cruel" to make the poor soul suffer so, that if thus he had decided on her fate, he might have sent her a-swimming earlier. But has not Shakespeare radically cut short her suffering? Had he not got rid of Polonius, she would have had to go through strangulation by slow degrees in the nunnery. Which, by-the-bye, is very much the grey-stoned grated prison-house for souls such as Ophelia's or Juliet's passing through emotional crises. To twist it into "a house of ill fame",<sup>2</sup> one honestly hears Shakespeare groaning in his grave. And his bones do not rest either when "Get thee to a nunnery" appears Catholic counsel".<sup>3</sup> Putting things thus is both idiom and fact for the girl once thwarted in love, veritably turns her back upon life. Shakespeare would much rather, as he gives proof in his treatment of Juliet and Ophelia, any day poison the maid, kill her with the dagger of love, madden her with its sweet delights- if the worse came to the worst- but he will not be a Catholic to that extent as to push her into the nunnery; he will not be so loyal a subject to his sovereign as to enrol her in Diana's class; and he will not so follow historic religion as to cling bigotedly to the virgin theory and martyr yet another for no cause.

Consider now how the moot points are treated by Shakespeare's contemporaries and successors. Two plays- Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay,<sup>4</sup> and The Merry Devil of Edmonton,<sup>5</sup> with some few years between them, come up to mind together not because it is conjectured that the authors attitudinise with the reformer, but because they suggest that the intellectual forces of the day are astir as indeed they are in recorded history. And all to combat the indiscriminate and unprincipled use to which the nunnery is put. It is, in virtual fact, a dangerous cavern into which, if she is not trundled by parental tyranny the maid leaps out of sheer desperation when such beauty and virtue shine best in marriage. The philosophy and art of Friar Bacon is subjected to acid test by Margret's love-affair which goes off at a tangent for a while after the scholar has complicated the case. Had he not out of conceit and power taken Friar Bungay away just as he was about to conduct the marriage ceremony, Margret would not have taken the rash decision "for to be

1. G.H. Nettleton & A.E. Case, British Dramatists from Dryden to Sheridan, (Collier's Attack on the Stage), p. 393.

2. J. Dever Wilson, What Happens in 'Hamlet', p. 134.

3. G. Siebel, The Religion of Shakespeare, pp. 6-9.

4. R. Greene, 1594.

5. 1606.

\* The authors of Shakespeare and Catholicism are silent altogether here.

+ Lamb dreamt of Michael Drayton as author of this play. Alas none confirmed it as such, to make it a worthy appendage to the renown of that Panegyrist.

shorn a nun". Therefore, the erstwhile "jolly" Friar is "mute" when he comes again in the end after all has been righted. His "deep prescience" thereafter that England shall "increase" her power and glory includes reference to her and lacy as much as to the Prince and Elinor and to the sovereign on the throne. Another moment of note in the play is when Warren is caught in "brown study" just after he has resolved the complication,

To see the nature of women; that be they never so near  
God, yet they love to die in a man's arms. 1

As against Friar Bacon- master and scholar of Brazenose, Oxford,--Fabell, the necromancer- genius of Peterhouse, Cambridge, in The Merry Devil of Edmonton establishes however, a superior reputation. By implication perhaps, over the rival seat of learning too. For to him is brought the issue of Millicent's enforced nunhood, when things have reached the climax. She has to be brought back from the nunnery, which is no matter of joke. Hence the buoyancy of spirits attendant on the task accomplished. In Hermia's case we see but the first stage of awe and threat; in Margret's, the second of suspense, a moment more, and she would have been lost to the world; but Millicent actually goes through the harrowing experience of the third and final stage.

2

The marriage problem distils in Monsieur Thomas, two situations out of all elements taken up so far. In poignant sorrow, as Ophelia might well have, Cellide runs for shelter to the nunnery at a dark midnight hour, to "forget earth's affections." Inside, she is no less in agony. Why even Millicent, who is sent in with kisses and all good cheer as simultaneously Fabell and Company are hatching a plot for her rescue,-- is not a little depressed. Much less is there a chance for Cellide's grief to assuage. All to the point, that while the maid does get involved with it, the nunnery is no solution. Shakespeare does not hit too obviously. When he takes us to it in Measure for Measure, he stands aside eloquent in his silence. When he does not in A Midsummer Night's Dream, he must tell us in truest words what that life means. Some authors would err rather on the safe side than feel they have not done their duty by the public. Virtually nothing more can be said after the long chant in The Merry Devil of Edmonton on the occasion of Millicent's initiation, (the running commentary by Francke, Bilbo and Harry goes in in between)

1. Sc. XIV.

2. J. Fletcher, 1610.

\* I should not suppose that the author "originally contemplated" introducing "magical business" as C.F. Tucker Brooke (The Tudor Drama, p. 276) states. Fabell, the "conventional medieval sorcerer" seems quite consciously to have been employed in establishing a tradition evoking anti-nunnery sentiments, particularly in the enacting of the nun-friar joke.

First, a mornings take your booke,  
The glasse wherein your selfe must locke;  
Your young thoughts, so proud and iolly,  
Must be turn'd to motions holy;

.....  
And for all your follies past  
You must do penance, pray, and fast.

.....  
Rise at midnight to your mattens,  
Read your Psalter, sing your lattins,  
And when your blood shall kindle pleasure,  
Scourge your selfe in plenteous measure.  
You must read the mornings masse,  
You must creepe vnto the Crosse,  
Put cold Ashes on your head,  
Haue a haire cloth for your bed,  
Bid your beads, and tell your needes,  
Your holy Aules, and your Creedes;  
Holy maide, this must be done,  
If you meane to liue a Nun,

1

In Monsieur Thomas, it chills the blood to witness how heartless that holy life is.

The brief ceremony of the "sacred stole" over, the child "nurtured in ease" is summoned to the exacting denial of "soft slumbers" to gain "holy health".

Come to your matins, maids!—These  
early hours.

2

The pictures are admittedly true to the last detail. But the constant reminder of "inclosure and coarse diet" suggests a sort of criminal punishment for disobedience, which along with the forceful expression

Husbands they must and will have,  
Or nunneries, and thin collations  
To cool their bloods.

3

seems to be a serio-comic way of flouting at a past ideal when the nunnery was an accepted alternative. Scarcely so now. Dramatic thought and speech implies thus the husband via the nunnery, with a tang of tradition as aforesaid, that it is folly if the maid flies to that safe harbour in the vain hope of peace. And indeed, the parent is the sillier goose if he wilfully immure her there.

Shakespeare does not take the Duke to Isabella's nunnery to start affairs there. Nor does he gallop a love tale to the grate. When however entertainingly, another dramatist interns the "nun", sets the lover impersonating a "friar" at her heels and brings round poetic justice,— he sends off minds a-ticking, notwithstanding the laughter. For a moment Millicent's mother is quite shocked when she asks the question:  
Haue Ffiers recourse then to the house of Nuns?

4

And ironically enough, the daughter gives the answer that they only come to keep a check on the "sinister practise" of enforced nunhood. Through Mounchensey's lusty joke furthermore-

Ah! rogues, there is  
A company of girles would turne you all Friers. 1

taken up with relish by Young Clare and Jerningham and suchlike touches, the author espouses his cause against the nunnery clearly enough. Would anyone miss those "squeals" and "squeaks" when Thomas plays "revel rout" among the nuns and runs the Abbess out of her wits, to get Cellide out? The plays are intensely dramatic, "uproariously farcial", cakes and ale included. But it is as exciting an experience exploring the nunnery after the Reformation has shattered the iron curtain as with a curiously alive mind adventuring into a concentration camp after a war is over. Landing a friar in the midst of nuns in that brooding darkness is a scene on the stage not merely for the fun of it.

But why must so extreme a step be taken? Because the eye must see, the ear must hear to believe. Even in Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay in which no such expedition is taken, there is an accusatory note on friars who go about luring girls. Hence for exemplary punishment apparently, the "marry" and "jolly" Friar Bungay is carried away on a devil's back, and the "wise" and "learned" Friar Bacon's Brazen-head is shattered, as if such a trait in character, such an object in view stands in the way of genuine progress. The various notes are not harmonised, but it is out of national glory and pride too that no sacrifice is allowed to a nunnery. So the author seems to say in his unique way.

The search for Fletcher's views may be carried a little beyond the aforementioned play. His more settled thought, or if it is verified that unassisted by Beaumont he was incapable of profundity, his lasting impression then shall we say, may be substantiated from the sleight-of-hand method whereby he converts the house with red lattices into the house with grated windows and smoothly passes on.

Chi. There's an old Nunnerie at hand.  
Cloe. What's that?  
Chi. A bawdy-house.

Cloe. A box consume it!

1. IV, 1.

Cf. Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, Sc. XIV.

Lacy. Why, how now, Marg'ret! what, a malcontent?

A nun? what holy father taught you this,  
To task yourself to such a tedious life  
As die a maid?

+ Reference to the "education" of the public through the stage is made in the last chapter. It is improbable that such a play could have little influence. Considering its popularity, Be Jonson, for instance, says in the prologue to The Devil is an Ass

.....If you'll come

To see new plays, pray you afford us room,  
And shew this but the same face you have done  
Your dear delight, The devil of Edmonston

Consume what? The bawdy-house or the Nunnerie? Or both? The "it" might mean the contraption of his earlier play that gave occasion for tragic intensity no less than for rollicking fun. But was not the significance wider and better understood by those audiences than we could imagine of to-day? Religion then was a burning question; any liberty taken with it needs must have been deliberate. Professor Dover Wilson's categorically pinning it down to "house of ill fame" is hardly acceptable without some such thinking over.

A more tenable line of argument may nevertheless be advanced on a literal interpretation of the statement that his heroines are not made "for the cloisters", as indeed Cellide is a case in point. Characters, it is averred, might have been fitted and suited, had Fletcher faith in or reverence for any such place. As a determinate step in the reverse direction rather, he draws Clorin out of the "holy rites" existence to which she had almost retired after the death of her shepherd in The Faithful Shepherdess. If this play is bracketed with Monsieur Thomas,

from which we may draw conclusions concerning the native tendencies of the young Fletcher.

he takes up cudgels for Chastity and single life which is a matter vitally inter-related as to be inferred from Shakespeare's attitude and from that of others presently to follow. Fletcher may quite correctly be indebted to Guarini for the pastoral theme, but into it he infuses the same state of affairs as portrayed in Measure for Measure. Isabella is withdrawn from the nunnery into the outer world, thence to marriage. Clorin too is compelled to give up life contemplative, but she is otherwise involved. Her emotional problem which may be comparable with Shakespeare's Juliet's, Fletcher resolves by devolving his central moral idea of virgin chastity round her and by combining it with a way of life that far outstretches Isabella's. Evidently, an open-air religion to meet the same demands as the nunnery, is at the time being fostered by the church. But siding with neither the historic school, nor allowing her to pay obeisance to the new, the dramatist commences a new page of biblical (call it missionary) history with her balm-and-balsam field of service. Possibly, he thus espouses the cause of a religion that could not lapse into the dogmatic. The fact remains however, that so much of such thought is motivated by current atmospheric pressure on the unmarried woman,

1. What Happens in 'Hamlet', p.134.

2. C.M.Gayley, Beaumont, the Dramatist, (quoted) p.279.

3. Ibid., p.90.

4. L.B.Wallis, Fletcher, Beaumont & Company, p.186.

\* e.g. in the lines to follow from The London Prodigal, L.B.Wallis writes that the church had fostered the enthusiasm for chastity, so had the apostles of neo-platonic love, Fletcher, Beaumont

which, it is feared, is not fully taken cognisance of when conjecture goes to "the third book of The Faerie Queen" for Fletcher's ideal of chastity.

On this issue, the cross-sectioning of a few authors' minds had been attempted in the previous chapter. Changing the angle a little, it will be found on recapitulating that Dekker and Middleton are again found to be radically modern when, out of faith in unmarried purity, they set up their daring models in Patient Grissil and The Raring Girl. Unlike Fletcher in The Faithful Shepherdess, they moreover provide realistic backgrounds for them. But whereas all these dramatists contravene the reformer's compulsory clause for marriage, on the question of religion their opinion is divided considerably. Dekker's valediction to the Papal hierarchy in If This be Not a Good Play, the Devil Is In It is perhaps a trifle swamped by Middleton's charge in A Game at Chess of the

killing

Killing, killing, killing, killing, killing- 4

of the "Six thousand infants' heads" unearthed at the "ruins of nunnery" begirt by orchards growing nothing but the "savin tree". Neither however, is in a frame of mind to think of a religious organisation as a support for his ideal of single life. That would have smacked too much of the old order. Fletcher, in comparison, is more even-tempered.

Yet, while scarcely anyone from among the foregoing authors has difference to settle over the nunnery, Dekker, Middleton and Fletcher is not identifying themselves with the new school strike practical ways out towards broader aspects of humanitarianism, - the last perhaps a bit ostentatiously. And though it may not be wise to assess therefore that we are dealing with an age of disbelief or shaken faiths, particularly in view of an instance such as Delia's in The London Prodigal,

My vow is in heaven in earth to live alone,  
Husbands, howsoever good, I will have none. 5

There seems to be on the whole little evidence of desire for devotional life to continue. Probably because the dramatist finds difficulty in presenting it effectively on the stage, or is afraid of giving encouragement to just another form of bigotry. No matter what aspect

1. John Wallis, Fletcher, Beaumont & Company,  
1. Ibid., p. 188.

2. 1612.

3. 1624.

4. IV, ii.

5. V, i.

+ Gilchrist observes that "Squire o' Dames" in Massinger's The Emperor of the East is derived from the same source. W. Gifford, The Plays of Philip Massinger, p. 287.

he highlights or deviously weaves through the theme, he feels happier contending for an ideal from which he can draw tangible results. A plausible explanation that could be given to such a tendency is, that he finds life altogether far too rich and meaningful to be frittered and wasted away, and the world- for all its ills and woes far too wonderful a region to be neglected and deſcoured for the uncertain hereafter. In consequence whereof, grows the desperate urge for making it more beautiful, for purging it of all wrong and for replenishing it with fruits he can beget. Hence Greene's decree of "increase" and Shakespeare's "rose distill'd" creed.

In the face of which, the nunnery forsooth is "a congregation of vapours", and the nun in simple truth settles a frost on the being within by nipping it with virtue and clipping it with chastity. Needless to say, these qualities at the time would more popularly be associated with marriage. In which context therefore, Philip's impatience over his sister in The Two Angry Women of Abington can well be understood when he shouts out at her:

..... I have laboured  
A year's work in this afternoon for ye!  
Come down from your Cloister, votary, chaste nun,  
Come down and kiss Frank Goursey's mother's son.  
Mall. Kiss him, I pray?  
Phil. Go to, stale maidenhead!  
Mall. Nun, votary, stale maidenhead, seventeen and upward!  
Here be names! what nothing else?

Therefore too Calisto's only plea:  
That I a Nunne and profest maid may live  
meets with the pregnant rebuff for an answer,

To live a maid, what is't? 'tis to live nothing:  
'Tis like a covetous man to hoard up treasure,  
Bar'd from your owne use, and from others pleasure,  
.....make your beauty live when you be dead  
In your fair issue?

With Shakespeare, Heywood thereby pools his cause. To lead "virtues to the grave", "to wither on the virgin thorn" is absurd nihilism,

Unlesse thy mother had let fall her floure,  
Thy blossome had not flourisht at this houre. 3

1. H.Porter, III,ii.

2. T.Heywood, The Golden Age, II, 1611.

3. T.Heywood, Procus and Puella, Pleasant Dialogues and Dramas, 1637.

\* Or, the 'utilitarian' view combined as I have stated in Chap.I. Hence, as I see it, the mild satire on the way in which virgins of wealthy families waste their youth in Fletcher's The Elder Brother (completed by Massinger, 1625?).



So, alongside of the reformer in the field, the playwright rattles about the matrimonial chains on the stage and clasps them on the nun and the virgin desirous of becoming one. Her very existence, independent of all the scandal about the houses of religion, is to him of negative worth since the very first postulate of a woman's life is ignored. Indeed, whatever the original derivation of the word "nonne", it said "non" and "no" to facts, and the positive thinker will have no more of such nullities. He will make it his business to redress and harmonise what the medieval <sup>orthodox believer</sup> ~~orthodox~~ had run into the error of. <sup>the</sup> School of Satire. So sallies forth the satirist. Seeing the reckless manifestation of <sup>the</sup> Life Force on the one hand, and on the other this denotation and connotation of a life of denial, he snarls. To be unmarried is bad enough. To put up the sign-board of religion and meaning to remain so, is more than he can tolerate. Trenchantly, the trio ~~Chapman, Jonson~~ and Marston, with thrice-treble force pick up Quicksilver's mistress Sindefy in Eastward Ho! for one that has

a great desire to be a Nun, an't please you.  
 Gert. A Nun? What Nun? A Nun substantive, or a nun adjective? ~~un~~ be a Nun.  
 Sec. A Nun substantive, madam, I hope, if Nun be a Noun.  
 But I mean, lady, a vowed maid of that order.  
 Gert. I'll teach her to be a maid of that order, I warrant you!

To the prospective "novice", the first commandment read out is:

Be still a Maid, whatsoever you do, or whatsoever  
 a man can do unto you.

This is gnarled satire on metropolitan life and manners. Even so, whatever her character, because she is at least a living organism, the "maid" remains within recognizable grammar and speech, while there are sneers for what eludes parsing and analysis.

Marston's share in the composition must have been small, for it lacks the strong flavour of gall and ashes which is so noticeable in his work....  
 However, we trace his handiwork in some satirical touches.

May not the above serve as a fit example? There are plays of which Jonson is the sole author, but they do not reveal his view. Good riddance for Morose in Epicoene if a place that hermetically seals unwanted characters mercifully exists. The woman in the case is clipping his ears off.

Would she go to a nunnery yet.

But it is no place for Dol Common who tells Mammon in The Alchemist that she is turning

1. II, ii, 1605. 2. J. Le Gay Breton, Writings on Elizabethan Drama, pp. 55-6.  
 3. or The Silent Woman V, i, 1610. 4. IV, i, 1610.

over to a life of higher contemplation,

Had you been crooked, foul, of some coarse mold,  
A cloister had done well; but such a feature,  
That might stand up the glory of a kingdom,  
To love recluse is a mere selecism,  
Though in a nunnery! It must not be. \*

Satirists like Jonson and Marston bracketing the habited form with the creature of Mammon's lust or of Quicksilver's hiccuping folly, the man of the theatre like Fletcher confusing the (reader's) mind with alternating lines on the nunnery and the bawdy-house, moralists like Shakespeare and Heywood explaining the meaninglessness of "virginity"- all add to collective thought against old ideals. On the other hand, individual opinions of Dekker, Middleton and Fletcher on maiden chastity go side by side with the propaganda for married chastity because of the disorderliness in the moral world. The marriage of the maid is one step away from temptation, but discipline of the blood subsequently seems also a serious affair. Facets of contemporary conditions in Measure for Measure, Eastward Ho! or The Faithful Shepherdess reveal that court, town and country are in the same welter and muddle. Marriage represents the golden mean. Yet, rather than stake on new religion, the unsettled mind of the people goes on re-examining whether there is anything left in the old. Such is the paradoxical position.

Harshest to come down upon it, is Webster in The Devil's Law-Case. The born-villain Romelio brazenly announces

I have a Mistris  
Of the Order of St. Clare, a beautious Nun,  
Who being cloistered ere she knew the heat  
Her blood would arrive to, had only time enough  
To repent, and idlenesse sufficient  
To fall in love with m<sup>e</sup>; and to be short,  
I have so much disordered the holy Order,  
I have got this Nun with child.

2

No wonder Isabella had wished for more restraint upon the Order (same incidentally) and Shakespeare had changed his mind about her future. No wonder he had plunged Ophelia

1. 1620<sup>3</sup>.

2. III, 3.

\* Cf. J. Dryden, The Assigination, II, 1.

"A Monastery is no retreat for Chastity; 'tis only a hiding place for bad faces,... like heaps of rubbish out of the way, that the world may not be peopl'd with deform'd persons .....we have occasion for Wit and Beauty; now Piety and Ugliness will do as well for Heaven,...

it is as great a Sin for a Beauty to enter into a Nunnery, as for an ugly woman to stay out of it." H.A. Jones, The Liars, I., 1898. "Ah no! there are plenty of dear good ugly women in the world who can do that." i.e. enter the sisterhood.

\* Marlowe is branded as a theist. But he too examines the question of nunnery from more than one angle. He says at Malta before he puts his firebrand to it.

into the brook with weeping willows instead of letting her weep in the nunnery Polonius had been planning her for. Romelio halts at nothing. Angiolella in the nunnery is with ~~the~~ <sup>her</sup> child by him. He prevails upon Jolenta, his sister, to mother it. Nay, to start practising the art of a "great-bellied" woman. Such counsel given and taken, the next step is to craftily nourish the jealousy between her and his mother over the common lover, so that after the supposed child-birth he will persuade her

To enter into Religion; tis concluded,  
Shee must never marry; so I am left guardian  
To her estate: 1

This is one of the "many folds", one of the "culs-de-sac" of the play, proffering information as to how ill-gotten the merchant's wealth is, and who are the figures of straw, the pawns to his game. And when the famous case goes into court, from side-talk it transpires that Romelio is subtly negotiating matrimonial alliances for ~~his~~ <sup>for</sup> unborn child! Alas the position of the dependent maid, his sister.

In Act V, Sc.1, however, the curtain lifts on the long-awaited nunnery, Angiolella "great-bellied" and the suppositious mother Jolenta, are like teen-aged school-girls in gasps and gushes over the present predicament. They must get away. But where to?—Well in time before the rumour spreads. And amid their silly prattle, Webster plays his trump-card

take heart,  
Thy boy shall be borne a brave Roman.

Perhaps, in the Papist Pater's land, To ~~lay~~ <sup>try</sup> the fruits of his religion at his very door. In the last scene, when Ariosto delivers his judgment, Romelio is willing to marry "that Nun", whose warning to all "honest Virgins" is

not to seeke  
The way to Heaven, that is so wondrous steepe,  
Th(o)rough those vowes they are too fraile to keepe.

Jolenta with her blackened face and unstained soul is to come out for marriage to the man she does not love. The "true beauty" of the soul she philosophises over, at any rate, was not acquired there. Nor was Margret's for that matter, nor Millicent's, nor Cellide's. Let alone Isabella's that presides over all. Webster's three women for their "vows' breach" are nevertheless to build a monastery. To what purpose, we are not given the answer.

1. *Vol. III*, 3. 2. A.W.Ward, *English Dramatic Literature*, Vol. III, p. 254. 61.  
3. A. Haworth, *English Hymns and Ballads*, p. 117.  
\* It may be said that since they were just going over the border, Rome was the state after all, nearest to Naples. But there is satire enough throughout the play on this religion. More at least, I feel, than on the other brands that he attacks in the same play.  
+ "What vow had Jolenta broken to the Monastery?" F.L. Lucas. *The Complete Works of John Webster*

To what purpose, we are not given the answer.

Much of the last act is beneath criticism and does little credit to the playwright, whether Webster or another. 1

Yet the most irate of critics has to admit that Juvenal's satire or Webster's, is but to provoke thought. If Ariosto's judgment means anything,

it is that everyone has had a narrow escape and must not run such risks again. 2

Could this imply that greater than all was the risk being run by the gentle Jolenta for loving Contarine? The dénouement is "strange", "even stranger" for most critics. Yet one dares risk an opinion. Webster does not satisfy the heart of the spectator as usually a comedian does. But he is not injudicious. Ercole assumedly is the only man on the stage with a clean past, and is a sincere and faithful knight. To add a word more for Jolenta would be superfluous. In a moral order, it is right that two pure beings should be paired off. Webster has no intentions of confining her to a nunnery. That is the main point.

he Turn in the Tide. With all gravity, Massinger <sup>strives against</sup> ~~averts~~ the tide of satire, fun, laughter, of settled and settling conviction against historic thought and religion. Could he do it, he would create "the 11,000 Virgins" <sup>3</sup> they heard of in medieval times, "but who ever heard of 11,000 good men?" <sup>4</sup> So is read the mind behind and between the lines of his eighteen plays. In the list of lost manuscripts that Professor A. Harbage <sup>5</sup> has ~~got~~ printed, at least three plays (could be more)- The Honor of Women, Minerva's Sacrifice and The Fair Anchoress-tempt to the furthering of a foregone conclusion that this faithful feminist never ceased enlarging upon and refining his ideals. A few of his contemporaries bestow their favours upon chastity and single life in a play or two maybe, and apparently rest content when they turn talent to other topics. Not so he. In point of fact, his is the case of one against many when he bases a creation on religious grounds. But he also speaks for a contemporary when he endeavours to show that what matters is not so much her ultimately remaining unmarried, as her having the strength to resist temptation in that state.\* Herein does she excel

1. P. Haworth, English Hymns and Ballads, p. 136.

2. C. Leech, John Webster, p. 93.

3. F. L. Utley, The Crooked Rib, p. 298.

4. Ibid., p. 293.

5. Elizabethan-Restoration Palimpsest, Modern Language Review, XXV, 1940.

\* Ibid., p. 362.

\* The authors of Patient Grissil, The London Prodigal, The Roaring Girl for instance, do not develop that aspect.

in value! Granted that his "Catholic or papistical morality", "distinctly religious bias,"<sup>1</sup> or "didactic moralistic bias"<sup>3</sup> (however the critic shades his differences) gives him fervour and eloquence, yet his is the voice that speaks at greatest length, since Shakespeare had given both eloquent and silent judgments when he was having his say.

Dominated by his prejudices how indeed can Massinger be half as subtle? What nonetheless calls forth admiration is, that knowing fairly well how minds are working, he leads them through other corridors to the cloisters. He gives them his moral and religious views initially. And he shows that as much steel is required for a soul to stay in the world as to go into a nunnery. At least, that it is no place for faint hearts and faltering steps.

He begins his story with Cleora in The Bondman<sup>4</sup> in the thick of battle, when the fevers of bodies rage high. But does she need the bandage over her eyes that her jealous lover bids her wear during the period of his absence? With dumb voice she makes her plea, with manacled hands defends her virtue. While he who is motivated by all that is vile and base, who comes to plunder her person, stands transfixed<sup>5</sup>, transformed in her presence. "Complete ascendancy of chastity over jealousy" is granting the least to her. Bellisant in The Parliament of Love<sup>6</sup> resolves to live a "virgin". But decidedly not "mew'd up." Spartan Helen, Corinthian Lais or Rome's Messaline might then have died as they were born by lust untempted.

no, it is the glory  
Of chastity to be tempted, tempted home too,  
The honour else is nothing! I would be  
The first example to convince, for liars,  
Those poets, that, with sharp and bitter rhymes  
Proclaim aloud, that chastity has no being,  
But in a cottage:<sup>7</sup>

Clarindore has his "lewd wager" with his wild courtier-companions, that he can pluck her "virgin rose", and that he will prove her chastity is no~~y~~ rock not to be moved or shaken. But when he assails her, had it not been for her mercy, he might well have been carried out of her "chaste house" on a bier. She yields by proxy to right the wrong he has done to Beaupré<sup>\*</sup>, and thus ~~stops~~<sup>by example that</sup> suggests<sup>by</sup> the study and daily practice of all his sect abusing "virgins" in the "Christian World", should cease.

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1. A.C. Swinburne, Contemporaries of Shakespeare, p. 173.
  2. L. Stephen, Hours in a Library, Vol. II, p. 153.
  3. T.A. Dum, Philip Massinger, p. 141.
  4. 1623.
  5. W. Gifford, The Plays of Philip Massinger, p. 119.
  6. 1624.
  7. I, iv.

Massinger founded the plot of this play upon the celebrated Courts or Parliaments of Love said to be held in France in the Middle Ages, but he did not make it into a "pleasing production." He "probably" lacked the "lightness and play of fancy" \* requisite to such a theme. Most probably, it is hereby asserted, he took it merely as a vehicle for a point of view, which indeed is purveyed through Bellisant. And an observation may be risked that she and Cleora might have served as immediate answers to Webster's Jolenta and Angiolella in The Devil's Law-Case. This might also explain the reason of the hastily-put-together effect in The Parliament of Love and of the too obvious purpose in The Bondman. He puts by the question of the nunnery to plays of a later date.

But carrying further the predominant ethical values of the preceding two plays, he ascends to a higher place with Pulcheria in The Emperor of the East.<sup>2</sup> This creation of his integrates in herself three distinct qualities, namely, the superior intellect to educate and train the prospective emperor, her brother and her two younger sisters; the supreme intelligence to govern and control the state till he is fit and ripe to take over sceptre and sway; the living religion of Christianity to conduct daily devotions and prayers and to convert opportunely those not of the faith, as for example, Athenias, when she comes to the state court with her petition. In "every part so perfect" is Pulcheria, that "paesans of praise" do not meet her "commanding power of virtue." "Wonders" blaze abroad through all states and kingdoms of this "sovereign abbess" who renders the court a kind of "academy", her place of habitation a "chaste nunnery." Indeed, Venus' son's shafts break into splinters encountering the "rock of diamonds" her chastity is composed of. There is, notwithstanding, a certain section with sullen looks. But that is because they believe a woman must for ever and aye be with her "distaff." There is also a rift and a ruffling of spirits after the marriage of Athenias with the Emperor. But that is because this matinet observes that the latter is not as vigilant and active as befits one on the throne.

With the three sisters however, Massinger comes to the heart of the matter. While making a renewed case for religion, he does not put forward bigoted ideas about the run

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1. A.W.Ward, English Dramatic Literature, Vol.II, p.273. (1875 ed.)  
2. 1631.

\* It is difficult to agree with such a contrasting opinion as-

"The Parliament of Love .. is still recognised as one of the author's most brilliant and animated comedies." A.C.Swinburne, Contemporaries of Shakespeare, p.195.

and life in the nunnery. There is considerable confusion of thought among Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists which he here straightens out and clarifies. To say that marriage is the only goal is wrong. To say that religion is the answer is wrong as well. Marriage is necessary for the average; religion and other fields of interest for the uncommon few. It is a particular type that is suited for higher and wider life. Flaccilla and Arcadia, to wit, placed as "probationers" in the open nunnery of their sister Fulcheria, find that way of life ill-agreeing with their constitutions. One is sick of "praying and poring on a book", the other repines why she had not been born

some <sup>girl</sup> mas<sup>ing</sup>-lady's woman,  
Only to see strange sights, rather than live thus! 1

For them, therefore, marriage is the answer as an end in itself and as a means to freer social life. For those who are made that way, the greater the restraint, the greater is the urge to break away. He therefore does not contradict the opinion of Erasmus, the author of Ane Satyre or others of that school. But he does not like them rig up giddyheads into nun's garb in order to prove the point. Instead, in fact, he never tires of repeating that a Bellisant or a Pulcheria is a "phenix" not too frequent.

And if this rare pair is included among the critic's "lubricious prudes," it might be well worth noting that the same is said of The Faithful Shepherdess. And if there is a prevailing air of falseness and unreality about Patient Grissil, or <sup>appearance</sup> ~~personality~~ of painful effort in the building up of the character of The Roaring Girl, such is the characteristic feature of all the plays in which the unmarried ideal is discussed. Where, in reality, the romantic character of the maid is not achieving the subtly thickening complication and consistency, it is because there is a point of view<sup>raw</sup>, unassimilated that is handed down to posterity. Cartwright's The Siege later on, for instance, is so propped up on chastity, that it is even more difficult to accept. To return to The Emperor of the East, "a play at which the author worked hard, and of which he thought highly," it does not indeed admit of

comparisons. For, in no other play does Massinger go into such comprehensive details. The very fact that he allows two sisters to live content ~~at a lower level~~, and by contrast, Fulcheria

1. I, ii. 2. A. A. Eliot, Selected Essays, p. 213. 3. A. H. Cruickshank, Philip Massinger, p. 213  
"e.g. "chastity, like the player-queen, doth protest too much." U. H. Ellis-Fermor, The Jacobean Drama, p. 211

Hence critics devote more attention to construction, source, motive, etc. e.g. "the play is built around scenes in which the lustful characters oppose the chaste by means of infamous stratagems only to find themselves vanquished in the end. Whatever overt instruction Fletcher intended thus hinges on the outcome of the play."

E. M. Waith, Review of English Studies, XIX, p. 742, 1943.

<sup>to</sup>the consort with freer religious life that incorporates the possibility of other duties and obligations, is unquestionably satisfying. Whatever place the latter inhabits is <sup>a</sup>nunnery in essence. So virtually would have been Isabella's influence had Shakespeare broadened out a religion that both had suited her and kept her away from dogmas. <sup>She</sup>Then perhaps would have been worlds above Pulcheria.

However, since it is only finally that Massinger makes a case for the nunnery proper in The Maid of Honour,<sup>1</sup> one feels he is perfectly justified. Long enough has he rendered the valiant knight's service to the cause of Christianity, to Catholicism specifically. That he has exercised restraint enough on this aspect of it, ~~as~~ cannot be denied. Eventually, when he does take it up, he first prepares us for it with suggestive thought in the closely-dated The Emperor of the East, wherein too he exhibits his broad-mindedness. He has to go slow and steadfast because he has to shake the case-hardened opinion of "beauty smothered in a cell." So by when we come to Camiola, titular role of the present play, so cheap a question as "How does she look?" is not to be asked. On her first appearance, she "looks" and is probably in her creator's mind, a charming combination of Flaccilla, Arcadia and Pulcheria. But only up to the time we hear of the fierce contest between her love and her views do we see her face somewhat. After she has spoken to the ruler, after she has made clear the difference between unjust demands and illegitimate desires, it is lost to view altogether. The soul then resigns supreme. She is the last and the maturest of Massinger's ideas of "perfection."

.....she alone, in the abstract of herself,  
That small, but ravishing substance, comprehends  
Whatever is, or can be wished, in the  
Idea of a woman!

2

Bertaldo her lover is false. She is quick and decisive because she has that innate power which a weaker vessel has not. Time stops for her in this world only to begin afresh in another which post-Reformation thought would not concede to. Not only religion, but the "fair nunnery" is necessary for her so that she can live there "in the abstract of herself" after parting with "wealth and pleasure" and all "poison'd baits." Hence the eulogium:

She well deserves  
Her name, the Maid of Honour! May she stand,  
To all posterity, a fair example,  
For noble Maids to imitate!..... 3

Such a rare and courageous conquest over the world and man is not measured by the yardsticks of religions. And yet, had Massinger not been religious, he could not have

1. 1632. 2. IV.iii. 3. V.4.



spanned the distance between Dorothea, The Virgin Martyr, when the "holy virgin" alone held his horizon, and Camiola, The Maid of Honour, by when he had to grant admittance to love of man too. Thus with his faith he was able to achieve a union between the traditions of the "virgin" and the "maid"-separate since medieval times. In closest manifestation of which, there is exalted praise of the 'virgin' Pulcheria in the first part of The Emperor of The East and of the 'maid' Camiola increasing to a crescendo at the close of The Maid of Honour.

A couple of minor dramatists dogmatically hold on to the medieval 'virgin' ideal as the superior. Ostensibly, the arrival of Henrietta Maria <sup>in</sup> ~~for~~ England and the resultant increase of Catholic influence at Court encouraged old themes, that is of the Christian maiden and the Pagan lover, persecution, conversion and final dedication to life of holy prayer, such as is evidenced in The 2 Noble Ladys and The Virgin Martyr. It may be assumed that since Rowley's name is entered on the stationers' books against The Parliament of Love, his relations with Massinger had been such as could have inspired the writing of such a play as A Shoemaker a Gentleman.<sup>4</sup> Were his resurrection of a medieval ideal in his heroine "faire Winifred",

1. 1622.

2. F.N.Trefethan, Demonology, Magic and Witchcraft,  
in the English Drama (1590-1642), p.1.,  
See Record and Footnote.

( Thesis, C.U.L., )  
( 1949-50. )

3. 1622.

4. 1638.

\* In ascribing to Dekker & Massinger their respective shares in the compilation of this play, obvious difficulty is experienced (by an editor e.g. Fredson Bowers, Thomas Dekker, Dramatic Works, Vol. III, p.372). But if track is followed of the innumerable allusions to the "virgin", the difference between the attitudes of the authors is immediately comprehended. Dekker is all disbelief; Massinger is all reverence.

Cf. Dekker (II, ii) Dorothea-drinking up her "ruby colour" in "prayer and meditation"; (II,iii) "self-love of a vowed Virginity" etc.

Massinger (IV, iii) Dorothea "the abstract of all sweetnesse";  
(V,i) "holy Virgin Martyr"; (V,ii) "blessed virgin." etc.

Cf. Dekker & Webster, Westward Ho, II, ii.

the mightiest Machiavelan politician

That e'er the devil hatch'd of a nun's egg,

And Dekker, The Honest Where, Pt.I,V,ii.

You love a Friar better than a Nun

For all y'are holy, you'll not die a maid.

T.A.Dunn ( Philip Massinger, p. 177 ) writes when discussing the playwright's religious views-

"The Virgin Martyr must, for my purposes, be ruled out of court since it is impossible to determine how much of its religious element was already present before Massinger came to handle it."

I repeat. Massinger's lines speak quite distinctly from Dekker's for the major part.

"vertuous Winifred" independently considered even, her "Orisons" could have reached not far, her sacrifice of the "Royall Palace" and noble suitors for the "celestiall Bridegroom" could have won little merit, when Massinger's many fare alas none too well.

634-1660. But after flights to heights with them, it is a fall indeed to immediately have to reckon with un moulded clay. Yet so it has to be. The Queen and her coterie in The Queen of Arragon,<sup>1</sup> for instance, deem the nunnery just a subject for playful fancy. The difficulties of "inclosure and coarse diet," "much discipline and early prayer" could easily be surmounted were Her Majesty only to turn Abbess and as such to

Cloister up fine young Lords with us,  
And ring us up each midnight to a masque,  
Instead of mattins;

Right upto the end goes the vein, that for "penance", were the man enjoined too, with "Love" one might manage to go "to shrift." At this meridian, if Urania is daft enough to kneel before the Ompha in Amyntas<sup>2</sup> for guidance and direction,

I vow unto thy cloister (awful goddess!)

Almighty Ceres! Is not this life holy?

quite naturally she is slapped in the face by Echo,—"Folly." She persists. "Better than live in unhappy love?" Comes the correction, "Happy Love." Vasco in Love and Honour<sup>3</sup> says that one of his captives "an old Abbess" will make an admirable governess for young Evandra, she will read "homilies" to her,

And teach her such receipt<sup>out</sup> of the fathers;  
How to cure the toothache, preserve plums,  
And boil amber possets,

so that she will make of her in "three days a very Saint." In The Wits,<sup>4</sup>

Marmalade made by the cleanly nuns of Lisbon.\*

is ready to hand for "your voluptuous maw."

Firmly dismissing more extraneous matter like the above, in The Platonic Lovers<sup>5</sup> however, ~~one~~ finds ~~oneself~~ not very far from the subject. As the title speaks of itself,

the play deals with the school of platonic love, patronised evidently by -----

1. W. Habington, II, i, 1635.

2. T. Randolph, V, viii, 1638.

3. W. D' Avenant, I, i, 1634.

4. ~~Id.~~, IV, i, 1636.

5. ~~Id.~~, 1636.

\* Could the author be insinuating that in the nunnery here they had wealth and leisure enough for such sweet occupations? For until Napoleon's invasion, the place had been celebrated for its antique gates of pure silver.

Queen Henrietta, in opposition to the marriage ideal. D'Avenant ridicules the manner in which they father on the good "old Greek fellow" a fantastic love he never knew, "poor gentleman." Theander and Eurithea hence gaze into each other's eyes till they ache, deem all hours and seasons fit to "celebrate" it, whereas Phylamont and Ariola exercise restraint till they procure sanction for marriage. Theander will not give it. Granted that such an institution is time-honoured and lawful, but is it "comely?" When "souls are wedded," the rest he does not understand. He accuses Phylamont for undoing "a noble maid," "unskilful virginhood." "What I have taught her, sir," retorts the accused,

hermits and nuns  
Night in their dying minutes listen to  
Without disquiet to their parting souls.     1

"Much fitter for the cloister" she seemed, did she? Well, she will not hear anything more "chaste" than marriage now.

But, smoothly enough on Theander himself the natural law then makes headway. In vain is the battle fought against the "cold and frozen life of virginity." Though, for a while, in the same ratio as Eurithea and he thaw towards each other, do Phylamont and Ariola attempt imprisonment "in ice." Plato's love-laws nevertheless, do not hold. The last note of the play long sustained on its poetic value consequently is, that "whining and puling love" grovels only "for eunuchs" and "for old revolted nuns."

D'Avenant's thoughts however, turn favourably towards the Order in the next play, The Fair  
2  
Favourite. The King returns from the wars with a cool heart for his young Queen since the beauty of Eumena bewitches him. The latter is low in fortune and is persuaded to cultivate the art of thriving in court with the additional reason that if her brother Oramont begs ~~of~~ liberty from his service, she alone can serve as ransom. The royal favourite hence has a day of glory. Crowds throng to her with their petitions, among them Oramont with the suit of the Queen accompanying him in the vestments of a nun. He taunts her:

Live still triumphant in the Court,  
Flatter thy beauty with presuming hope  
It ne'er shall fade;....  
.....  
Whil'st this great type of virtuous love,  
That vainly is, what others ne'er can imitate.  
Retires into a shade, cloister'd i' th' dark  
With holy nuns, hiding her eyes from all  
Those shining glories, which th' ambitious seek  
Till they are blind.     3

Eumena is touched. She beseeches Her Majesty to exchange garments, the virtuous need no pattern, since they are already what the chief should be; persons like herself should retire to monastic cells. The brother is sceptical. But she is resolute. The Queen has yet a suit,-- that while the rival reigns, she might at least obtain a grant from the King that part of her dower be used in building a convent where, along with the "virgin sisterhood" she can expiate the royal sin against the marriage vow. Virtue and piety ultimately pays both the penitent and the wronged.

In comparison with his earlier rather flippant lines, D'Avenant appears to be serious in looking up to historic religion though he does not forfeit a character to it. That probably would have been against the happy-ending rules of tragi-comedy.

He also seems to be attracted to the numnery for the dramatic effect it ensures. In The Distresses <sup>1</sup> he evolves what <sup>one</sup> would term, the numnery-camouflage method. That is to say, he works an intriguing plot through the conventional idea of the institution as a place of safety and refuge, and though one of the two parties in the play is deluded into believing in it, the place is non-existent. It is difficult to infer any religious attitude in the circumstances that may bear upon the question under consideration.

Shirkey is of debatable value. Since he draws expediently upon nunhood for character delineation, upon the institution for plot construction, and upon either for incidental expression that gives a glimmer of <sup>a</sup> new idea,--he may be taken as a bridge between the past and <sup>the</sup> Restoration dramatist. Possibly, as conjoint author with Chapman and Fletcher, and as friendly fellow dramatist <sup>of</sup> ~~with~~ other contemporaries, he has over the years been tempered to a fairly conciliatory attitude to all policies. The Roman Catholic faith he is known to have professed does not further the main issue as with Massinger for instance, it has been seen to do. But that apparently is because the stage and audience are of primary importance to him. When he can, he is only too careful to choose phraseology that smacks of religion and serious morality. One fails, however, to reach any spiritual heights with or through him.

In order to win applause for Lady Peregrine in The Example, <sup>2</sup> he makes Lord Fitzavarice exasperatedly remark on this ideal of married chastity, who is "all nun's flesh about her;" "no trick" serves "to thaw her chastity." His wit, five hundred pounds a year, good clothes and other "appurtenances" move her not. Hence, "would she were sent to nunnery!"

On the other hand, in The Royal Master, Shirley reveals an unpleasant historical truth in Domitilla's groundless accusation of her mother:

You<sup>would</sup> have me live a virgin; a less fortune  
Would serve me for a nun.

When subsequently the King showers his favours upon her and asks,

You have not vow'd yourself  
To a cold nunnery?

her "Not I, sir," is emphatic; though it must be borne in mind that she is being worked up to the delusion that he will procure a meet husband for her. She does not know that the Royal Sire desires her for himself. In her outspokenness and in her determined will as revealed in such words, she strikes as being a fore-runner of the Restoration heroine.

Evolving more fully out of Domitilla is Maria in The Court Secret, in the sense that the latter too shows a will of her own. To expand very far on her character however, on the basis of a stray reference to the nunnery, is neither possible nor desirable. If Domitilla affronts her mother, Maria passively resists her royal father's authority. He wants her to marry Prince Antonio but since she dares love Don Manuel, knowing how much wrath the latter has provoked, she declares that she is dedicating her life to "prayer and virgin thoughts" to merit "a better name." This sudden "fit of religion"(III,ii.) raises the father's suspicions and more strongly determines his efforts towards the match proposed. It transpires however, not only that Don Manuel loves Clara, but that he is the long-lost son to the king. Hence matters resolve of themselves through this rather tortuous plot.

Amusing one by his distantly reverential attitude towards institutional faith in the foregoing plays, the all-embracing Shirley emerges nevertheless, in The Imposture and The Sisters. More Massingerian than Massinger himself in the former, he packs his lines with "devotions", "holy virgins", "sweet society" of "Benedictine nuns" and so on, but for all that the nunnery is a place that "confines" and mortifies flesh that is fresh and fair, "exceeding fair".

'tis pity so much  
Sweet flesh should be engross'd, and barrell'd up  
With penitential pickle, 'fore their time,  
.....  
..... I do not like the woman  
Should be cabled up.

- 1. 1638.      2. I, ii.
- 3. II, i.     4. 1653.
- 5. 1640.     6. 1642.
- 7. ~~III, ii.~~ I, ii.

\* "it was cheaper to place her(in a nunnery) than to get her married." D.M. Stenton, The English

During the war, Fioretta had retired there for safety and for prayer. The father and brother on returning are afraid they have "nunnified" her; they have "frozen" her. Actually, the villain Flaviano having abducted her from the house, gives it out that she is no more for the world. Whereafter, more complications ensue. Juliana, who had been wronged by the same villain, is prevailed upon to impersonate Fioretta and to settle down with Leonato. After the chapel choir where we first meet her, she hence lands in a palace! Conscience-stricken, she confesses all. Back again her fortune takes her to the house of religion, while the right pair marries. The nunnery thus is the pivot of all intrigue and action that D'Avenant for his part, leaves to the imagination in The Distresses. And though the religious air of the place is kept intact, Shirley brings his grave mask on immediately after many a free line like Bertoldi's about "limber friends i' the nunnery"(IV,iii), the "golden apples" of Hesperides. For being rather stern (he thinks) in his poetic justice, -for making Juliana pay her "dowry" to religion as "price of her lost honour" and for earmarking her estate towards "redeeming Christian captives," -the author feels sorry for having upheld the twin cause of faith and morality so far. Consequently he redeems the grated heroine in the Epilogue spoken by her.

I am sent among nuns, to fast and pray,  
And suffer piteous penance; ha, ha, ha!  
They could no better way please my desires:  
I am no nun- but one of the Black Friars. \*

Professor Ward seems to be quite mistaken in crediting Shirley with "cordial attachment to the beliefs and institutions of a faith." <sup>1 +</sup> In so far at least as any consistency in this aspect goes.

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1. English Dramatic Literature, Vol. II, p. 309 (1875 ed.)

\* Trust R. Brome for a protracted metaphor in the following style, when in The Novella, II, ii, (1653) Paulo goes for employment to the window of one who has set a large price on her Maidenhead.

. . . . . I have serv'd  
Six, the most famous Dames, this City bred  
These sixty yeares; some scorning my advice,  
. . . . . some in pious uses  
Purchas'd them fame, almost Canonization.  
The last and least of them, Margarita Emiliana  
Founded the Augustinian Monastery.

If she does not accept his expert service at the negligible price he states, doomsday is not far  
. . . . . witness the falls  
That Pox and Poverty have brought on many!

+ Cf. "He nowhere puts himself forward as a combative Papist, but he loses no opportunity of exhibiting his attachment to the doctrines and practices of the creed professed by him."  
C.M. Gayley, Representative English Comedies, -Vol. 3, pp. 550-1.

Perhaps for fear of his stage heart running away with him again, in The Sisters, Shirley most religiously and resolutely stays out of the nunnery as if to follow the footsteps of Massinger in The Emperor of the East. The undeveloped Flaccida and Arcadia thus are combined into the arrogantly proud Paulina; and Pulcheria is reduced to the "sweet and humble" Angellina. Falling into two neat halves, the first part of the play is designed to bring out the worst in Paulina in order that Angellina may eventually shine the better- a more radically Fletcherian way of drawing out Massinger's types for stage success. The all sugar-and-candy girl "contracted" by her deceased father

Whose will I cheerfully obey, and wait  
When my good uncle will dispose me to  
A nunnery. 1

hence dutifully plays at being the medieval nun while waiting for disposal! The uncle, in fact, mortified by Paulina's behaviour, to spite her endeavours converting the sister into a court type by employing servants and suitors, fiddlers and flatterers. To no avail. She is the angel waiting for the nunnery still. The reward for this virtue is a Prince and a Palace instead. And Paulina who had mocked her for her acceptance of "the cloister", is proved to be supposititious. Thus, while the picture of the saintly ideal and the religious house is ever there and Shirley pays all lip-service to it too, he sidles up with <sup>the</sup> Elizabethan's main thought of the maid's marriage. The specious argument he has on the whole, is thus put- that since the laws of the most holy house are not inviolable, a Fierretta may be rescued from a devout life of everlasting prayer, before the managing authorities are able to cajole her or convert her; that an Angellina is too perfectly good and beautiful to be lost to the world; that the institution is not to be desecrated either since it alone can give shelter to a Juliana wronged, as also to a love-bird with bleeding-heart as Maria, when a royal father imposes his will.

e Restoration Period. The religious spasm really begins and ends with Massinger. An author like Rowley could safely be tucked under his wing. The court-cloister issue revived with the medieval theme by them is nevertheless fostered with fervour by Shirley. What he endows it with is the intrigue element and profusion of action which D'Avenant for instance, endeavours to instil into The Distresses by nunnery-camouflage but which eliminates the possibility of a holy atmosphere. From this lump apparently, two plays of the Restoration are extracted, namely, The Change of Crownes <sup>2</sup> and Juliana <sup>3</sup> - with the main ~~and~~ difference -  
1. II.ii. 2. E.Howard, 1667. 3. J.Crowne, 1671.

that though the heroines have the wherewithal to exercise their independent wills, they prove that to part with 'poison'd baits' is impossible. But The Change of Crowns contains so much more than the simple matter of choice between two lives. Machiavellian state policy conventionally linked up with religion, as not infrequently <sup>it</sup> had been factually at that level since earlier times, is brought out in Ariana's character initially. She had retired to a life of <sup>the</sup> nunnery, but leaves "her Vayle" for the Crown to which she succeeds on the death of her father. When her sister who has taken possession of it, suggests partnership, Ariana, who is anything but religious prefers sulking away in the nook of <sup>the</sup> nunnery to this sharing of "Lustre". After her second phase of retirement when she re-emerges amid tangled circumstances she ends with the Crown what she had been aiming at, and marriage what maybe she went to pray for. The satire on this game between court and cloisters is somewhat lost in the very involved plot and technique. Nonetheless, granting to her a will and a heart quite as free, this none too young heir to the throne grasps the maximum.

\*  
In Juliana it is self-evident that the Restoration dramatist is staking the last of his dramatic resources to please the eye of the Merry Monarch. What indeed could rouse the senses more than the rising effect of preparations for Juliana's renunciation just when heaven is about to smile on her after those long warring tempests she had been braving. Bedecked in royal splendour, there she sits on the throne for the space of a few brief moments while the heterogeneous spectacle of ghosts and 'nuns in white' and "Angels crown'd" moves solemnly on. Music and dance not omitted. But something is amiss. Has she named an heir? Will she not listen to last-minute entreaties and pleas? All suspense. And then, with theatrical reversal, fainting fits, drawing of daggers, a general pandemonium, the cloisters fade away for love and the crown! And ending other wise would have been disconsoling indeed for His Majesty just returning from his travels!

After whose heart, directly the Restoration Period opens, a proclamation regarding the new spirit of the age is framed by Mary Cavendish in Wit's Cabal,  
Ladies that love the World better than Heaven, and hate a Nunnery worse than Death; and by my Faith they have reason, for liberty is the joy of life, and the World is the place of sensual pleasures, and sensual pleasures are substantial in being, when pleasures after death are uncertain; but if <sup>they</sup> were certain, yet I had rather have draught of Ale in this World, than a draught of Nectar in the next.

Carnival Delights  
and Distresses.

In the world of sensual pleasures, the nunnery is a thrill the main spur for a sensational play. The object pent up whips up the desire



for the unattainable.

... By immuring those whom most we love,  
We sing and sigh only to iron-grates. . . . . 1

is the note on which The Adventures of Five Hours turns the lover into a desperado. Fire consume the tongue of the villain crying out the news of "my dear Porcia" going into a nunnery! And after all those accidents the group on her side has been through! Breath comes back on the revelation that the opposing gang has conveyed her only to a relation's house. More action, but all is well. <sup>2</sup> The Carnival similarly gyrates on an invisible nunnery. That offers scope for ambuscade too. Beatrice comes to a pass with thieves when she adopts disguise to fathom the love and sincerity of Ferdinando, while her attendant advertises her resolution for "S. Teresa's Monastery." The lover is found sound. Promptly the beloved is of "another order".

The question about religion and life passed over in these plays, is raised with a bygone force in The Change of Crownes and Juliana already reviewed. In between the spectacular denun-<sup>3</sup> ciation of cloistral existence evidenced therein, is staged An Evening's Love causing no little stir. To all appearances, the Restoration dramatist brings in careles<sup>4</sup> levity with it when he starts getting full entertainment value out of places of worship and prayer. Since thereabouts might beaux and belles go for first glimpses of one another and for eventual rendezvous. In the process of paying "devotions" to "kneeling saints" and of witnessing "imitation" ceremonies, the Prince in The Younger Brother<sup>4</sup> to wit, falls "victim" there and then; and Melinda and Parbelia in Love in the Dark<sup>5</sup> confer with "Gallants" while "spies" tell their heads. But the troupe in An Evening's Love certainly seems to head the list.

"Smutty" it was for Pegys even; and "very profane" for Evelyn. True enough, there is the not too reverent church scene followed by magic and "rondaches", and by situations in lanthorn light and darkness. Emerging from the which when the hoydens do, Alonzo passes the sentence of "nunnery" upon them. There is no other place for "strumpets". Where indeed had Webster's Angiolella carried her bastard or Shirley's Juliana her wrong? The pronouncement is provocative. "All the women" echo with choral effect "A Nunnery!" Jacintha (Nell Gwynn- the spoilt child of the time), who shocked Collier in his turn past mention, confronts the tyrant:

I would have thee to know, thou graceless old man, that I defy a  
Nunnery: Name a Nunnery once more, and I disown thee for my Father. . . . . 6

1. S. Tuke, I, 1663.
2. T. Porter, 1664.

3. J. Dryden, or the Mock Astrologer, 1668.
4. A. Behn, or, The Amorous Jilt, I, i, 1696.
5. F. Fane, or, The Man of Business; I, 1675.
6. V, i.

This is mutiny. Not that an earlier daughter was a perfect picture of obedience. Shakespeare's Hermia to wit, had run away. But in speech she was not half as irreverent. It might however be remembered, that the Duke had run from explanation of the law of "death" into difficulties of nunnery existence. With no great dissimilarity, Lopez, the deciding authority in Dryden's play, pins the point down to:

You know the Customs of the Country, in this case, Sir: 'tis  
~~the~~ either death or marriage. 1

Hermia's father had said precisely that in her case too. \*

Since old thoughts thus is getting wrapped up in the Restoration spirit of revelry and revolt, one should, one feels, be able to reach out to fresher conclusions: With renewed interest too, as there is also introduced a Reformationistic scene in retrospective action, of part foreign element,

In Italy at Carnival time in the fifteenth century the  
 favourite songs tell of nuns who leave their convents for  
 a lover. 2

and part domestic, of about the same time<sup>as</sup> when "nonnes" ran after "so freshe" and "so fre"<sup>3</sup>  
 Liberty. Of course, the picture now is the completer with the bit about Liberty also meeting them at the nunnery-grates. That is, if they have not paired off before or after the investiture ceremony and left father and guardian straggling behind through crowds at church, chapel or carnival.

"Ladies of quality," the one "professed," the other "designed" are falling sick and tired of virtue and chastity behind the grates in The Assignation.<sup>4</sup> Hence his noble gallants looking for diversions. Bloods on both sides warm up. These procure masking-habits, and those contrive well to resign their "nunship" for "one fling into the sweet world."

Hang <sup>it</sup> ~~it~~, at worst, 'tis but one sin more, and then  
 we'll repent for all together. 5

The ball and merriment over, back they come to the flock. Through the nunnery grates then lips and hands meet "half iron, half flesh." Qualified distinctions are made between worldly love and the religious. Having tasted both the agonies of the lock-up and carnival delights in the company of gallants, marital knots indeed follow. In this -----

1. An Evening's Love, or the Mock-Astrologer, V, i.

2. E. Power, Medieval English Nunneries, p. 505.

3. J. Skelton, Magnificence.

4. J. Dryden, or Love in a Nunnery, 1672.

5. III, i.

Perhaps  
 following facts in mind (according to J. William, All Souls Reader in  
 Roman Law, Consuetudines, Oxford) that adultery was punished with death by

play, runs and lovers meet half-way. But Hellena and Cornelia in The Rover and The Feign'd Curtizans respectively, the one to be admitted, the other "bred in a Monastery" to whistle all their lives away,--sweep like whirlwinds to seek lovers since they haven't so far any. Hellena to be sure, leads the paler elder sister and the governess in charge of both to the carnival! She meets the roving band of Cavaliers, picks up the Rover himself, "swings" his "Appetites" with her prospective "nunhood", runs riot in as many changes of dress as time permits, and resolves the problem of her own victimization to the nunnery <sup>that of</sup> and her sister's to enforced marriage. The characters of the second play radiate but slightly altered colours. The "meat, drink, air and light" is flaming love excited by the 'nunnery' type. Hellena was the moving spirit of the carnival, now Cornelia poses as courtesan just for the night. One loses count how many times these heroines flaunt "nun" and "nunnery" about while on their very venturesome pursuits. Hence are dramatic contrasts achieved vividly. And acclamations as "best known comddy" (The Rover) "one of Mrs. Behn's happiest efforts" (The Feign'd Curtizans) ensue.

Trust Shadwell to bluster about with fire-works, Essential unquestionably to any carnival Through his stage-deputy, Don John, The Libertine, a father is killed, fortunes are lost, reputations are ruined and daughters are driven

Clar. to the next Monastery, and  
~~and~~ there spend all our weary life in Penitence.  
 Flav. Let's fly to our last Sanctuary in this World; and  
~~And~~ try, by a Religious life, to expiate this Crime: 6

The hero goes to view "the stately Nunnery by", chats with "the poor sanctified Fools, till it's dark" and "chabbers" for "Nuns-flesh". So brags he to Dons Antonio and Lopez who come to seek counsel concerning one "this day" "plac'd there for probation." Are the walls so high? Is the Nunnery so strongly fortifi'd? Don John boggles at no difficulty on so "honourable" an occasion.

Why, I will set Fire on the Nunnery; Fire the Hive, and the Drones must out, or be burnt within; Then (you may) with Ease, under Pretence of Succour, take whom you will. 7

'Tis a gallant design, most gallantly carried out. Shouts of "Fire", to which the trio add full-throated cries; laments of "Help!", to which they hearken amid pell-mell

1. A. Behn, Or The Banish't Cavaliers, 1677.

2. A. Behn, or A Night's Intrigue, 1679.

3. M. Summers, The Works of Aphra Behn, Memoir, Vol. I.

4. Ibid.

5. 1675. 7. V.

6. IV.

extraordinary. More wails. And they are there to render aid. Poetic justice<sup>1</sup> thunder, lightning, fire and all effects of Doomsday. Otway, notwithstanding, is unmoved by this new show-business. He still nurses an<sup>2</sup> old grievance against "a Kennel of Cramm'd Friers" and yet fumes over "a Charnel House".

Much ado it most certainly is; but because it still is the story of distressed virginity. Elvira in The Counterfeits<sup>3</sup> like the heroine in The Carnival gives it out through her maid that "her false Vitelli" has driven her with "no small Grief" to "the Convent of Molbietro". In virtual truth, she goes breeched about as "a Knight of Malta" who

has vow'd Destruction to all Pretenders to Chastity. You'll scarce believe it, but the sight of a Nun through a Grate, though he thinks her chaste upon force, puts him into an Agony. 4

Full in the know<sup>ledge</sup> of that provocative fact therefore, the damsel<sup>5</sup> in distress, Maria, goes to the masque in The Fortune-Hunters; clad in the robes of a nun! Senses spark up all a-fire. Littlegad alights on her with: "throw off this Garb of sorrow"; he'll make her a "Glorious Princess of the Earth," 'll immortalise<sup>6</sup> her Name; Sir William ejaculates:

What a Pox a Nun, is that thy Choice then, i'll build Churches, 6

and bristles up despite his years, for the dance of "the Frier upon the Nun" and the widow, her rival to Junior Wealthy, burns in wrath,--wonders why she could not think of this ingenious subterfuge. In utter confusion the Masque soon breaks up. And a scene paralleling contemporary accounts of May-Day Routs, the Decrees and the Routs ends alas that role of Maria's, whereafter she assumes another in order to procure her love.

Heavier clouds hang over Rosania in The Amorous Bigotte:<sup>7</sup> She might actually be in the nunnery any moment now. Therefore does she cook up the tale about the "holy Woman" of "the Sisterhood of St. Clare" when she sends her S.O.S. to Doristea for "rescue" "as soon as it is Light". And she conjures her cousin;

If ever Life or Liberty were dear to thee, if ever Love enter'd thy tender Breast, . . . pity my sad Condition. Must I be buried while alive with Melancholy and Green-sickness'd-Nuns? (y) 9

("melancholy young Eaters of Chalk"). And she blatters<sup>yaves</sup> on,--no woman, with any "sense", with any

1. Friendship in Fashion, III, 1678.

2. Ibid., IV.

3. --, 1679.

4. II, i.

5. J. Carliie, or Two Fools well met, 1689.

6. III, ii.

7. T. Shadwell, 1689.

8. V.

9. T. Shadwell, The Humorists, II, 1691.

"warmth of blood" in her, would ever allow herself to get interned.

So, if the father in Sir Antony Love is brutal enough to despatch the daughter who contemplates rather persuading a man

to make a sinner of me, rather than suffer my father  
to make a saint so much before my time.

there are bound to be billet-doux bolted through bars. Charlott well continues to secure her sister's marriage with whom the latter desires. As for herself, she rests content with the match that was being thrust upon the elder, since "out of love with the nunnery", "any man would be as welcome".

Never before nor after, all said, was there so vigorous a hunt of the liberty-loving nun<sup>1</sup> for the rover and ranter; <sup>2</sup> of the rover and ranter for the nun converting "dull virtuous life" into "the world of Dark-Lanthorn Men", "the Serenades, the Songs, the Sighs, the Vows, the Presents, the Quarrels" (The Feign'd Courtizans, II,i); for saint among sinners <sup>2</sup> nor for sinners among saints. But for all that giddy rapidity, the playwright never relinquished the moral law. The hoax was honest. The play was fair. Smartness sought only to match the unsound unseemly strength of a guardian. When however, Millamant in The Way of the World sought to prolong and increase her prenuptial glamour with her demand upon Mirabell,

I'll fly and be follow'd to the last Moment, tho' I am upon the very  
Verge of Matrimony. I expect you should solicit me as much as if  
I were wavering at the Grate of a Monastery, with one foot over the  
Threshold. I'll be solicited to the very last, nay and afterwards.

Congreve, of all dramatists, complied to the utmost with the truth, with the permanent and universal values of human nature.\* For,

Unquestionably, her charm, consciously cultivated though it be,  
emanates from something more enduring than scent, more tangible  
than similitudes.

3

The nucleus of a perfect coquette was there when the world was young, and indeed has not been killed with the winding up of a Restoration Carnival.

Generalising upon the existing facts nonetheless, when one witnesses a back-yard escape from the nunnery in Sir Anthony Love for instance, it becomes apparent that these girls are

1. T.Southerne, or, The Rambling Lady, II,i.1691.

2. W.Congreve, IV,v,1700.

3. Paul and Mariam Mueschke, A New View of Congreve's Way of the World, p.30.

\* Cf. The newly-invested heroine of the hour who passes through an exciting experience.

..... "the crowds that filled the church-the pathway and altar  
strewn with flowers- the public applause-the gaze of strangers-

the chorus of runs-the blessings of cardinals-the flattery of priests, and the tears of  
Nuns and Nunneries, p.19. (Seeley's, Fleet Street, London, 1852.) friends-

as much the creatures of circumstances as Maria in The Fortune-Hunters enrobing herself or as Hellena running away from the robes in The Rover; that a good part of their flash and flare is acquired from the grim prison-house, actual or suggestive, that looms large before and behind, each evasion and flight; also that spirits are heightened because of the carnival merry-go-round, albeit, the author feels sorry at the thought that those there are who are prevented from draining the pleasures of life to the lees. "Aphra", it is said, "could lie, and lie with conviction," with respect to The Fair Jilt. Because one is impelled to declare, that despite the inglorious character she draws out in this novel, her romantic heart flies to the nun much the same way as the medieval did to the damsel, or the Victorians ~~was to~~ to the governess. When one picks up her plays with an open mind one must be struck by the conviction with which she uses metaphors such as of the "young Nun the day she is invested", "the vestal Nun" and so on. Part of her heart rests with the innocent. Therefore was it possible for Southern to found his tragedy The Fatal Marriage on her work. Therefore ~~does~~ her nun in a play endears herself besides the additional fact that bright and beautiful as she is, the penniless rake whom Mrs. Behn loves also, must obtain her, must stretch out his arm, <sup>\*</sup> to lest she fall into the dungeon. Contemporary agitated thought is over the object of captivity and not over religious issues. <sup>The sketching of</sup> ~~Complexion~~ for each character is taken from that central fact.

Shadwell too, notwithstanding his bludgeonings, is thus as helpful in detecting her victimiser, is as daring in giving her with ~~with~~ and tongue to lay bare the circumstances

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1. V. Sackville-West, Aphra Behn, pp. 26-7.

2. The Dutch Lover, I, ii, 1673.

3. The Emperor of the Moon, I, ii, 1687.

\* Lines as below are not taken into account.

Jac. Have a care of Nunnery, lest he take you at your word.

Isa. I would not for the world, no, Jacintha, when ever thou seest me in Holy Orders, the World will be at an End.

A. Behn, The False Count or, A New Way to Play an Old Game, I, ii, 1681.

of her case. And not solely out of the partiality that that age, it is assumed, had for youth. Dryden of all had to face most fire. But what is there to prevent one from thinking and believing that the idea of the nunnery in The Assignation was drawn from Shirley's "high fantastical" Bird in a Cage? Or even from conjecturing that the latter's religiosity prevented him from converting the cage with its romantic damoiselles into the grey-stoned stronghold? Dryden meant no ill-will when he could end the Epilogue to his play with the couplet

His nuns are good, which on the stage are shown,  
And, sure, behind our scenes you'll look for none.

Shirley's postscript to The Imposture aforementioned might only be compared.

The trouble is, that a Restoration dramatist on the average renders himself infamous for the irreverent manner in which he does it, yet his masquerade reveals an irksome truth, his carnival condemns an arrant knave. Above all, his spoken word besmirches aright; it does not calumniate out of spite. In fact, he does a lot more than his ancestor who thought he did a good job by talking or taking a maid out of an oubliette. and who thought it does not calumniate out of spite. In fact, he does a lot more than his ancestor who he did not do it in private when a couple had taken a paper was an imposing, unbecoming sight when Tweedledee was as good. From those elementary anti-nunnery devices Webster advanced a good stride when alongside of an enforced marriage problem he showed that the guardian-brother was a thorough villain. His maid notwithstanding, was in sorry plight before and

\* The treatment of the nun in the plays of this period seems to be little affected by the Monarch's faith or by the contemporary religious controversy arising from the conversion of the Duke of York in 1671 or 1672. ~~But~~ Although it is surmised that the Catholics "were very strong both in the theatrical world and in the Court circles" (C. Hollis, Dryden, p. 63) and were responsible for the "failure" of The Assignation, it was still possible for Crowne to effect a caricature of the Sect in City Politics (1673) and subsequent to the Titus Oates flare-up in 1678, for Dryden to write The Spanish Friar (1680) which may have inspired Shadwell's Irish Friar in the character of Teague O Dively in The Amorous Bigotte (1689). Can the religious issues be taken seriously when at any rate, it is argued that the first poet-laureate was a weathercock, even if the second had certain loyalties and convictions? That both whipped left and right is of greater import. Says a mouthpiece of the first in An Evening's Love for instance, "I am a very zealous Catholick: and for fornication and adulterie, I assure you I hold with both Churches" (I, ii.). And says that of the second in The Lancashire Witches (1681) "the Church of Rome allows Fornication. And truly it is much practis'd in our Church too" (V). This is before and after 1671.

L.I. Bredvold in The Intellectual Milieu of John Dryden (Appendix D, pp. 164-84) gives a penetrating analysis of the English Catholic opinion in the reign of James II. Essential to the understanding of Dryden in the round though it be, the plays I allude to only support a consistent, unabated movement on the comic stage against the nunnery. Hence is of little value to such work here.  
(Mich. Univ. Pub., Language and Literature, Vol. XII, 1934).

after The Devil's Law-Case settlements. Shirley's single line pointed out in The Royal Master could have got lost, is as good as lost since he clamped his hand upon Domitilla's mouth directly she had opened it.

The coolly-considered truth consequently is the present author's cause and concern beneath all his rowdiness. If blood in An Evening's Love has coursed a little too wildly, it is brought into normal pace by marriage. Webster's Romelio cared not a fig for setting muns to midwifery. The moral law is much too strict now for matters to reach that far with a maid. Indeed, the author is on the look-out for members of the entire gang involved in harming her. Only while he is at his job, he lets her sometimes go out to play, noon or night. And over this point of relaxation arises almost an irretrievable rift between him and his judges. And he is branded Badman.

Accepting the possibility that The Mall<sup>1</sup> is only a dressed-up version of Dryden's Ladies a la Mode<sup>2</sup> written as early as his scandalous An Evening's Love, and treating it as his, one would rather be inclined to add more marks to his total score of merit for tracking "the old decrepped Miser Under". Old Easy forbids niece Grace to have so much as a peep out of a window. Either marriage to a knight or he'll make "a Nun" of her.

thou shalt languish with the thoughts of flesh, and  
every day shall be a Good-Friday to thee. 3

The young Mrs.Easy however, supports her,

I know too well the torment of forc'd Marriages to  
wish thee that punishment. 4

There is the Restoration "Masquerade" Dryden is so fond of, to which Amorous the lover is invited. And as a result of tricks, Grace is able to have her way. But the issue of the nunney is though such a plot extended by the author from a case of forced marriage, on to its aftermath and still further on to finance. It was truly "cheaper" to dump a girl there. This verdict on existing and past social conditions is elaborated fully in The Assignation, a play of which only a one-sided view is taken when it is supposed that the blasphemous and atheistic part could have been written under the influence of Rochester and such idle companions. Mario is another member of the gang, who, because of the "vast fortunes" Laura and Violetta possess, refuses to find fit

1. or, The Modish Lovers, 1674.

2. Scott and Saintsbury, Dryden's Dramatic Works, Vol.8, p. 645.

3. The Mall, or, The Modish Lovers, I,ii.

4. Ibid.

5. D.Stenton, The English Woman in History, p.43.

6. C.Hollis, Dryden, p.53.



matches and denies consent to those in love with them. They are as "mew'd up" at home as Lucretia and Hippolita in the nunnery proper are. And after we have stood testimony to a dark trysting-hour, we find them on "pension" in the same pound. The not too bad Abbess Sophronia helps them out because of their honest confession and because she knows about the "sordid avarice" of the "domestic tyrant" Mario, incidentally, her brother. But Dryden does not spare her either. When the Duke wants to gain admittance to Lucretia, it is she who permits him soon enough after he has recounted his "vision" of a "fair virgin" and the "great endowment" he has accordingly to make to the monastery. Which earlier author had told us half as many reasons when he had opposed the religious institution?

<sup>1</sup>  
In The French Conjuror, the evil is even more complex. Sabina speaks of having "been several times with them for gold-wyre for the use of the Convent"(I), the Lady Abbess of which spends time and money "making heavenly preparation for herself and all her good friends" ~~and~~ much different from the hypocritical "Puritans". And Clorinda is

forced to appear willing to live and die in a Nunnery,  
to humour my Father's covetous resolution of saving a  
portion by me. Though I am satisfied, I cannot live  
without my Dorido.

2

Hence all that cock-and-bull story about the lover's religious fervour too. Indeed, when Clorinda is so obviously designed "for a Mother of a most glorious issue", "how can her beauty be "connealed like a Taper in a Tomb"? Why indeed does Hellena in The Rover race at that maddening pace through carnival and masque? "Three hundred thousand Crowns" left her by an uncle, bring to the brother the bright idea of a nunnery for her right away. Why is Rosania getting panicky? Belliza, her aunt- (The Amorous Bigotte) is to "suddenly" send her to "a Monastery" on the most solid of solid grounds, - "Her Fortune then will come to me!" (III,1.) Alas, but another aunt, The Amorous Widow cannot save the cash, cannot obtain the match she is contesting for, because of some scruples about religion. Yet her heart does give an extra beat when the lover caught playing with the niece's palm shows the nunnery-line therein. The parent in Sir Antony Love has his own logic. One daughter is enough to marry and to carry on the family name. The other can conveniently be cast away. Finally though, both get themselves extricated from the nunnery.

1. -1678.

2. II.

3. T. Betterton, Or, The Wanton Wife, 1670.

\* Ben Jonson had lashed men-folk mainly of various orders, e.g. Tribulation Wholesome in The Alchemist, and Zeal-of-the-land Busy in Bartholomew Fair.

Having in such manner discovered a gang long lain under covert, the culminating point in his sense of justice is when the Restoration dramatist combines the economic with the moral values. Since, if thought of the nunnery is accelerated in the oldster's head, why so, is the vital truth also exposed by him. Easy in The Mall mistrusts the young "blades" of the time, Gomez<sup>z</sup> in The Counterfeits forbids marriage with a "a Perjur'd man", similarly another safeguarding the future of a quieter daughter or niece with a greyer head and stowing away the more unmanageable one in a nunnery, <sup>\*</sup>mirror the times only too well. It is a veritable problem to find proper, reliable matches and a greater problem still to preserve virtue and honour. The nunnery meets more than half-way this situation, particularly when purse-strings are in tight grip. At any rate, it is no mere survival of a traditional figure of speech.

The Rise of Nationalism. Taking stock of the entire situation therefore, in the name of the virgin-heiress falling prey to this complex of socio-religious evils, the dramatist whips up masque and carnival. To the which, he invites the sated penniless rake and gives him a fair bid to reform, to redress and to win the reward of her hand. (~~By Jones~~, And isn't it worth it!) The sound bargain struck, the glint in the benefactor's eye is from even sounder polity behind. The Monarch and his men probably during their sojourn and journeyings abroad had cultivated the nationalistic sentiment <sup>+</sup> well enough to embed it hereafter at home. Little did Ravenscroft and others (even now) see beneath when they swooped down upon Dryden's liftings from Calderon and Corneille for An Evening's Love. In rebuttal, the vexed author exclaimed ~~have with them~~.

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\* Research is being done on the subject i.e. Enforced Marriages etc. during the Restoration (by A. Mr. Vernon, London University).

+ Further evidence is in lines such as:

- (i) I do not love to change my Religion; but if we had a nunnery for Protestants, and I were of her Age, it should be the first thing I would do--(The Amorous Widow, III, 1670).
- (ii) rather than marry my cousin, I will be a nun in the new protestant nunnery they talk of.  
(W. Wycherley, The Gentleman Dancing-Master, I, i, 1672.)
- (iii) The country is as terrible, I find to our young English ladies, as a monastery to those abroad.  
(W. Wycherley, The Country Wife, IV, i, 1674).

"I do not take into account casual lines as

"I hope you are a better Christian than to think of living a nun." etc.

(W. Congreve, The Double-Dealer, IV, iii).

the design of it turns more on the part of Wildblood  
and Jacintha, who are the chief persons in it.

1 \*

The hero, his contribution, is of "the English" ambassadorial train, because of which fact Jacintha falls victim to his figure and form. Above all, despite his earlier rogueries, he is a man of honour and saves her from death or imprisonment in the nunnery. Dryden makes his broader declaration however in The Assignment:

The monastery has begun the war, in sallying out upon the  
world; and therefore 'tis but just that the world should  
make reprisals on the monastery.

2

Which may be taken along with the interpretation in The Rover when Hellena accosts Willmore's  
"English Heart,"

Hell. Can you storm?

Will. Ch, most furiously.

Hell. What think you of a Nunnery, Will? for he  
that wins me, must gain that first.

3

"The English," continues she, "that's sort of good natur'd People." Because this Cavalier,  
this Rover, this neo-national hero sets free those victimised or threatened. Hence conditions  
as the above for courtship. Hence admiration for his assurance of the deed. Hellena in point  
of fact, had learnt "to sigh and sing, and blush and wish, and dream and wish" all at once  
when the brother had announced the nunnery for her and "the fine English colonel" for her sister.  
"Ay! an English Cavalier too" conquers Cornelia's heart in The Feign'd Curtizans and spares  
her from whistling her life away caged. Therefore does the Abbé himself in Sir Antony Love  
have a soft heart. He gives too much liberty to "Englishmen in his family". So Count Canaille  
protests, for his chances are being lost thereby. But, proceeds the argument

your Englishmen are the fittest men for husbands in the world: 5

1. Preface.

2. IV,i.

3. I,ii.

4. II,i.

5. II.

\* N.B. Allen, for instance, in The Sources of John Dryden's Comedies (Michigan) pp. 156-7,  
gives a resumé of the "mélange" the play is. His referring of Wildblood and  
Jacintha to corresponding characters in Molière's Le Dépit amoureux is far-fetched  
I believe. The motive of Dryden's introduction of the English character moreover,  
is only pointed out, not developed. It could easily be inferred why two "groups"  
appear in his play as indeed in The Rover, Sir Antony Love, etc. The critic ignores  
the above guiding line from the Preface.

+ The cult of the 'Liberty-loving Englishman' starts hereon just as 'The Englishman's  
home is his Castle' in the later 18th century, or 'Britons shall never be Slaves' in  
the 19th Century.

x The Prince in Mrs. Behn's The Younger Brother falls in love with an "English"  
girl being initiated. The rest follows.

So English husbands will he have: Because they are the saviours of nunnery-birds once more.

Yet all this is in the full liberating spirit of the carnival. The maid's distresses dissolve, the prodigal resolves return, the elder's discomfiture is wrought amid cheer and chastisement. An <sup>epi</sup>logue of later vintage, which ~~is~~ <sup>is appended</sup> by Mrs. Behn to The Rover, runs:

THE banist Cavaliers! A Roving Blade!  
A Popish Carnival! a Masquerade!  
The Devil's in't if this will please the Nation,  
In these our blessed Times of Reformation,  
When Conventicling is so much in Fasion. 1

~~is appended by Mrs. Behn to The Rover.~~ From it apparently the purist Southerne elicits his more filtered expression in Sir Antony Love,

we make a carnival; all the year a carnival:  
every man his woman, and a new one at every  
town we come at. 2

Not overloading one's exposition any farther, it emerges that since he is straight-forward in his dealings, since he has no inhibitions, and since the entire religious set-up does not fit in with his fancy, the Restoration dramatist declares so in adequate measure. If say, he looks into a nunnery, it smells of rank nepotism and financial exploitation of one party or another negotiating with it. Consequently, blades and bullies in Guzman <sup>3</sup> prowl around its groves, have rencounters there till the trail they are on brings them to a treasure-trove. If say, looking into it further, he makes so intent and exhaustive a conjugation of religion in relation to woman in The Disappointment, <sup>4</sup>

. . . . . I've made  
A study of the sex, and found it frail;  
The black, the brown, the fair, the old, the young,  
Are earthly-minded all: There's not a she  
The coldest constitution of the sex,  
Nay, at the altar, telling o'er her beads,  
But someone rises on her heavenly thoughts,  
That drives her down the wind of strong desire,  
And makes her taste mortality again. . . . .

it is because of the acceptance of nature's law regarding man and woman, how they stand, each to each. If say, Congreve for one turns out to be "the last and most illustrious of the Sons of Ben", <sup>5</sup> there is presumably multiple sense in his satire when Valentine in <sup>6</sup>

Love for Love counterfeiting madness propounds,

- 
1. I.
  2. II, i.
  3. R. Boyle, 1693.
  4. T. Southerne, or The Mother in Fasion, <sup>h</sup> 1684.
  5. Paul and Miriam Mueschke, A New View of Congreve's Way of The World, p. 82.
  6. IV, xv, 1695.

.....Angelica is turn'd nun, and I am turning friar, and yet we'll marry one another in spite of the pope. Get me a cowl and beads, that I may play my part; for she'll meet me two hours hence in black and white, and a long veil to cover the project, and we won't see one another's faces, till we have done something to be ashamed of, and then we'll blush once for all.

And when Millamant in The Way of The World talks of the monastery in the process of qualifying her demands upon Mirabell, maybe she tinkers for the while with <sup>the</sup> thought of her probable fate, common to heiresses, since her aunt sits tight on her deeds and documents. Maybe, knowing how much he is in need of her money, she implies that his love should supercede all factors even if the worst comes to the worst and she is driven to don the habit. But the issue the playwright as a rule makes of institutional religion is, that no longer is it an individual affair since the individual is subordinate to the state and society. Hence Valentine's allusion to the 'Pope is wider in connotation and has more emotional force than that in Mrs. Behn's Prologue. Hence too Congreve's 'rakishness, relinquishing' heroes are settled finally on their own soil.

\* \* \* \*

On putting together the dissected parts of some Restoration plays and proceeding with the examination beyond 1700, once again one pounces on the critic's oversight, For what he leaves unattended to when classifying plays with foreign sources and settings is, why the author bends these to his ends. It is not for dearth of ideas but for convenience' sake that he pursues the matter of the nunnery through them. In plays like The Adventures of Five Hours, The Carnival, The Counterfeits, he intertwines the picaresque or intrigue element with the nunnery-camouflage. But when the purpose of his creating an atmosphere of intense action and dialogue wound up taut with urgency is to convey his ideas about the stronghold with a one-way entry to it, he establishes thereby a hybrid tradition, shall we say. Since what arises out of local sentiment is planted on a foreign soil that is certainly more congenial. The creative genius in plays like An Evening's Love or The Rover gets scope to add more indigenous material. Through the English group amid foreigners, for example, nationalistic opinion on nunhood and the nunnery is facilely propagated. Mrs. Behn declared however, that she had also drawn from Tom Killigrew's Thomaso, or The Wanderer. He, in turn, from Fletcher's Captain. Which is really beside the point. But if the last author too

borrowed his plot of Valentine, Cellide and Frank from D'Urfe's L'Astree for Monsieur Thomas,

evidently it was because it was befitting to his nunnery scene. In the eighteenth century too, it will be apparent, the author has recourse to this 'hybrid tradition' so that he can conduct his campaign. It is indeed a method well conceived of whereby if he does not precisely go about <sup>throwing</sup> dropping bricks, he, at any rate, suggests psychologically that it is all an un-English affair. The undiscerning might still take it as a play with good dress parts and an unfamiliar way of life. But that is a different matter.

1700-1800. National sentiment, home-truths and religion stand out bolder and bolder as we draw closer to the eighteenth century and further on particularly towards Fielding. Whereafter the Restoration influences may not appear to be quite so direct. During this period somehow, the subject itself is reduced sometimes to sheer mockery and an earlier serious intent and purpose is converted into open propaganda. The new century in fact, dawns on not a little ribaldry either, when, sinking into coarser parlance, the dramatist still prefers to remain on his travels abroad. Is it a "Picture" of a "Jilt"? The man trying to conceal it prevaricates, "She's a nun in Brussels". Has the tourist gone further with an affair? "In Portugal," yes. He did not stay there, was hard pressed for time,

I only call'd in there at the Salvation-Office, just bought  
an Annuity of Indulgences for Life; got an Assurance for my  
Soul; lay with a Nun, flux'd; and so came home again. 2

This is Cibber, who for The Non-Juror, for treating Dr. Wolf in it as a fifth columnist on account of his Roman Catholicism, brought a hornet's nest about his ears.

Eliminating <sup>such a theatrically effective play</sup> ~~for the nonce, not bad theatre~~ such as Love's a Jest, wherein threat of a Nunnery hastens matters to a clandestine marriage, a halt is cried at Farquhar. Having collected energy probably during the year of the jubilee of Pope Innocent XII when he wrote The Constant Couple, he eventually despatched his English hero, Sir Harry Wildair "all the Way to Rome" for the fusillade. And when Dick followed with news of the love-sick Lady's death and of the hubbub they had created over her <sup>bur</sup>ial, where do you think he found the noble knight?

Why, in the Middle of a Monastery, among a hundred and fifty Nuns, playing at Hot-cockles...when I told him the sad Story, he roar'd out a whole Volley of English Oaths upon the Spot, and swore that he would set Fire on the Pope's Palace for the Injury done to his Wife. (I,

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1. D'Urfey, A Jilt in all Humours, III, i, 1697.

2. C. Cibber, Love makes a Man, or The Fop's Fortune, IV, 1700.

3. P. A. Motteux, 1696.

4. 1701.

He got over his grief at thought of "revenge", drove to a "Nunnery,"

Why, in a Matter of five Days he got six  
Nuns with Child, and left 'em to provide for  
their Heretick Bastards.

and had the dare-devilry to travel back through all the Catholic countries too!.

Out of nationalistic zeal then Farquhar betakes himself to Fletcher for a loan of  
The Wild-Goose Chase and turning it to good account in The Inconstant, gives us the remnants  
of his Romish thoughts. Poor Oriana has long been waiting for inconstant Mirabel to return.  
So, at long last, he does. With "Relicks" from "Rome" for her.

I do remember now you made a Vow of Chastity before my  
departure; A Vow of Chastity, or something like it;  
was it not, Madam?

(II)

She is worth her weight in gold. Ten thousand pounds besides. But Mirabel just will not  
honour the long-standing contract, let alone her constant love. He is willing to make her  
his mistress, if she will. Else he mocks her with her "Vow of Virginity", and his offerings  
from Rome. Now,

the vicissitudes of Fortune, the inconstancy of Man,  
with other disappointments of life, requires some Place  
of Religion, for a refuge from their Persecution.

Oriana seeks it out. In the company of her femme de chambre, we meet her in this new boudoir,  
the nunnery-cell that is to say, where she has just been draped and now stands admiring herself  
and winning words of wonder. The habit becomes her so. Indeed, she looks ten times handsomer  
than she did before. A few musings over the repentant sinner to whom she had refused to grant  
audience, and soon there is a stir. Nettled at his repulse, in comes Mirabel as "brother-  
friar" to "sister". Down he falls on his knees. But the nun-beloved breaks into tears of  
avowed "Separation". At this tense moment, the coil suddenly snaps with the old father

1. I.  
2. or, The Way to win Him, 1702.  
3. II, i.  
4. IV, ii.

\* The hero seems to be a projection of the author's self.

Cf. "Whether in quest of wife or mistress his recovery from frustration was like the  
bounce of a ball: before he knew it he was up in the same air again. . . any  
woman of moderate attractions was enough to set his fancy awirl."

W. Connely, Young George Farquhar, pp. 148-9.

+ The above-quoted critic pays no particular attention to the nunnery scene.

L.B. Wallis (Fletcher, Beaumont and Company, pp. 47-8) too refers only to Farquhar's "A  
Discourse upon Comedy" - and to the following-up of his decision in taking Fletcher for source.

turning up and letting it out that it is only a well-contrived mortification. Petulantly the poor dear flings aside her robes, the sinner too his, and dashes off for a fling again.

Dryden's Love in a Nunnery was comparatively a misnomer. Love at the nunnery-grates was what <sup>we</sup> witnessed then. Now when Gay gets his day he presents his The Wife of Bath as what in essence, is a masque of nuns. Indeed, he over-reaches Farquhar's nationalism in going past Fletcher, via Chaucer, to a medieval superstition, and coming back with a sweep through the Restoration. The experienced widow plays palmist to Myrtilla in nun's habit. "Fye, fye .... and shall a Lady that hath all her five Senses to Perfection, with the Bloom on her Cheeks, and Sprightliness in her Eyes, hide all those Charms in a Cloister?" (I, i.) In that "Hospital" for the "maimed!" (This supercedes Ben Jonson's, Dryden's, Farquhar's definitions). "A Husband is every Woman's Concern." She herself has had five. Number six is in the make. Can Myrtilla go without even one? But the maid is superstitious. She has been told that "virginity" is to be her state. So what? "This is St. Agnes's-Night." Yet there is time. The nun of Act I is in Act III ready in wait, with "Cake. . . and . . . Bottle of Wine", for Chaucer to appear as <sup>the</sup> apparition. And hasn't the "apparition" got fire in him! He well-nigh had run her mad with a precipitate act. Wherefore plays he astrologer-poet next time to woo her and win her. Myrtilla in Act IV is transformed; Trying on ribbons too. Senses have returned. Only

those young Ladies, who protest their Modesty in a Nunnery, lay themselves extremely open to Censure.

All the picaresque Restoration element bottled up by Gay <sup>5</sup>bursts into this stage masquerade with the widow enrobing herself in turn and prevailing upon the inclining Monk; with Myrtilla's maid donning the habit -ahem-to speedily marry Doggrell under Chaucer's surveillance; with Florinda learning the "Duty of Filial Obedience" under Doublechin/indeed to melt him with the "Vows" of his "Order". The escapade of this maid number three brings cries and imprecations of her father upon the "covetous Rogue" enticing her

to Sacrifice her Fortune to a Monastery?..... Ah, they  
have ruined many a poor foolish Girl to enrich the Brotherhood. 2

Not "Sisterhood", mind you.

1. 1713.

2. V.

\* Cf. Congreve's Love for Love.



The much decried Restoration artist had not turned his talent to half such blatant accounts. Nor was his speech replete with vulgarity as Gay's medico-researchist's in-  
Three Hours after Marriage when boosting up the sales of his discovery with the testimonial,

De Archbishop did make Obligation to de Nun to take  
it every ninth Month.

Even the galled Middleton had begun and stopped at "savin-tree" and "killings". Even  
D'Urfey had a cleaner sense of the fun when he rhymed

The Fryer took him (Devil) for a Fool:  
He piqu'd, and re-piqu'd him so oft,  
That at last he swore by the Jolly fat Nuns.

Mrs. Behn and her contemporaries had the welfare and love of the "nun" at heart.  
Therefore had they stood shoulder to shoulder to set her free,---scarcely to enjoy smutty  
jokes at her expense. If Don Juan had gone out of Shadwell's control in setting fire to  
the "hive" though to succour virgins in woe, he had sent him right down to hell mid roars  
and peals of thunder that all might hear poetic justice had been done.

But the eighteenth century is losing all sense of proportion. Mrs. Centlivre, the  
critic protests, "was far from using the stage as pulpit." One differs. And for reasons  
simply refers to The Wonder: A Woman Keeps a Secret wherein the Restoration lighter note  
spurts into an anthem.

Liberty is the idol of the English, under whose banner  
all the nation lists:

And Colonel Briton, a rather heavyweight champion, is sent abroad with his Highland  
attendant for group assessments and judgments and for more like showing himself off.

. . . . . but to behold such Troops of soft, plump, tender, melting,  
wishing, nay willing Girls too, thro' a damn'd Grate, gives us  
Britons strong Temptations to plunder. Ah, Frederick! your  
Priests are wicked Rogues. They immure Beauty for their own  
proper Use, and show it only to the Laity to create Desires,  
and inflame Accompts, that they may purchase pardons at a  
dearer Rate.

And the ~~ills~~ <sup>ills</sup> at home that the pre-1700 dramatist had exposed with honesty and humour  
are smugly cast on the other side of the channel to become Briton's burden. And

Isabella is made to chant on "pleasant lives women lead in England", while  
.. The custom of our country enslaves us from our very cradles,  
first ~~first~~ <sup>first</sup> ~~next~~ <sup>next</sup> to our parents, next to our husbands, and when Heaven  
is so ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> kind to rid us of both these, our brothers will usurp authority. 7  
"1. II, 1717." - - 2. The Famous History of the Rise and Fall of Massanello, Pt. II, IV, ii. 1699.  
3. M. Wilson, These were Muses, p. 8. \* It is a variation on the nun-friar joke. Cf.  
4. 1714. 6. Ibid. 7. i, ii. "talking of chaplains. to satisfy. and set right things.  
give him fat Capons, Sack and Sugar, Purse of Gold, and a

But perhaps the hybrid-tradition alluded to earlier, helps in exposure such as of the tyrannous Spanish father ruminating over "a small part" of "twenty thousand pounds" for the daughter's seat in the nunnery" (IV,i). Topping the tale of course, is the British hero who again saves a fainting figure from falling behind bars. Conceivably, a little pruning would be needed before accepting Hazlitt's "one of our best acting plays" on the stage to-day.<sup>1</sup> Even though a contemporary of Mrs. Centlivre's confirms in The Successful Strangers that the "Spanish Dame" has "Longings for an English breed." And the protestation supporting the authoress as being above all propagnada too would have to be re-considered<sup>on</sup> glancing through<sup>2</sup> more lines from another of her plays, namely, The Gotham Election:

Ay, where swarms of Nuns and Priests daily curse your Country, by Bell, Book and Candle, where you must have been taught to pray for its destruction too.  
 Lucy. No! had I been trapan'd to that curs'd Place, tho' but a poor defenceless Maid alone, yet I'd have shown 'em a true British soul, and dy'd before I would have changed my Faith.

Saying little more about these, but at the beginning of the first quarter of the eighteenth century, were such lines from Love Betray'd

You see Love laughs at all our good Purposes, and will be obey'd in spite of Penances and Cloysters.  
 Emil. Nay! We can't Diet it away! 'Tis a Fever of the Mind,  
 That all the Water-gruel in the World won't prevent.

disregarded as platitudinous, these  
 perpetual Confinement, Penance, and Midnight-Prayer,  
 will never agree with our English Ladies.

from The Self Rival in 1725 could not be dubbed as trivial. For in that case, the significance of earlier references from Wycherley's plays that were evocative of nationalistic feelings, would be lost.

A play such as The Masquerade<sup>5</sup> gives some indication of the moral-immoral attitude towards the religious character. As over a forthcoming social event in it, fancies are in full play. If one dressed as a nun, that creature in captivity, how many suitors at the masque would come and kneel and sing orisons instead! The experience would be thrilling. "Ay," says Sophia significantly, "we are forced to affect to be Innocent to be Charming." Lady Frances decides.

I will appear in all the gloomy inaccessible Chams of a young Devotee; there is something in this Character so sweet and forbidden.

1. W. Mountfort, II, i, 1719.  
 2. W. Burnaby.

3. I, 1715.  
 4. Mrs. Davys, II.

5. C. Johnson, II, ii, 1719.

The running commentary during the masquerade is worth hearing:

Mr. Ombre. See the Room begins to fill- what plenty of Diana's Nuns and Shepherdesses there are yonder moving towards the Buffet.

Sir Geo. Those are Votaries of Venus, in Italy they are call'd Courtezans, in Spain, Margarittas, in France, Filles de Joye, and all over Great-Britain, Strumpets. 1

as it reminds one of Restoration characters behind those infamous vizard-masks. Possibly, the practice of dressing-up parts in robes such as adopted by Farquhar and Gay, is thus discountenanced. Notwithstanding, a tongue might still run glibly on about "the seriousness<sup>2</sup> of the Nun that takes the Habit" while the heart leaps to the moment when with "Gaiety" she will quit it.

Endeavouring to steer clear of more of such voices and views and eschewing veiled allusions in the 'hybrid-traditional' style, the initial question/whether or not the maid was permitted to accept religious life/has observably gravitated towards the answer that(1) whereas the post-1584 dramatist made a tyrannous parent to the Hermia-Juliet-Millicent type create an unnecessary emotional problem since the lover was not less worthy than the suitor sought out, the post-1660 dramatist adds the not less important economic issues from at least three angles, namely, the parent or guardian's, the daughter's and from that of the house of religion.

(ii) A marked trend is, that religion is no longer a personal affair as of the pre-1660 years. It involves loyalties to the state.

The stage, it is self-evident, has been fairly vigilant while the state in the early years of the eighteenth century is accused of being apathetic to conditions in the country. Hence the Methodist Movement from Oxford in 1729 which declaredly influences Fielding among others. So when he pounces upon the Gerard-Cadiere story<sup>3</sup> from the Toulon Jesuit Seminary for The Debauchees,<sup>4</sup> he intensifies earlier stage propaganda. Particularly, since dramatists had so far shown capability in either disclosing external forces of compulsion leading the maid to the nunnery or talking in a general manner that could or would have deterred one from entering it. But Beatrice in Fielding's play moves thereto from inner compulsion, as the very first words the curtain is raised on revel.

1. III.

2. J. Moore Smythe, The Rival Modes, I, 1727.

3. Digeon, The Novels of Fielding, pp 229-30.

4. or. The Jesuit Caught, 1732.

-A NUNNERY! Ha, ha, ha! and is't possible, my dear Beatrice, you can intend to sacrifice your youth and beauty, to go out of the world as soon as you have come into it?

The strikingly contrasted character of Isabel is there, firstly, to decry a life of "watching, working, praying" in the company of "an old fusty friar" and to proclaim louder instead that the "prettiest thing of all pretty things" is "a pretty fellow"; secondly, to play traditionally indignant victim-role to a father for the expiation of his sins and crimes! This eventfully brings fresh odour into an old tale. Old Laroon's instructions are a sequel to his fairly active past for "having burnt half a dozen nunneries, and delivered several hundred virgins out of captivity", Many a queen and countess owes hence her "liberty" and "promotion" to his arm(I,ii). And Young Laroon plays at being heaven-sent "Friar" to Father Martin at his confessionals and enticements. Indeed, declares the latter with "a kiss that tastes of ambrosia" to Isabel,

A pope is always the son of<sup>a</sup> nun.

Suffice it to say, that he is caught in his own trap when Laroon comes impersonating the designed nun for an assignation,-leading with many a device in between to Beatrice's conversion to a life "in the company of a layman". Which indeed is the motive of the play.

The nun-friar joke that had been propelled amid sense and nonsense, speech and action-through plays since Shakespeare's day that would be idle to recapitulate, reaches a culmination point in The Debauchees. Fielding had twanged a little on it in Rape upon Rape whereby the "Cavalier" and "Adventurer" out to "plunder" widows and "ravish" virgins had made mock of Hilarest in taking her to be a street-walker. "Our Professions are pretty nearly allied", went he on, "and like Priest and Nun, we are proper Company for one another." Whether or not the Restoration dramatist had exercised restraint in deviating from this easy comic track, he certainly had shown more ingenuity in setting his high and low mettled nuns, professed or designed, on the matrimonial highway.

Had there not been occasion, the following comparison however, would not have been launched since first and foremost, Fielding ranks among novelists. But with apologies to Professor Nicoll, one fails to see the point of taking The Debauchees back to Dryden's Secret Love only to discover that the "brilliance" of the latter is missing. The subject

1. II,iv.

2. I,ix,1730.

3. A History of English Drama,II,pp.157-8.

\* Cf. Shadwell in The Libertine probably gains credit for making a mere start.

matter of that play in fact, is closer to that of The Assination: But one should not look for a source in there either. Fielding simply follows a well-beaten trail. For, were the nun-nunnery count taken, Mrs. Centlivre's The Wonder and Gay's The Wife of Bath would alone take the digits higher than Dryden, Mrs. Behn, Shadwell and others put together. And a point well worth looking into is, that if The Assination proved to be "least successful"; if Farquhar was left wondering why "some people" were "extravagantly angry", what there was in The Inconstant, a play he had laboured six months over, that they "objected to"; and if The Wife of Bath also turned out to be an "unsuccessful adventure", a flop, the simple reason is, that the authors caused offence by their irreverent treatment of the nunneries. So obvious a fact should not make it "difficult to explain... lack of success" of Gay's play or of any in that genre. Fielding was more fortunate because the Wesley brothers had ploughed good ground and time had come for more responsible sense of nationalism under Pitt. Such personalities and movements made it more congenial for Fielding to carry on with the 'hybrid-tradition' theme propaganda. That is, if it is accepted that he borrowed from Molière's Tartuffe for The Debauchees. Besides of course, the Toulon event.

In a more modest vein alongside, lines like

What have I to do with the Masses, St. Bridget, Anna,  
the Baker's Maid, who was sainted for stealing her Master's  
loaves, and giving them to the Poor, and all the rest of his  
sanctify'd ragged Regiment of Non-Entities?

appear. So does a theme such as of All Vows Kept, wherein Aromania and Parthenia, as like as two peas, have only to resolve a confusion. To a nunnery, for a year of probation? "A Year of Tryal is a sweet Variety"(II,iv). But "we shall stain our Honour and our Name" (I). Hence while the air is rent with cries of "colder Zones" to "freeze in", "Sackcloth and Ashes", "those Houses that have a way in, but none out", Herculio even prepared to go to Rome to get Parthenia out, she adopts the disguise-motif and stays by his side. Thus the respective lovers are able to settle their affections and Herculio is able to embrace "this constant

1. C. Hollis, Dryden, p. 63.

2. W. Connely, Young George Farquhar, p. 182.

3. P. F. Gaye, John Gay, His Place in the Eighteenth Century, p. 74.

4. A. Nicoll, A History of English Drama, Vol. II, p. 158.

5. W. L. Cross, The History of Henry Fielding, Vol. I, p. 126.

6. The Fate of Corissa, or The Female Rebellion, I, 1732.

7. Downes, 1733.

\* When Dryden wrote The Spanish Friar, he "partook" of some of the ferment caused by the Popish Plot. (Scott and Saintsbury, John Dryden's Works, Vol. VI, pp. 396-7). Regarding "nuns" he had however only a couplet in the Epilogue to the play

"Your wives and daughters soon will leave the cells,

When they have lost the sound of Aaron's bells."

That too because the persecution of Roman Catholics in Sweden had been very severe.

pious Nun"(V,v.).

Lines<sup>such</sup>/<sub>as</sub>

and my little Pammy here intended for a Nun- for such Doctrine,  
Child, is fit only for a Convent, or a stale Maid of five and thirty. 1

are more in the central spirit of the age, with the elder unmarried woman in one eye too.

<sup>2</sup>  
In The General Lover Melissa and Sapphira plan a romantic flight, at a midnight hour  
again to the refrain of "A year or two" in a nunnery for "sweet variety". But the fair win  
sails away with their gondola and they stay put.

\* \* \*

The nunnery as a stage-set after Farquhar disappears. The habit similarly after  
the first decade and a half or so. But with Bickerstaffe's appropriation of Calderon's  
El Escondido y la Tapada for 'Tis Well it's no Worse, <sup>3</sup> a nunnery "parlour" lock-up and  
escape<sup>ade</sup> is again effected. The two neat plots with characters in flight, pursuit and  
rescue end this good theatre however, in a fiasco.

Whether or not religious issues are brought up, one legacy from the Restoration  
years is, that there should preferably be a team of two for the nunnery game at hide-and  
-seek, <sup>though</sup> sometimes ~~through~~ then, a third was added. The "nun" nevertheless, remains now as the  
the sole brains, the leader of the gang, adept at running away from it. With simply such a  
eye to the stage, Sheridan borrows that entire Restoration tradition and re-introduces the  
nunnery strategy for The Duenna. <sup>4 But in his play too,</sup> ~~The Duenna~~ <sup>since the action takes place outside the nunnery</sup> ~~is there~~  
for background realistic effect. <sup>However,</sup> Clara dons the habit, much the same way as her  
predecessor Oriana did, for the few hours till her ruse works. Designedly, she leaves  
careful instructions with her second,

when you see your brother [whom she loves and who has offended her]  
be sure you don't tell him that I am going to the Convent  
of St. Catharine's two doors on the right hand side of the  
piazza. 5

And the author creates out of the standing nun-friar affair, a divertingly entertaining  
scene with not one, but a whole band of friars. Who, were it not for their gowns and  
tonsured heads against Gothic windows and transepts, might well have been mistaken for  
a rabble in an Elizabethan inn or a Caroline tavern. "Tossing the bottle" about, toasting

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1. Pamela, II, iv, 1742.
  2. Moss, The General Lover, 1749.
  3. 1770.
  4. 1776.
  5. I.

simply ~~the~~ "the abbess of St. Ursuline" but more delectably ~~the~~ "the blue-eyed nun of St. Catherine's", they make the spectator realise how much a nation, lacking in a sense of spontaneous humour, is indebted to a religion that out of its grimmest and weakest side, has struck for them one keen, fairly enduring spark.

But Foote's satire and realism in A Trip to Calais cut through suchlike erratic ways of <sup>flying</sup> ~~drifting~~ away on the wings of foreign imaginations, slapdash stage tricks and jugglings. Medieval historical records show that only those who had dowers gained admittance to religion. This situation is repeated in Jenny's case when she flees to the Calais nunnery in her flight from an enforced marriage<sup>s</sup>. The case alters somewhat on another party's intervention, but she cannot bring herself to accept the tenets of religion. Indeed she had not gone for permanent residence there.

Abbess. ....consider what temptations you are exposed to in the world.  
Jenny. The more merit, mother, than in one, to resist them.  
Abbess. Attacked from enemies from every quarter.  
Jenny. I am a girl of spirit, mother, and am determined to face them.  
Abbess. But they will be too powerful, child, for you to resist.  
Jenny. Then, like abler officers, I must surrender! I suppose there will be no danger of their refusing one quarter.  
Abbess. Daughter, daughter, I am afraid your affections are carnal.  
Jenny. Mother, mother, they are like other girls of my age.  
Abbess. Why won't you accept a spiritual spouse?  
Jenny. Because I have found one of flesh and blood much more to my mind. 2

Flesh always had been frail. But there had not yet been a Kit Codling in a play to note things with his journalistic verve,

They catch any young woman into their Clutches, they locks  
them up in dens like wild bestesses, that are kept in the Tower. 3

(Had Dryden therefore let them run wild for a while?) nor indeed had there been a Lady Crocodile hauled up for assistance.

It is well worth asking a plain and simple question at least at this stage:-  
How many times had the dramatist, in the course of this two-century old problem now, spoken the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth? When the sources were undefiled in Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay and in The Merry Devil of Edmonton, it was all about English girls and nunneries in Framlingham and Cheston, that is, places on the map of England. Thence the controversy had been conveyed to Grecian shores in midsummer dreams,

- 1. 1778.  
2. II.  
3. Ibid.

to Spanish and Italian soils in religious-irreligious climates, as likely as not, to no man's land. Once again but after how long <sup>it</sup> <sup>it</sup> Foote sends <sup>an</sup> English girl to Calais. There is plausibility in his story. When do his contemporaries hold on to it if at all? In The Chapter of Accidents the satire subsides somewhere in the bygone sands of time. Lord Glermore rakes up Bridewell one moment, and the nunnery soon after. Any blessed place will do so long as the daughter is out of the way of the "weathercock". The theme soon works down to the maid, an ignoramus who, to win the mistress's lover impersonates her and is discovered. Governor Harcourt threatens. She "shudders". "For life in a monastery", "O Lord! among monsters!" And they'll cut off her hair, and make her wear sackcloth next <sup>to</sup> her skin. Ay, if they leave her any skin at all. Jacob mercifully comes along. Bridget pleads.

Oh, do take pity on me! Why, they be going to carry me to some outlandish place, and make a nunnery of me.

Jacob: A nunnery? what's that? anything Cristin? 2 \*

We are off the map again. (Evidently, on the strength of the Restoration nationalistic note that has stayed.)

<sup>Back to</sup> ~~To the~~ medieval times! <sup>Back</sup> ~~With the revival of interest in~~ Gothic themes! Consequently, there is many an allusion and flashback interspersed with scene and act of terror and of woe. Don Pedro in The Panel, for example, seizes Leonarda and Aurora each by the hand and thrusts them in a convent; Catalina's father in The Castle of Andalusia had desired that she should take the veil, and "a parent's voice is the call of heaven"; the daughter in A Bold Stroke for a Husband is a vixen and the father fulminates. "Immured in a Convent!" Indeed,

then I'll raise Sedition in the Sisterhood, depose the Abbess, and turn the Confessor's chair into a Co-card.

Dared the medieval virgin have done that! Threats of "convents" in The Dramatist lead to a romance under the very nose of the tyrant guardian, with fainting fits and all the stock female tactics to escape that "shocking" place with "nasty monks".+

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- |                       |            |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. H. Lee, 1780.      | 2. IV, i.  | 3. Kemble, 1789.      | 4. O'Keefe, 1782. |
| 5. Mrs. Cowley, 1785. | 6. II, ii. | 7. F. Reynolds, 1793. |                   |

\* I hope you are a better Christian than to think of living a nun;

W. Congreve, The Double Dealer, IV, iii.

+ Reynolds has animadversions he is obsessed with (e.g. "old maid" later to be seen.) Cf.

Sir George.....every now scene dazzles you-you are like a nun escap'd from a convent.

Darnley. No, more like a Friar in one.

The Rage, II, i. 1794.

More snaps and yaps: "skeletons, rusty daggers, fat monks, and fainting nuns."

The Will, IV, 1797.



No "check to the passions", all seen and said, must be borne(V). Constantia in The Mysteries of the Castle<sup>1</sup> thinks she can throw herself away upon the "prating puppy". A lock-up to-day, and a nunnery tomorrow.

A "Necromancer, whose Spells could melt a Vestal's heart- in the chill regions of a Convent"(V,i), has billed and cooed through the Grate in Which is the Man?<sup>2</sup> May, conducted a clandestine marriage too. An accusatory finger in Hear Both Sides<sup>3</sup> oscillates between who and who:

. . . you stole her from a convent; you bribed father Frances; she gave you the gold; the purse was green; he conveyed you to the small door of the convent; you hurried her down the dark aisle, and, like an impudent wretch as you were, stopped three times to kiss; knowing the poor thing durst not cry out.

Grave error, you may be sure, is it to believe that a convent is an "asylum against the cares and anxieties of the world."

You have never heard the sighs of those unfortunate women, whose number you would encrease, they pierce the solitude with their cries, and water their lonely couches ~~(XXX)~~ with their tears!

<sup>5</sup>  
The Italian Monk brings <sup>one</sup> us to the stormy years of the Reformation it seems. ~~By force had~~  
<sup>had</sup> Ellena <sup>by force.</sup> been detained. No "piety or passion" or "predisposed mind" indeed had led her to a cloister's consolation.

You mark my only crime: I dared to love. 6

There are perils of disobedience, authorities are merciless. Yet Olivia warns her

Of being entom'd, to dwell with putrid death;  
To linger years in vaulted sepulchres,  
Amidst unwholesome dews, and morbid stench  
From time-dissolved flesh. 7

The Abbess solemnly approaches, followed by her Chapter. And all is order. Men in "the Garb of the Inquisition" charge Ellena and Vivaldi whom she loves, to surrender. He had stolen her. But he stands by her and she by him. Alas, the inquisition at Rome can do nothing.

Humiliation enow when Schedoni, the monk, goes through confession of crimes. What is She?<sup>8</sup>

is another tale of a virgin averse to the cloister, combining with it evidence given by

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1. M. R. Andrews, 1795.
  2. Mrs. Cowley, 1782.
  3. T. Holcroft, III, 1803.
  4. By a Lady, The Family Picture, 1781.
  5. J. Beaden, 1797.
  6. I.
  7. Ibid.
  8. Wm C. Smith, 1799.

Erasmus and Lyndsay about the villainy of an avaricious guardian. But the hard game in-and-out-the-nunneries from "Florence to Leghorn" leads to an episode also with "a young Englishman". Even so, a safe arrival on English soil and all is compensated for.

Thus through the later eighteenth century plays <sup>one is</sup> ~~were~~ taken back into the years of the Reformation, forth into the Restoration and out once more to witness the Englishman's skill in liberating imprisoned souls. The operatic deeds of Dashington, the national hero, in What a Flunder! are launched in the country of the "inquisition" and the "stake", in the country of "killings", "immurings", <sup>locks</sup> ~~locks~~, bolts, and bars. He is for reprieve however, not reprisal. But alas, the Restoration fun and fire are missing! But the moral injunction

Force certainly ought to be punished; and therefore,  
punish those,... who placed her there. For surely it is  
a greater crime to put a lady into a convent against her  
consent, than to take her away with her consent..... 2

from the maid, the mainstay of all the hue and cry over the centuries brings the question fit<sup>ting</sup>ly to ~~its~~ close, ~~of itself~~. Stacks of material not included is to the same effect, that she is either a pawn to someone's game, or a tragic victim in matters of the heart. The nunnery hence has been <sup>our</sup> ~~our~~ young Alice's pool of tears.

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1. J.G. Holman, 1800.
  2. II,iii.

Religious issues with regard to the maid have not been seriously pursued farther than the plays. Focus has been on the nunnery because the older dramatist had specifically taken the religious issue in this aspect. Obviously, since it was the first religion and the institution the first measure of individual and group security. Then and subsequently, the average artist being to me a reflector of the people's mind, of the social and political state, the more conscientious one indeed the confessor of his own convictions as well, I have allowed my mind to be least prejudiced with histories of religion. Rather, since down the years he has supplied adequate material to have enabled me continue with the study, I have looked up to him for direction. From her beginnings in the Restoration years and on to the eighteenth century however, he sets up the "old maid" as the main character for non-nunnery brands of religion. The stock parts and stock jokes consequently stand out each undiluted by the other, without suffering either "maid" to be undervalued or any religion to go unspared. Whatever conventional thought has necessitated continuity, is not for me to answer.

HONORIA AND MAMMON

Background  
to 1584

Be the evidence exiguous or ample, as an alternative to enforced marriage or to save a dower, the nunnery comes in handy. Otherwise, the position is still the same as when we started. ----- 'Marry' is the main cry; 'Marry' is the resultant reverberation. Hence we needs must consider what the maid's position is in the marriage mart where indeed, it is tautologous to state at this stage, that the matrimonial law is regulated by the standard Mammon sets on the Social Exchange.

Men marry for good<sup>+</sup> and that is damnable,  
Yea, with olde women that is fifty and beyond:

That the "old women" could scarcely have been the unmarried<sup>1</sup> may well be believed on the basis of fairly direct evidence. Says an old familiar voice<sup>2</sup> behind the Reformation that while "no Virgin is to be admitted as a Member" of 'The Parliament of Women'

those shall be excluded that have been more than thrice married.  
....they ought to have their quietus est, as being superannuated.

The humanist hopes, at least, that this will be so in the case of "those that are upwards of 70 Years of Age." Hence the inference that these legatees to numbers of husbands in succession are sought after for their "good".

Wherefore the maid's position in the marriage mart is particularised with regard to such a powerful rival in a member of her own sex. For, if she is to marry fitly and well, the powers that be deliberate over the feasibility of taxing him who does not, and from the proceeds providing "the dot of poor damosels and virgins"<sup>3</sup>. The eye evidently is on the professional bachelor<sup>H</sup> who has left many an impression in Middle-tonian and Marstonian print of his knack for "cracking maidenheads" and "leaping laundresses". But, if he is as merry as the day is long in bachelordom, if gold alone rules the marrying man's better senses, if a woman passes in and out of wifhood into widowhood till a septuagenarian, and if a mite from here or there is yet to be raised

1. Hickscorner, Dodsley's Old English Plays, Vol.I, p.152.

2. N.Bailey, The Colloquies of Erasmus, Vol.II, p.206.

3. T.Starkey, A Dialogue between Pole and Lupset, Ed. K.M.Burton, p.141.

4. i.e. "property" or "money". Dodsley's Old English Plays, Vol.I, footnote p.152.

5. Cf. the new voice of "professional virginity". J.Osborne, Look Back in Anger.

for the maid's portion, - small wonder that the greybeard or the nunnery is the latter's hapless lot.

Romanticism  
and Reality.

It is because Mammon runs the show that an intrepid dramatist fights for justice for the maid and takes pains in establishing a world wherein maiden glory must rightly radiate whether or not she is to settle down in strict obedience to the ordained marriage law. The Fair Maid of the Exchange,<sup>1</sup> for instance, is proved 'buoyant and upright';<sup>+</sup> Two Maids of Moreclack<sup>2</sup> make "a merry production, full of disguise, bustle and merry intrigue"<sup>3</sup>; A Chaste Maid in Cheapside<sup>4</sup> is a flower, drooping withal, grown out of filth;<sup>x</sup> The Fair Maid of the West<sup>5</sup> wins the esteem of foreigners and praise from their womenfolk; The Maid in the Mill<sup>6</sup> ~~for virtue~~ and The Fair Maid of the Inn<sup>7</sup> ~~are rewarded for their~~ <sup>are rewarded for their virtue and</sup> goodness; Fair Inn<sup>8</sup> is the fairer because she suffers for her loyalty and The Maid of Honour<sup>9</sup> reaches the zenith, not the nadir in the nunnery. These are but a few of the many the playwright creates, less, it is imagined, out of pure romantic fire than out of viewing existing conditions and the senselessness of it all when men-leaders of the day cry, "marry, marry, marry" and followers carry on the same clamour. And all the considerable good he sees both ninnyhammers doing between them, is lowering still further the maid's position in the marriage mart.

On the other hand, the stock character that the dramatist builds up of the widow

1. T. Heywood, 1607.
2. R. Armin, 1609.
3. F.E. Schelling, The English Drama, p.170.
4. T. Middleton, 1611.
5. T. Heywood, Or A Girl Worth Gold, 1609?
6. J. Fletcher & W. Rowley, 1623.
7. J. Fletcher, 1626?
8. 1631.
9. P. Massinger, 1632.
- + I would agree with the judgment that "her sudden change of sentiment" is not because of "inconsistency" in her character but because Heywood follows dramatic conventions of "a fair heroine" wedding "a handsome gallant". (O. Cromwell, Thomas Heywood, p.164) I do not ~~take~~ <sup>see</sup> her ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> "opportunely fickle" as thought of by A.W. Ward, English Dramatic Literature, ~~p. 543~~ <sup>vol. II, p. 573</sup>.
- x. It is interesting to compare the general impressions critics give of this play, e.g. "a broad and rollicking comedy... only second to Ben Jonson's vigorous picture of London life in Bartholomew Fair." H. Ellis, Chapman, p.22. And "cynical tale of debauchery".  
quoted L. Wallis, Fletcher, Beaumont & Company, p.122.
- + Cf. Heywood makes "a strong appeal to the patriotic [sentiment] and the anti-Spanish feeling of ~~this~~ audience".  
F.S. Boas, Thomas Heywood, p.35.

in plays like The Old Law<sup>1</sup>, The Widow's Tears<sup>2</sup>, What You Will<sup>3</sup>, The English Traveller<sup>4</sup> is, - that the death of a husband is an eagerly waited for release, the funeral gathering an occasion for meretriciously displaying her charms (ay, for all her weeds), and the period of mourning an opportunity for men's nods and winks and semi-salacious laughs. All that over, perhaps even before the husband has given up the ghost, it is a boom time for suitors. Her vows of fidelity are all sham. They know it by rote that she is "buxom" "merry" "gay". Dame Pliant from The Alchemist<sup>5</sup> could well be accepted as a standard sample since created by no less an authority than Ben Jonson. And the qualifying remarks that she is "rich" and "wealthy" could safely be written in bold letters across the brow of each member of her clan.

One has good reasons to believe that the incidence of widowhood must have been fairly high, hence the character will be close to reality. For, she quite often is the residue of a disproportionate match, or the product of a marriage de convenance from which the dramatist redeems the maid on the stage. Maybe, she is also a victim released from the gross injustice of child-marriage<sup>†</sup>. So that if she is a good beguiler, a match for wily man, she only rattles off a lesson that the book of Life has taught her. As to how far she is able to use her influence for better or for worse upon the maid, to what extent she can or cannot encroach upon the latter's rights, will be seen. Suffice it to say here, that the dramatist recognises her presence because he simply has to.

It would be irrelevant to go into opinions uttered on characters in odd plays. But the general feeling seems to be that the broad distinctions which the playwright normally maintains, are as between "good" women and "bad", and that these are basically a medieval heritage. Yet, whoever the writer of a Morality Play extracted his abstractions of Lust, Liberty, Riches and Power from, it is intriguing to note that a post-Reformation dramatist infuses these invariably into the widow, while he endows the maid with the antithetical qualities. Then however, the juxtapositioning of

1. P. Massinger & T. Middleton, 1599.

2. G. Chapman, 1602?

3. J. Marston, 1607.

4. T. Heywood, 1633.

5. B. Jonson, 1610.

† Of which there is abundant evidence in a book such as F. J. Furnivall's Child-Marriage Divorce, and Ratifications, Etc.

contrasted characters was probably the simplest way of indicating morality, whereas the "intelligence" of an "average" Shakespearean audience, it is asserted, "was higher than has been supposed".<sup>1</sup> Any onward flow of earlier values manifestly passes into a Moral Masque or a hybrid product like A Warning for Fair Women<sup>2</sup> wherein personifications such as Lust and Chastity rub shoulders with persons of flesh and blood.

From this proceeds the argument that a good deal of observational analysis and no sheer adherence to tradition must have gone into stock opinion when both critical and comparatively flippant authors like Ben Jonson and Fletcher endorse and formulate character traits. But since the position of woman has not since altered, her victimisation by enforced marriage and subsequent graduation into full-fledged widowhood is a continuous tale from medieval to modern times, - the dramatists, as likely as not, give life to voices that were only trying to speak before. The Honour-Mammon question altogether, one feels, has long been waiting for attention; <sup>though</sup> in these pages too, it is restricted to those plays in which maid and widow figure together in incidental dialogue or as dramatis personae - with the hope however, that the reader would be able to elicit enough evidence from elsewhere once his mind has been opened. Any point in this connection, it might be added, such as one of dubious dates or of adherence to chronological order, would not hamper the logic of the case, hence could be safely ignored.

1584 - 1660. Of course, one has to begin with Shakespeare, who, in as early a play as The Taming of the Shrew<sup>3</sup> tells no untruths when portraying realistically as he does, an acquisitive order of morality in the prevailing world governed by man's rule of law. Yes, it is indeed Shakespeare the realist, with his heart yet far away from a love like Rosalind's and Orlando's, that was to be so very free of material considerations. Yes, it is indeed Shakespeare the realist, with his mind yet worlds below the lore of Nature that Arden was to bring. Thus, into this first and last complete transcription from life, he brings in Petruchio - all ready and set for marriage. "Wealth is the "burthen" of his "wooing dance"

1. L.C.Knights, Education and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare, The Criterion,

XI, p.601, 1931-2.

2. -1599.

3. 1584-94(?)

Be she as foul as was Florentius' love,  
As old as Sibyl, and as curst and shrewd  
As Socrates' Xanthippe, or a worse, ..... 1.

- a dance begun long ago in Hickscorner's day at least, as has been noted. Widow or maid, it matters little who or what she is, since woman is the means to an end and marriage is the formality, the social contract for the attainment of that end. In this spirit, Petruchio goes on the track of the Shrew shown to him by Hortensio and Gremio. Flagrantly striking a business deal with the father first, he commences his next task of taming the stubborn thing. Hortensio meanwhile, fooling around as "tutor" to the two sisters, suffers a "broken pate" at the hands of one and is bypassed by the other. All hopes here over, straight away he makes a dash for a "wealthy" widow. Had it been for any love of Bianca that he had till then lingered on, he could have ventured a "broken pate" again, this time for a cause, in having a duel with the rival to her hand. After all, he ought to have been prepared for one with Gremio if with no one else. But it is "wealth" that sets heads awirl in this too, too worldly world Shakespeare deals with. He only restores a balance in settling both maid and widow down to marriage in conformity with the Reformation law. And having passed their wealth into men's hands, in accordance with St. Paul's dictum, ratified by the State,-- he performs a demonstrative feat of disciplining woman to man's will and command. In the confessional style introduced by Erasmus in a Colloquy like 'The Penitent Virgin' and by Lyndsay as in Ane Satyre, the 'reformed' Katherine tells "headstrong" women "What duty they owe to lords and husbands" (V,ii). All to the effect, that Hortensio has to use the rod of authority<sup>x</sup> behind the scenes to tame the widow he "fears", and that Bianca is well on the way to becoming a shrewish wife if her husband is not circumspect.<sup>†</sup>

Of course, Shakespeare would not have pardoned himself for having thus played into the hands of social reformers and religious teachers. But he was the wiser thereafter. Realising that any such world with its laws of utter inequality whereby man's might swayed over all, was no more acceptable to him, he simply had to create

1. I,ii.

† I keep my hands off books of criticism as I find little to my point, I am sorry to say. I. Brown (Shakespeare, p.132) for instance, calls this one of the "rougher comedies". That is all.

x Cf. "A married woman was the property of her husband and completely at his mercy; it was both customary and lawful for him to beat her, and "salutory fasting" (cf. Petruchio's course adopted with Katherine) might be inflicted in addition to stripes and kicks, even to the breaking of bones." D.I. Hobman, Go Spin, You Jade! p.7.

another. Though not by allowing himself to be so insensate as to ignore it altogether. He next converts the Globe Theatre into a nursery and when old children and young tumble out of tavern, street, shop and home into it, he starts on a clean slate with them. And through The Merchant of Venice<sup>1</sup> he tells a fairy tale about caskets of lead, silver and gold, and about the worldly-wisdom of the father who could not have it that so wondrous wise and fair a lady should fall into the hands of noodle or dandy. And no prating tyrant Petruchio again! Even though wealth is the primary object of Bassanio's pursuit of Portia. But since he is a worthy courtier, soldier and gentleman, the heiress has the sound woman's heart to instinctively embrace him as lord and master, wishing for his sake she had been a thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich, well-schooled and taught - yet willing to learn at his word. No sacrifice is enough for the wealth he has brought her with his love, and she gives proof of it.

Shakespeare had taken the maid to task in his first play. Turning over a new leaf he makes the bachelor beholden to him for noble conduct in love and life. But he casts a clearer reflection on the gross worldlings through the lout launce as he reads the palm of his hand,

a single line of life! here's a small trifle of wives: alas! fifteen wives is nothing; eleven widows and nine maids is a single coming in for one man!<sup>2</sup>

We overlook the fact that the numskull's count should run up to a round score, for Mammon masters his mind evidently. And though maids could not be without portions, (marriage having no other purpose) the wind sits in the widow's favour as she is bound to have so much more.

Hence it is quite in common form for an Elizabethan<sup>†</sup> such as John Gresham in If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody<sup>3</sup> to proceed with his suit in plain words,

My lady here is a comely, ancient, rich widow, and I am an honest, proper, poor young man, remembering still I am a gentleman: now, what good her riches may do to my poverty, your gravity may ghesse;

As much as it is for a Jacobean like Surly in The Alchemist to couch his proposal in the same style,

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1. 1594.  
2. II,ii.  
3. T.Heywood, The Dramatic Works of Thomas Heywood. ed.J.Payne Collier, Vol.II.p.149,160.  
† The first part of the work is dated 1600.



You are  
They say, a widow rich, and I'm a bachelor,  
Worth nought: your fortune may make me a man  
As mine have preserv'd you a woman.

1.

And so down the succeeding ages young bachelors march to salute the widow's way. If the logic of the case truly is that Mammon makes a man out of what was stark naught before, just so is it with the other part of this extravagant world. A mother in The Old Law pining for widowhood herself, tutors the daughter:

But always take age first, to make thee rich:  
That was my counsel ever, and then youth  
Will make thee sport enough all thy life after.

2.

And a damoiselle trips on in Marston's still more efficacious satire in The Dutch Courtezan according to the formula of "take age first"

Cris..... for one of my keeres to marry an old man; truth 'tis restorative, what a comfortable thinge it is to thinke of a husband, to heare his venerable cough o' the everlastings, to feele his rough skinne, his summer hands, and winter legges, his almost no eies, and assuredly no teeth; and then to thinke what she must dreame of, when she considers others' happines and her owne want! 'tis a worthy and notorious comfortable match.

Sir Ly. Pish, pish! will you have me?

Cris. Will you assure me -

Sir Ly. Five hundred pound joynture?

Cris. That you will die within this fortnight?

Sir Ly. No, by my faith Cris.

Cris. Then Crisp. by her faith assures you sheele have none of you. 3

Since only the woman who "had survived matrimony and graduated into a prosperous widowhood"<sup>4</sup> enjoyed the maximum civic rights, she may well have been the envy of all womankind.<sup>x</sup> However Shakespeare gets out of such a vicious circle as is seen above, he does not bring the widow into the centre of his picture. As to how far she influences the fate of Honoria is to be inferred from the way in which Petruchio's, Hortensio's and Launce's minds and steps pursue a zigzag course en route to obtaining

1. IV, iv.

2. II, ii.

3. IV, i, 1605.

4. D.M.Stenton, The English Woman in History, p.118.

+ And it is thought the satire in this play is not "deep" enough! A.W.Ward, English Dramatic Literature, Vol.II, p.73.

Cf. T.S.Eliot writing about The English Traveller (1633) that in it "Heywood found his best plot. Possibly the elder critics disapproved of the heroine's plighting herself to marry herself as soon as her elderly husband should die."

Selected Essays, p.178

What indeed would they have to say of such lines but a few of which are quoted in my page x A.Clark in The Working Woman in the Seventeenth Century has innumerable pages on the "widow" to the same effect.

the latter's hand. The vexing question none the less with the average playwright is, - must he at all allow one who has known liberty, who develops as a consequence a fearfully domineering temper as evinced from plays such as The Shrew and Patient Grissil, to consort with her who knows nothing about the world and man? He has to. For as members of the same society or of the same family how long can he keep them apart? The problem is about adjustments, as, whatever her age, Mammon might turn out to be a dangerous ally.

In Sir Giles Goosecap<sup>1</sup> for example, Countess Eugenia is aggrandized to the position of the central luminary and her chaste virgin companions Hippolyta and Penelope are decreased to but pale satellites. This worthy lady is "the best scholar of any woman, best one, in England; she is wise and virtuous". The most marvellous thing about her is, she can "love reasonably constantly, for she loved her husband only, almost "a whole year together" (1,2).

Probably Chapman is at the time genuinely in love with a widow<sup>+</sup> and so identifies himself with the youthful lover Clarence who sighs and sings and writes verses with soul aflame for "divine Eugenia",

Goddess of Learning and of Constancy,  
Of Friendship, and every other Virtue. 2.

He grows pale and spectre-thin and all but dies. For the Divinity condescends to visit him to shower upon him her love, wealth and happiness. To the share of one of the virgins thus falls one lump of idiocy - Sir Goosecap, and to the other, another hulk of coarseness - Sir Rudesby. On both of whom, setting aside Eugenia's tepid treatment at table and curt dismissal of their conversation, even the pages dare play tricks. Apart from all that, the knights appear to be pretty advanced in years too to be suitable matches.

The Development of the  
Machiavellian Character.

Apparently, the author has no desire to give Hippolyta and Penelope firmer outline, for fear they steal the light ~~away~~ from his Principal. But then too he appears to have little faith in a widow's constant

1. G.Chapman, 1601.

2. V,2.

<sup>+</sup> The personal episode of Chapman's courtship of an unknown widow leading to The Widow's Tears is narrated by H.Ellis, Chapman, pp.48-9.

love, so that a simile like "woman's heart" running into "peacock's tail" occurs more than once when he writes Sir Giles Goosecap. Thereafter it seems that the widow has not belied the opinion he held of her in his heart of hearts. Witness the revulsion with which he portrays Corteza<sup>+</sup> in The Gentleman Usher<sup>1</sup>. If an apology is made for, as it is termed, - her "drunken humour",<sup>2</sup> for the invertebrate manner in which she clings to Medici's neck, and for the fool she makes of herself in Act III, i. by drawing the attention of all bystanders, - there is scarcely any word of commendation that she gains subsequently when sober. For then she is agent to the intriguing party, passing on all "traffique of love" between the Duke's son and Maria, which leads to stricter control at her hands. Because of her it is possible to show to advantage innocent and romantic love,<sup>x</sup> and the grim despair which makes the niece disfigure herself, indeed, which drives her to the verge of suicide. But old widow or young, her influence on the maid's affair is adverse. If old, she is too dangerous an ally to be by the younger one's side; if young, she is too strong a centre of attraction for the maid to benefit or to get a chance of showing her merit.

Coming out of the home into the open too, her influence tends to be baneful. In Tis Merrie when Gossips meete, the maid who is prevailed upon by the widow to quaff claret is fairly bashful. But a little liquor flushes her cheeks and loosens her tongue for shafts of "liberty" to shoot to and fro till the wife curbs both and brings them round to

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1. 1602.

2. T.M.Parrott, The Comedies of George Chapman, p.757.

<sup>+</sup> Even if the controversy regarding the authorship of Sir Giles Goosecap is over since Bullen includes the play in his edition and T.M.Parrott definitely assigns it to Chapman, I however, connect the reference to his personal life in the first play (Sir Giles Goosecap) with this character in the second (The Gentleman Usher) by the "widow" factor, since so obvious, and confirm thereby Chapman as author of the disputed play. For my premises I take <sup>the statement of</sup> Professor Havelock Ellis (Chapman, p.20) who refers to a "scene" in Sir Giles Goosecap "bringing in A Lady Furnifall". Because it was "personal satire" that led to the censor's interference, Chapman, says he, shifted it to Italy and rebaptized "Lady Furnifall" as "Corteza". The remarks I have to make are (i) in Sir Giles Goosecap, III, i, Rudesby only asks about a Lady Furnifall "still of the same drinking humour as she was wont to be?" The character does not appear. (ii) Why need Corteza have been particularly cast for a "widow"? On two grounds as I take it - his own affair was fizzling out and because the widow otherwise was in disrepute on account of her excesses as the following pages will bear me out. Notice also the parallel acts and scenes in the two plays i.e. Act III, i. Criticism like "The broader effects of humour are comic enough, though perhaps too much prolonged and too often repeated..." (A.C.Swinburne, Contemporaries of Shakespeare p.56) does not bring out the characterization of the widow or why she was placed by the side of the maid.

accept the matrimonial state. Had it not been so, who knows the wine-bibbing sessions might have become a habit since the widow has wealth and leisure enough with none to give account to. Society seemingly takes note of such factors.

(A Middletonian  
Animadversion)

A trilateral theme by Middleton in his lost play, The Puritan Maid,  
~~Modest~~  
Modest Wife, and Wanton Widow<sup>1</sup>

would have helped one on to a promising study of social relationships and characters. At any rate, from his treatment in those plays that survive, it transpires that all in all the widow enjoys a solid reputation for wealth that is detrimental to the maid's cause. In proof of fact, so hypnotising is the word 'widow' that Witgood in A Trick to Catch the Old One<sup>2</sup> trades well by setting up his former mistress as one. The Uncle is quick to accept her as bargain for paying off the prodigal's debts. And the latter is once again free to wend his way to Joyce whom he loves. What is more, the leeches clinging to her as suitors fall off and turn about to the 'widow'; it is taken for granted that she cannot be one unless she has wealth. Mistress Lucre charges her son with her "blessings" to "withdraw the action" of his love from Joyce - "dog me the widow home to her lodging" (II,i.). Moneylove too suddenly awakens to the conclusion that he has "bestowed" many months in the same suit, and that he must seek his fortune "elsewhere". Suffice it to say, that all men, one after the other, gallop in the same direction, leaving the passage clear only in Act IV,v. for one to get a glimpse of the maid in the garret. After which the clandestine marriage between her and Witgood comes about. The climax of the widow-stunt<sup>†</sup> is that Joyce's uncle finally gets caught, and the "rival" on the whole turns out to be a blessing in disguise.

Thus, Middleton contrasts the position of helpless Honoria with that of Mammon's popularity that shakes an entire town to its very foundations. In recognition of which in Act IV,iv. a falsetto is raised by one of Witgood's creditors about a "master Mulligrub's sister newly fallen a widow", as if the air is not already full. The purport of

1. A.Harbage, Elizabethan-Restoration Palimpsest, Modern Language Review, XXXV, 1940.  
2. 1605.

† She is incidentally the agent bringing about the interplay of different social classes, the important development in realistic comedy assessed by K.M.Lynch in The Social Mode of Restoration Comedy.

it all really is, that the author is out to rehabilitate and exonerate a character who is socially condemned, but who having known sin, detests it from the bottom of her heart. What Dekker achieves with fine sympathy in The Honest Whore<sup>1</sup>, Middleton does through a successful trick with a comedy prodigal, whereas Marston<sup>2</sup> calls up the widow with his gall when he excogitates the case of the fallen,

marrie a rich widdow, or a crackt Ladie, whose case thou shalt make good.

Having established her whom they call a "quean" for an honest character, Middleton however proceeds to spew "libidinous", "lecher", "unmerciful adultress" on the "shameless" "wanton" monied queen of society in No (Wit) like a Woman's.<sup>3</sup> For besides being widow (Help) to one "second to none for usury and extortion", Lady Goldenfleece is Jew and Machiavelli in herself no less. Like any base hireling, she has been responsible for the changing of Jane and Grace in their cradles. And at the time of the opening of the play when the maids, now young ladies, are on the threshold of happiness, she comes like a witch and leaves her "dishonest riddle" behind - thus robbing them of their peace of mind. Since Jane has neither the "strength" nor "cunning" to solve it herself, she goes to Mistress Low-Water for aid.

...help me to untie a few dark words  
Made up in knots - they're of the widow's knitting. 4.

The confession part comes in the end. And though the main interest is focussed on the ingenuity of Mistress Low-Water in winning her wealth, in humbling her high-fed pride and in procuring her person for her brother (an improbable solution), carried on side by side is the dissection of the libertine who regards herself as royalty incarnate as it were,

they {suitors} should get us, and not we them: 5.

Indeed, the four suitors stage a masque, and, impersonating the four warring elements in nature, rain torrents of abuse on her.

For all that, because it so happens that gold well solders her position in society, Middleton collaborates with Ben Jonson and Fletcher, and in The Widow<sup>6</sup> serves hot a game of winning and trapping a wealthy widow. Hortensio in The Shrew had been lucky in having one waiting round the corner while Petruchio had been expending his energies on the maid.

1. 1604-5.

2. The Faune, I,ii, 1606.

3. 1613.

4. I,ii.

5. II,i.

6. 1615.

But Ricardo in this play goes into streams of perspiration in rehearsing and lashing himself into a furious passion for the widow whom he sets his friend Francisco at impersonating. An enjoyable scene till the latter rises in protestation against a smacking kiss that brings the conquering hero down from the widow-peaks. In virtual sincerity, Ricardo also trains him at matching with a widow instead of mooning over what strikes him relatively as only calf-love for Maria (maid). Hers is a pale shadow-play of escape from the tyranny of materialism manifest in the rich old suitor sought out for her, and in the process, of her falling into the hands of band of robbers. The widow's part rivets the greater attention, since a number of suitors, - young and old, including Maria's father incidentally, - are at her door for pelf. Thus, of the two, the pursuit of the widow and the flight of the maid, Memmon's as ever carries the greater weight. Only so long as a niche is made for Honour in the mart, the stage social reform is on the right way.

In the wake of the wanton widow and wealthy of the preceding plays, the playwright's ~~next character in More~~ next character in More Dissemblers besides Women<sup>1</sup> might well have knocked out the Counterfeit Countenance of a Morality. Chapman too had ventured his full flow on predatory widowhood in The Widow's Tears, but his viewpoints, it is suspected, are not quite as impartial; whilst Middleton puts almost his best foot forward by turning his joke of one corrupt individual and social force, that is the widow, upon a corrupt religion for which he had no love lost, that is the Papal. Out of all persons, consequently, the Cardinal's object of "contemplation", his "holy mistress", is the Duchess of Milan - a widow of seven years' standing - on whose resistance to temptations, witcheries, slights and subtleties, he is prepared to stake head and heart. Another person he has implicit confidence in is his nephew and heir - Lactantio, who has a mistress pursuing him in disguise; the virgin Aurelia running again and again to him for rescue from her father treading close upon her heels; and above all, the Duchess who suddenly is seized by an uncontrollable passion for him. Maybe Middleton draws upon the axiom that a scion of the papal hierarchy can excel the widow in the arch practice of dissembling. Depend on her therefore to rival the youngest virgin's love!

In few words, the general impression he conveys is that he holds a potential mass of energy in his hands when he takes up the widow. He is concerned about measuring it out to establish a plausible relationship between her and the maid. But while he finds

1. 1622.

vigour of expression, intense action and movement through the full-blooded character he makes of her in a materialistic society, by her side the maid's role at best limps along. He cautiously keeps the latter out of the stronger one's way, little more. Each, he proves, belongs to a man's world. But with either as woman-member of the same society, sharing the same loves and hates, he does not bring them to a state of tension or friction and therefore does not experiment very searchingly.

For further disastrous influences that a wealthy widow might have on the destiny of a maid, Massinger's The Bondman<sup>1</sup> offers itself as illustration. Remotely distant in theme from Middleton's social comedies, in essence nonetheless, it may be comparable with No (Wit) like a Woman's. Two group photographs of the three states in it, leave an (Help) indelible impression. The first is in Act I, ii, when the trio sits watching men filing in from the man-of-war newly arrived. Of the two wanton animals, the widow is a trifle worse than the wife in exhibiting her character through her remarks. The maid sits aloof in silent dignity. She opens her lips later. Then too, to strike aflame the spirit of nationalism in the Syracusans. The second picture is in Act III, iii, when the men have gone to war and the slaves have risen in rebellion- raping and assaulting the women of the land. With malevolence unsurpassed in any of his plays, Massinger spotlights wife and widow as fit creatures of their lust.<sup>†</sup> Contrastedly, the maid is shown with eyes bandaged, a dumb character in evidence of the rigid vow to her parting lover- to remain so till he returned. She goes not only unharmed for all her physical helplessness, but raises the respect of the bondman for her.

Enough has been said about Massinger's faith in the maid in the previous chapter. In The Bondman he makes it clear, that because she has a reserve of undefiled power within her, she is impervious to corrupt influences. There is no occasion for mentioning it really, but since he does caption her "rich Olympia", he verifies how base the effect of opulence on the widow can be. That is why he works up powerfully the maid's triumphant speech in Act I, iii, after she has discarded the ornaments she had been wearing. Honour is worlds above Mammon. Massinger has to show to the acquisitive society that there is wealth above and beyond which they can see if they permit the scales to fall

1. 1623.

† Could Massinger be casting a reflection on the times, since the "Buckingham" and "other" direct political allusions are pointed out in the play?

T.A.Dunn, Philip Massinger, p.173.

from off their eyes.

Unless a dramatist such as the preceding gives an idealised study, the maid really is revealed as emerging from a tight corner. Facts as they converge toward the widow are that her social status clouds the maid's, and that her degenerate character brightens the latter's- both in efficacious contrast. At closer quarters, this stock force of conflict is seen in greater depth, since, whatever the relationship established, the premise upon which it develops is that the female Shylock has the wherewithal<sup>1</sup> to become only a greater Machiavelli, for few would get to know what wrongs might be perpetrated behind closed doors,- indeed, what chances might be seized upon with little loss of social goodwill and credit.

The widow in Wit at Several Weapons<sup>1</sup> for instance, is in the position of guardian to Sir Perfidious's niece, and to Mirabel she is aunt. The first of the brace of nieces is in a nice state of discomfiture as it is, with the antique model which any comedy guardian could be trusted to find as suitor and with her lover Cunningham's pretensions at indifference. Added to which, the old dame pounces upon her opportunity with the latter. A "young" man at her "years" is a "blessing" that the uncle approves of and bars the "impudent" hussy from being "hind'rance" to. The widow's "comfort" rankles, even after Cunningham has shaken off the "fleshy book". Hence the niece tells the guardian that Mirabel is a rival to her, and that therefore the youth has cooled off. The spark alights on the innocent party.

Mir. Mercy cover us! what do you mean aunt?  
 Guard. I mean to be reveng'd.  
 Mir. On whom?  
 Guard. On thee, baggage.  
 Mir. Revenge should follow injury  
 Which never reach'd so far as thought in me  
 Towards you, aunt.  
 Guard. Your cunning, minion,  
 Nor your Cunningham, can either blind me!  
 The gentle beggar loves you.

2.

The old woman's fears are allayed, whereon she is incensed to revenge. In the name of ~~the~~ the "wealth" she will be "heir" to, she invokes Mirabel<sup>2</sup> to play for her against Cunningham, to "bait all his desires" with her "youth" "even to the highest pitch" and tantalus-like recede then, leaving him in agony. But the next moment she herself is-spying on them both together! And so in a series of situations, this aunt and guardian runs amuck,

1. J. Fletcher, 1609.

2. II.



fooled in the end for her 'revenges'. The niece marries the young man, Mirabel, assisted by his wit marries old Sir Gregory Pop, and the aunt tries pacifying herself with this promotion as Lady Pop's relation, - though unreconciled to Cunningham's loss.

Comedy can always be on the verge of burlesque or farce when the dramatist maintains disparity in years between the characters of conflict. To what extent Fletcher saves Wit at Several Weapons is a matter of opinion. On the other hand, there would have been greater likelihood of Without Money collapsing into tragedy had not the author skillfully tackled the more probable clash between the two sisters in this second play. The first few sentences on the appearance of Isabella and her maid in Act I, ii, lay bare the entire situation. Lady Heartwell's dream has come into realisation. Well within the widow's birth-rights, she "has ingrostr all the brave Lovers". So sardonically comments the sister on the

....goodly portly Lady, / A woman of a presence; she spreads sattons, / As the  
Kings ships do canvas, every where, / She may spare me her rizen, and her  
bonnets, / Strike her main Petticoat, and yet outsail me; / I am a Carvel to her.

Meanwhile she remains "a thing slubber'd", melancholically waiting for her mean fortune, of which she has less than little hope under the circumstances. As unmarried, she must not lose "the main part" of her "politick government"; the Grand Dame alone has no fear of "loss of honour". Such thoughts are soon cut short for Francisco of "brave parts" "noble Lineage" and fallen fortune passes by, and Cupid's shaft is struck. The sycophantic maid transmits the information and Lady Heartwell ventilates her views,

Is she so hot, or such a want of lovers, / That she must doat upon afflictions  
Why does she not go romage all the prisons, / And there bestow her youth,  
bewray her wantonness, / And flie her honour, common both to beggery; 2.

It is now the widow's turn to melt towards the prodigal elder brother though she was in a humour to seize upon the other toy out of sheer conceit. Observing which change, Isabella starts her revenge and after Act III to the end leads on with topsails set.

She collects all the widow's suitors together and urges them to press their suit on "a widow must be won so". "Follow" her up to her chamber, down to her table, "if she retire to Pray, pray with her" (IV, ii). Having found the "scab", she is determined to "scratch" even if it "kill" her. The caterwauling starts. With what difficulty does Lady Heartwell manage to look them up in the "Orchard" and with what malicious glee does

Isabella release them again and pumps them on to renewal of their clamour!

Francisco chooses this unseasonable hour to return the gold Isabella had sent him, Lady Heartwell "looks narrowly" to spring upon the younger if she so much as lets pass an immodest word. Isabella is too "crafty". She carries on her love too "precisely", grinding between her teeth at the same time "I'll teach you to worm, good lady sister". Thus eye for eye, tooth for tooth, the widow meets with the forces of antagonism she had only herself to thank for. The contrast between low and loud wooings, the happy end to Isabella's story and the humbled Lady Heartwell's pursuit of the drunkard to his chamber, finally his acceptance under threat "Widow, I'll keep you waking"<sup>1</sup> (V,iv)- are each a dramatic touch to the rise of Honour and to the fall of Mammon.

Swinburne waxes wrathful over Fletcher's first play, captioning it as "The riotous and outrageous farce"

as might conceivably have been written in his nonage by a bastard son of Ben Jonson who had inherited more of the worse than of the better qualities, intellectual and moral, of his illustrious father. 1.

Amen. But so far as one's imagination goes, the ridicule of senile sentimentality as consistently as Fletcher has managed, suits the way of comedy as well as if not better than pompous passages that a critic might measure to satisfaction by the yardstick but that Jonsonian audiences might nod and yawn over. And Jonson was aware of it. He carried the knack authors of popular<sup>2</sup> plays possessed. To reduce all Fletcher's acumen to "a schoolboys' pillow-fight"<sup>2</sup> is questionable in view of the Honour-Mammon tangle. In fact, his most laudatory lines on Wit without Money are lop-sided too when they refer only to the "admirable young English hero" with not a word a spare for the women. This falls short of the equilibrium one looks for in a critic. Yet when say Weber<sup>3</sup> restores it, he divides the women of the older playwrights into "good" and "bad".- "No less happy" continues he, "were the sprightly girls and jolly widows".- Such as, adds Wallis<sup>4</sup>, "the widow in Wit without Money". And he raises a question over such broad classifications:

Does it, perhaps, afford a clue as to why Jacobean and Caroline audiences responded warmly and even sentimentally to the virtuous women in love of our playwrights?

1. The Earlier Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, The English Review, Vol.V,pp.213-4,1910.

2. Ibid.

3. The Works of Beaumont and Fletcher, edited by H.Weber, p.xxxi.

4. Fletcher, Beaumont & Company, p.78.

1. C.J.Sisson in Last Plays of Shakespeare's Age goes into a remarkable investigation of facts involved in widow-catching.

x. See mention of The Merry Devil of Edmonstone in Prologue to The Devil is an Ass.

Now in the first case "jolly" is like writing a postscript<sup>1</sup>, like noting down a delayed reaction to a character fast receding to view. For in the play, Fletcher rubs in well her gilded pride and reduces to rags her satiny sails. To the ensuing question one gives at least one answer, that the plutocratic modern world manifestly reflected on the stage by (i) the enforced suitor proposition (ii) the wealthy widow force- is countermined by the pure virtue ideal about which, besides the introductory remarks to this chapter, discussion is being continued.

In considering which, a word of commendation for "the freespoken Lady Heartwell"<sup>2</sup> puts subsequent judgments on the wrong track. And lost to account is the younger unmarried sister under her rich thumb, who really does the speaking up. She creates situations- as indeed the heroine in Wit at Several Weapons does- and through her agency brings about the downfall of the oppressor. Slaves in The Bondman are employed to crush this degenerate power, and elements with lashing fury are let loose in No (Wit) like a Woman's. (Help) Incidentally, had the latter play come to a critic's mind along with Wit without Money, some thought might have been set afloat regarding the widow, since the punishment meted out to her at her suitors' hands is akin. Instead, when it is said that Wit at Several Weapons "inevitably calls to mind such a work as A Trick to Catch the Old One"<sup>3</sup> it is a little misleading, since if it is regarding the methods employed, Middleton lays the widow-trap in order to catch Mammonites, whereas Fletcher is out to trap the widow, that is, Mammon herself. If the end (which includes more dotards) is referred to, all authors show up some silly old fool or other. Surely Middleton did not inspire them to it, as indeed he may not have inspired Fletcher either, even if it is supposed that he lent him a hand in the compiling of the said play.

Critics pass adverse decrees on Webster's The Devil's Law-Case<sup>4</sup> since they do not perceive the two distinct roles that are cast for Fortune in the dramatists' feminine world. One emanating probably from märchen and mythology is followed in themes like The Merchant of Venice, The Honest Man's Fortune<sup>5</sup> or The Parliament of Love<sup>6</sup> wherein the central character is an unmarried lady whose virtue and honour shines above all gilded

1. Fletcher, Beaumont & Company, p. 269.

2. Ibid. p. 86.

3. W.W. Appleton, Beaumont and Fletcher, p. 47.

4. 1623.

5. J. Fletcher, 1613.

6. P. Massinger, 1624.

glory. The second is as in Webster's play where the widow holds wealth as all in all. The manner in which the peak of mockery is reached with Leonora rivalling her daughter Jolenta's love, is not a whimsical variation on but a confirmation of the Honoria-Mammon + strife - of, in fact, the acquisitive social organism at war with the moral order.

Therefore, when Contarino comes for consent to marry Jolenta, Leonora rapidly presumes that the "suit" is to her. She will give in earnest a perfect picture of herself "devoutly kneeling" at prayers! Touching on his weaker side, she will make amends for his losses at gambling from the sums "sleeping" in the "chest". Presumably taking her her own case as settled, she turns round to Jolenta, bidding her to give obedience; and on to Ercole to press on his suit lest he be dismayed at her "tears" and "nos". These are out of maiden modesty. And then back again to the daughter. This time down on her knees,

Heare me, if thou dost marry Contarino,  
All the misfortune that did ever dwell  
In a parents curse, light on thee! 1.

Matter enough in this scene alone that could be lengthened out to a full play. A duel then ensues, in which Contarino (and Ercole, but who cares for him?) is supposed dead. Jolenta's silent grief is overpowered by her mother's wailing and raving:

For as we love our youngest children best;  
So the last fruit of our affection,  
Where ever we bestow it, it is most strong,  
Since tis indeed our latest Harvest-home,  
Last merrymment fore Winter; 2.

Her sudden fits, her romantic thoughts of dying like the "worthy Princesse" who loathed "food and rest", her revival into consciousness at the mention "son-in-law" and collapse on seeing Ercole- is classic. Another scene for a full play. Jolenta meantime, on being told by the wily brother that Contarino loved her for his "lust" and the mother for the

1. I, ii.
2. III, iii.

+ It is only a different angle of approach (or reproach?) when "archers..... what do you call 'em- shooters?" advance with their suits:

Sir Oliv. We come in the way of honourable love-  
Sir And.) We do.  
Sir John)  
Sir Oliv. To you.  
Sir And.)  
Sir John) And to your daughters.

The Puritan, II, 1607.

"money", -- awakens to his "falsity" and runs off into a nunnery. The crux of the matter is, the mother takes her fantastic case against the son to the court on the contention that he has killed Contarino. Her self-allegation of adultery in the hearing of it brings out the one trait perhaps that Webster had so far omitted in the widow's stock character.

Out-Machiavelling      The dénouement is a reflection on the solid position of the widow. She  
Machiavelli      is the devil who wins the law-case. † Probably a familiar character in law-suits, herein even if she carries aloft her sentimentality only, she proves nonetheless, that she is not a widow of the age if she cannot have her will. The maid meekly and mildly suffers, as maybe a Middletonian heroine does. Fletcher's too, though she exercises her wit in a manner not often noticed. But whereas he and other authors end with patterned poetic justice, Webster makes the audience sit bolt upright to muse over the sort of settlements that the power of wealth may bring. Is it possible that Contarino pledges her his sword and heart? The critic of course, misses fire again when he does not take the intersection of material and moral laws into consideration, when he dismisses such a character and situation as unacceptable to him. x

A faint outline might be given to suggest the plausibility of the character of a litigious woman like Leonora,-- minus of course, the particular case she has briefed and carried through. Comic tradition has it that lawyers and usurers, politic suitors and crafty are the daily ware she has to deal with. There is, for instance, a guardian who acts as buffer between the maid and Moneylove in A Trick to Catch the Old One, but the "widow" has to keep her own wits sharp and alert about her, when reinforced by Lucre, Hoard and the rest, the train accosts her one by one; Lady Goldenfleece in No (Wit) like a Woman's has to handle Sir Gilbert who comes to merge estate with estate; (Help) similarly

~~1. 1. Fletcher, 1612.~~

† U.M.Ellis-Fermor (The Jacobean Drama, p.181) spins out a case for Romelio-- an "instinctive type of Machiavelli". But it is the "widow" who out-wits both him and the others.

x "This spectacle of a woman of fifty-five seriously pursuing her daughter's lover is much more disturbing. Webster seeks to create an atmosphere of apprehensive dread usual in his tragedies; but this situation of the love-sick widow is properly a quarry for the comic spirit". P.Hawthorn, English Hymns and Ballads, p.121. Similarly Gosse considers her out of the pale of human sympathy. And Professor Lucas finds the end "astonishing". But Webster is making a hit probably throughout the play at the "proverbial frequency of weddings between wealthy widows wanting rank and poor knights wanting money". The suggestion given in the phrase "Knights service" is so explained by F.L.Lucas, The Works of John Webster, Vol.II, p.326.

Morecraft in The Scornful Lady<sup>1</sup> comes to amalgamate money with money. A man from such a region might alight at a maiden lady's portal too, but he is therefor variety's sake. No importance is attached to him. An honest, deserving man soon occupies the central position in the wooing theme.

Familiar perhaps with bailiffs, clerks and sharks during a husband's lifetime, though thereafter hard put to, the widow had to acquire first-hand knowledge and experience in tackling them. Wherefore the subtler dramatist in launching an operation to rout the most villainous Machiavelli and perfidious Jew, had to harness her into service. Set a thief to catch a thief, shall we say, might well have been his motto. As the whole action of A New Way to Pay Old Debts,<sup>2</sup> for example, is, 'The Tricker Tricked'<sup>3</sup>, Massinger has to show Sir Giles Overreach at his game. Thus far critical analyses too, may be neat and proper. But left out high and dry is the reason why the playwright chooses Lady Allworth as the main lead to bring the anti-Overreach conspiracy into fruition. When she emerges from her retirement and betakes herself to "visits and entertainments", she is suspected because she belongs to the sect of Gertrude, Hamlet's mother- the widow who for her lust provoked the wrath of heaven. According to that tradition, the trick works. Blinded by gold, Sir Giles does not question how her wealth is acquired or what the character of the holder is, when Wellborn gives news of marriage. All that the knight thinks of is how drastically he will fleece her. Who ever went in for investigations? Why was Middleton able to plan and play A Trick? Massinger brings out the difference between two particular persons with the common factor of wealth between them. Because one is the uncommon widow who has employed the base metal as a "useful servant", she is able to keep clear her mental faculties. Hence none else but she is able to catch the "lion" and the "fox" who has made it his "bad master". (IV,i). Massinger takes into consideration also the type of wealth that flows in the veins before he proceeds to pass judgment on character, indeed, before he demotes Honour and raises Mammon in the play. The sin of the parent is visited upon Margaret. In herself she is not blameworthy, she is "well qualified", and "the richest match" too. But she has been reared in Sir Giles's tainted creed. Therefore Lord Lovell decides,

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1. J. Fletcher, 1613.
  2. P. Massinger, 1621.
  3. T.A. Dunn, Philip Massinger, p.59.

I would not so adulterate my blood  
By marrying Margaret, and so leave my issue  
Made up of several pieces.

And Lady Allworth, whom he had doubted for<sup>1</sup> her prodigal favours to Wellborn, he takes  
with the words,

were I a Spaniard, to marry  
A widow might disparage me [1]; but being  
A true-born Englishman, I cannot find  
How it can taint my honour.

Massinger goes out of the way to declare<sup>2</sup> she is not tainted goods, though in The Bondman  
he radically alters the position. He suits policy to suit times. When he needs her to  
overreach Sir Giles how can he declare her to be crafty and cunning and corrupt? Herein  
lies the 'catch'.

There is another "Quar of Machiavel" and Ben Jonson proves a veteran at the job in  
eluding critics of The Magnetick Lady.<sup>3</sup> Lady Loadstone is again "a right worshipful"  
and "virtuous" widow made so to intercept the designs of Sir Moth Interest who keeps off  
all the niece's suitors and

keeps the portion  
Still in his hands; and will not part withal,  
On any terms. 4.

She on her side "draws, and draws" the soldiers and the scholars, travellers, physicians  
and divines, in order that Placentia "who strikes the fire of full fourteen" marries well  
and in all justice gets the £16,000 due to her. She negotiates with person after person  
in the same humour. Sir Moth for his part, is all vested interest. He wants payment  
for his "watch", "breaking of sleep" for fourteen years; hence with Bias and Practise  
talks about bargains and sales in open market and about drawing up of contracts.

It is absurd comparing Lady Loadstone to Volpone and Subtle and then lamenting  
that she is not as "hypnotic".<sup>5</sup> They are cormorants, beasts of prey grabbing at the  
tiniest glitter of gold. Whereas the meritorious element in her is that she has the  
wealth "of six East Indian Fleets at least," and that that has not corrupted her, has not  
converted her into a Jew. On the contrary, she is a "brave and bountiful house-keeper".

And the even more

1. IV,i.
2. V,i.
3. 1632.
4. I.
5. E.B.Partridge, The Broken Compass, A Study of the Major Comedies of Ben Jonson,p.206.

And the even more "magnetic" <sup>+</sup> quality about her is, that though a Sir Diaphanous Silkworm casts his net both ways, over aunt or niece whoever has more to her credit, she is not worried about her own re-marriage; whereas the closest relation, it has been seen to some extent, falls headlong into rivalry with daughter, niece or sister, on the strength of <sup>the</sup> money she possesses. More space has been kept for Shirley, indeed more than for others too who speak of and seldom free the widow from such odium. But it is writ large across the mind of the age that thus she creates conflicts. The wonder is, that here she reconciles! This death-bed deed (Ben Jonson was rumoured to be dead) of repentance on the part of the author is not connected with the "too artificial" <sup>x</sup> character that turns out of his hands, nor is it evaluated in considering the "centre attractive" <sup>1</sup> or the "ingeniously contrived" <sup>2</sup> plot.

Had Ben Jonson been in the humour, had he written the court scene of The Merchant of Venice, the lady dealing (or influencing) justice <sup>4</sup> would have been very much of a litigious widow, since, despite the bile and gall aroused by the late Radio version <sup>3</sup> of the play, Portia is in a court of law deciding a case of debt. Comparatively speaking, she is less experienced in a world of lawyers, clerks and usurers. And wherever the flaw, she does bring about the invidious contrast between Christians and Jews in the name of mercy; and she does make Shylock leave the place a broken, battered man.

Ben Jonson's Magnetic Lady (it had to be a sort of death-bed write-up, if good for a

1. P. Simpson, Essay and Studies, Vol. xxx, p. 38.

2. Ibid.

3. The Listener, June 19th, 1959 - July 17th, 1959.

<sup>+</sup> Assessments are e.g. "there is nothing magnetic about the lady except the money of 'the niece'. A.W. Ward, English Dramatic Literature, Vol. II, p. 379; "the real magnetic lady turns out to be the niece," and her only magnetic quality, her money". E.B. Partridge, The Broken Compass, p. 206.

Now one cannot understand that Lady Loadstone is plainly qualified as the "Magnetick Mistris". This qualitative epithet is shifted by critics on to the niece to suit argument or fancy. And then everyone knows about the money of the niece from the beginning. Nothing "turns out" to that effect later.

<sup>x</sup> Ben Jonson is making no "pun". He is out for no "attractive" title. The "humours" are drawn towards her "artificial" person because the author is straining to say that she alone, infamously known for her wealth, is in the money-obsessed world unconcerned about it for herself. This is in answer to M. Chute, Ben Jonson of Westminster, p. 329.

<sup>4</sup> Does "The Magnetic Mistress" look "somewhat helplessly at the movements and counter-movements she exercises but hardly seems to possess?" Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson! The Man and His Work, Vol. II, pp. 204-8. She appears to have rather the cool, calm exterior that a justice of peace must always bear about him; but with complete self-confidence in his own ability.



widow was to be said) would have restricted herself to facts- as pertaining to a materialistic world that her creator was intimately acquainted with. Controversy can still arise over Portia as an "angel of mercy" or as "a golden angel of mercy"; but Shakespeare resolved that contradiction only when he reached his ideal in Isabella, whose appeal for mercy, justice and forgiveness is not in a wealth-obsessed atmosphere, not indeed in a man-constructed court of law. Could she, one asks, ever have been caught wishing she were "ten thousand times more rich?" "More rich" than which state? Portia is the youthful Shakespeare's visionary ideal, conceived when he was passing through the same stage as maybe the Marlowe of The Jew of Malta, when the glitter of gold had gilded his fancy awhile. Isabella is the beatific vision, his ultimate ideal. Each dramatist portrays his own. The "face that launched a thousand ships" pursued Marlowe when he tried to escape woman altogether in Faustus.

Speaking generally, a contemporary or successor had to accept his model of perfection more realistically, for he could not easily get away from the theme of money and marriage, indeed of money and its relation to character, - individual or social. Ben Jonson was not the only author to deal with it, nor was he "abnormally concerned"<sup>1</sup> about it in The Magnetick Lady. Some aspect of the Honour-Mammon conflict and opposition might have been taken up by Professor L.C.Knights<sup>+</sup> with his expert knowledge about capitalism and mercantilism making inroads upon the culture and morality of a time when the widow grows in alarming proportions and the maid is cast for an ideal balancing force. He would have effected the required correlation between actual facts in society and their impact upon the dramatist's mind for the characterisation of Honoria and Mammon as it is evidenced in plays.

Because a critic has not explored the problematic case concerning the two, one flits from play to play only to open the mind and view. One sweeps aside the citizen-

1. E.B.Partridge, The Broken Compass, p.207.

+ He quotes Ralph Fox, Engels and others to form the logical basis for his arguments, before he builds up a vast background for the study of the social aspect of drama. "The exasperating haziness", writes he, "of all those who have attempted to make some correlation between economic activities and culture is not due merely to the lack of satisfactory definition of the latter term. Perhaps it is due....to the fact that the materialistic interpretation of history has not yet been pushed far enough". I apologise for having to refer the ironical truth back to him. Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson, p.4.

father's proposal in A New Wonder, A Woman Never Vexed<sup>1</sup> of Jane's marriage to one who has newly translated his "wit" and "wealth" into knighthood. But a veritable imbroglio arises when he holds her back from the young man unfortunately wedged in between the loves and hates of a father and of an uncle married respectively to a Xanthippe of a widow and to a widow never vexed: till some "settlement" is made! (says he). Indeed, who can make a character proverbially known for her power in every way, put her hand to the deed? The maid might have waited her whole life through had the King himself not come and imposed his royal will. But wherefrom cometh the widow's might? Wherefrom ariseth her spite and her wrath? Money. Now the wonder of all wonders is, that the author has alighted upon one, who has money enough that a widow's widowhood can hold, but she laughs and she loves and she has no lust for gold. And she is set off to advantage by the proverbial one who is a trial for a man of Socrates' nerves.

Thereupon one is led to assert that the stock attitudes of a time should be incorporated in ~~the~~ critiques since looking only for a particular source in individual plays, the specialist might sit on end on at his escriptorio, rummaging through stacks and stacks of leaves, wondering what bee buzzed in Rowley's bonnet when he created A New Wonder. Indeed, what could the wonder be? Professor Clark picks holes in Dr. Greg's theory - " 'wonder of woman' a new play of the Admiral's men....may have been Heywood's original version" and "Fleay has by no means proved that the state of A New Wonder is due to its being a revision of an "old rhyming play" ".<sup>2</sup>

One only wonders whether sometimes criticism does not creak under the weight of ~~an~~ erudition. This is evidenced by the way in which Ben Jonson's "magnetic" factor alone is pricked at with sharper and sharper reasonings by astuter and astuter critics. So it is bound to happen if in order to perceive any originality, a play is not evaluated in relation to the stock attitudes aforementioned. Pertaining to the same point, what is the impression of the later and latest editions on old authors? Going through the "sources" section preceding an average text, the hall-mark of criticism seems to consist in exposing that A was a greater copycat and that B was a more daring plagiarist. Scarcely any space is left thereafter to say how far the climate of the age necessitated a particular creation. Lines and words of the trilateral theme of Amends for Ladies,<sup>3</sup>

1. W.Rowley, 1631.

2. A.M.Clark, Thomas Heywood, pp.332-3.

3. N.Field, 1610?

to illustrate, are literally counted to prove how far Nat. Field lifted from Davies' A Contention betwixt a Wife, a Widdowe, and a Maide, how little from Rowlands' 'Tis Merrie when Gossips Meete, how closely from Campion's Masque at the Marriage of Lord Hayes, and the rest of it. Ousting Fischer and indeed others from the field, Professor Peery advances his contention that "its content and figures are proverbial"<sup>1</sup> and need not have come from one author. Yet he goes on to trace bits of his plot back to Cervantes, to Shakespeare, and to who not! However, what concerns the argument here is that while it admittedly is "proverbial" for a Lady Honor (maid) to have a brother to dice her patrimony away and to have an old rich Count imposed upon her in order that the former make amends to his purse, it is a departure from the "proverbial" for Lady Bright (widow) to get up from Bould's bed and halloo to all the world that the latter in guise of a waiting-woman has basely tried to do mischief unto her. But why should so extreme a step have to be taken?

Why? Nat Field has to prove what a "widdow wonderfull" she is to be honest! And since the play was written to honour a promise he had made in the prefatory epistle to A Woman's a Weather-cocke,<sup>3</sup> which presumably had been written to humour Chapman - evident from the commendatory verse the elder wrote to "his Loued Sonne" for it, - Field had to show the three states to perfection. According to the rules of comedy and the prevalent attitudes of church and state, he had to strike a finale on marriage. Notwithstanding, he had drawn out the salient points of each character and her position in relation to man, with Ladies Honor and Bright maintaining the usual polarity (in their respective states and selves).

A question may well be asked whether in eschewing, for the nonce, the debasing factor of wealth, anyone goes to the core of the relative characters to establish a norm whereby widow and maid of the age be tested. In it answer could be said that Shakespeare does in Hamlet. If it is maintained that Gertrude is not as cunning as the stock widow, that she is rather gullible, it only strengthens Shakespeare's point that she, nonetheless, is a widow of the incestuous sheets set in opposition to Ophelia - Nature's child really, when she reads her fancies in those innocent flowers she picks to make

1. N. Field, 1610?

2. W. Peery, The Plays of Nathan Field (Texas), pp. 146-9.

3. 1609.

wreaths for her own dead self. The maid<sup>1</sup> proved to be even purer than Nature. For, had not an "envious sliver" treacherously let her down as she clambered to hang a garland on a neighbouring willow-branch, she would not have fallen into her watery grave. It might be said further that she is thereby symbolically washed clean from any pollution that the earth may have contaminated her with.

From the same standpoint as many another author, D'Avenant reaches his own heights and depths in Love and Honour.<sup>1</sup> Of the two "Matchless Maids" taken captive during a war, Evandra is "beloved" to one Prince, "sanctified" by another and praised for her "beauty" and "virtue" by a third. From which situation strong rivalry ensues. One of them, in deference to her "sense of honour" is prepared to die in imprisonment rather than live without her. In place of duels, consequently, other rivals are as eager to take that course. Melora, appraising her as "the most beauteous virtue of the world" (III,i), stands by her side, to undertake the "penance" of setting the men "free"; indeed, she has loved one of them since long. Both the maids thus undergo the "beauty of sorrow and suffering" till the situation is resolved. And lower down, the soldiers lay claim upon the widow for her fortune<sup>+</sup>. While the wooing in the clouds goes on at one level, her "gruels" and "poultices" provide the burlesque.<sup>x</sup> Easily won, however, the widow cannot be made to die. So when the two marriages are solemnised above, a divorce is obtained for Mammon. And Honour reigns supreme.

In News from Plymouth,<sup>2</sup> Carrack is a "lusty young widow" exhilarated by the experience of her state;

I am worshipful indeed, / For I am rich... 3.

and "gold", a "wise woman" has told her, will spread her power. But she is jealous of Loveright, Sir Trifle's niece,

..... and the pure grief of it  
Wounds my very heart. Ah, what pity 'tis,  
So excellent a creature should be honest! 4.

People wonder why the "virtuous" maid with manors and goodly houses in the country, and more for winter pleasures in the city, should disregard censure by living in the port

1. 1634.

2. 1635.

3. I,ii.

4. Ibid.

+ Molloy took this part of the plot for the grandmother-rivalry with granddaughters in his The Half-Pay Officers, 1720.

x The 'libertine' still has her consanguinity with Chapman's Corteza in The Gentle, 1621

town and in the disreputable house of this widow. Loveright however, goes through her phase of troubles, sacrificing her liberty because she loves the deserving Warwell. She is in search of the "perfect poor" man, since those "rich and noble suitors" do not meet with her esteem. He comes. And she embraces him, ready to "obey" him. Carrack meanwhile goes her own way to obtain a husband, resembling more a "suburb sinner"<sup>†</sup> though she adopts that disguise to bring the dissolute Cable round. Pure Honour and reformed Mammon seem thus to be made to co-exist in this play. In the previous one, it was all for love and honour that D'Avenant had won a victory. Possibly in coming down from his ideal in the second, he makes a compromise with reality.

Shirley's Manifesto. When Shirley tones down the arrogant pride of Riches and claims a rightful position for Honour in the moral masque, namely, A Contention for Honour and Riches<sup>1</sup>, the idea of a settlement between the two occurs to him. But, thereafter and before, the widow principally captivates his fancy. And as observed in the last chapter, his pretentious morality does not lack some sincerity. In The Ball<sup>2</sup> for instance, Lady Lucina represents the same social force that Middleton had depicted in A Trick, had magnetism enough to draw the masses towards her. In up-grading his comedy to the courtly level, Shirley only cross-sections the old and new order of capitalism in her train of suitors to get the maximum glittering effect for the stage. Not till the end of Act IV is the Grand Dame addressed as widow, yet it is easy to guess that she is one from the direction they take. As against her, Ladies Rosamund and Honoria stand blushing and getting hot over a Rainbow, who however comes, sees his position secure here, and goes to the Centre Attractive! In the end, two of the many left-overs try their luck with the maids- who, on point of honour, will not stoop down. "We love our own", says Honoria, "when we preserve a gentleman's honour". These words and the "Ball" at which Venus and Diana have a contest, are of some significance. The latter has the last say to her rival, that she would have no quarrels with her, were she only to throw her "licentious shafts away" (V). Which the widow does.

1. 1633.

2. Chapman and Shirley, 1632.

† Cf. the continuity of idea about her- (Thwack, a humorous old knight in The Wits (1636) cares little for a damsel. She is wont to talk too much over her mammalade.)  
Give me an old widow, that commits sin  
With the gravity of a corrupt judge; (No wonder Ben Jonson's lady was  
Accepts of benefits i' th'dark, and can magnetic.)  
Conceal them from the light. II, i.

The playwright proceeds, with partiality in his stamp of morality, to The Lady of Pleasure.<sup>1</sup> Celestina is a greater paragon of beauty than Lady Lucina The Lady, distinguished in her gifts than Eugenia in Chapman's Sir Giles Goosecap, appearing so, maybe, because of the extra Shirleyan splash of colour to her court. Therefore, Hippolyta and Penelope of the latter play have striking parallels in the pairs in The Ball and in The Lady of Pleasure respectively. As maids of honour were enrolled in a royal household to learn and acquire the polish of social graces, at the same time probably hoping to obtain a match, they appear as satellites to the widow-planet. They have no individual existence to speak of. I do not wish to go into the dispute of scholars over Chapman's liftings from Chaucer's Troilus and Cresseide for his play, nor over the greater or lesser share the former and Shirley have in The Ball. But influences<sup>†</sup> are apparent in the continuous treatment of and attitude to the unmarried from Sir Giles Goosecap where they perforce marry gross oddities- to The Ball where, had they not met one so evaporative as Rainbow, they might have married some such man. Else what indeed was the object of their going to Lady Lucina's to learn the new style of dancing? Further on in The Lady of Pleasure, Isabella and Mariana are "partly pupils" to the prodigy Celestina, "not yet full sixteen". They hum and haw merely, while she philosophises over the art of existence in a man's world with strength of heart and mind. Once or twice Mariana has three whole lines to speak, and in this vein,

And yet they say your entertainments are,  
Give me your pardon, madam, to proclaim  
Yourself a widow, and to get a ~~widow~~ husband. 2.

waived aside by Celestina as droppings of "malicious tongues".

Then the grand durbar starts. At her leisure the widow summons suitors in from the waiting-hall and pierces them with observations and questions. The "pilchards" and

1. 1635.

2. II, ii.

<sup>†</sup> I cannot, for the above-mentioned reason agree with the statement- "In The Ball.... it is easy to detect Shirley's hand, almost impossible to find any trace of Chapman's." H. Ellis, Chapman, p.46. In fact, besides the "widow" significance earlier pointed out with reference to Sir Giles Goosecap, such duplication and triplication of teams confirms still more Chapman's authorship of the first play, and also proves that Shirley and he together collaborated both in ideas and characters in The Ball. Difference perhaps is evident in style. Ward and Dyce in opposition to Gifford call The Ball entirely Shirley's composition too. See A.W.Ward, English Dramatic Literature, Vol.II, p.444.

"tadpoles" are dismissed (a suitor scuttles away failing courage to stand up to dissection); and a court of Justice follows in Act IV,iii. Tributes are paid to the nuptial virtues of the reigning Stuarts (Charles and Henrietta) and wildbloods are tamed. Mariana and Isabella sit still and wonder. And still their wonder grows.

Shirley thus keys himself up on a position Chapman had forsaken three decades ago. How far Fletcher was his guiding star for Hyde Park<sup>1</sup> it is difficult to say. Maybe not at all. But the same forces are pitted against each other in Carol and Mistress Bonavent as in Isabella and Lady Heartwell in Wit Without Money. Taking it as sheer accident that her counterpart in Middleton's More Dissemblers besides Women is of "seven years" standing, Mistress Bonavent decides to marry, right away, that very morning, while the suit is hot. She will not then be thought of as "a despiser of mankind". Carol comes upon her with severity,

No marvel if men rail upon you then,  
And doubt whether a widow may be saved.  
We maids are thought the worse on, for your easiness.  
How are poor women overseen! We must  
Cast away ourselves upon a whining lover,  
In charity....

2.

But the emotional content of Fletcher's play is lost in generalisations. Carol, with some considerable knowledge, classifies/women into categories- those who are not worth man's love (widow) and the "very wise" who will not care for him<sup>(maid)</sup>, and then breaks out and has another bout with the widow,

Carol.....some widows have been mortified.  
Mrs.B. And maids do now and then meet with their match. 3.

A long harangue follows on the "too, too much liberty" of the widow, on her "plenty and command" and her wantonness. Which is a summing-up of Middleton's Lady Golden-fleece and Massinger's Olympia; one that Fletcher in Wit without Money conveys better without the heavy sermonising. A widow's tyranny, it will be remembered, had no little share in turning Dekker's Julia away from marriage. Carol similarly, if in a different milieu having seen only "servile flattery" and "jigging" at the widow's feet, expostulates with her suitor and makes it difficult wooing for him. Shirley then changes the issues with the lost husband turning up all too soon and with events of topical interest engaging his

1. 1632.
2. I,ii.
3. Ibid.
4. 1636-9?

attention.

Conveying the stock impression of another thoroughly unprincipled character is Bellamy, mother to Frances in The Constant Maid.<sup>1</sup> She had introduced the none too rich man of sterling worth, Hartwell, to the daughter. And now when their love has reached its peak, in the very first Act she marches Frances off to her chamber and opens her suit,

Present myself to ~~your~~ <sup>my daughter's</sup> affections.

One stands agog with Hartwell. Her arguments are steadfast and sound. She is not too old (no widow ever is), has birth, love, fortune. Whereas, she goes on,

my daughter:  
Depending on my love, whose portion must  
Flow from my bounty, or be nothing.

There's the rub. Hartwell nonplussed, seeks counsel of a friend, upon which he acts with no little strain, pretending to retrieve his affection from the daughter in order to win her via "beldame June" till such time as he can "cheat" her. The poison brews till it rises over and out. Webster does not let us hear the other side of The Case. But Shirley Frances rails against all conundrums about children having to be dutiful and the rest of it.

break,  
.....Oh, break, my poor heart, break!  
~~When~~ she that gave me life, hath took it from me.

She weeps. Bellamy bewails in turn, that she has been "ill-rewarded",

..... desiring  
One comfort in the world, and shall my child  
Rise up to take it from me?  
Frances. Alas, I knew not  
You lov'd him too; indeed I had rather die,  
Then you should call me rebel. 2.

The torment of duty and love finding expression through rebellious words against "oppression" and "authority" that kill "the poor beneath"- violent language indeed of the wronged soul- has no effect on the heart of flint. Then Frances subsides to pathos. She will "die to shew obedience", the same herbs that deck the mother's bridal-chamber, will deck her coffin. And all passion is spent.

In the last Act comes stage<sup>cy</sup> morality<sup>†</sup>. Bellamy reveals that she really had been

1. 1636-9? 2. IV, ii

† Note "a mother's attempt to win to test the affections of her daughter's lover is revolting if not a ridiculous mainspring for the action of a play". A.C. Swinburne, Contemporaries of Shakespeare, p. 301.

When tabulating critical remarks on individual plays e.g. The Gentleman Usher, Wit at Several Weapons, The Devil's Law-Case, The English Traveller, The Constant Maid, to mention only a few, it will be seen that the drift goes against the mammonised widow and in favour of the honoured maid. Through the latter is surveyed the ethical area of the question.



trying to sound the depths of the young hearts. Having completed the testing, she gives her blessings and the fortune due. Had Bellamy got Hartwell, it would still not have been a Websterian ending, for Frances would not have accepted the other candidate, Startup. In which case it would have been a tragedy, since Shirley does not much like the idea of ending a heroine in the nunnery either.

More than in all his plays, the theme and character of The Brothers<sup>1</sup> written earliest, consistently hold together, for widow and maid are pictured as common weak victims of man, the fortune-hunter. He therefore gets the two together to fight a common fight. Jacintha is bid by her brother to try suitor after suitor for his "expenses". Frankly immoral in himself and egged on by his father, he at the same time is out to catch the "noble" widow Estifania. Seeing whom, Jacintha goes up for help; and honey-sweet words-seldom heard between widow and maid, ensue.

Estif. If any faith or service in me can  
Deserve this goodness, cheerfully employ it.  
Jac. I will be confident to use your virtue.  
Estif. I will refuse no office.

2.

On learning that Don Pedro, a man who has been guilty of violating a contract with Estifania, is imposed upon Jacintha, the widow conceives of a plot that serves the "happiness" of both. The disguise motif is adopted at the time of marriage, there is a shuffling of suitors as desired, and Don Pedro and Jacintha's brother are both dropped out.

Then Shirley amusingly meanders off. There is, as witnessed already, the falling character in Hyde Park, through whom he gives a little importance to the maid but sends the husband back to set her up securely. Lady Lucina next dazzles his sight in The Ball. He patronizingly tells her to throw her "licentious shafts" aside and she fares well indeed. Politely he shambles away from Honoria and Rosamund. A flicker of thought about their fate evidently comes up for the moral masque- A Contention. But soon after Celestina in The Lady of Pleasure, a more dazzling edition of Lady Lucina, blinds him to their weal and woe. She runs his new show of a character-building academy. And for having mourned a year for the knight who had compassion on her youth to die "so timely", she shines "more fresh and tempting" in his eyes than "any natural virgin" (I,i). But we feel she is imposed upon us; indeed that she has been most high-handedly imposed upon

---

1. 1626.

2. III,i.

the "natural virgins" at her feet. The shallower Fletcher touches a heart-string quicker with incidental irony in The Prophetess<sup>1</sup>, over a young widow, following a bed-ridden husband

(After a three years groaning) to the fire.

And a lump in one's throat he brings up, when his widow in The Scornful Lady<sup>2</sup> recounts her five-year yoke to a man, who

loved to toil, fed ill, made gain his exercise, and so grew costive,  
which, for that I was his wife, I gave way to.

She had spun her own "coarse smocks"- "But let that pass". "Time that wears all things out, wore out this husband."

Shirley notwithstanding bungles a moral case. As indeed he does in The Constant Maid. A Maidenhead Well Lost<sup>3</sup> is said not incorrectly to have an "unhealthy Caroline plot"<sup>4</sup>, and out of it Heywood runs up a tune about widowed mother and daughter as examples to all "succeeding Ages". But because it is a steadily planned and built-up moral idea, it grips any times sooner than Shirley's.

Howbeit, since the theme of Honour-Mammon is well in the air, given shape to as foreseen by D'Avenant and other dramatists from realistic-idealistic angles, additional focus is given to it by a contemporary in The Sledge.<sup>5</sup> Pyle, a rich haughty widow

But of the first wrinkle; and yet no wrinkle  
But that we please to say so. Wee're as faire  
As any Shée in all Byzantium, 6.

is ambitious of being queen to Misander, the conquering lustful tyrant of Thrace. She aspires to blot out the virgins. They are happy, hoping at the least, that some cloud will descend and Misander be unable to behold their beauty. Leucasia unfortunately is chosen. She laments. Honour will be lost. What price freedom? Pyle's heart nonetheless burns. So she plays the villainess's part by sending in poison to Misander as punishment for neglecting her. Leucasia drinks it instead and all but dies. The wheel of fortune then turns and she exerts her chastening influence upon the King. Pyle on

1. II,ii.

2. II,iii.

3. T.Heywood, 1634.

4. A.M.Clark, Thomas Heywood, p.128.

5. W.Cartwright, 1651.

6. I,iii.

the other hand, vows fidelity to suitor after suitor who are besieging her<sup>+</sup>. And thus the contrast between the beauty of Honour and the rottenness of Mammon is sustained. The end is rather tame, since an honest artist in gaining the hand of the widow, is saved from starving perhaps thereby. But that he should love her too, well, well --

We saunter back to Shirley. For by now, having disentangled himself from widow-lure (and lore), he prodigal-like returns to an earlier equilibrated idea used in skeleton form in A Contention for Honour and Riches, fills it out to Honoriam and Mammon<sup>1</sup>, and puts his seal of last will and testament on the co-existence hereafter of the two parties. It is indeed a carefully plotted Morality. The first two Acts alternately <sup>focus on</sup> the respective atmospheres of Mammon's house and Honoriam's,-- the affairs of the one being left to a crafty gentleman-usher, and of the other, to the poor Alworth,-- with two links between them. The first is wrought by Honoriam's letter of recommendation for the employment of the downtrodden; Mammon of course has no place for a "man of learning". Common suitors such as Conquest and Alworth effect the second. Honoriam however, after peppering her praise of their respective professions with satire, honours Alworth with the wreath of bays. Yet when he breaks into a poetic frenzy, she scowls on the score that he forgets his position. Alworth whereupon gets mentally deranged.

Honoriam repents. And while she is at the mercy of the doctor, the complications of Act III converge at the lawyer's. The gentleman-usher comes to raise hopes here of a fortune on marrying the widow. The doctor too arrives. He, in turn, puts forth the proposal for the maid. The lawyer is covetous. If only he could marry Honoriam and keep Mammon as his concubine, the fortunes of both would be his! To implement which design, he takes them both prisoner. The castle then is stormed, Alworth by his courage and suffering playing no mean part. But Conquest carries the day.

1. 1659.

†. Cf. her attendant-maid fighting a losing battle:-  
 I've wash'd my face in Mercury water, for  
 A year and upwards; lain in Oyl'd Gloves still;  
 Worn my Pomatum'd Masks all night; each morning  
 Rang'd every Hair in its due Rank and Posture;  
 Laid red amongst the white; writ o'er my face,  
 And set it forth in a most fair Edition;  
 Worn a thin Tiffany only o'er my Breasts;  
 Kept Musk-plums in my Mouth continually;  
 Yet have not had one bite at all these baits.

IV, v.

What is there left addition to my happiness?  
 Mammon and Honoria both within my power!  
 Ambition, write non ultra: fix, fix here,  
 The two great darlings of mankind are mine,  
 Both excellent, and yet but one divine.  
 . . . . .  
 . . . . . Mammon leads  
 To conquest, and rewards our bloods and watches;  
 But Honour is the lustre of all triumph,  
 The glories that we wear are dim without her; 1.

He however, allows justice to get the better of his love and accepts Mammon. Honoria wins Alworth back. Henceforth she is to "steer" men's course. Her rival's too, since Mammon absolves herself of charges against her and accepts the position of "humble servant" at "Honoria's feet".

Thus though all are subordinated to virtue, and though the proverbial gang of gentlemen-ushers, doctors, lawyers, Alarums are taken to task for their greed and lust, Shirley is not above the fallacy of the plutocratic order manifest in plays like The Taming of the Shrew, The Merchant of Venice, The Scornful Lady, News from Plymouth, wherein Honour is as rich as Mammon. At other times, playwrights turn moral purists and emphasise virtue in The Bondman, Love and Honour, A Maidenhead Well Lost and such-like plays. Shirley does not think of a poor maid like Aurelia in The City Match<sup>2</sup> who is frustrated at the thought that the world ultimately is one in which "wit or good parts" have little value.

I may die a virgin  
 When some old widow, which at every cough  
 Resigns some of her teeth, . . . [who]

may well be "put together" every morning as "some instrument". Indeed,

Having full coffers, [who] shall be woo'd, and thought  
 A youthful bride. . . . !

Therefore Honoria as one takes her to be, possesses wealth, but remains uncorrupted by it. Mammon, in a state of rottenness, goes through a moral purge. Inferentially, virtue and wealth are to be common to both. Shirley indeed cannot conceive of Shakespeare's Ophelia or Massinger's Cleora, who, contrasted to the lustful widow, is exalted to disembodied purity.

1. V,i.  
 2. J.Mayne, II,iv, 1639.

The Balancing  
Force

That the dramatist is almost a lawyer negotiating settlements between Honoria and Mammon, is true. But that he acts as mediator under compulsion is equally true too, since gold holds paramount power in the 1660's as much as it does in the 1580's. The situation remains a bit vague however, till such time as stock is taken of the bright hero who, after all, is the active agent setting and upsetting balances in the marriage mart. Of special interest is it, in fact, to learn somewhat about his cardinal qualifications and about the ways and means his creator devises in adjusting his virtues and vices to suit the partner allotted to his share.

The Prodigal's  
Progress

Little more in essence, can be said of Petruchio and Hortensio in The Taming of the Shrew than that they are the commonest variable quantities accelerating their respective speeds in the reverse directions to suit occasion and opportunity. Fellows and followers of Shakespeare seldom provide such basically indeterminate characters as suitors for a widow or maid on whom their spotlight falls. Nor, as a rule, does a wooer to the latter brazenly declare that "wealth is the burden" of his "wooing theme". The hungry, angry man Petruchio behaves like is the characteristic mode and code better understood in the vicinity of the widow. Who, compared to her rival, is supposed with her years and experience to have developed coarser scales to her back that enable her to bear all. Thus the sated John Gresham in If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody marches up to the "ancient, rich widow" to declare that he is worth "stark nought" and that he comes to strike a bargain- his youth for her riches. Surly in The Alchemist is a gamester about town in a similar predicament. Hence his offer is similar- Dame Pliant's "rich" widowhood for his bachelorhood "worth nought". Banking on the trade value that a widow has, and on the stability home and society guarantee in any alignment with her, Witgood in A Trick to Catch the Old One 'widow-vaults' (!) well to get safely across to the nebulous position of the maid. What indeed is the alternative for one who has sunk all his "goodly uplands and downlands.....into that little pit, leachery?"

The widow is the prodigal's<sup>x</sup> anchorage. That Middleton does not sail the young man he sympathises with and heartily loves for his wit headlong into harbour is chiefly because she makes the dramatist's stomach turn. Thereafter evidently, he is subjected

x A tradition that really starts with N. Udall's Ralph Roister Doister (1552). But even if Dame Custance's husband had not turned up the roisterer would have been a dismal failure. He should have learnt to roar and rant first.

to some schooling at Fletcher's and Ben Jonson's hands when he puts his signature to The Widow. Ricardo hence turns out to be the trio's mouthpiece expounding principles governing social economy and sound institutional policy;

It was the naturallest courtesy that ever was ordained; a young gentleman being spent, to have a rich widow set him up again. To see how fortune has provided for all mortality's ruins! Your college for your lame-creeching soldier, your band for your mangled roarer, your open-house for your beggar, and your widow..... 1.

who makes Middleton foam and froth at the mouth no little in No Wit, No Help, although he finally incorporates his compatriots' suggestion of rehabilitating a broken bankrupt on her funds and foundations. But Middleton can part with his conscience no longer. Not being able to bear with her re-marriage, he couples her paternosters with the Pope in More Dissemblers besides Women and washes his hands of her.

Wherefore, the main share both in the duplicated wooing theme and in making the widow-tem into a theatrically effective and socially acceptable one in The Widow, seems to be Fletcher's. And only the idea of apportioning a tempestuous tatterdemalion to her is shared by Ben Jonson, as may be educed from The Alchemist. Accounts in Fletcher's favour could further be tabulated from Wit without Money which is his independent endeavour and earlier in the date of composition than The Widow. Valentine foreruns Ricardo. But he also reveals that the vision of 'fallow' (so at least they consider him) Fletcher is broader than his contemporaries' and his approach more sensible. Valentine silences the widow's suitors with his tirade (II,i) that none of them "know what it is to woo a widow" (hence Ricardo's rehearsal mentioned earlier), that they are "fools" to lie but with "dead mens monuments",<sup>x</sup> above all

I have no state left, a benefit that none of you can brag of,  
and there's an Antidote against a Widow, nothing to lose

while she like a "Christmas-box" has the fury to "sweep all". Could they manage her? 'None, Brutus, none'. Then none has he offended. He goes on with his sane advice

chuse the tamer evil, take a maid, a maid not worth a penny ~~(heart-heart)~~; make her yours, knead her, and mould her yours, a maid worth nothing ~~(more elaps)~~, there's a vertuous spell in that word nothing (II);

1. I,ii.

x. Cf. Fletcher's echo- Live in a dead man's monument?

Fie, fie.

Monsieur Thomas, 2,2.

particularly since they have plenty with them. And in The Scornful Lady,<sup>1</sup> Fletcher the Socialist frames a still newer policy and furthers his view about the second hero, that is, the widowed lady's man. He carries further the tradition of the "distressed younger Brother", who not only "renews" his fortunes all too soon, but implements his creator's plans for his fellowmen. Their bread and ale costs nothing much, so the poet, the courtier,-- the ragged regiment in short of his bachelor days, form indeed a socialistic state out of his alliance.

Furthermore, Fletcher comes down to stark realism when in Wit without Money he pairs the maiden sister with the out-at-the elbows scholar<sup>x</sup> whom Ben Jonson apparently approves of, since he too seeks Compass out for his unmarried character in The Magnetic Lady. Of course, the meticulous scholar would project his ego into a lover of the preciser sciences, that is to say, mathematics, in Compass's case. And of course, the subtle, shrewd self within him would project itself in partnering Lady Loadstone of the same play with the soldier, Ironside. The question arises as to why he revises his opinions of earlier days when he allowed a gamester Surly or a prodigal Ricardo to the widow. Strength of one sort equalled strength of another sort only; but there was no misallying. The answer one arrives at is that the soldier during peacetime was a veritable problem.<sup>†</sup> Thus if Fletcher lightens one type of the social burdens of the state Ben Jonson lightens one of its political and economic ones by quartering his second hero on the widow's bounty. Of this aspect somewhat more presently as we come to the Restoration period.

Apropos this partitioning of the male and female sections of contemporary society, considering the manner in which Petruchio huffs and puffs for wealth, one might expect this rolling stone to roll on to the widow. Had Shakespeare not followed the medieval romantic tradition, Benedick returning from the wars in Much Ado should have been marched along the same way as indeed valiant Bassanio too in The Merchant of Venice. The disinherited younger brother in As You Like It should have been declared poet (not a lame rhymester for a mere while) or scholar if he was to marry the roseate Rosalind; and Oliver should have been a reckless spendthrift,-- and for having squandered away his

1. 1613.

x. Chapman's creation in Sir Giles Goosecap I do not view seriously for reasons already stated.

† L.C.Knights in Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson, p.137. quotes Lipson on this point, that the soldier's hope for employment was in the event of a war only.

brother's patrimony and the rest that old Sir Rowland had left behind, should hence have married a widow and not the pale dear Celia. Reconciling oneself to this pair at any rate, is not easy.

But the critics' moral digestion gets thoroughly upset when Leonora in The Devils Law-Case files and wins her suit. Now if the upright suitor is the hero in reserve for the maid, whether she likes the arrangement or not, she jolly well has to accept him. And if the gambler and the insolvent hero are the widow's lot, she jolly well sees her claim through the court. We on our part jolly well have to swallow these points with Webster's many-sided satire. Temperaments of creators might vary, but the prodigal progresses in spite of or because of whatever is said about his counterpart's past and present. Amid side-splitting laughter, Rowley in A New Wonder for instance, lays his injunctions one by one upon the Ludgate younger brother, the latter says amen to all, and then soars up high, as high as the rare fortune and the rarer widow provided to him can raise him. Shirley however, on the one hand, disappoints the dissolute Don Pedro and Luys of both noble widow and virtuous maid in The Brothers, and on the other, starts giving morall polish to the rest of the traditions that his older contemporaries have worked hard at formulating. Apparently he finds it none too easy sacrificing existing theatrical values either. In The Ball to wit, the wooing and winning of the widow is not a whit less loud and long than it is say in Wit without Money or The Widow. But he introduces more honour by entitling her suitor Colonel and by adding on the whole more gravity to the morality- A Contention for Honour and Riches. Notwithstanding, the feeling remains that besides stealing the widow's match from Fletcher, he has stolen the maid's (with the scholar) from Ben Jonson. At the most, he lifts Fletcher and Ben Jonson to a little lofty idealism with an Alworth, and he blows a trumpet on the re-entry of a Conquest in Honoraria and Mammon.

The Restoration Howsoever D'Avenant too in his turn contributes towards the general thought Pot-pourri.

that the maid should have a suitor of integral worth as in Love and Honour and News from Plymouth: the most honest man in the gay years of the Restoration might get entangled with an affair or two before he comes to the maid. Whence it follows, that the dramatist's main endeavour would be to convert him to the matrimonial moral knot. But then a figure-head such as Mrs. Joyner in Love in a Wood messes things up too. For, at her I. W. Wycherley, 1670.



bureau are applications filed both for a widow's re-marriage and for a virgin's match, and, she has no compunctions in bargaining with a pimp like Sir Simon over either or both. Likewise, Coupler in The Relapse<sup>1</sup> sends Foppington off to the rich heiress Miss Hoyden, and, when Fashign comes along with his financial misery- common indeed to all younger brothers-, "widows swarm", he is answered in the conventionbound phrase, but is sent after the same quarry to provide the complications of the plot. Hence, signs are in favour of the survival of the pair that has no reputation to lose. In which context, the desperate soldier and the surfeited sailor in D'Avenant's aforementioned plays already have helped strengthen the tradition of a Middletonian character with Fletcherian-Jonsonian engraftings.

Shedding off Shirleyan colours quite, Freeman with "broken fortune" in The Plain-Dealer<sup>2</sup> doggedly persists in marrying the widow who has "fifteen hundred pounds a Year Jointure", for which (or whom?) Major Oldfox is angler too. The earlier conceptions of such heroes become clearer at around this time as coincidentally more light is thrown on actual conditions. Colonel Bounce's blunt statement to the name role, The Triumphant<sup>3</sup> Widow for example,

Look ye, Madam, the case is this, I'de go upon the square with my Lady, I have a thousand pounds a year, but 'tis mortgaged very deep; for I was hatter'd and sequestred, as many brave Fellows were for serving the King; but no more to be said.

carries us back to The Magnetick Lady to consider whether it was not the prevalence of similar circumstances which necessitated the creation of Ben Jonson's Ironside. Indeed, references to army personnel among the widow's suitors continue well into the early decades of the eighteenth century<sup>x</sup>. Specific mention is quite often made of the "half-pay" Officer and the ensign "reduc'd" bolting for her harbour. Maybe many a bully and boulder from the contemporary forces would have sworn testimony that a rumbling belly had really inspired the Captain in The Country Innocence<sup>4</sup> to the kicks that clear "flat-capped".

1. J. Vanbrugh, 1696.

2. W. Wycherley, 1676.

3. W. Cavendish, III, 1674.

4. J. Lealand, or, The Chamber-Maid turn'd Quaker, 1677.

x e.g. In C. Bullock's Woman is a Riddle (1717) Charles Courtwell is "a Younger Brother of a small Fortune" running after "a rich young Widow" for her "free Jointure".

Whereas, in Mrs. S. Centlivre's The Artifice, I, (1722) the disinherited Sir John is urged by Ned Freeman to go the customary way to Widow Heedless, but Fainwell is already at the game on the grounds:

"No hopes of War, no Rising in View! and Subaltern's Pay will make a Man rub but slowly through the World."

But the tradition now seems to be mixed up. As in the same authoress's Bold Stroke for a Wife the maid is pursued by an army officer.

merchants and "coxcombs" out of his way to the widow. Historical evidence such as

The struggle between King William and the Parliament of 1690 over the disbandment, or sweeping reduction, of the army, was the burning topic of 1698-99. The Dutch Guards had, as a matter of fact, been dismissed, and the British forces reduced to a minimum. 1.

deepens the conviction that at least in this quarter she is in greater demand than ever she was. She too, for her part, knows where to look for for the gratification of her desires. That is why Foible in The Way of the World<sup>2</sup> spins out the smooth yarn of Mirabell's encounter with her in the Park and the ensuing parley over Lady Wishfort--

What you are a hatching some Plot (says he) you are so early abroad, or Catering (says he) ferreting for some disbanded Officer, I warrant- Half Pay is but thin Substance (says he)- Well, what Pension does your Lady propose?

But the beldame has her inherited knife in the "spendthrift prodigal"-- over whom Webster had conducted a case in court.

Honoris and Mammon contd. 1660-1700. Yet he and his contemporary had gone all out to lay separate tracks for widow and maid, and for dissipated and undefiled suitor in order to resolve rivalry

and conflict and to restore proper socio-moral values to Honour and Mammon. With a dramatic stroke of the pen, Shirley consequently assisted in leaving everything in apple-pie order in the year 1659.

The Social Setting for Mammon's Reign. The Restoration chapter, howbeit, commences with everything in a muddle.

The maid one finds, is suffering from widow-phobia. Her rival has stolen from her overnight rover and ranter, gallant and gamester, Top and Fashion, plain and double dealer, has taken them by storm. The widow has now so many advantages over the maid that we find an assembly of women inquiring into this phenomenon.

Matron....Maids are always....jealous of Widows, for fear<sup>that</sup> they should get their Servants and Suters from them.

Faction. I should sooner be jealous of a Widow, than spiteful to a Married Wife...Widows have such a magnetick power, as one Widow will draw away the Servants and Suters from a dozen Maids.

Bon 'Esprit. Indeed Widows are very prevalent; for a poor widow shall have more Suters, and better Choice, than a rich Maid, and an ill-favour'd Widow, than a handsome Maid, an old Widow, than a young Virgin.

Ambition. I wonder at it.

Faction. Why should you wonder at it? since they know the humours, weaknesses, and strengths of men, better than Maids do, by which they know how to work and drag them to their bent and design.

Bon 'Esprit. No, that's not the Cause.

Faction. What's the Cause then?

1. G. Farquhar, Plays, ed. W. Archer, p.45, (footnote).

2. W. Congreve, III, i, 1699.

Bon 'Esprit. Why men think Widows wiser than Maids as being more known and experienc'd .....

~~But~~ Indeed Death and Hymen are great friends to Widows... 1.

The first difference to be remarked, on stepping into this period is that where there were individual cases and examples in the previous period there are now multitudes.

They are "very prevalent", they have "many Suters". So we had always known. Good old Erasmus had rung the thrice-blessed state of widowhood in. Dominion since had spread.

With the plenty she had always had at her command, and with experience she never was found wanting in, the Restoration somehow brings her into the limelight. To a Women's

Rights' Conference in The Projectors,<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Godsgood is, lo and behold, unanimously elected chairman too! For all their fears, maids have to yield to the powers that be.

But, alas for the poor dears on whom directly the proceedings begin, the hammer comes down with a bang.

Mrs.Gods. And first, if I might advise, I would have no maids of this council!

Nan. No maids! Why, I pray? Were you never one yourself, or was it long since you forgot it?

Mrs.Gods. Pray, give me leave! I say no maids.....

In the general discussion ensuing, Nancy's voice is lost. The sluggard should have heeded to (the mother's counsel in) The Old Law passed by Middleton and Massinger in the year of our Lord 1599.

Man had always been wise, but never so wise as now. Ferdinand in the present play is first despatched by the chief administrator of the marriage mart to try luck with the rich Mrs. Godsgood, failing which there is Nancy, old Suckdry's heiress, to go to (I,i.). Leaving our best wishes for the latter's widowhood, we attend another parliament-session (II,i.). Alongside blue-prints of a large-scale joint project, members browse over the balance-sheet of widows. Dame Godsgood, right enough, leads here too. Mammon is an older dear love. But the dear old love has since been tested on the touchstone.

I say Virgins are the Ore; Widows are the Gold try'd and Refin'd.  
3.

Confessedly, it is the widow's age. Of all the states (a knowable fact)

1. M.Cavendish, Wit's Cabal, Pt.I, I, 35, 1662.
2. J.Wilson, III, I, 1664.
3. Pawlkland, The Marriage Night, II, i, 1664.

wife, maid and mistress are tethered to some degree. She alone is FREE to carry first and foremost the Restoration banner of Liberty. Whatever she does, wherever she goes, she is free to go gay, to go wild with gaiety, to go wild even when the gay day is over: she is a law unto herself. The brightest of maidens could hardly escape being eclipsed by her.

1

Nowhere more so than in The Comical Revenge! Aurelia loves Bruce who loves Graciana who has Beaufort's love to call her own. But there are tears and more tears as each drifts away on a love-sick tide. Yet how soon are they forgotten, for Mrs. Rich and Sir Frederick begin and end and envelope the play with their rollicking fun. He comes reeling in from the tavern at a midnight hour. Is she in her night-gown? No matter. The fiddles strike up followed by masque and frolic and a bout of tears too when Sir Frederick is brought in upon a bier carried by his fiddlers four. Amid the kisses and laughs thereat, one forgets to feel sorry or happy over maiden tears turning into smiles.

2

Even in that interminable, sprawling play The Parson's Wedding, where Mistress Pleasant is handsome, young, of good fortune, hence independent, Widow Wild has a grain more of initiative and the provocative mistress touch. She it is, who from the balcony extends invitations to friends passing by, not the least of whom is a stock widow's suitor sought after by another "old stallion hunting widow". Candidly though the two talk of loves and preferences, are at ease together amid company at table, have the same lust for midnight adventures, are chaperoned by a pair of "dull" servants thrown off in the end for gallants à la mode, yet the widow leads. When, for instance, on their return from the play they find themselves locked out of the plague-infected house, it is she who opens the door to her nephew's. Which of course, is a pretext for introducing and breaking up, with all stagey effects, a rowdy night club scene.

Both these plays end with the decent note on marriage. But bits here and there are a trifle too blaring and once too often the characters break into bawdy. The purpose of the authors evidently was to cram the play with promises to the Monarch that they were catering to the merry programme he had in view. Hence there could have been no grating, screeching problem presented, emphasis being chiefly on atmosphere. As indeed in The

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1. G.Etherege, or Love in a Tub, 1664.

2. T.Killigrew, 1664.

Mulberry Garden<sup>1</sup> which teems with couples each providing newer motion and fire by continuing to change partners till the play gives over. The most intent reader or spectator would not remember which widow was aunt or chaperone and which was not.

More wine, mirth and company comes in Love in a Wood<sup>2</sup>. But Wycherley's cynical commentary descends upon them. Mrs. Flippant is supposedly an aunt, but it does not take a fraction of a minute to count how many words in all she has to say to Martha. Where indeed had Mrs. Rich the time to take off from Sir Frederick's window-breaking<sup>3</sup> and masquerading? Where indeed has Lady Flippant any when she is with the "precise City Bank" Bawd<sup>4</sup> in the doldrums over the fiver gone and no husband yet? Another three months at the most and down she will have to lie- "port", "equipage" and all. Hence hies she to the French-House, for at this candlelight hour Ranger, Dapperwit, and who not would be at their wine-cups. Someone might be caught. She plucks at one, pulls at another. Having made her strength last as far as this, her last breath goes into the song she sings. For whom the song is matters least, as like a plague she visits the place. Not a soul remains. Not even old Sir Simon who is all set to spring upon "a bed-ridden rich widow" or a "sucking heiress in her pissing clout." Thence to the park with Ranger's mistress to try out new tricks, and on to another's lodgings, Lady Flippant flies and flits. Oh, for an adventure with a gallant "for a gown, a new coach, a neck lace!" Little leisure indeed has she for Martha, who just stays put till her plotted escape.

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1. C. Sedley, 1668.

2. W. Wycherley, or, St. James Park, 1670.

x The treatment of the widow has to be related both to the past and the continuing present (i.e. Restoration). Else it remains impressionistic, fragmentary. For instance, H. F. B. Brett-Smith (The Plays of Sir George Etherege, Vol. I, p. lxxiv.) remarks that Sir Frederick's "nocturnal window-breakings are too crude" and that his "raillery of Mrs. Rich is sometimes boorish", even granting that during this age widows were a mark for the "broadest jests". Similarly, B. Dobrée (Restoration Comedy, p. 81) simply touches on Lady Flippant's "boorish repartee". In which context, Rochester's Main'd Debauchee and Killigrew's The Parson's Wedding are often quoted too. Why they were treated so, no one tries to explain. Nor was it purely for jests' sake. That she is a licentious character is still in the process of substantiation. Hence the reason of her being kidnapped in The Mulberry Garden wherein she is treated as a common property of a sort. In fact, any such type of treatment is not half as scandalous as in N. Field's Amends for Ladies where Bould has to get into Lady Bright's bed for the author to prove that she is indeed an exception. In Ben Jonson's The Alchemist too, Dol Common might or might not be spared, but Dame Pliant has kisses smacked on her lips turn and turn about by Subtle and Face. But to quote more is superfluous.

But "My Lady Flippant" escapes from her despair too, for the last words are about her and "the bondage of matrimony".

Of her corrupt side presently. Besides which, Wycherley's caustic criticisms of her are that she has thought little about truth, that such a way of life as she has led can exhaust even a widow's mine; and that she is sadly mistaken in thinking that the "supposed" will do for the "real". Man instinctively knows that a heavily patched face does not make up for Mammon. Contrasted is the veriest drab, the most eccentric Widow Blackacre in The Plain-Dealer who enthralls the most masculine Freeman, two decades her junior in age. By "custom time out of mind only" this "younger brother" has a sufficient "stock of impudence" to turn her thoughts from the memoranda and the affidavits tumbling out of her "green bag". Her lawyers and solicitors have fifteen hundred pounds a year, whilst she is content to be poor, grudging so much as a sixpenny piece to Jerry, her son, for a peep-show. Upon this point Freeman wins over the boy- and "peace or war, love or law", through any and every means, is determined to have her. Here then, is a Widow who puts Webster's much maligned creation into the proper perspective. She threatens disowning Jerry, tells him he was not born "in wedlock", hence according to law, the "base" (bastard) child cannot inherit the estate- if that is what Freeman is planning to have via him! Jerry in turn, briefs his self-appointed guardian to get hold of "three attorneys, two proctors, two solicitors, and a shrewd man of Whitefriars(!)" and between them they will see whether they are not hard enough for her.

Ben Jonson had not the art to draw the whole gamut of notes out of a woman's heart, consequently he could not put quirks into the head of The Magnetick Lady. But he was no fool in choosing a widow as a match for a Machiavellian set. Middleton on his part, could not have given more twists to his Lady Goldenfleece (No Wit, No Help). Now here is Wycherley showing mighty well how a widow's gang works- forging deeds and wills, counterfeiting hands and seals and bonds.

Satirically, he contrives to relate her to Olivia, a common mistress, for whom she recovers in court the claims from the men that the latter ensnares and ruins. Between these two destructive Mammonite forces, Manly, the titular role, is being hacked and torn. Hence the function of Fidelia the maid in the play is to retrieve him, to win back for him such faith in the world and womankind as to make him believe that love and virtue still

exist: indeed, that these are still higher than the gold she gives him, though such a deed in unknown in the widow-mistress confines.

Along these lines and through this type of satire Wycherley's soul may be followed. But he makes a more serious attack on the widow<sup>x</sup> for debasing the morale of the Restoration here. When for instance, she retorts to Freeman's proposal in Act II, sc.i.

now-a-days, every idle, young, hectoring, roaring companion....thinks  
to carry away any widow of the best degree.  
.....you would have me keep you, that you might turn keeper.

and further when she remarks on the allied point to the Knights of her gang that "a widow is a mere gap, a gap" (V,iii) for those in pursuit of her, she apparently reveals a truth. Yet would she not be the culpable party should she find herself in that situation? Since on Freeman's approach, she fires volley after volley into Major Oldfox (her equivalent in years) for aspiring to make her the crutch and the staff for his age. How long could she expect Freeman to stick by her side? She ultimately has to play "bawd" as she says, in compliance with the times. But if this widow has yet to lead to Freeman's degradation, does not Wycherley on the same score already have a revulsion from Lady Flippant in Love in a Wood? He does not let her sit any more on Dapperwit than heretofore. Wild as she is, she is a danger even to a Ranger. Hence Sir Simon for her.

In contemporary plays too, a Widow Wild (The Parson's Wedding) serves as a "gap" fairly clearly. Her however, one would overlook. But what exactly is the position of the widow in The Mulberry Garden? Wildish seems to be cloyed with her when he complainingly woos Olivia for putting difficulties such as "decency, honour and reputation" in the way of men who love "pleasure". Her injunction- "but Wildish, you shall visit her no more now we are married", sets any such doubt to rest. Estridge and Modish furthermore, kidnap the woman in question and her maid too, as sensationally perhaps, as the gangs of the day did a rival mistress for the pure fun of it, - or to settle scores. Inferentially, Wildish has been keeper to her. "Guardian" is sheer mockery.

But, however events take shape, however relations are settled, the weightiest evidence is, that till she has the money, because she has the money, man is subject to

x To quote critics at length is futile. All they have to comment on is that she is a queer, litigious character. At the most, that she is drawn "with cold horror that reminds one more of Honoré de Balzac than of Racine".

B.Dobrée. Restoration Comedy, p.91.

the widow's power. Loveall in Tom Essence<sup>1</sup> for instance, had been "entertain'd and Cloath'd" by her after he had been "stript and rob'd". In due course, when the banns are just about to go up, he however tries to escape her. But through disguise and other tricks the widow manages to re-possess him. You may be sure hence that the "lowest Heathen about Town" like Wilding in The City Heiress<sup>2</sup> has love "Darts" flung upon him by a rich Lady Galliard during her "Devotions" at "Church". And though he has eloped with the titular role Charlot, he leaves her in the lurch- "Marriage, Frank, is such a Bugbear!" He palms his mistress too onto an elder- the Middletonian Witgood way, since she complains of and weeps over dwindling recompenses. The widow alone is conveniently dear to his heart. Meanwhile, love for him, concern for her own honour, the intimation "Galliard his Mistress too!" and the awareness thereupon "That Rival may be dangerous"- drive Charlot frantic. What does Galliard have that she hasn't? Flummoxed by this question- "wou'd give the World to see the Widow....that Lady Galliard"- she adopts a disguise to do so. Indeed, pursues Wilding too therewith. The rival in turn learning of developments, is both shocked and concerned.

Mrs. Charlot Get-all go away with Wilding!  
A Man of Wilding's extravagant Life  
Get Fortune in the City!

Thou might'st as well have told me, a Holder-forth were married to a Nun:

There are not two such Contraries in Nature,  
'Tis flam, 'tis foolery, 'tis impossible.

3.

But the midnight hero comes to her in dishabillé. "My Life, my Soul, my Heaven" tumble out of his mouth as he leads her to the bed-chamber. That part of it Charlot is blissfully ignorant of. But to the end, Wilding is widow-possessed, till Charlot rushes in weeping to catch him, "I have thee, and I'll die thus grasping thee." She will. For Lady Galliard has already settled down with another.

Out of all the Restoration heroes however, none other can one find to compare with Beaugard, whose conscience is cleft the widest over the widow-maid triangle in The Atheist<sup>4</sup>. Like Wilding, he is resolved to have nothing to do with matrimony. Fair enough, comes the offer from Porcia, whose husband "Heav'n be thanked" is "dead and bury'd". She is

1. T.Rawlins, or, The Modish Wife, 1676.

2. A.Behn, 1681.

3. IV, i.

4. T.Otway, or The Second Part of the Souldiers Fortune, 1684.



young, loves her "Pleasures" and is as determined to hold her "Liberty". On account of her riches as it happens, an avaricious uncle keeps strict watch,- has even armed men to set upon her heels in case she breaks away. This offers a challenge to the soldier's honour<sup>x</sup>. He must open for her the way to freedom. But then, it has been "Lucretia's" misfortune to watch him, haunt him, dog him "these six Months".

being, to my eternal Torment, jealous of that ravenous Kite your Widow, your Widow, Captain! Nay, since I have confest my Weakness, know from this Hour I'll defeat all her Ambushes, all the false Baits she lays to ensnare your Heart, 'till I obtain the Victory of it my self, much more my due, in that I'm not beneath her in Beauty, Birth, or Fortune, or indeed any thing but her years, Captain; 1.

Beaugard is disturbed. If this "little Fairy" cheats the Widow of him, he will have to put on "that monstrous Vertue, call'd Self-denial, and be damnably constant" (IV). True, there is plenty and pleasure in marriage with her

Well, here's no fear of starving, that's one Comfort....[he then asks for the Beauty he is being made to wait for]. But then, my Widow! my Dear, Generous, Noble-hearted Widow! She that loves Liberty as I do. She that defies Matrimony as I do too. Shall I turn Recreant, and be false to her! Ah Daredevil, Daredevil! How I want thee to help me out in this Case of Conscience a little! 2.

Daredevil opts for the "enchanting Virgin", for one indeed that makes up for "six and fifty". And Beaugard's senses are kindled. "But then again, my Widow!" (Ah me!) The virgin lady scorns refusal. Minus the "base Artifices and Practices" of the widow, she has all, she says.

Finally, it is the soldier's word and the question of his honour that decide the case for Beaugard. He comes fully armed for the purpose, along with his soldierly men. And such a fight it is they fight that

This shall, in after Story, be call'd, Captain Beaugard's besieging of the Widow.

Otway's poetic justice in bringing the two liberty-loving characters together, leaves Lucretia hanging in the air. But if it is so, evidence only accumulates to the effect, that conceding the maximum that could be desired to a maid even, she still stands every chance of losing. The reason is pretty obvious.

1. II.

2. IV.

x (i.e. in view of the widow-soldier tradition going back to 1632. (Date subject to correction if evidence otherwise discovered).

The gallant soon parted from his money or the soldier in distress finds easy enough access to the widow. No taxes to pay here. Indeed, the other way round. Wine and raiment are in free supply too. Wildish, Wilding and Beaugard we have seen. In addition to them, what prevents Junior Wealthy in The Fortune-Hunters<sup>1</sup> from giving up his dissolute ways? The Ephesian dame- Lady Sly's lust and gold. Wherefore Maria is all fire and motion.

shall she devour my Souldier; no I'll vex every vein of her Heart.  
I'll Dog her every day..... and turn her to her proper use, Procuring;  
I'll trace the old Fox till I find out her Young Ones. 2.

Her greatest misfortune is that her fortune is in Lady Sly's treasury. Ultimately of course, this dramatist as well as another, resolves her tangle as well as another's but not until we have been informed about the entire situation. "Have I kept Sir John"- blurts out Mrs. Rich in The Beau Defeated<sup>3</sup> "and run all the Risques in the Universe to maintain his Port...?" At this point she is trying to chase the "rose-bud" Lucinda away from the theatre of marriage. Eventually though the titled head that the two scramble after turns out to be an impostor.

Space not permitting, we have not, both entertaining and instructive though it might well have been, run up town and down with Mrs. Rich or Lucinda; we have not fully watched the feats of the disguised Charlot, Maria or Fidella in rescuing their heroes; we have not encountered Porcia's face or Lucretia's appearing and disappearing behind masques. But if we have had some idea of them, and of Lady Flippant's park ambushade or hunt-the-prey game, of Widow Wild's gabble en route playhouse or in bed, of Mistress Pleasant's dashes or Martha's debut- we have the social perimeter somewhat in view. Cynical Otway besieges a citadel for one widow; gay Sedley kidnaps another; frolicsome Etherege breaks upon a third; and satirical Wycherley flays a musty dam. Probably, the more closely guarded a widow was, the more suspicious did a Beaugard grow that her bag of gold was weightier than a self-advanced maid's. Probably, a man ruined by a mistress squatted somewhere near the Inns of Court or sauntered somewhere around Temple Bar to catch some wisp, some speck of a widowy substance from afar and s@ll his way into the rest. But for love or lust, for game or guile, for wealth or wile - the widow, whether as hunter or hunted, seems part of the Restoration malady and carnival.

1. J. Carleile, 1689.

2. III, i.

3. M. Pix, or, The Lucky Younger Brother, III, 1699.

About which, in order to unify our impressions and solidify our views, we must descend from such a social stratosphere. We might then sense how with a current of town air carried by a town character into a low or high class home, and how with a reflection on family relations thereto, the dramatist metaphrases or perverts his moral law. Through two relationships mainly, namely, mother/daughter and aunt/niece, he conveys all he has to. Not excluding the manner in which the Mammon Law operates upon and conditions their respective mental outlooks, he thus completes his observations on the spirit of the times.

Mother and Daughter At one end of the social scale are Mrs. Crossbite and Lucy in Love in a Wood, who have fared fairly well ever since Mrs. Joyner introduced Dapperwit into the house. Had it not been for him, the dame might have subsisted "upon green cheese, tripe, and ox cheek" the whole vacation. Had it not been for him, the daughter might never have got into a "Farrendon gown", never have got out of her worsted stockings, never indeed have got dandled on the knee in the playhouse. After her early morning prayers, Mrs. Joyner comes this time to enquire after her "sweet god daughter", with promise of the "fine old alderman of the city" - Gripe. Will he relieve all necessities? "Mine, as well as my daughter's?" Double assurance given, Lucy is bidden to swap over and to put an end to her "scandalous familiarity" with the vile young fellow. (In a play like The Minor, Foote in the eighteenth century had yet to go ahead with Wycherley's unfinished job).

At the other end of the scale, an "Orange Woman" in The Man of Mode<sup>1</sup> makes hay while Medley and Dorimant are in the mood to go gay. Of course, she will make them acquainted with Lady Woodwill and Harriet. But the former is a sample of an "antiquated beauty" out of humour with the freedoms of the age. There is the hitch. Therefore too do tongues go wagging. What indeed could have induced her to bring Harriet up to town? "An old, doating keeper" could not be "more jealous of her distress". Ay, why? This is Etherege, mark you, who had given to his audiences so sensational a figure of fun and hearty cheer, as Mrs. Rich in The Comical Revenge. But that was just the beginning. He had yet had no time to divine a widow's humours. This is why he now has to create a daughter with sense enough to be ashamed of a forbear with less than little of the same.

1. G. Etherage, or, Sir Fopling Flutter, 1676.

Lady Cheat<sup>1</sup>ly, A True Widow<sup>1</sup>, comes to town, makes a show of herself and of her two daughters. For that reason, her house becomes the rendezvous of "Fools, Knaves, Whoremasters, Ladies of all sorts, and young Heirs". Lady Busy gets really busy. There is a lord for Milady's virtuous elder daughter, "he offers a Thousand Pounds down, and Three Hundred Pound per Annum during Life", (she says.) Such bargains come not every day. Since marriage is "cry'd down", Lady Cheat<sup>1</sup>ly is highly obliged to Lady Busy, and the proposal is propounded to the party,

Custom alters all Things mightily- Mothers very frequently do this  
for their Daughters now; and if it be a fashion, you know- 2.

But the daughter is so perverse. So is Angeline in The Disappointment<sup>3</sup>. She just refuses to say her prayers daily and to take her mother's advice along with her though by it she might come to keep her coach one day. Poverty however suits the young one just as well if her old father goes on foot. But no. The instructions continue. She need not marry for another few years; the young men in the picture could serve her a great deal better, another way. In The Constant Couple<sup>4</sup> Vizard, himself "a great debauchee and villain", acrimoniously calls Lady Darling "a private bawd". Indeed, when Sir Harry Wildair goes to her house with a letter of introduction from him, seeing her pass by he too repeats the comment: "this must be the bawd by the bulk". And then one hears of her being called "procuress", "a right sanctified bawd" (I,ii) and so on interminably; for in contrast there is her daughter, Angelica, "the master-stroke and charm of the creation, but charming virtuous woman." (V.iii). To get at whom Vizard himself was anxious, but held back owing to the fear that he would have to re-establish his connection with the mother, from whom it would have been hard to disengage himself.

In such a group of plays as the preceding, emphasis is laid on character contrasts, maybe occasionally parallels too, to show how far influences might go. Further examples are available in which the dramatist picks up the conventional idea of rivalry for apparently little more than theatrical value, but also on the other hand, to direct moral

purpose. The learned lady in Sir Patient Fancy,<sup>5</sup> for instance, sweetens herself into smiles

1. T. Shadwell, 1678.

2. II.

3. T. Southerne, or, The Mother in Fashion, 1684.

4. G. Farquhar, or, A Trip to the Jubilee, 1700.

5. A. Behn, 1678.

and dimples over young Leander, implores him not to waste himself on "that little trifle Lucretia", comes to "plain right-down Terms" in proposing that he become the master of her "Fortune"- the old jade. He pretends that he is "inconstant, wild, debauch'd". That is all very well, says she,

...a Fortune too that can support that Humour,  
That of Lucretia does depend on me,  
And when I please is nothing;  
I'm far from Age or Wrinkles, can be courted  
By Men, as gay and youthful as a new Summer's Morn,  
Beauteous as the first Blossoms of the Spring,  
Before the common Sun has kiss'd their Sweets away,  
If with salacious Appetites I lov'd.

1.

One would not go farther back than Shirley's The Constant Maid for parallel arguments, as the selfsame play had incidentally appeared with barely any alterations under the title Love Will find out the Way.<sup>2</sup> Even in the final reversal, when Lucretia comes in weeping and the mother declares that she had only been proving both their passions, the congruity is there. The addition however is, that the lady manages to wheedle the "Writings" out of Sir Patient for the nephew, our hero. Thereby, if Mrs. Behn had anything to do with Shirley's play, she improves upon, indeed strengthens the moralistic point of the master. In her later play, The Amorous Jilt<sup>3</sup>, the authoress borders on the burlesque<sup>x</sup> when she digs up the ancient Lady Youthly for a competition with a granddaughter on the strength of her "two thousand a year."

But, it will be noticed, that whereas masculine voices such as Wycherley's or Shadwell's bawl at the bawd and bay the mother, Mrs. Behn, Mary Pix and Mrs. Manley make a moral rattle inside the rivalry theme. They positively put the elder's idiocy up for show, with the ultimate idea entailed that a mother's a mother for all that. Sir Patient Fancy we have seen. In The Different Widows<sup>4</sup>, Lady Bellmont and Angelica are rather naively cried up as "the Wonder and Pattern of the Age", and Lady Gaylove is ridiculed for her fury over Mariana, her daughter. The latter perforce is made into a "disobedient" girl. Likewise, The Jealous Husband<sup>5</sup> creaks under the weight of morality.

1. III, i.

2. T.B ?, 1661.

3. 1696.

4. M. Pix, 1679.

5. Mrs. M. Manley, 1696.

x. Even in a play like The Widow Ranter; or The History of Bacon in Virginia (1690), Mrs. Behn's idea is to get good lively fun for the stage. The title-role is robust in outlook, almost masculine in bearing, were she even without the bowl of punch and the pipes of tobacco she starts her day with. She does indeed invert Otway's plot of The Atheist. For Widow Ranter dares Daring, the General, himself to a fencing match and a prompt surrender to her love.

Mariana's criticism of her mother, Mrs. Younglove

How can it enter into a Woman's head of Fifty, to look back upon a Young Fellow of Twenty, whose first contrivance will be how to get rid of her, her Money excepted, and that once secur'd she may march off with what separate maintenance he is pleas'd to allow her, and be contented to starve all her life .....

is certainly worlds away from Wycherley's sharp satire on the widow as a "gap", and from the dulcet delights she proffers to Sedley's conception of "keep". Mrs. Younglove's repentance, "I have too long...den'd you the Affection of a Mother; but I'll make amends for it", is again different in purpose from Southerne proving only to the male line of thought that a bawd cannot carry the blood of a mother in her veins. For indeed, Wycherley and Shadwell held the two together aloft for infamy.

Aunt and Niece. Congreve finally takes the point over from the women-dramatists, and rejects the

mother-daughter idea whereby the Restoration dramatist inculcates a moral law. And in so doing the only sober element he credits Lady Wishfort with in The Way of the World is her solicitude for her daughter's welfare. When <sup>one</sup> says that, <sup>one</sup> should like to resound a note that alongside of Ben Jonson, this playwright is appraised for his "skill in consistent and sound characterization and motivation"; for his manner of displaying characters "somewhat better or somewhat worse than people in real life"<sup>1</sup>. Now since the aunt and niece pair<sup>x</sup> of which little point has been made in the preceding pages, gains footing in his play, since in fact, Congreve lengthens the conflict of this relationship out thematically too-- attention at this juncture is drawn to it. We may combine contemporary and conventional ideas of this relationship and reach the following perspective, one long overdue.

In quest of the aunt's pedigree along one trail it will be observed that in the l. Paul and Miriam Mueschke, A New View of Congreve's Way of the World. p.80.

x. As a respectable relation, barring the unavoidable mention of an occasional aunt in an historical play, she is not in Shakespeare's world. Taking other prolific writers into consideration,-- Massinger? Avoiding irrelevant controversies as to how many plays were lost, how many destroyed by Mr. Warburton's servant, in the eighteen that survive there is none. Inferentially, those that were lost or destroyed may not have had any either. Speaking of their fifty-two plays, similarly overlooking how many Beaumont acquires joint-stock reputation for with Fletcher, is there any relationship in the theatrical characters of The Prophetess wherein the titular role incidentally is "aunt"? In The Island Princess and Wit at Several Weapons, she is in the tradition of Chaucer's Wife of Bath. Ben Jonson? Only in a play of his "dotage", The Magnetick Lady, written when he was thought to be dead and had long ceased to appear abroad, indeed was in it doing a sort of death-bed deed of goodness. Not as aunt then, but as the phoenix of a good widow could this character be considered.

pre-Restoration plays, the character is rare. If and when occasionally spotted, she is (almost?) invariably a widow who controls the fate and fortune of a niece. Inferentially, the "bawd" or "procuress", used synonymously with "aunt" until the seventeenth century, should have been more precisely specified as a "widowed aunt". Support on this head is gained further on both negative and positive grounds. First~~ly~~, the unmarried woman as the foregoing and following pages reveal, has no rights of existence, hence the dramatist's fight for and fury over her. As such, since any association of aunt-hood with her involves contradiction, she would be even less acceptable as the reprobate relation. Besides, would she have had the experience and tactics to conduct such delicate matters between Lord alone knows whom and whom? Were the furthestmost hypothesis considered even, that a body had messed her own life up (which really alters the case) and set up her 'practice'(!) then too, one imagines, "widow" would have been, for propriety's sake, tagged to her sign-board and appended to her name. Secondly, if literature is any reflection of reality, the three factors, namely, "bawd", widowed aunt and blood relation, go all-in-one, then and now. In an early Elizabethan prodigal-son play Glasse of Government<sup>1</sup> for instance, Aunt Pandarina is responsible for whistling niece Lamia with her gold out of the parental home in order to establish a "house with red lattices". Whatever the conditions then, Dryden in his time, as one infers, is a leader<sup>x</sup> of thought on the crying contemporary sin of keeping, by suiting purpose and theme to Lady Dupe and her niece in Sir Martin Mar-all<sup>2</sup>. Since he was far too astute a judge of his times to pay blind homage to tradition, the closer truth for such creations seems to be, that while a fellow-dramatist enrolled one like Widow Wild for fun and merriment in The Parson's Wedding, Dryden saw the moral infirmities of such characters and relationships. If he did make use of a ready-to-hand term and of the cant term "aunt", ostensibly the widow part of it was the aptest. Copious evidence has been given about various aspects of her character. So, the crucifixion of a niece, supposititious or real, for thirty pieces seems not improbable at her hands. The Restoration tone and temper gives the widow only a new lease of life in this relationship. Therefore Mrs. Termagent, by birth a "Gentlewoman", laments in The Squire

1. G.Gascoigne, 1575.

2. or The Feign'd Innocence, 1667.

x Wycherley's Mrs.Crossbite appears later. Shadwell's creation too. But I would not reckon Shadwell "original", because he panders both ways- the "mother" side after Wycherley and "aunt" side after Dryden, as to be seen.

<sup>1</sup>  
of Alsatia that she owes her ruination to a widowed aunt under whose tutelage she came on the death of her parents. If one sinner has been laid to rest, there is another-  
Gremia in The Amorous Bigotte: <sup>2</sup>, "aunt" to "a fine Curtezan", Levia. Plausibility is given to yet another tale of exploitation in Greenwich Park <sup>3</sup>, where the aunt to save herself from dying in an "almshouse" played the regular "bawd" to her niece Dorinda. And so on

Lady Wishfort cannot deny consanguinity with these her widowed sisters, since one aspect of the aunt-niece-fortune tangle is seen in no little measure to be involved here. With this difference, that while she can afford the time and leisure to roll in agony over her insatiable maw of "lechery" <sup>4</sup>, they have circumstantially to forego some share of such considerations in order to maintain the office of dealers with lechers. Had Millemant not the fortune nor the beldame her maids and men, the family trade would have been adopted quite instinctively. For going by the language Lady Wishfort exsiccates her wind-pipe with when her rouge and cherry brandy are not administered, she gives the impression as if not quite so long ago she had been littered and left in the gutter for her breeding. Incontinence hence runs in the blood. Fainall, her daughter, exults that she

was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow, and would again be a widow. <sup>5</sup>  
Over the legacy conflict too, who is the dame at grips with from the centre of her pit but a gang of "four adulterers"? <sup>6</sup>

It is simply absurd to take Lady Wishfort back to Ladies Tailbush and Eitherside in The Devil is an Ass for her "humour" <sup>7</sup> and ignore her widow-heritage. Were any affinities to be sought out in pursuance of the second strain in her pedigree, like Widow Wild, Lady Flippant, Lady Sly and a long scroll of dishonour- (roll of honour!) - able names it would be idle to repeat, she has only all her life gone around collecting the diseases of the age till now she can stir out no more. The Restoration day is over. She is the summing-up. Congreve positively has this deep Restoration pit to draw from. Assuming for a while that he did sit down at schooling himself the Jonsonian way, if he was so susceptible to

1. T. Shadwell, 1688.

2. T. Shadwell, 1689.

3. W. Mountfort, 1691.

4. Paul and Miriam Mueschke, A New View of Congreve's Way of the World, p.36.

5. The Way of the World.

6. Paul and Miriam Mueschke, A New View of Congreve's Way of the World, p.36.

7. Ibid.



influences, all the more reason why characters from Wycherley's and Dryden's pages must be consulted since they breathe the earliest exhalations of debauchery. Lady Wishfort belongs to the Widows' Age starting in the year 1660 and ending with her in 1700 or 1699, and she breathes in addition, the sickly and sour air that they have left for her green envy to feed on.

"Humours" is very much a cliché these days. But since so fondly drawn upon, since it is an accepted way of literary criticism to burrow into traditions, Lady Wishfort has a host of "humours"(!) then. For her brandy and ratafia, refer her to Cortezza's "drunken humour" in Chapman's The Gentleman-Usher. And, not that this forbear does not give adequate exhibition of her grovelling appetites, Fletcher's "fleshy hook" from Wit at Several Weapons gives her the "humour" for "rivalry" with a niece complete with the fortune factor<sup>x</sup>. But then Lady Wishfort has the widows' especial "humour" for "the spendthrift prodigal", on a traditionally legal ground.

As a measure against this humour the Restoration hero has willy-nilly to adopt a common strategic device. He nibbles at the niece like Dapperwit of Love in a Wood, by making pretences to the bag of lustful bones, Lady Flippant. So at least he says. And we can well believe him. What other course can Philadelphia's suitor take in The Amorous Widow?<sup>1</sup> The "tormenting Creature" will not release the fortune and she does not give up her designs upon him. Mrs. Caution in The Gentleman Dancing-Master<sup>2</sup> neither has Hippolita's fortune in her clutches nor is trusted with complete charge of the niece, consequently does not come up to quite the same stature as the other aunts. Nonetheless, she itches to lay her hands on the dancing-master who makes freer and freer with the charge. Lady Love-youth in The Humorists<sup>3</sup> is the carnivorous animal proper. She imposes a set of baboons upon Theodosia that the niece might pick and choose from but swoops down on Raymund herself. She of course, knows his full "value"; he is to her "full welcome". So she advances upon her "prey". Naturally, misunderstandings ensue, despite even the communiqué Raymund is able to pass to Theodosia while Milady is melting over his love verses. Clouds hang

1. T. Betterton, or, The Wanton Wife, 1670.

2. W. Wycherley, 1672.

3. T. Shadwell, 1670.

x. W. W. Appleton (Beaumont and Fletcher, p. 48) catches just a glimmer when he writes, "On the surface Wit at Several Weapons has several points in common with The Way of the World, instancing an old doating crone, a niece and young man of wit. Congreve has an old tradition to perfect. Fletcher was at the stage of rough-hewing it.

heaviest however, when he is closeted with Lady Loveyouth. Theodosia intrudes. Enraged, the aunt seizes the miscreant to lock her up. Pouncing upon the opportunity when she is so engaged, Raymund adopts the stock tactics of the dacoit. He sets fire to the house, and amid its roar and crackle runs off with his prize. Fortune follows.

Shadwell caters for an adolescent audience, while for Congreve the mind has to be alert, and nimble and clear enough too to be able to follow the queerest clues in a detective story. Yet if Raymund, the Shadwellian hero's experience is "there is no way to come to the Niece but by the Aunt" (II), Congrevian Mirabell has danced his dance no less. What is more, he has sung a song in Lady Wishfort's "commendation", got a friend to "lampoon" her, complimented her with "the imputation of an affair with a young fellow", to the extent that the "malicious town" had noticed she was grown fat of a sudden when she lay in of a dropsy. He could not have gone downright to "debauch" her (I,i.). From this point, having seen such progress made by the adolescent Shadwell, Congreve proceeds to the tortuous turns of the legacy business, harvesting thereby the Restoration summer. For, they have all spoken of and sworn over fortunes, why else should the Honour-Mammon clash have ever been started at all, but no dramatist had so far drawn the Shylock and the Machiavelli parts of a widow out by floodlighting a regular band of conspirators trying to get the fortune out of her.

"Yes, he shall have my niece with her fortune, he shall".(III,ii), hisses the snake under the spotlight. And the venom rises when the coils are being set for the reception of Sir Rowland-- she'll have "the spendthrift prodigal" "murder'd", she'll have him "poison'd". More coils. Then with a swerve to

a sort of dyingness....a swimmingness in the eye- I'll look so- my niece affects it; but she wants features.

And more writhing coils.

A widow in the hands of a dramatist was a sort of Frankenstein. After he had created her, to save his own skin, he had to get her settled, somehow, anyhow. In all saintliness, says Mirabell (or is it Congreve quaking in the presence of his Frankenstein?) for his "peace and quiet", he is leaving the "beauty" her niece. "On proviso" comes the categorical imperative, that he "resign the contract" immediately. Congreve shows malice against Lady Wishfort in arranging for Mirabell to have possession of the deed (no

fictitious fortunes at the back of a dramatist's mind) ~~and you~~ actually on the stage, and, let pass the spendthrift prodigal, denies her even old Sir Rowland, a type with whom comic convention had often come to a compromise. Congreve wrote no more. But he had done a thoroughly good job: since havoc enough had been done to the Restoration beau monde. Wherefore, if one may take the liberty of breaking the label of a name (Wishfort) into syllables for more motives and meanings than one, that the saintly moralist, for his "peace and quiet", had perforce to build a fort around the lady widow's wishes.

Notwithstanding, all the varied notes in the Restoration chord of the Widow's Age are sustained up to the end. Mockmode in Love and a Bottle<sup>1</sup>, for instance, has newly come from the University and is newly setting up for a Beau, and though he knows not a thing about Lucinda,

By the universe, I don't remember whether my mistress is maid or widow!  
But a widow, so much the better; for all your London widows are devilish rich, they say.

knows well the Mammonite Laws. About their influence, too, all is known. Hence judgment too comes from the town's Lord Courtipoll-

I profess there ought to be a Statute of Restriction relating to the Widows of this Kingdom; they are generally so damn'd cunning in their Amours, that half a score of Widows are sufficient to enslave all the young fellows about the Town.  
2.

The three odd decades since a back-bencher such as Nancy, old Suckdry's daughter, (The Projectors) have ended in a resonant diapason. Quickly steps Miss Hoyden<sup>3</sup> out of her bib and tucker years of strict vigilance- knowing what's what- as well as the best of 'em- is married to Fashion on the quiet and when Foppington appears for his claim, 'eood, and isn't she inspired!

Hoyd. ...say not a word of what's past, I'll e'en marry this lord too.  
Nurse. What! two husbands, my dear?  
Hoyd. Why, you had three, good nurse, you may hold your tongue.  
Nurse. Ay, but not altogether, sweet child.

The chaplain's sermon is suggestive. And spirits soar.

Hoyd. 'Eood, and I will marry again then! and so there  
is an end of the story.

1. G.Parquhar, II,ii. 1698.

2. T.Dilke, The Pretenders: or, The Town Unmaskt. II, 1698.

3. J.Vanbrugh, The Relapse; or, Virtue in Danger. IV,vi, 1696.

Berinthia in the play warbles a higher note in the same scale:

Ah, Amanda, it's a delicious thing to be <sup>a</sup> young widow. 1.

In Fainall's (The Way of the World) throat the note is fuller: she

was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow,  
and would again be a widow. 2.

Maybe the marriage mart is being declared open for Honoria. Else how reach the next haven of bliss? But Collier, Steele and others have come. Even without them, one by one, such refrains are to fail and fade. To fail and fade with the Restoration days that are no more. And old morality and tradition needs must crumble to yield place to new.

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1. II,i.
  2. II,i.

THE OLD MAID'S TALE.  
(The First Phase)

'Maid's flesh and fish are vendible while fresh', cried many an Elizabethan and his immediate successor. The unmarried state was in many a way discountenanced. The particular dramatist who resisted the 'Apes in Hell' theory or the barren life of religion had conceded to an individual case on its exceptional merit and had made her live for an ideology. She was young. He said nothing about what she would be when grown old. Except perhaps, that in time she would be an example for posterity to follow. Hence, as she existed in contemporary society, the older unmarried woman was scarcely acknowledged until after 1660. Easily without comment could be passed up a solitary reference such as occurs in The Siege. And that is when the three Captains sit discussing their shares of and preferences for the spoils of war, and weigh specifically their chances with-"the virgin of tender years" "squatted among her sweet meats", the "stale virgin", and "season'd widow"

Environ'd round, and cheerfully besiedg'd,  
With her Strong-water Cellar; The other compass'd  
With five or six good large deep-belly'd Bottles,  
And both of them mumping for Consolation.

Maybe an odd phrase or line could still be ferreted out. Yet when thus brought together from the space of half a century, would it be of much import considering the masses of plays written during the greatest period of English dramatic literature?

2-1700. The strange, eventful history of the 'old maid' ~~Portia~~ begins with the  
e New Restoration. And the writer who gains pre-eminence in this connection is Mary Cavendish.  
re e. 'Addicted' as she always had been to writing, <sup>one may</sup> <sup>that</sup> ~~assumedly~~ what appears in print in 1662, is  
what could have <sup>appeared</sup> earlier, had her fate and fortune (husband's really) not been involved with  
the King's. The idea of 'old maid' therefore, that had been pent-up <sup>within</sup> ~~between~~ the complex  
of the autocratic male habit of thought and speech, is liberated through her ~~with~~ <sup>repeated</sup>  
<sup>references.</sup> ~~distinction.~~ Primarily, because she can ill-disguise her subjective feminine approach;  
secondarily, whether she is aware of it or not, she certainly resolves the cantankerous  
"apes in hell" into the simpler, easily understood "old maid" formula. In fact, no  
little of what had gone into the exposition of the superstition of the 1600's, also a  
little of what has gone <sup>by</sup> way of explanation <sup>of</sup> ~~into~~ it since, is contained in the posing and  
parrying of questions as they occur to her. And fairly rhetorically are these framed too.

(a) <sup>80</sup>Th<sup>is</sup> surely she is not a woman, for there is none of the effeminate Sex, but takes it a disgrace to live an old Maid, and rather than dye one, they will marry any man that will have them. 1

(b) Parle. Those women that are curious in their Choise, may chance to die old Maids.

Matron. 'Tis better to die an old Maid, than to live a miserable life, which will be, if an unhappy Wife.

Vanity. There is no misery like being an old Maid. 2

In the story Trifle relates, the King's daughters are confronted with the option that

(c) if they would marry, they must choose one of those that were sometimes man, and sometimes beasts, or otherwise they must never marry; and they, rather than to live old Maids, were resolved to marry, were their Husbands at all times beasts: 3

(d) Nan. But if you never marry till your Father get you such a Husband, you will dy an old Maid.

Mistriss Odd-Humour. I had rather dy an old Maid, than ~~be~~ be an unhappy Wife. 4

There is also the free shot permissible to any playwright.

(e) Malicious. I shall despair, unless the third Sister Mademoiselle Grand Esprit would marry also; for the whole bulk of Mankind will ~~see~~ <sup>made</sup> to her, and never think of any other woman, whilst she is undisposed of.

Spightfull. Well, the worst ~~we~~ come to the worst, we shall only live old Maids.

Tell-Truth. But not old Virgins. 5

Where<sup>for</sup> <sup>made</sup> <sup>for the first time</sup> ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> obvious that the "disgrace" or "misery" is not out of fear of a punishment hereafter but of living right here, probably because the maid is confronted with a harsh social attitude. For the rest, the reason for old maidism (as for "leading apes") is the fastidiousness of her choice. And the acceptance of married life similarly is in unquestioned obedience to nature's law. The comical reversion ~~to~~ <sup>of</sup> forestalling the curse, which in other words, the post-Reformation playwright sometimes alluded to as the "yoke of virginity", completes the argument by which the authoress wriggles the "old maid" out of "apes in hell". Henceforth an elder's threat and reminder is

If you die an old maid, the worst is yours. 6

Likewise, the younger one is apprehensive of being  
a neglected and obscure Maid  
Nor seen nor spoken of, .....7

Mary Cavendish was paid many a glowing tribute to in her time, not the least was

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1. Loves Adventures, Pt.II,I,Sc.5,1662. 2. The Public Wooing, III, Sc, 31.  
3. Ibid, V, Sc, 40. 4. The Religious, II, Sc, 10.  
5. Natures Three Daughters. Beauty, Love and Wit, Pt.II,V, Sc. 12. 6. Love à la mode, I, ii, 1663.

incidentally one from Etherege. The Royal Society even held a reception in her honour in 1667. Ostensibly, she was read by those that mattered if not others. Though she on her side, was ambitious of ~~her~~ fame in the annals of history as she writes in the Preface to her works,

I regard not so much the present as future Ages, for which I intend all my Books.

posterity has as good as forgotten her. Notwithstanding, deliberation arises over whether in this comparatively minor question of the old maid, she could at all have influenced thought. If not, it is remarkable coincidence that contemporaries think uncommonly alike. Of major consequence during these early years is Dryden. In his first <sup>1</sup> play performed in the Theatre Royal, when Isabella starts stretching her powers to procure the bashful knight, Constance overhearing remonstrates,

No fat overgrown virgin of forty ever offered herself so dog-cheap,  
or was more despised; methinks this should mortify thee exceedingly.

The epithet "despise" runs well in discordant harmony with "neglect", "obscure", "disgrace" in the lines just scanned through. However between the years of The Wild Gallant <sup>2</sup> and Secret-Love <sup>3</sup> a stirring event takes place. Etherege's Love in a Tub is staged. Up till when

The London theatre was the theatre of Charles I. Its comedy was the Elizabethan comedy of humours, pale, withered and exhausted. <sup>4</sup>

He "changed all that". <sup>With result</sup> ~~To what purpose did~~ here? That Dryden's first thought on the "fat over-grown virgin of forty" catches new fire.

Cel. But dost thou know what it is to be an old maid?

Flor. No, nor hope I shan't these twenty years.

Cel. But when that time comes, in the first place, thou wilt be condemned to tell stories, how many men ~~there~~ might'st have had; and none believe thee; Then thou growest forward and impudently weariest all they friends to solicit men for thee.

Flor. Away with your common-place wit; I am resolved to grow fat and look young till forty, and then slip out of the world with the first wrinkle, and the reputation of five-and-twenty. <sup>5</sup>

Even in his own day regarded as the finest critic of life and times, Dryden could not have, despite his feeling of inferiority regarding himself as a winter of comedy given better exposition of his irony and precision. Evident as it appears in print, how much more ~~so~~ when coming from the mouth of Nell Gwynn. Prospectively speaking, but a few more

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1. The Wild Gallant, II, 1, 1662/3.
  2. or The Maiden Queen, 1666/7.
  3. 1664.
  4. J. Palmer, The Comedy of Manners, P. 64.
  5. Secret-Love, IV, 1.

\* e.g. Steele, The Tender Husband; Mrs. Davies, The Self-Martyr; Mrs. Griffith, The Double Mistake etc.

years were to pass before audiences were to learn that the jilt or coquette who had started her career with the Merry Monarch and his men, was looking no longer young, yet was wearying all her friends in refusing to get out of the world long after" the reputation of five-and-twenty." Of this type presently. Of his other prophetic voice, the eighteenth century maiden aunt will give adequate proof. She will tell stories about the men/man she might have had and none believe her.

It is already quite apparent that the broad analysis of Mary Cavendish is taking a sharp turn and twist to narrow down to the <sup>contemporary</sup> society type of old maid. And the history of the pre-Restoration <sup>maid</sup> ~~class~~ however filtered through her and however diluted by Dryden or another that might still have been written, remains forever and aye a blank. The contemporary dramatist of course, is under no moral obligation to atone for the omissions of his ancestor when the present demands his attention and he is loyal in his duty both to monarch and to society.

After Secret-Love things are, the Restoration diorama whisks up to still brisker action, and a doubt arises as to whether some sort of <sup>moral</sup> stigma is not being attached to the character, and whether a chance substitution of "stale" for "old" means <sup>some</sup> ~~anything~~ and/or ~~anything~~ more than a term ~~as~~ opposed to "fresh and young". ~~First~~, for the sake of argument, it should not be surprising if the same character commissioning himself as the informant of his gang that "the town-cryer" has "grown hoarse with crying for lost <sup>1</sup> maidenheads", were to brand this category "stale". <sup>with a moral implication. He knows the trend of things only too well. Nevertheless</sup> ~~Probably not without reason.~~ <sup>But also</sup> ~~because of~~ <sup>he assumes</sup> a newly-rising concern for the woman who has yielded to temptation. <sup>On the other hand,</sup> ~~Second~~, the Careless-Rover-Ramble type of hero, demanding forfeiture of virtue at his hands, on refusal might swear and curse,

Now Lady, if you are not for what I propos'd, you may e'en keep your Maidenhead till it stinks, and is not fit for man to meddle with. 2

Even if a later moral voice dictating that rather than give way, "maidenheads may hand as medlars...into marmalade" <sup>3</sup> ~~is added into the bargain~~, the shortened form of this cry would still be "stale". The braggart, at any rate, could ~~not~~ <sup>virtue</sup> sophistically declare the maid with fallen virtue as well as she whose <sup>virtue</sup> he could not fell, to be such.

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1. W.D'Avenant, The Man's the Master, IV, 1. 1668.
  2. E. Ravenscroft. The Careless Lovers, V. 1672/3
  3. 1664. T. Southerne, The Disappointment: or, The Mother in Fashion, V, 1, 1684.

+ e.g. Steele, The Tender Husband; Mrs Davys, The Self Rival; Mrs. Griffith, The Double Mistake, etc.



Conclusive evidence on the stigma referred to may be obtained after investigating the woman's side of the picture too. Mrs. Squeamish and Fidget in The Country Wife<sup>1</sup> and are decidedly not old if they have a grandmother "rattling" herself to "pieces" and an old Sir Jasper in pursuit and concern for their safety and "honour", and again and again if they are found in Horner's lodgings where the central situations are built. In the company of Lady Fidget, in the act of tugging at Horner's cravat for the China he has not been impartial at distributing, in the scene where a bawdy song can be sung and a bottle uncorked, if Mrs. Squeamish is there to contribute to the atmosphere even, does she not leave her own indelible impression behind? She gives the play a sprinkle of bon-mots as

nobody takes notice of a private man, and therefore with him  
'tis more secret; and the crime's the less when 'tis not known. 2

and

that demureness, coyness, and modesty, that you see in our faces  
in the boxes at plays, is as much a sign of a kind woman, as a vizard-mask  
in the pit. 3

But <sup>at</sup> what one asks, is done about her future? There is not so much as the suggestion of a wedding with regard to her, let alone the actual conventional ending. Such a statement as

but it was a practical impossibility to visit poetical justice  
upon every character of the play. 4

does not fully satisfy. "Stale" already in so far as virtue goes, rejected thus by the artist, she will be doubly stale in 'despite', 'neglect' and 'obscurity' is no time. As a type assembled out of contemporary society she will live to be an old maid on account of fallen reputation. It is surmised that clearer allusion in Act IV, iii. is to her kin only. That is when Sparkish announces the news of his forthcoming marriage, Horner-to whose wild sect he belongs- astonishedly remarks,

Thy wedding ! what stale maid has lived to despair of a  
husband, or what young one of a gallant?

Comes the victorious reply, "O, your servant, sir- this gentleman's sister then,- no stale maid." Wycherley's satire straps "old" and "stale" together, meaning thereby- Which honest and youthful maid with eyes open would cast her lot with any man of this clan? Else it may refer to the genuinely ageing woman who'd cast her lot with, oh well, just any man rather

1. W. Wycherley, 1674.

2. II. i.

3. V. iv.

4. E. Bernbaum, The Drama of Sensibility, P. 66.

than have none. But the first, <sup>interpretation</sup> that is she who could not guard her virtue, she who had made a slip, who in Shakespeare's day too would have been called a "stale", seems plausible enough. Despite the antithetical "young" in the sentence. Wycherley finds the mean between double and plain dealing.

<sup>My</sup>Contention, however, is not merely over words and their usage, but <sup>about</sup> ~~about~~ how ~~far~~ they contribute towards the compilation of the new character. Rather, if it is believed that Dryden reflects Charles II and Lady Castlemaine through Celadon and Florimel in Secret-Love, that D'Avenant in The Man's the Master notifies essential changes in society since the time he had been favoured with grants for a theatre after the King's heart, and that Wycherley in The Country Wife only transmutes facts with his wit, - it may also be asserted that they have aptitude for correctness. <sup>reporting</sup> From their respective angles they present the flirt as young, though not without remarks on her <sup>transient</sup> ~~falling~~ value. <sup>Then</sup> ~~Meanwhile~~, fifteen years of the new régime having passed, others observe that she is now all a-flutter for her fading wings. <sup>maybe</sup> ~~Maybe~~, Crowne, out of sheer inventive power, Otway through intimate contacts in his life of enervating <sup>dissipation</sup> ~~debauchery~~, and Southerne due to his sense of moral purity, - but, taken together, the records <sup>set down by</sup> ~~as~~ each of <sup>them</sup> ~~the~~, <sup>they</sup> ~~say~~, tally well.

1. first declaredly 2. Ladies Faddle (The Country Wit), Squeamish (Friendship in Fashion)  
3. i/stale maids in 4. and Susan Malapert (The Maid's Last Prayer) consequently share the  
5. nedy-The Society type. 6. same pains and penalties of stale virginity or old maidenhood. Their late appearance on  
7. the Restoration scene disproves however, one part of the assertion,

Superannuated belles and timeworn rakes crowded the English stage between 1660 and 1700. 5

and young Mrs. Squeamish behaviour in The Country Wife invalidates the second, that

the old women with their decayed charms are always pursuers. 6

Accepting the definition of the heroine from the Manners school

A woman whose scruples, if she has any, are based on prudence rather than virtue. 7

1. A. Nicoll, A History of English Drama, Vol. I, P. 228.

+ Of her fate, G. M. Trevelyan in "Artificial" Comedy, Times Literary Supplement, Jan 9, 1928. has a certain amount to say. At the age of sixty four, she tried persuading she was "fifty five". Beau Fielding who married for the money of this royal relict, was the subject of The Tatler, Nos. 50 and 51. He was, in fact, tried and convicted of bigamy.

x And Killgrew in 1662.

2. J. Crowne, 1675/6.

3. T. Otway, 1678.

4. T. Southerne, or Any rather than Fail, 1692/3

5. E. Mignon, Crabbed Age and Youth P. I.

6. Ibid.

7. J. W. Krutch, Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration, P. 8.

as applicable to her, it has to be added besides, that while critics fall to browbeating each other over manners, humours, wit and other norms they test comedy of the time by, they consistently ignore <sup>broadening of the</sup> the feminine field ~~broadening~~ by the evolution of the unmarried woman as a character of intrigue or of any other calling. Admittedly, examples are few. But ~~that~~ <sup>even</sup> ~~however~~ <sup>when some of</sup> these few stand in meaningful relation to notable male creations of the time such as Sir Mannerly Shallow, Sir Noble Clumsey, Sir Courtly Nice, Lord <sup>Fo</sup> Poppington, it is suspected that the significance of ~~even~~ their character and action is underrated, if not <sup>totally</sup> ~~only~~ missed. Now that is indeed surprising for they have in fact, separate roles to play in each of the two worlds, male and female, as they pass in and out of either.

Onethread of Lady Faddle's person and behaviour for instance, is unravelled from her railing against "the bad women of the town, only because they get all the men from her" and against "painting women, at the same minute she is painting herself"; another, from her responsibility <sup>for</sup> ~~of~~ Sir Mannerly. For the "honour" of her family she approaches Sir Thomas as match-maker for his daughter and her booby nephew. But "like the encounter of two dog-  
1  
apes" as Jaques would indeed have termed it, is the complimenting that ensues on the occasion

L.Fad. Oh, Sir Thomas, you over-run me with <sup>too</sup> a great <sup>a</sup> flood of language.  
Sir Tho. Oh, 'tis your Ladyship only is the governess of that province,  
L.Fod. Oh, Sir Thomas, it is you are the inheritor; 'tis you ~~who~~ have the learning, and the parts.  
Sir Tho. Oh, 'tis your ladyship has the phrases, and the mine.  
L.Fad. Oh, Sir Thomas, it is you ~~who~~ have all-  
Sir Tho. Oh, the sovereignty is your ladyship's.  
L.Fad. Oh, Sir Thomas, you depose yourself from your rights.  
Sir Tho. Oh, 'tis your ladyship dethrones yourself.  
L.Fad. Oh, Sir Thomas!  
Sir Tho. Oh, Madam!  
L.Fad. Intolerable presumption it were-  
Sir Tho. I beseech your ladyship.  
L.Fad. I protest, Sir Thomas, <sup>2</sup> (Falls a-coughing) And what a relief!

Having unprofitably stretched her capacities to the utmost for a conquest, directly she leaves the house she breaks into rivalry with the young. The sound of fiddles leads her to the presumption that the night serenading could be for none else but her. Then "intelligence" and intrigues" in which her type is to specialise, put her on a hot chase for Ramble playing L'amour peintre to Drybone's captivating mistress. He too eluding her grasp, ~~any~~, rather than fail, she strikes up with the old man. The booby in the meantime, despite her efforts at making a "well-bred" gentleman of him(IV) marries the porter's

1. W.Shakespeare, As you Like it. II,v.

2. The Country Wit, I.

daughter on cue of indentical names! But what has the dramatist done other than hold her up to ridicule? Aside from theatrical effects, he mixes in subtle touches. For instance, in the final scene that leads to her deflation while she still tries imposing superiority, "How, Sir Thomas, will you use my nephew thus scurvily?", Ramble's man, <sup>whom she had married thinking him a gentleman, and</sup> whose existence on the stage had been almost forgotten, edges in

How! will you oppose my desire? Resist my virgin authority?

Friendship in Fashion begins with a cynical note on "some stanch Virtue of 35 that is just now fallen under the Temptation" and is followed by a whole gamut on Lady Squeamish who

censures Plays, and takes it very ill she has none dedicated to her yet, a constant frequenter of all Masquerades and public Meetings, a perfect Coquet, very affected, and something old. 1

Not a person "in the world" understands the "Intrigues" of the Court better than this "amorous Jilt", who "loves young Fellows more than an old Kite does young Chicken", hence is bent on disrupting Valentine's friendship with Camilla by means of impersonation. Fully armed for the purpose with her "Mask with an Amberbead", she does indeed call for the darkest comments when Truman warns Valentine

I see Mischief in her eyes; 'tis safer provoking a Lanchashire Witch, than an old Mistress; and she is as violent in her Malice too. 2

But to expose her mockingly, the author throws her into the wrong arms at the assignation, and then hoists her on her own petard. So long as the "Censorious World" knows not of the "Accident", all's well; so long as she herself is "satisfied" in the "Integrity" of her "Honour" all else can be winked aside. Little to her credit is the manner in which Sir Noble pursues her in Act III. And she barely escapes assault in the last Act when he comes drunken in and hurls things down and across. The only compliment she could get would perhaps be for her announcement of her kinsman's marriage with Victoria and for her acting as master of ceremonies because of her genuine love for the fiddle and dance.

Could Otway, however, have had a general low estimate of the unmarried class? <sup>as</sup> It is also apparent <sup>in</sup> from the manner in which Sir Noble relates the incidental story about "an old Maid of my Grandmother's" taking "great Delight" in "the honest fellow" of a "Butler" having "all Westminster Drollery and Oxford jests at his Finger's ends" (V). For aught one knows,

1. I.

2. III, 1.

+ J.C. Ghosh, The Works of Thomas Otway, Vol. II, p. 497, Refers to the "Uncomplimentary manner" of these, besides pointing to the "satirical reference in 'The Character of a Town Gallant' p. 5, 1675.

when he thus includes the "stanch Virtue of 35", the "Whirligig" of the Restoration age, and the "old Maid" in the country within the plan of his play, he is ~~only~~ in his morose way remarking on the deleterious effects of town air and characters on the most serious and far removed.

Still virtue could not entirely be dissociated from her when she has assumedly some hand in laying down the moral law.- "Honour" is

That Nothing, fram'd by some old sullen Maid,  
That wanted Charms to <sup>Kindle</sup> Flames when young.

1

the harsh attitude towards age and plain features notwithstanding. <sup>But such an association is exceptional.</sup> Multifold, however, are reasons against the single state.

I'm not in humor to die for constancy:  
Virginity is a commodity will hardly off, if it be kept too long,  
each hour it abates and diminishes of its price;  
Time won't be dallyed with, Maids are contemn'd when  
they grow old; and

Though  
Nothing's more glorious than a Virgins name,  
(Grown stale yet) nothing's more a Virgins shame.

2

The above is an odd conglomeration suggestive of the Restoration friskiness of character, the time-honoured Chaucerian-Shakespearean assertion that maids are "vendible" only up to a certain age, not excluding a streak of medieval religion either. But that "shame" should be attendant on the state, is the point (not less directly substantiated in plays through the double-edged concepts "old" and "stale") one tries to overlook by supposing that such free throws are permissible according to rules of the comic game.

"Nay, now", freely quotes Mrs. Behn the Scripture to her purpose, "the old Law had not Curse (to a Woman) like dying a Maid; witness Jeopha's daughter". The censure of all eyes is alack-a-day the Cursed Maid. Hence the <sup>not unsympathetic</sup> ~~propitious~~ The Maid's Last Prayer: or Any, rather than Fail. Lady Susan Malapert is, however, nearer caricature than the portraits first introducing the type.

that youthful virgin of five and forty, with a swelling rump,  
bow legs, a shining face, and colly'd eye-brows.

4

Otherwise, the "crooked heiress" is as "doating a fool" as Lady Squeamish and as "affected" as Lady Faddle, and like both vying with a fresher beauty. Nor is she the first to go masked

1. A. Behn, The City Heiress, or Sir Timothy Treat-all, I, 1681.

2. The Mistaken Beauty, or the Lyar, 2, 2, 1684.

3. A. Behn, The Rover, or, The Banish't Cavaliers, I, ii, 1676/7.

4. T. Southerne, I, i.

5. J. C. Shesh, The Works of Thomas Otway, Vol. II, p. 497, Refers to the "Uncomplimentary" <sup>manoeuv</sup> "The" of

in order to hook Valentine. Skillfully does the author manage the assignation with Gayman instead at this none too respectable hour and place. As a consequence of which, seeing through her concealment, the young man seizes the opportunity of upbraiding her when "incognito" she <sup>touches</sup> ~~draws~~ upon the subject of love. "Why", declares he,

that's a folly Lady Susan has renounc'd these twenty years:  
and getting hotter, calls her

A midnight stroller; nay worse, some mischief-making friend,  
who would'st assume the title of an angel, to be more devil. 1

And unceremoniously scuttles off. Failing once, the heroine pursues her hero to the bitter end. But smugged once too often and left all by herself, "any, rather than fail," she turns to Sir Symphony.

True, he does not "lash his age" with satire as Wycherley did. That is because he is not Wycherley. But to add that Southerne is "critical merely in a superficial way" does not in the least apply here. He is quite ironical in the treatment of her plot, in the twaddle between her and her nephew Lord Malapert, and in the self-explanatory double title. The Epilogue, however, is in a moralistic vein not devoid of sentiment from <sup>the</sup> first line

See the effects of a poor maid's last pray'r,  
Drive'n by mere want of husband to despair.

to the last

Yet every woman's business is a man.

Ready, in fact, to pardon the moral errors of mankind on the whole, Southerne cannot but deal with her in rather a mixed manner while Otway provedly is coldly cynical and Crowne demonstrably is not too mild: Mrs. Behn in her turn, has only a few <sup>typical</sup> lines to say, but they are not lacking in strength. Others put in an extra word here and there,--whether they take the cue from Dryden or he in turn from Mary Cavendish, or none from another, each has somewhat to say because she is very much a member of the "social comedy" in vogue.

In the re-valuation of the Restoration drama therefore, despite the "perverted and deliberate search for the smutty and the bawdy" apparent to one critic, despite also what appears "stupid, nauseous and abominable" to the second,--the "moral force" in Wycherley seen by the third seems to me to preponderate with the qualification that morality is extant, it is

1. IV. 2. J.W.Dodds, T. Southerne, p.95.  
3. A. Beljame, Men of Letters and the English Public in the Eighteenth Century, p.50.  
4. W. Archer, The Old Drama and the New, p.173. 5. J. Palmer, The Comedy of Manners, p.118.  
+ C. K. Crowne's Sir Courtly Nice; or It Cannot Be, which indicates that the second of the two

Now when Cibber and Vanbrugh, come, they effect a compromise between the two age groups, and in the presentation manage to relate the history of the coquette in the round. Their judgment apparently is, that time must come to a stop for her. And with a high hand they see that it is done.

is a mere cessation of arms. When I can hold out no longer, I am secure of an honourable retreat in my Lord Lovemore; the reputation of his sense, and his six years constancy, sufficiently satisfies the world that I am not at a loss for a husband. 3

breaking apart because of Leonora's malice and "groundless jealousies". For having managed

3. II.

+ Though judging from Miss Notable's character in The Lady's Last Stake, or The Wife's Resentment (1707) it is purely an instinctive desire for the rising beauty to oust the name and fame of a reigning Mrs. Conquest. That Cibber deals again with the same type, as an early part of Leonora's life as it were, shows how much she was the object of his concern. Her dismissal--in tune with that of her prototype in her respective play, that is, prior to the finale.--proves also that his method of punishment does not alter.

to evade her adversary's trap, the coquette alters one letter, misdirects another, till the assignation in mask leads to her exposure. Whereupon, humiliated, she quits the stage to make thereafter the "whole sex" "eternal subject" for her "spleen". Since the other ends of the plot are tied in her absence, the last words on the "plotted injuries" as having led to her own "dishonour" and the moral

And may the blest event this truth record,  
That good and evil actions are their own reward.

point at her.

This play, a product<sup>of</sup> Cibber's "judgment", though a "complete failure" on the stage<sup>1</sup> for reasons to be discussed elsewhere, is not only of import because of theme and character, but because of his sincerity. In fact, the original sub-title "The Devil to Deal With" could not more clearly have revealed Cibber's temper too, roused as it was by the type. The later alteration of it to The Lady in Fashion was a politic step taken with the intention of presenting the play as a comedy of manners.

Of Vanbrugh's The Provok'd Wife a great deal has been said. And of Lady Fancyful, "the lady in Fashion", evidently quite a lot too. But as will soon be apparent, it is as <sup>inadequate</sup> ~~much in~~ ~~bits and pieces~~ as calling Lady Susan "the unfortunate heroine" as if she is the only one, <sup>Only if</sup> indeed, as Burnaby's Mrs. Friendlove later is called an "original". Lady Fancyful is ~~not~~ <sup>can the moral realism of her creator be appreciated?</sup> ~~seen in~~ <sup>It is this quality which explains</sup> ~~given a proper perspective to.~~ ~~Not the before can any reason possibly be given as to how~~ <sup>of the character.</sup> ~~and why the author changes her structurally.~~ Think only of Lady Susan from the older ~~lot~~ <sup>group</sup>, how cadaverous and grotesque she looks in comparison. And then of the undeveloped Mrs. Squeamish. Or of Leonora rather, her real equal, who seems a commoner pretty-pretty butterfly losing colour. Vanbrugh was not thinking of just any society type, but in particular of the unmarried woman, the value of whose life was measured by firstly how many admirers she had in her equipage; and secondly, how long to the envy of both sexes she was able to put off the crucial moment of her choice. With his robust pen, he eventually <sup>3</sup> draws her so powerfully, that to say simply she is a "female counterpart of Foppington" is only partly true. Foppington is a "figure of fun", a trussed-up "ass". Lady Fancyful does not make the audience laugh, which she should be able to do if she is a "companion <sup>4</sup> piece to, and commentary upon", the male creation of his. But even the drawing out of a <sup>5</sup>

1. R.H.Barker, Mr. Cibber of Drury Lane, p.30.

2. 1697.

3. H.Ten Eyck Perry, The Comic Spirit in Restoration Drama, p.98.

4. L.Whistler, Sir John Vanbrugh, p.33.

5. H.Ten Eyck Perry, The Comic Spirit in Restoration Drama, p.98



a partial comparison does not hold very far except on the initial point of "vanity and affectation". That is over with the comments that precede her in the first scene and in the second when the sychophantic Mademoiselle, in order to get a gown or a piece of gold, panders to the Mistress's weakness. After Heartfree's park-parley, <sup>the next</sup> ~~it~~ is a giddy flap of the wings preceding her fall. With impudence ~~she~~ treats her there as she never has been treated before for no man has ever had the effrontery to tell her that she is undoing by "art" what "nature" endowed her with,

It made you handsome; it gave you beauty to a miracle, a shape without a fault, wit enough to make them relish, and so turn'd you loose to your own discretion; which has made such work with you, that you are become the pity of our sex, and the jest of your own.

She falls in love with him for his plain dealing. But her hurt pride constrains her to pay him back a little in his own coin, little knowing that she is thereby sending him the quicker towards Belinda. In Fletcher and Shirley, a woman such as she is, is won often with "impudence", but time is taken over it. Lady Fancyful would have been so too. Instead, "upon the rack", realising her lover lost, she is in desperation driven to revenge

and that's the same thing. Ah sweet revenge!  
Thou welcome thought, thou healing Balsam to my wounded ~~oult~~ soul!  
Be but propitious on this one occasion, I'll place my heaven  
in thee, for all my life to come.

Such a finale to Act IV-more in the spirit of tragedy-

If love won't make her happy- mischief will.

makes her resort to fiendish acts, which in comedy go almost to the blasting up of whatever little chance there is of conjugal felicity in the Brute household. Her letter to Heartfree furthermore, and her appearance in disguise before Belinda with the story that she is his deserted wife and has a child by him, may be interpreted as a wishful thought expressed through action. Vanbrugh treats her mercilessly right up to the climax when, of all persons, the valet(Razor) literally "pulls in" mistress and maid with the words,

if my prayers might be heard, her punishment for so doing shou'd be like the serpent's of old(Pulls off Lady Fancyful's mask). She should lie upon her face all the days of her life.

Lady Fancyful is not an old Lady Squeamish, Faddle or Malapert swooping down on young chickens. She is not Leonora playing coquettishly <sup>with</sup> ~~upon~~ one man and toying with the

affections of another of six years' standing, and punished for doing so. She is a woman amitten with love for the first time, still young and beautiful, compelled to bear the cross for the way of life the age has taught her, with little time given for reform. She is <sup>almost</sup> pathetic.

Because the end of the play is to be dark and heavy for her, how ingeniously and lightly does Vanbrugh put the fatal words bearing upon this second sufferer of the play into the mouth of the first- the speaker <sup>Sir John</sup> ~~Lord~~ Brute himself incorporated.

No boy was ever so weary of his tutor, no girl of her  
bib, no nun of doing penance, or old maid of being  
chaste, as I am for being married.

And right at the beginning of the play too. Therein lies his architectural skill in making the comi-tragical figure of "old maid" and lady Fancyful combine.

This thought of both genus and species continues in the next unfinished play, A Journey to London.<sup>1</sup> The artist is still in search of purity and truth in beauty, -of nature's design in creating the beautiful woman. But finding her defeating this purpose or betraying it, turns away from her, frustrated. And embittered, he projects his intent idea through the glutton Sir Charles:

they (against nature) keep their Chastity, only because they find more  
pleasure in doing mischief with it, than they shou'd have in parting  
with it. 2

Which is really another sidelight thrown on Lady Fancyful's behaviour. In A Journey to London however, the only punishment drastic enough for the tantalising character before his eyes not preserving nature's dowry, is a state of perpetual torment. Yet, notwithstanding, Vanbrugh's mind soars above to touch the cosmic world. From that he derives inspiration. For that reason his pen has more passion than any of his contemporaries dealing with the social world. They too have a moral purpose. But rising above them and theirs, even above Cibber's compass of the moral world, Vanbrugh is desirous of a perfect one, -despite the vulgarity that drags him down so often.

To sum up, the satirist teaches on the whole, not only that the older dame makes herself ridiculous, but that Lady Fancyful's skylarking period is soon over, and that the most desperate flutter is alas, in vain. And since the habits inculcated during earlier years persist, there is no "honourable retreat" in a husband for Leonara. In other words, from

1. Completed and converted by Cibber into The Provok'd Husband, 1728.  
2. II, i.

among the "sorts" of "Damosels" now available, sifting away the "Jilt" and the "Mistress", the fate of the third "not a Whore, but a brisk airy, noisy Coquette" is,

perhaps a year, or it may be two, the gaudy Butterfly flutters found the Kingdom, then if a foolish Citty does not take compassion, sneaks into a Corner, dies an Old Maid, despised and forgotten. 1

Only the "threads of sentimentalism and of Moralisation" are by now definitely perceptible.

Also, Drawing upon the Fidget-Squeamish pair for the beginnings of the type, ~~and take the implication of the moral in the ending,~~ playwright starts the unmarried woman on a career. And between the date of her initiation in 1675 (The Country Wit) and 1697 (The Provok'd Wife) <sup>respective plays. The years heaped upon her with a frowl in The Country Wit,</sup> he develops her into a stock character of intrigue in the Friendship in Fashion, and most in The Maid's Last Prayer, he takes off in Woman's Wit, The Provok'd Wife and The Innocent Mistress—the last by suggestion. Then from the fallen state of the Wycherley pair, he raises her to the level of a coquette who could belong to an age other than the Restoration, with other variations in treatment than are observable in these few comedies. Other passing references about her give her even more fullness. Despite the fact <sup>other</sup> that of the <sup>major</sup> dramatists reflecting the beau monde through her, Congreve <sup>his part</sup> for ~~one~~ does not spin her out. Instead, with the sharpness of wit, <sup>for seasoning</sup> he serves her <sup>at his own banquet,</sup> ~~significant by too~~ through the title-part first when the Old Bachelor has lost possession of his heart,

I shall be the Jest of the Town! Nay in two Days, I expect to be Chronicled in Ditty, and sung in woful Ballad, to the Tune of the Superannuated Maidens Comfort, or the Bachelors Fall; 2

and later ~~when~~ he has got it back in safer keeping, a quartet strings together the <sup>cutaneous</sup> ~~scum~~ <sup>summers</sup> of the female world,— she by no means excluded.

Heart. For my part, I have once escap'd—And when I wed again,  
may she be— Ugly, as an old Bawd.  
Vain. Ill-natur'd as an Old Maid—  
Bell. Wanton as a young Widow—  
Sharp. And jealous as a barren Wife. 3

On which, another variation at the close of the century is recorded by an unknown author:

True. Fickler than the Town Gilt.  
Town. Foxander than a City Wife.  
True. Fond as a young Widow in her first Year.  
Town. Ugly and impertinent as an old Maid in her Fiftieth. 4

1. M. P. The Innocent Mistress, 1697.  
2. The Old Batchelour, III, ii. 1693.  
3. V, Sc. the last.  
4. Feign'd Friendship: or The Mad Reformer, IV, i. 1699.

More brilliant truth with the stroke of Congreve's pen again, rounds off the century in  
The Way of the World.

Fainall, how does your Lady?.....I beg Pardon that I shou'd  
ask a Man of Pleasure, and the Town, a Question at once  
so Foreign and Domestick. But I talk like an old Maid  
at a Marriage, I don't know what I say. 1

Emanating as it does, from the emotional and intellectual integrity of his mind, it is  
indeed the "unkindest cut" of all.

\* \* \* \*

Aunt/  
rness. From the external world in which the jilt and coquette has her being, let us now  
turn towards domestic confines. Another character, totally different in presence and  
serving absolutely other ends in comedy, though of necessity taking shape out of the  
peculiar conditions of the Restoration period, is the governess/aunt. As stern guardian  
for the safety and security of the young girl's honour, she may be referable to the idea of  
the nunnery or of enforced marriages growing ~~space~~ at this time. This is not to be taken  
as continuity of custom that the immature one should have an experienced woman about the  
place, but a mock-serious way of depicting genuine caution and concern for reputation.  
Tier after tier of control may on that issue be noted. The erewhile scarcely recognisable  
governess with perfunctory duties, is now a "Mrs Caution".<sup>2</sup> Governante, duenna, aunt/~~all~~  
in one, she dangles about the keys of the doors behind which the niece is locked. Or else  
she is "an old greyhound bitch"<sup>3</sup> of a governess-nurse let loose about the house to keep  
guard over a Miss Hoyden. Virtue is in virtual danger. The ensuing escape and flight  
is of as great consequence from out of the clutches of the governess/aunt, as it is from  
behind the strong grates of <sup>the</sup> nunnery. Indeed, the true-blue Protestant attitude against  
the latter is only in another way paralleled against the former.

Additional reasons could be advanced for the advent of such a team. When so sharply  
defined an attitude towards crabbed age and youth prevails, a highly satisfactory stage  
function that this personification of ugliness (for as such she constantly is referred to)  
serves, is well specified by the debauched hero in The Different Widows.<sup>4</sup>

Your Lady sends this Duena, I suppose, as Ben Johnson  
prepar'd his Witches, to set his Beauty's off at Court-Masks.

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1. I, vi. 2. W. Wycherley, The Gentleman Dancing-Master, 1672.  
3. J. Vanbrugh, The Relapse: or Virtue in Danger, 1696.  
4. M. Pix, or Intrigue ALBA Mode, II, 1697 (B.M. Copy).

Through a manifestation of the law of opposites thus the earlier Restoration dramatist too feasts the eye and whets the appetite of King, courtier and clown as much as he reflects the state of affairs.

Besides, he has to go on investigating his new "discovery". We consequently have to keep watching experiments. Unlike the contemporary society type who for obvious reasons occasions the formulation of a certain pattern of thought and opinion about herself, the character in hand is more clearly illustrative of the emotional attitude of society towards the "old maid". We may begin by assuming that she, with exaggerations and modifications, derives from an earlier Abigail, but we are forced to give up this view. For even if there is the sentimental strain to which she answers, that is not so much to the point, <sup>a</sup>as the relationship in which she stands to the hoyden and the romp, and ~~we~~ how her authority is made to ring hollow. She is literally reduced to a farcical position ~~then~~. Nor in the process, is the mind permitted to relax over the fact that it is the "old maid" really that sets the dramatist's teeth on edge. Aunt or governess, all is one to him.

In a popular adaptation of an early Latin play Ignoramus<sup>1</sup> for instance, Surda is appointed by Torcol to keep "a diligent Eye" over his niece Rosabella, and "to suffer her not to go <sup>abv</sup> ~~abv~~road".(I,i). Directly he turns his back, the innamorato comes with the arch-rogue of an attendant, Trico. Pretending to make love to her in order that the love-birds <sup>may</sup> fly away, the latter curses and <sup>w</sup>sears at the "old she-Dragon" to his heart's content, for she is deaf, till the suspicious old guardian appears and puts a stop to both affairs. A good sound rebuke given, Surda is dismissed from the play after this scene. The rest of the abuse falls on Polla, Xanthippian wife to a ballad-seller, who, in accordance with the next trick of Trico's, impersonates Rosabella, so as to deceive the lawyer-hero of the play. Pandemonium ensues. Polla flies at him and scratches his face when the tricked party attacks her and bellows,

You are a Sorceress, a Hag, I will indict you for a Witch, viz. That you, Spinster, (I shall learn your Name) not having the fear of Heaven before your Eyes, but seduc'd by the Instigation of the Devil, have practised the wicked Arts of the Devil, Vocates Witchcraft and Sorcery, in, upon, and against the Person of Ambidexter Ignoramus. 2

1. E. Ravenscroft, "The English Lawyer", 1677.  
2. III,i.

In the person of Surda, the author reduces her position to zero; through the person of Polla, he expends the lawyer's vocabulary on the unmarried woman. ~~And both~~ <sup>And both</sup> Surda and Polla in turn, set to double advantage the beauteous Rosabella. But Ravenscroft is known to have written his plays only with an eye to the stage.

The foregoing remarks perhaps would more readily be acceptable in application to the next character from Sir Courtly Nice. This, it has been estimated, is "by far the best of Crowne's plays, and has in it something of the true spirit of comedy". Proof is, that for nearly a "century" it held the stage. But no little of that reputation is to be credited to ~~such~~ <sup>the</sup> innovation of a new stamp of aunt for the old governess. <sup>Since</sup> For if Sir Courtly was to be one of the Sir Fopling Flutter- Novelty Fasion-Foppington line of the Restoration years mainly, she was to transmit her type with little interruption to the next century and beyond. Why, even in the play itself, she precedes the knight and stays on till the end because Crowne knew that anything new would require more time to soak well into the mind of an audience. Hence, though in the Dramatis Personae he sets her role down as "Leonora's Governess, an old amorous, envious maid", in his introductory remarks in Act I, he faithfully elaborates on the elements she is compounded of.

Leo. I never stir out but, as they say the devil <sup>d</sup> goes, with chains and torments. She that is my Hell at home, is so abroad.  
Vio. A new woman.  
Leo. No, an old woman, or rather an old devil; nay, worse than an old devil, an old maid.  
Vio. Oh! there's no fiend so envious.  
Leo. Right! she will no more let <sup>your</sup> people sin than the devil will let 'em be sav'd, out of envy to <sup>their</sup> happiness.  
Vio. Who is she?  
Leo. One of my own blood, an aunt.  
Vio. I know her. She of thy blood? she has not had a drop of it these twenty years; the devil of envy suck'd it all out, and left verjuice in the room.

One aspect of her function and nature explained in this manner, the other is in the singular device he adopts in actual presentation. Leonora draws the curtains apart and exposes this "ridiculous piece of antiquity" in dishabille, attending to the breakfast of the domestic staff,—"crooked wither'd, ill look'd fellows". Whereupon she croaks

I wonder where my niece learns her wantonness, we are the most reserv'd family in the world. There were fourteen sisters of us; and not one of us married.

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1. J. Crowne, or It Cannot Be, 1685.
  2. The Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. VIII, p. 189.
  3. A.W. Ward, English Dramatic Literature, Vol. II, p. 542.

Female  
volio.

Indeed, precious little had been done to trace the female line of descent from, <sup>on</sup>

atleast, Malvolio's days. Plays about the puritanical, hypocritical widow did not

equalise the balance against the Puritan of Shakespeare's creation. Who, because he once had frowned upon cakes and ale, was denied and privilege and pleasure of partaking the same, Despite the yellow stockings and cross-garters he had donned. Despite the behaviours in the sun he had practised. Just so here. The canting Puritan <sup>is</sup> testimony of the aunt is drawn upon at length. As when directly Bellguard, her nephew, announces the news of Sir Courtly's visit for Leonora's hand, she is all a-flutter. She must dress up! "He's a great critic". And when in Act IV he appears, it is with much ado that Bellguard gets her out of the way. Again in Act V, as soon as Leonora slips out and the fop falls to consulting his mirror, the old dame appears for a neat January-May situation also popular with early and late dramatists. In her misunderstanding <sup>of</sup> Sir Courtly's behests and requests, she is neither first nor last, but in her leaving the house vizarded for the marriage ceremony and in Sir Courtly's running away on discovery of his error, -she is the foremost to be exposed and punished for that puritanical mask she had earlier put on.

In between the scenes in which she endeavours to promote her own cause, of course she comes in thump, thump, thump upon Leonora with the characteristic cries of "virtue" and "family honour" taken up by her successors. To enlist the effusive execrations hurled at her in return would require a longer page. But the point is that the house remains well secured with this "cat" <sup>set</sup> above the niece who suffers no "vermin" to crawl near- yet has a liquorish tooth herself. ~~Bellguard by the way, is in overall command.~~ Hence as in Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay and The Merry Devil of Edmonton, unless aid from Cambridge and Oxford scholars had been obtained, the nunnery problem could not be resolved, -so also in this play the garrison holds till Leonora's lover requisitions the services of a "poor scholar" from Oxford, who is well "studied" in the "black arts".

It Cannot Be, - the second title to the play may literally be interpreted, that thus virtue cannot indeed be guarded. Nor indeed is it to be tolerated that a governess-aunt should -----  
x. Which in the "aunt" is to get as firmly established in stock form as earlier religion with the "nut-brown" maid.  
+ eg. The Puritan Widow of Watling Street, 1607; the puritan widow in Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair. Or supposititious cases as Bould in guise of "precise and learned" Princox, (Field's Amends for Ladies), and the attendant-woman in Webster's The Devil's Law-Case in the court. Only a passing reference in these two plays is however made to their "Puritanism and unmarried state".

run amuck so. The purpose of the stage as the Epilogue says, is "As well to profit, as delight the mind." Both she and Sir Courtly serve that duofold end. Critical appreciations in going little beyond the hero, fail to do justice to the play.

Shadwell, relatively speaking, "scaled the topmost height of his popularity" in <sup>1</sup>  
The Squire of Alsatia.<sup>2</sup> Here too, a parallel character rules the roost. Omitting the first half of the play that deals with the rooks and rascals of London, at the end of Act III, we are taken to the interior of a house where "a precise Governess" keeps shut "Casements", threatens locking "Fore Rooms" up and placing her wards in the recesses somewhere. By still more violent methods is stress laid on her puritanism. She snatches away the "wanton" book in their hands, "there is a Charm of Satans in it",<sup>3</sup> "is contrary to Light", so, to "commit it to the Flames" she marches out. The dissection starts:

Isab. I can never persuade my self, that Religion can consist in  
Scurvy out-of-fashion Cloaths, stiff constrained Behaviour, and  
Sour Countenances.

Teres. A tristful Aspect, looking always upon ones Nose, with a Face  
full of Spiritual Pride.

Isab. And when one walks abroad, not to turn ones Head to the right or left,  
but hold it strait forward, like an old blind Mare.

Teres. True Religion must make one cheerful, and affect one with the  
most ravishing Joy, which must appear in the Face too. 3

"Shadwell gives blow after badly aimed blow". Truman has to have to his disgust, "most lewd dalliance" with this worse than "Lancashire Witch". And he has to satisfy her itching palm. Whereafter Ruth turns opportunist. "Oblige yourselves", she encourages Isabella and Teresia, "and be not silly, coy, and nice: Strike me when the Iron's hot, I say"(IV). And gives them over, -to Truman, who ~~was~~ is not an undesirable match in the circumstances; but also to Belfond who has got a fresh girl into trouble, besides at least the Mrs. Termagant by whom he has a child and who is pursuing him. So long as a "Bond" is in her hands, amen to everything. The author leaves her at that.

<sup>4</sup>  
In his last comedy (but the one published posthumously)-the Prologue to which emphasises a "moral", Shadwell takes her up and deals the "plaistered saint" her due, - without wasting a moment on ceremonies. Newly come to London town, Eugenia and Clara are sent under Priscilla's charge to buy a few gew-gaws. Instead, they lead the "old Mumpsimus", "old Sybil" to the "lewd" place, the park, throw aside her authority, and shoot off with a



a "wild Fellow" who carefully leaves instructions with his footman to "toss" her "in a Blanket". However, safe and sound when escorted by a Scowrer all are back home, Lady Maggot the mother, on the flimsiest ground rains a few expletives,

There's none so bad as th<sup>ee</sup>, old Puss. Thou filthy, toothless  
worneaten old Maid, I'll maul th<sup>ee</sup>, thou Witch of Endor.

and kicks her and beats her. With a few more <sup>abusive terms</sup>, she issues instructions,

You Cecropia, when they are in their Chamber lock the Door  
upon them, and keep the key, or I will strangle th<sup>ee</sup>, thou  
old wither'd she-Baboon.

When in the next Act, Wachum desires access to Eugenia, the storm breaks from this third (or fourth?) front.

Come on, Mrs Tawdry! Old Trigramat<sup>e</sup>! I will make thy  
dry Bones rattle within the old Tan'd Hide of th<sup>ee</sup>; I'll swinge  
th<sup>ee</sup>, Mother Damnable! What, dost thou lock up these pretty  
Ladies, Drab, Pole-cat?

He turns her about and kicks her and she "flyes" at him and "scratches" him and he showers his abuse

Old Puss, thou art grown into a Cat already, and shortly will  
take the degree of a Witch upon thee.....1

On hearing this caterwauling, Lady Maggot sweeps in and packs her off again to lock up the romps. The last we see of this mutilated object is when under Sir William's instructions she is soaked in alcohol. In which state she mumbles a word or two exhibiting an easy conscience; and so maundering, falls asleep. They then pick her pocket of the keys. Perhaps it is such sustained expression in word and deed that wins for Shadwell the distinction of a  
2  
"perverted moralist".

It is regretted that this successor to Dryden in laureateship died just at the time he was learning to use phrase and word in "subtle" manner. The preceding two comedies, it is only pointed out, are the <sup>only</sup> fruits of his maturity. If, however, he had "the commonplace expression of a commonplace man", and "he laughed only at those at whom everybody laughed" <sup>4</sup>  
infer<sup>al</sup> pertinently, "the devil a Precisian thou art" they all would have said to the old maid virtuously inclined. But only partly in Sir Courtly Nice and The Squire of Alsatia, is the legitimate practice of r<sup>g</sup>illery in comedy followed. In the main, foul invective is belched, beginning with The English Lawyer and reaching a climax in The Scowrers. Southerne's Mrs.

1. III.

2. A. N. Co. All, A History of English Literature, Vol. II, p. 208.

3. B. Dobrée, Restoration Comedy, p. 117.

4. Ibid., p. 119.

Teazall is, on the whole, comparatively closer to the spirit of comedy. "She carries with her an air of robust, if coarse vitality,"<sup>2</sup> vociferously denouncing the vices and the wits of the town. For having had the vexatious responsibility of a brace of nieces, she had "been forc'd to marry" one "below her rank because she had been undone", and now the second has been carried off by Wilding during a mêlée <sup>following</sup> ~~evening~~ a music-meeting she had gone to attend. This, surely enough, is the result of the "six o'clock prayers"(I) that the old lady had brought the young ones up on. The best part of her character is, that she still has unshaken faith in her powers of management. As when seeing the suffering Mrs. Friendall, she comments,

if I had such a husband, as old as I am, a'my conscience,  
I believe, I shou'd use him as he deserv'd. <sup>3</sup>

That is clean humour. Had an ironical line as

Some can't get husbands, and others can't get rid of 'em. <sup>4</sup>

← occurred oftener, it would have been more <sup>acceptable</sup> ~~acceptable~~ than the direct assaults in the few plays seen. Not that Southerne was incapable of these <sup>rougher treatment.</sup> ~~rougher treatment.~~ Indeed, though he had in the case of the beau-monde type granted a maid's last prayer, he had not treated her differently from the others. <sup>is striking.</sup> ~~Wherefore the striking family resemblance~~ <sup>Wherefore too,</sup> ~~Wherefore too,~~ Though Lady Faddle in Crowne's The Country Wit is an aunt to a nephew, she is more aptly placed in the first category <sup>to which</sup> ~~she~~ <sup>right</sup> ~~by right~~ of descent belongs, than in this group.]

Drawing further conclusions from the same authors, they really attack the "virgin"<sup>7</sup> ~~in~~ Lady in society and her virtue. Even Southerne <sup>does so</sup> ~~in~~ the text of The Maids Last Prayer. But this attack is not barbaric, like that on the <sup>As</sup> ~~As~~ governess and aunt, <sup>who as</sup> ~~it is~~ the commonplace "old maid" ~~who~~ <sup>who</sup> therefore can be mauled and mangled a little more freely. ~~All said, having the history of the development of the idea~~ <sup>thereafter, when</sup> From 1662-74 ~~when~~ there is some confusion as if authors are at observational analysis: ~~before~~ <sup>social</sup> they set themselves about to experimenting <sup>with the</sup> ~~whether as a~~ type that is swept away with the tide, or as one that exercises a curbing influence <sup>on</sup> ~~to~~ it, the character is nurtured amid a general atmosphere of intolerance. Nor is she introduced ever but to moral purpose and prior to the dust raised by Collier at that. She is perhaps there also to provide the chief occasion for humour-broad or black <sup>whichever</sup> ~~what~~ ever it be.

1. The Wives Excuse: or, Cuckolds make themselves. 1691.

2. J.W.Dodds, T.Southerne, p.85.

3. III: coll, A History of English Drama, Vol.I, p.72.

4. V. Mignon, Grabbed Age and Youth, p.34.

(Anthony Aston, A Brief Supplement to Colley Cibber, Esq. quoted).

In view of all this, any statement to the effect that "actresses" presented to the theatre "a series of stale types", however ably supported by argument and an authentic extract, such as,

Mrs. Leigh...had a very droll way of dressing the pretty Foibles of superannuated Beauties. She had in herself a good deal of Humour, and knew how to infuse it into the affected Mothers, Aunts, and modest stale Maids that had miss'd this Market; of this sort were...the Coquette Prude of an Aunt in Sir Courtly Nice, who prides herself in being chaste and cruel at Fifty; and the languishing Lady Wishfort in The Way of the World. 2

are but fractions of the whole truth. For if they suggested the creation of suchlike "finished" parts, shall we say, there is still some explanation required for the drubbing that falls to a governess's share or for the analytical remarks on the maiden ladies waiting for superannuation but as yet nowhere near that stage. But the Restoration is only the first phase of a long history that is still being written were one to follow it up.

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1. A. Nicoll, A History of English Drama, Vol. I, p. 72.

2. E. Mignon, Grabbed Age and Youth, p. 34.

quoting {Anthony Aston, A Brief Supplement to Colley Cibber, Esq. 1706/23}

The Old Maid's Tale.  
(The Second Phase)

However <sup>and</sup> ~~For the~~ Gibber Vanbrugh <sup>may have gone against the stream,</sup> ~~sings in the stream as it may,~~ Burnaby inadvertently takes

the amorous veteran from the beau monde of the Restoration dramatist, and starts the century with Mrs. Friendlove in The Reform'd Wife. And he stands her credit on such ground too, that we know only too well she can claim neither the position of an <sup>2</sup>, nor of the first "opportunist." In point of fact, she is no more than a loose of her predecessors. Insofar as her "pedigree" calculations go, Lady Faddle in The it and the aunt in Sir Courtly Nice have <sup>taken</sup> ~~taken~~ the start of her. In her policy of

let foolish Maids squander their times that don't know the use of it, I'll snatch the precious Minutes as they pass, and ne're stand shilly shally...

as well, she has been anticipated by Lady Squeamish in Friendship in Fashion and Lady Malapert in The Maid's Last Prayer. Under the misapprehension that young Freeman's gallantry is directed towards her, she appears all pinned up and ribbanded for a wedding that is all over and done with before her arrival. Beshrew the woman who had ~~and~~ misplaced her "false Teeth!" If a little farcical, her punishment also is not dissimilar. Any distinct <sup>contribution</sup> ~~reckoning~~ that Burnaby could be accredited with leads to and results from the age factor.

For when a Woman is Thirty.....Well, it needs must grate a fine Creature, that is just declining, and still perhaps with all her Lovers glowing in her Thoughts, to see the Tide pass by her, and hear the Mortifying Sound- She was! 4

His mind is hinged on the same <sup>point</sup> when he coins the simile of a person looking "as much....  
out of Humour, as ~~a~~ <sup>at</sup> Maid <sup>5</sup> ~~is~~ "Thirty", or when he penetrates to the repressed sub-conscious  
state.

and Maids of Thirty set up for Virtue, and Dress in  
Their Sleep. 6

Baker incidentally sidles up by him.

(She) looks as disconsolately gay as a Maid of Thirty  
at the Wedding of her youngest Sister;

1. 1700.
2. F.E.Budd, The Dramatic Works of William Burnaby, p.83.
3. The Reform'd Wife, IV*xi*.
4. III*iii*.
5. The Modish Husband, II*i*, 1702.
6. Love Betray'd, II*i*, 1703.
7. The Fine Lady's Airs; Or, An Equipage of Lovers, II, 1708.

But gone is all the fire and fury the character had roused not quite so long ago. Of interest is the progressive decline of enthusiasm in Burnaby himself, after the first play. Indeed, all that he had flitted about and collected from the Restoration playwrights goes into one character. Thereafter, he falls to repeating himself. An occasional jibe at her age is ~~the little or more~~ <sup>all</sup> he and his contemporary have power to add. That, nevertheless, clears any illusion that still might have been there that the old maid was a ~~brave~~ <sup>sally</sup> of the Restoration spirit, <sup>Although</sup> ~~Though~~ Mary Cavendish had dispelled ~~it~~ <sup>the illusion</sup> as early as 1662. Her vague fear however, was over a Miss Loneliheart's existence. Thirty years after, the dramatist calculated ~~whenabouts~~ <sup>it</sup> could ~~it~~ be that the fear and despair of lonelihearted old-maidism starts. Otway had referred to a "stanch Virtue of 35" that had fallen under the temptation; Southerne's creation was "a youthful virgin of forty five"; Congreve had bantered his wit on a "superannuated" maiden; Vanbrugh had left ~~it~~ <sup>off vaguely:</sup> "at a certain age", and now when the playwright is at a loss as to what else ~~he~~ <sup>to</sup> could say, he occupies his mind with this petty-pertinent question.

Coquette-Reform  
sign.

It is really because the older unmarried society woman is surreptitiously dismissed from the stage. <sup>Perhaps</sup> ~~Maybe~~ Collier's chastening influence has some part to play in that. ~~Though~~ <sup>it</sup> Somewhat arbitrarily at the same time, has ~~it~~ to be stated that tradition so having taken root, there is off and on a cynical remark about her. But while in the years from ~~on~~ 1662 <sup>on</sup> when from a general character of the "old maid", the particular of the "squeamish" type had ~~taken time for evolution~~ <sup>had to evolve</sup>, now, in reverse, ~~the point~~ <sup>it</sup> is <sup>on</sup> this particular <sup>type that</sup> ~~upon which~~ the general character of the "old maid" is built. Nonetheless, as a stage character of older years, she gets to be even more conspicuous by her absence than the widow, who long-fallen into moral disorder had therefore to undergo some treatment at Cibber's and Mrs. Centlivre's hands.

An odd play ~~takes up the~~ <sup>takes up</sup> during this complex period of dramatic history, however, the subject of the young coquette's reform, wherewith some thought or the other of the older one may be caught. Possibly, not without the Restoration tone either, as, for instance,

Coquet Ladies like Hilaria, you win with Mimickry  
and Scandal; and Old Maid that's miserably pitted  
with the Small-pox, you must praise her Youth and Beauty.

1. T. Baker, Turnbridge-Walks, Or, The Yeoman of Kent, V, 1703.

<sup>2</sup>  
In The Lady's Last Stake, Miss Notable scarcely out of her bib and tucker stage, is found side by side with the older woman (hitherto cast as a character of intrigue) who indeed forestalls the necessity of such extraneous reference. The slashing-down of an earlier Leonora's <sup>2</sup> years in this blatantly moral play, makes it perhaps easier for us to excuse the rather daring exploits of the coquette out on a sweeping victory over the town, though it is difficult to accept her as a true copy of life. 'Thou shalt not thus conquer' seems to be the new commandment. Hence Mrs. Conquest whom she seeks to oust has probably to be accepted for what she is, namely, the senior reformed unmarried woman already! To complete the picture another way, Lady Rhodomont in The Fine Lady's Airs is shown as a conceited character with a whole train of lovers at her heels, mortifying members of her own sex thereby. Like the rest of them with superior dowers and powers, she too is prevented from becoming an "Amorous old jilt". <sup>in time, so to speak, from</sup> ~~in time~~ barred ~~from, not to speak,~~ repeating the mistakes of her Restoration counterpart. The stage thus is being weeded of the demoralising society woman, regardless of the fact that through such themes good parts for actresses <sup>such</sup> as Mrs. Oldfield and Mrs. Verbruggen are being written. <sup>This was just as well, for had</sup> ~~Right well too,~~ Had not some life and spirit of the pre-Cibber-Steele times been so retained, comedy would have gone limper the sooner.

Besides the depiction of the moral through a whole part manifestly written <sup>the</sup> for purpose, a bit of direct advice is inserted against an old familiar type. ~~is inserted a bit of direct advice.~~

Sylv. But 'tis infamous living a Maid long, and she can expect but few Conquests at Twenty five that was unadmired at Sixteen.

Dress. Therefore I advise you not to be distracted with the variety of your Choice; single out one and resolve; who shoots at the whole Covy seldom kills a Bird. 3

The first stroke- "'tis infamous living a Maid long" awakens remembrance of the "fallen virtue" example when the concept "stale" had got interwoven <sup>with it.</sup> ~~by and by.~~ The second about being "unadmired at Sixteen", is an echo from Mrs. Behn's The City-Heiress instanced heretofore. The last ostensibly, is new morality. Similar evidence may be gathered from The Stage-Beaux <sup>8</sup> ~~toss'd in a Blanket~~ which was written to ridicule Jeremy Collier. Tantalisingly, though, Lady Clemene answers to the entire Restoration character in the sum-up against her name in the Dramatis Personae,

- 
1. C. Cibber, or, The Wife's Resentment, 1707.
  2. C. Cibber, Woman's Wit.
  3. Sir Giddy Whim, or The Lucky Amour, I, ii, 1703.
  4. T. Brown, or, Hypocrisie Alamode; Expos'd in a True Picture of Jerry- A Pretending Scourge to the English Stage, 1704.

An affected Hypocrite, Coquet, and Jilt, and one whose Reputation has not been without notorious Blemishes in the very eye of the World,

and since the publication of "Mr. Collier's Book" has become a "profess'd Enemy to the Stage", -she is not asscoured as Old Maid. In the heat of his argument against the critic, Brown might well have forgotten that part of it. Yet it is not so. When her complement, Sir Jerry Witwould, is censured for his attacks "On Women, Dress, and Plays" it is well called to mind.

On the first he's more severe, than an old Maid of Sixty, who owes her Celibacy to her lost Reputation.

1

For who else could be pointed at but the Lady Coquette type who is as much in the habit of railing?

Occasionally, a satirical shaft is directed both ways as in the early eighteenth century version of Chaucer's Wife of Bath reminiscent of the Restoration airs. Alison, widow to near half a dozen husbands, has a "wonderful deal of Judgment"

2

there is not a greater Impairer of Beauty than the Longing of a Virgin and the tedious Expectation of a Widow.-Why, who wears worse than your old Maid, Sir?

3

Nor is the topic entirely dispensed with at that. The moral comes in time when the gallant proposes a "convenient" husband to the maid after he has won for himself the mistress, and she replies with the common sense and sanity of the author's commendation,

I have not Vanity enough to set me out for a Coquet....  
Humble Sergeants now-a-days are not to be trifled withal-  
and should I neglect a good Offer, I fear the Fate of  
an old Maid would too late convince me of my Folly.

4

onal change in the  
ge of the "curse"

And then as we pass from the second decade over into the fourth,

(the current that goes into the utterance of the curse is)

without having to be told we know that motivated by the sentimental strain

of the century. Is the current that goes into the utterance of the curse.

Greater restraint is exercised with the elimination of "old."

For example,

the greatest Misfortune that can light upon a Woman..... 5  
is to die a Maid.

"Tis true", admits Anna, "I can never die for a better  
Mistress," but then-"to die a Maid is the Devil."

6

Further <sup>instanced</sup> exemplified,

- 
- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1. I, i.  | 3. II.   |
| 2. J. Gay, 1713.  | 4. V, i. |
| 5. Molloy, <u>The Perplex'd Couple: or, Mistake upon Mistake</u> , II, i, 1715. |          |
| 6. <u>The Fate of Corisca, or, The Female Politician</u> , 1732.                |          |

-Well, if ever I'm a Lady's Woman again, after I leave my Mistress, may I die a Maid; we undergo such great Hardships. 1

Contrast with the mid-Restoration period, <sup>the</sup> force with which <sup>the curse was</sup> ejected then, To convince you of my Aversion, I had rather live a wrinkled Maid of Sixty, and then be burnt for a Witch, than have anything to do with thee. 2

<sup>The same force is</sup> and retained by a moralising dramatist with feet planted on both sides of the century, 3

May the Curse of Woman-kind be mine; may I dye an Old Maid without the Reputation of Vertue; may I always stay two hours waiting in every Assignation, and then be Disappointed,

Thus juxtaposed, how faded and jaded are the first three citations, whereas in the last two, ~~is vividly brought up~~ a character that since has been knocked off the stage <sup>is vividly brought to mind</sup>.

But to suppose that the 'coquette reform' campaign is directly solely against the dilapidated morala of Charles II's days would be falsifying facts, as indeed it would be to conclude that a virtuous woman weaning a man away from his main vice—which is the gaming table in say, the Cibber-Centlivre plays, is a reflection of social morality of their day. For neither is the <sup>own</sup> town scrupulously clean thereafter, nor is it without reason that tradition is upheld. In fact, the gyrations of society as evidenced in plays of the last three or four decades of the eighteenth century, provide as varied stimuli to the unmarried woman as they do to the married, if not more. Ravelling never has ceased. Clubs, routs and assemblies have gradually and all along been fertilizing this soil or that for both amorous old jilts and young coquettes. That there is even from the beginning of the century a dearth of ideas as to the re-modelling of the former, is because it is also supposed that the interests of the artist have been shifting towards "neo-classic tragedies, burlesque, parody and opera". 4 Social comedy resultantly has been going off the rails. <sup>flirt</sup> The is nevertheless extant, in person character and type, only is forcibly being repressed or ignored.

Resisting the temptation of going into periodicals such as The Spectator and The Tatler for illustrations, <sup>we find that</sup> comedy itself is not totally lacking in evidence. Though such a conglomeration as follows is bound to odd allusions, which, thinned out over the years, bar coherence of expression, - There is however an attempted correlation by taking observations at quarter-century intervals indicative of the necessity of the post-1760 build-up of the stock figure.

- 
1. The Female Rake; or, Modern Fanny Lady, II, 1736. 2. The Counterfeits, III, 1, 1679.
  3. M. Pix, The Different Widows: Or Intrigue All-a-Mode, II, 1697.
  4. F.S. Boas, Eighteenth Century Drama, p. 167.



<sup>1</sup>  
<sup>really rails</sup>  
 At the first of these, Courtwell in Woman is a Riddle, (courting the Widow with insolence,  
 really rails

I am in Company with the most disdainful, affected Coquet in Town; one who has more Vanity than her whole Sex, and as ill-natured as an old Maid.

This assessment of character could be associated with observational analysis of the town type <sup>in</sup> and a society where unrewarding rivalry easily provokes an unaccommodating nature and a warped temperament. Since at any rate, the author who was to go in for searching character inquiry was still a way off, a little importance is ascribed to this point. And the thought is hazarded that below his surface placidity, that is to say, of immediately discontinuing the Restoration practice of bringing her on the stage and having it out straight with her, the dramatist fosters an earlier acerbity. Any circumspection over the continuance (from the Restoration years) of disreputable elements in society ceases with the stock-taking of "revels,"  
<sup>2</sup>  
 past and present, in The Dissembled Wanton.

Beaufort. Only with this Difference—these Feasts were in Honour of Bacchus; these are dedicated to Venus.

Col. Severne. Ay, they're the School of Love.

Beaufort. Rather say, the Mart of Maidenheads, the Nursery of Cuckolds, and the Terror of Citizens.

Col. Severne. Or the resource of Stale Virgins, and un-accomodated Prudes.

Fielding however, lands us on more solid ground with the figure of Vermilia inconsequentially moving in and out of Park and Drawing-room in Love in Several Masques.  
<sup>3</sup>  
 Then there is the satirical comedy, namely, The Tryal of the Time-Killers wherein, <sup>are brought to book</sup> ~~are brought to book~~ among others, Ladies Melody and Autumn, <sup>n</sup> for their fashionable ways of leading unprofitable lives detrimental both to themselves and to society.

Grouped together,—first, the individual "ill-natur'd" old Maid heading the class, second, the "Stale Virgins, and un-accommodated Prudes in general; third, Vermilia as the first impression of a genius's mind, and finally, the last pair provoking a body to put pen to paper when he was no writer, much less a dramatist (not to mention the "Old Maid, 1775" finding place  
<sup>5</sup>  
 otherwise, say, in an <sup>essay</sup> ~~essay~~ periodical of the period,— these are facts of worth in considering

1. C. Bullock, II, 1717.

2. L. Welsted, or, My Son Get Money, I, i, 1726. 3. 1728.

4. P. Bacon, 1757.

5. C. H. Gray, Theatrical Criticism in London to 1795, p. 123.

the whys and wherefores of the reappearance of the respective type in plays of Colman and Murphy in 1761. And if the Restoration "situations and characters" in comedy continued until "after 1760" when "the tone of the whole play" changed so noticeably as to say that "the new tradition was established", the "old maid" reverses the argument. In fact, very much like the Restoration character and in similar situations too, she is revived "after 1760" as will appear in the course of this meandering chapter.

\* \* \* \*

<sup>.25</sup> Little introduction is required for the singularly brief appearance of the <sup>a</sup> ~~Governess~~ <sup>unt.</sup> governess after 1700. For, in the year following, when Steele writes his first play<sup>2</sup>, barely any thought goes into her character-drawing. He lifts her from the Restoration school, changes satire for ridicule, and plants her for an incidental scene into his yet undiscovered genre, though she is as memorable perhaps as Ravenscroft managed to make her<sup>in</sup> his farcical way in The English Lawyer. In between the funeral<sup>3</sup> humour of the widow's pretended grief, the undertaker's drilling of a team of paid mourners and a girl escaping from sinister control through the device of a supposed corpse in a coffin,<sup>4</sup> Steele ingeniously ~~a~~ arranges a squalling scene(II,iii) wherein Mrs. Fardingle features prominently. To the accompaniment of the lute, she is urged to squawk higher and still higher the "song" come "hot out of the poet's brain", till it grates on the nerves. Enough is got out of her to necessitate re-appearance. She is but the old stock type with all the outstanding traits- has pretensions to youth, is won over with "gold and flattery", whereafter the lover gains "easy access" to the ward. Caustically enough, for in the same breath is explicitly stated the policy of choosing so "odd" a "companion"<sup>as</sup> an "old maid" as

the best guard for young ones, for they, like eunuchs in a seraglio, are vigilant out of envy for enjoyments they cannot themselves arrive at.

3

By<sup>a</sup> ~~strangely reflected~~ coincidence, in the only other play meriting still briefer mention, Lisset, friend to both ward as well as wife of an "old cross lord",<sup>is</sup> ~~passed~~ off as "eunuch" who has been in charge of "seraglios". Her present assignment is "To watch Virgins and Spoil Intreagues".

1. Ibid, pp. 17-18.

2. The Funeral; Or, Grief a-la-Mode, 1701.

3. II, i.

4. M. Pix, The Adventures in Madrid, 1706.

1 Not unfamiliar in folklore e.g. the ballad of The Gay Goshawk, The English and Scottish Popular Ballads, ed. F.J. Child, Vol. II, No. 96.

if I don't manage them, till I make them as Lean as Skelitons  
and as Cross as Crooked Maids of Fifty, Condemn me to the  
Gallies instead of a Reward.

1

Since there is really no "governess", it is again the Restoration dramatist's attitude towards  
the old maid that is whipped up in this weak Spanish play. Observable once in the lines  
<sup>it is to be seen</sup>  
cited, a second time ~~it is~~ when Laura in Act II schools the wild adventurer to pledge "Heart"  
"Hand and Honour", and Gaylove emphatically declares that he will be "As constant as stale  
Maid, who is convinc'd, if she loses her only Fool, she cannot get another".

If, conjecturally speaking, the writer of this play takes <sup>the</sup> hint of "eunuch" from the first,  
thereby usurping the office by rightful Spanish descent of the "duenna",--and if Steele himself  
reckons the value of the governess at one scene, there is no more to her than could be to an  
effete type belonging to the feudal household. As we look back upon the conflict indicated  
between the "governess" and "aunt" in Crowne's Sir Courtly Nice and the dwindling purpose in  
Steele's The Funeral, it might seem that the emergence thereafter of the full-fledged aunt  
in The Tender Husband, marks in fact, a final change of order. It may even be wondered  
whether Shadwell did not begin with <sup>the</sup> thought of <sup>an</sup> aunt in The Squire of Alsatia but ended her up  
as governess for convenience' sake since he had a fairly good number of problems on his hand  
to solve.

significance  
e "Maiden Aunt."  
Howsoever that be, Steele's transition from the governess waiting for  
gratuities in the first play to the aunt in the second whose "pence" can be  
turned into the annuities, or the stocks of one of the companies"(II,i), gives to the relation  
dignity and respect long overdue. The investment of capital in her is a marked feature of the  
eighteenth century aunt. From her "utility" value in the domestic sphere of this age, "the  
guard not to be corrupted" gains further currency. And by when we come to Cumberland's plays  
towards the closing years, and have learnt on the way a little about her being the fortune-  
hunter's target, we assess other precious reasons for her retention in the home. The relatives  
themselves are interested in her final will and testament! From the socio-moral point of view,  
the widow(as the only other unattached woman taken from the stage angle) <sup>was</sup> ~~had~~ a traditionally  
~~being~~ a libidinous character with extortionist aims. At her worst during the days of Charles  
II, the "correct" step Steele takes is to replace her by the maiden aunt and to pass her on  
as <sup>a</sup> legacy.

It is worth pausing a little over the significance of this creation. Apparently, the one critic is fairly amused that the author of The Christian Hero should have made drama the turning-point in his life; <sup>a</sup> the feminist is <sup>2</sup> ~~a bit~~ <sup>glad</sup> <sup>that</sup> ~~amused~~ that he should have had cause not only to patronise but to establish intimacy with womenfolk through The Tatler and The Spectator; <sup>against</sup> ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> point goes the masculine argument that Steele had a "faculty for wearing his heart upon his sleeve", that he was "a creature of impulse", and that "too much" is made of him "as a liberator of women". <sup>3</sup> ~~Even to add that.~~ <sup>That is as may be, but</sup> The debt that the English family, of ~~relations~~ which assumedly as in all parts of the world is a unit of males and females, heads and hearts combined, owes to Steele, goes unacknowledged thereby. The "aunt" in fact, had scarcely any stage existence until after 1660. We have reason to believe that the cant term synonymous with "bawd or procuress" must have put the blood relation as such in rather a precarious position. Both indeed, as seen in a foregoing section, are bracketed in many a Restoration play. Admittedly, these seem to have been written against the crying sin of keeping and to allied moral purposes. Even so, the ignominy of aunt-niece relationship is obvious.

Such then is the jumbled heritage from which Steele selects probably the envious, amorous, puritanical, old maiden governess-aunt's framework provided in Sir Courtly Nice. Upon ~~the~~ which since all novel developments and additions are gr<sup>f</sup>ated until quite recent times, the English comic stage owes a debt to Crowne. But his creation was for thorough ridicule. Steele's engenders laughter without eschewing respectability. Hence the debt to Steele is vastly greater. It is owing to him that the person and character of the aunt becomes well-nigh proverbially associated with the unmarried woman. She supplies the demand for comic relief which comédie larmoyante cultivating the new cult of respectability is so much in need of. Crowne, one fervently asserts moreover, was only on the lookout for novelty when he experimented first with the "virgin" lady in The Country Wit, thence with the "old maid" in his more popular play. Out of his total output of <sup>some</sup> eighteen ~~and odd~~ works there is little to compare with Steele's four plays in all. And of these, if three contain the character of the "Old maid", the difference in interest is plainly marked.

1. F.S.Boas, Eighteenth Century Drama, p. 66.
2. A.Wallas, Before the Bluestockings, pp. 193-5, etc.
3. "Richard Steele", Times Literary Supplement, Aug.29,'29.

That, <sup>the part in</sup> The Funeral ~~part~~ is under Restoration influence is obvious. Thereafter, when he procures pardon for the traditionally unworthy character of the "aunt" and for the "old maid" made unduly unworthy by his predecessor, and when he gives double, treble assurance that nothing is wrong with either, has not the author of The Christian Hero served a purpose through play-writing? And has not the journalist-essayist letter-writer built up a stage family to appeal to the masculine and feminine head and heart alike?

Biddy and her aunt- as foils to each other and as characters related to life as well, are an unforgettable team in The Tender Husband. No longer do they present any pre-1700 claptrap about crabbed age and youth. Humour arises out of the universal clash between different generations, between unvarnished orthodoxy and romanticism. The aunt suffers herself no loss of dignity by stalking in and out with black scowls and antagonising gestures. She simply wishes "the authors had been hanged and their books burnt", because they "corrupt young girls" with "foolish dreams". And Biddy has her head full of fanciful thoughts, simply because she has been

immured almost one-and-twenty years from the conversation  
of mankind, under the care of an Urganda of an aunt. 1

Nor is the aunt envious. On the contrary. Now is the right time to think of Biddy's marriage. And in order that she "live comfortably", "with prudence and frugality", is anxious for it to be with the rustic cousin who is "monster", "pig", "savage" all-in-one to Biddy. Aunt and niece just do not meet. Indeed, the latter is thoroughly tortured with thought of the ancestry that the aunt so proudly upholds. <sup>x</sup> Consequently, the tickling Mollirian scene of [l'amour peintre]. Under the aunt's very nose thus romance thrives.

But also to be noticed is another trend usually overlooked. With "pity" and "a certain confidence in the goodness of human nature", <sup>2</sup> Steele builds up the character of the elder, weaving while he does, along with Biddy's affair, the cause of her unmarried state.

Aunt.	Indeed, niece, I am <sup>as much</sup> overjoyed to see your wedding day as if it were my own.
Niece.	Since you understand things so well, I wonder you never married yourself.
Aunt.	My dear, I was <sup>very</sup> cruel thirty years ago, and nobody has asked me since.

1. II,1.

2. A. Nicoll, A History of English Drama, Vol. I, p. 264.

x. An amendment to the following statement

"That there is some delightful humor in all four of Steele's plays is undeniable, but Hazlitt's pronouncement that the former's comedies are misnamed and might rather be termed "homilies in dialogue" is not without justification". A. Sherbo, English Sentimental Drama, is that the "delightful humor" is within the "homilies in dialogue"...contd. (Michigan)p.72

Niece. Alas-a-day!

Aunt. Yes, I assure, you, there was a great many matches proposed to me; There was Sir Gilbert Jolly, but he, forsooth, could not please, He drank ale and smoked tobacco, and was no fine gentleman, forsooth....Mr. Peregrine Shapely...had travelled...spoke French...but then he was consumptive. And yet again, to see how one may be mistaken; Sir Jolly died in half-a-year, and my Lady Shapely has by that thin slip eight children, that should have been mine. 1

Through this flash-back he introduces a new method of drawing out the "amorous" trait with respectability, Exemplifying thereby, that the "old maid" is more than a card-board stage type for raillery and rejection merely. Since the time he had written The Funeral, his own thoughts had turned a somersault and his attitude changed sufficiently towards her.

So much does the aunt-niece pair in fact, catch his imagination, that outside of the theatre world too he ensures its popularity. In The Tatler

Lady Autumn made me a very low courtesy the other day from the next pew, and with the most courtly air imaginable, called herself Miserable Sinner. Her niece, soon after, in saying, Forgive us our Trespases, courtesied with a gloting look at my brother.

As dramatist, Steele had not <sup>indulged</sup> ~~appeared~~ <sup>spared</sup> religiosity in his senior character. But he could not very well have brought a church scene on the stage. Even so, neither here nor in Biddy's aunt praising Pounce for his ability to sermonise does he touch her with any tinge of harshness.

By contrast, there is the contemporary author as unreconciled as ever to the "old maid". As aunt only can she exist. Then too she is a poseuse. Her Puritanism nettles him particularly. Or does her sentimentality more? ~~Not improbably,~~ <sup>castigates</sup> He ~~whacks~~ her for any and every reason. While censoring letters and checking identity cards of entrants to the house, it is as he makes it, farcically possible for her to get infatuated with the niece's lover. In The Apparition, to cite an instance, she is quick "to forsake the Godly" ~~what though~~ She had gone

....contd....in the Aunt and Biddy scenes. But it may be pointed, that the critic's appreciation of Biddy's "delightfully fantastic notions" or "The Biddy Tipkin plot" (p.106) is extremely one-sided, if the aunt is totally out of his range of sight.

1. IV,ii.

2. or, The Sham Wedding, 1713.

these Twenty Years to Lecture for a Husband, but the Saints are too Crafty to deal upon the Square; and I was too proud to descend below myself, and now I must shift as well as I can. 1

2  
Parallelwise, in The Play is the Plot, she preaches "low Diet, good Books, and Confinement"

for a "better Temper of Mind"(I) to the niece, Who, in her turn, teaches us about the

holy Zealot going religiously to <sup>her</sup> ~~his~~ Closet, to divide ~~her~~ time there between Thomas of Kempis, and a Bottle of Nants. 3

The upshot is that the dame at the moment is off on a flight to the parson's to finalise matters! In both cases, though the fortune-hunters get the better of them, the punishment accorded is only superficially different. The guardian-brother to the first-"my saint-like

Amorous Sister"- turns her out of the house without her marriage portion! The aunt in the

second play tries to escape on discovering she has been tricked. But the man married to

her has now the law on his side and does not permit it. Malicious gibes <sup>on</sup> ~~at~~ the <sup>part</sup> ~~hands~~ of

the younger characters are ~~almost~~ <sup>almost throughout.</sup> sustained. Lines such as

Old Maids cling like Ivy; they are wondrous Loving...Why, after all, my Aunt will be <sup>much</sup> more tractable than I shall: She has bid adieu to ~~all~~ the Follies of the World, and will make a staid, saving Housewife. 4

and

On Fools like these he spends his idle Rage,  
And wounds Deformity, or shoots at Age. 5

coming especially from the nieces, could easily lead to the insinuation that the feelings of the eighteenth century dramatist were no better, nor worse towards her than those of the writer of <sup>the</sup> ~~previous~~ years.

- 
1. III.
  2. J.Breval, 1717.
  3. V.
  4. The Apparition, IV,i.
  5. The Play is the Plot, V.

Not that he is quick to make responses, but having his fingers on the pulse of his times, Steele could not have remained insensitive to the moral-immoral atmospheres thus created. Nor would he have esteemed very highly the thick-skinned treatment accorded to the "old maid". Respect for age was returning after the Restoration Roman holiday.

x In The Gentleman (A Fragment, Mermaid Series) wherein he depicts a scene of jollity below stairs, he does not exclude her. "Here", says one of the stewards, "is a dragon that devour virgins, as a pike does small fish".

2nd Steward. Have a care—here he comes, here he comes—he eats all virgins without mercy, but will touch nobody else.

Several women's voices together.

Let him come, let him come.

An old withered MAID, crying out.

Old Maid. Have a care, have a care, have a care; let me get off, let me get off; oh me—oh me (Running off)

Dicky (as St. George borne on a war-horse) Fear not, fair one, fear not.

I am St. George. I'll save thee.

(Dragon and St. George fight)

Cf. E. K. Chambers, The English Folk-Play, p.94.

Also, R.J.E. Tiddy, The Mummers' Play, p.238.

Here comes old Dame Jane  
Comes dabbling about the Meadow,  
Comes jumping about, to show you  
such sports;  
Look about you, old Maids and Widows  
Long time I have sought you,  
But now I have found you.

In come I old Jane  
My neck as long as a crane  
As I go dib dub over the meadows  
Seeking all the old maids and widows.

In folk-plays, the old woman comes hunting around for the old maid. When Steele carries the folk-play spirit and scene into the servants' hall, his "St. George" fights in defence of her

1 Including Bernard de Mandeville's scientific inquiry into single life and the basis of relationship between aunt and niece in The Virgin unmasked or Female Dialogues betwixt an Elderly Maiden Lady and her Niece, 1709. If posterity adjudges that this author "stands as the extreme type of selfish theory in morals" (National Encyclopaedia, Vol. IX, p.99.) or that in the understanding of the 18th Century background, he is "an obstinate amalgam.. of ingredients which could only have existed in his own age" (B. Willey, The Eighteenth Century Background, pp.99-100) he nonetheless argues the aunt's defence of single life so that the niece is won over as convert. The point regarding "selfishness" or "protection" is mooted because she does not pull the niece away from the world of men. "Amalgam" indeed the author is when considered alongside of the dramatist.



Why was she still denied the possibility of some claim to it? Seemingly something was wrong somewhere in matters of men and money too. Seventeen years after The Tender Husband when therefore he turns dramatist again, a mellowed opinion goes into the creation of the aunt in The Conscious Lovers.<sup>1</sup> It is another tale altogether. He shakes off the face-behind-the-mask convention adhered to <sup>to extent</sup> ~~some~~ <sup>that</sup> till 1705. Isabella ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> not remotely connected with the old maid of a governess of his first play and she is not simply "an Urganda" of the second. She is the anxious Martha because Belvil is benefitting her niece out of no pure motive as she thinks. Little wonder considering her experience,

I once had almost as much love for a man, who poorly left me to marry an estate; and I am now, against my will, what they call an old maid—but I will not let the peevishness of that condition grow upon me, only keep up the suspicion of it, to prevent this creature's being any other than a virgin, except upon proper terms.

2

Steele proves to be an exception among dramatists in giving not only a valid reason but a not unblameworthy cause of her watchfulness and concern. Of which too he absolves her, as a sinner in innocence when all is righted in the end.

Now, dearest niece, my groundless fears, my painful cares no more shall vex thee. If I have wronged thy noble lover with too much suspicion, my just concern for thee, I hope, will plead my pardon.

3

The difference between Biddy's aunt and the second is plainly put. The first had money and "a great many matches proposed". None of which having struck her as the right one, she now regrets that she was so selective. The second had been jilted for lack of it and none other had come her way; her history hence eschews all probability of farcicality. In <sup>considering</sup> ~~judging~~ <sup>over</sup> her "misanthropy"<sup>4</sup>—which one does not accept—the critic is troubled over "who" it could be. From Steele's point of view, the "why" was more a matter of explanation, which indeed he has not left to "mystery". And the answer is in the duplicity and cupidity of man. Amid these questionings, the main issue is inclined to be side-tracked. The author is really establishing the reputation of the maiden aunt as responsible guardian. He takes both sides of the case, that is, of the rich relation and of the poor, and eventually holds up the unsullied character of each in turn. Obliquely put, does it not stand comparison with the governess's or widow's? Both these characters it will be remembered are attacked in his first play and over the same factor. Steele's morality from this angle of vision may be comprehended more fully.

1. 1722.

2. II,ii.

3. V,iii.

4. F.W.Bateson, English Comic Drama, p. 57.

Might it not do to nod assent besides, when fondly questioning the adaptation of the Terentian theme at his hands, that an indigenous character had her little part in the play too!

Faithfully modelled on Steele's creation is Aunt Madge in The Gentle Shepherd.<sup>1</sup> Drawn with as kindly feeling are the two outstanding characteristics, namely her 'old-maidism' and her concern for the niece. But, more directly than <sup>in</sup> the first author's method, comes an injunction upon the audience with regard to the character: \_\_\_\_\_

"Ne'er call her old that's maid against her will."

As for the relationship and office, it is closely along Steele's idea. She is as watchful as a dragon, nay, has cultivated "ten sharp Nails" too, to "claw the ugly skin" from a "false face", and has ready to hand the "distaff" to come upon the "sconce" of a "wry-mouth'd driv'ling dunce". Indubitably, because she is the only responsible well-wisher. Once a feasible marriage is settled, she will with the youngest of them flaunt

And even boast that I was call'd the aunt  
Of our young lady.

Likewise, her sister in The Conscious Lovers or Biddy's aunt in The Tender Husband could hardly contain herself for joy over a niece's wedding. The light comic vein, the pastoral settings and verse form indeed made popular Ramsay's play and in particular the aunt and niece team.

As significantly marking the end of the first quarter of the century is <sup>The Self Rival by Mrs. Davys which maintains</sup> what one would term a balanced morality, <sup>since</sup> ~~in which~~ the characters of "old maid" and "aunt" appear separately—too obstinate ~~as indeed they are~~ to amalgamate. To maintain further the equilibrium, the niece and her maid form the team of commentators whereby, the authoress does not, like Steele and Ramsay, procure pardon for the sin of old-maidism in the name of aunt. Lady Camphire ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> the Argus-aunt of the prayer-closet type again, since always engaged in keeping "filthy Man" away from Maria—the niece. But Mrs. Fallow is "certainly the first good-natured old Maid", offsetting the former by introducing the Colonel into the house. Whereafter, she

1. A. Ramsay, 1725.

2. Mrs. Davys, The Self Rival, 1725.

3. Alwin Thaler; Provincial Drama after Shakespeare, P.M.L.A., P.269, 1922 quotes Holcroft to the effect that an early Scotch company which when it started, played nothing but Allan Ramsay's Gentle Shepherd,— and this he says, "they continued to do for several years, without either scenery or music", with no actors but the manager's family. In Foote's The Maid of Bath, 1771, the heroine had been acting in the same.

tenders all advice to Maria to give up her "Fancies" and illusions of independence, and to borrow experience of her on whom time has stolen "unawares" and now 'tis too late". The fundamental assumption that "Affectation and Ill-nature" are the "constant Attendants" of old maids, is painstakingly explored. Mrs. Fallow consequently "always" speaks well of Matrimony, and Lady Camphire "for fear of being put in mind" tears it "quite out of her Common-Prayer Book". (II). Thus Good Old Maid and Bad Old Maid are naively set side by side.

That Mrs. Davys, almost a decade after her only other comedy in the "genteel" style, sits down to write The Self Rival, is a matter of note. Deliberation arises over the point whether Steele had actually anything to do with the inspiration, as the aunt's words in The Conscious Lovers- "but I will not let the peevishness of that condition ~~grow~~ upon me", are echoed in Mrs. Fallow's. Also, ~~that~~ she is all out in defence of "the old maid", <sup>that she was provoked by</sup> could it have been ~~because~~ Mrs. Centlivre's cut-and-thrust in The Artifice?

Let me see! What dead Folks have we among the Living?— There's a disbanded Officer— And old Beau—a broken Tradesman— A degraded Parson— A Quondam South-Sea Director— An Eunuch— An, an, an old Maid. (Is it the blood rising or the venom?)

Widow. You have hit it, my Lord.

1

~~had provoked her~~

This voice however, is lost in the wilderness. Beyond dispute the Restoration maiden aunt and niece would have falled by the wayside, had not Steele in the beginning and <sup>towards the</sup> ~~near~~ end, and Ramsay at the end of the first quarter, with other comparatively unimportant authors in between, rounded off the tradition so strikingly. Almost a total eclipse exists till the mid-years. Yet when picked up again, the tie could never have been stronger. The aunt retains her good will for a couple of decades thereafter, and then when feelings soar high against that obdurate part of hers— the old maid, she not only is rival to maiden-niece but like <sup>a</sup> beaver goes about destroying nests, specifically the married niece's. Criss-crossed with various stages of amorousness running at cross-purposes with her puritanism, is the pedantry that descends on her with the mounting years of the century. From 'prayer-closet'

1. V, 1722.

1 Steele has no share in stage bluestockings. But of course "his recognition of women as an integral part of the reading-public was entirely new" so far as his contributions to The Tatler and The Spectator go. Women owe him a "debt" there.

Ref., A. Wallas, Before the Bluestockings, p. 194.

of the first-quarter to 'hermitage' of the last, she spells sermons and breathes books; at her table surrounded by tomes or in company, she vaunts and flaunts ill-digested knowledge. The case therefore to be made out in following the development of this female Malvolio into the most easily recognisable aunt of the century- Mrs. Malaprop<sup>1</sup>, and out to the end of 1800 is, that Sheridan's creation is a confused amalgam. She belongs, strictly speaking, to neither tradition, past or present.

stones in the  
d of Education,  
-1805.

The 'malapropism' <sup>and</sup> ~~or~~ the showing off of one's knowledge means nothing, unless the point that it is woman's education which is being represented

typically, is borne in mind. And it is rather haphazard~~ness~~ to waive the matter aside with words as

Mrs. Malaprop has a long pedigree, including Dogberry,  
Lady Froth, Mrs. Slipslop and Tabitha Bramble.

In a way, Mrs. Malaprop could be grouped with the pedantic type. But the female pedant does not go back to the days of Dogberry. Equally true though on the other hand would it be to say that learning had been a fad not restricted to the unmarried group. Anyone familiar with Miss E. Gagen's book The New Woman would have arguments thick-coming both for and against a citation such as the preceding. But in the eighteenth century we needs must keep to the aunt for any straightening of thought on the question. Since, as it appears, she is the dramatist's pointer both to the rise and progress of as well as to the various viewpoints on the much debatable subject of education during the age. The only other person who might have served his purpose, was the fluid governess. But when "not one gentleman's daughter in a thousand" could "read or understand her own language", she could have stood a slender chance of reflecting reality. As matters stand, the aunt then answers to the stipulation that "a woman's reading" should be restricted to "books of devotion or of domestic management" as anything beyond "might turn the brain",--above all, to the belief that the world of books suited only those women who had to lead "unmarried or retired lives".<sup>3</sup>

"Books of devotion" and "management" of the niece are the aunt's sole occupation in The Sham Wedding. Between her and the pedantic type proper in The Play is the Plot, the afore-mentioned stages of education are clearly marked. In fact, the niece's lover in the latter play is able to impose on her as he passes for a "Cambridge Scholar". Because this

1. R.B. Sheridan, The Rivals, 1775.

2. Cambridge History of English Literature, XI, p.266, (Even so, Tabitha Bramble is a "maiden" aunt).

3. Cambridge History of English Literature, IX, pp.402-4.

"hopeful Sprig of Divinity" betrays a "Proclivity to the conjugal State", certainly not because she wants to find out whether he follows "Demosthenes, Quintilian or Tully," ~~as she~~ she seeks a pretext for passing a while with him over "Lucubrations" (1). Peter Pyrate the fortune-hunter, for his part, sets himself ~~about~~ also to use bookishness as a bait. He ends Act II with indeed a pregnant couplet

Help me, you Starts, to catch this foolish Prude,  
Her ready Rino is my Longitude.

and gets her on the strength of it. The puritan's blood runs ~~de trop~~ true in her veins too, traditionally as the sect had been against plays, and as perhaps <sup>roused</sup> ~~aroused~~ afresh by Collier. Much less therefore stood the strolling company a chance of meeting with <sup>aunt's</sup> ~~the~~ approbation when

our prevailing impression is that of having records <sup>in</sup> of the lowest levels of the profession, (where) there were neither prosperity nor self-respect, artistic purpose nor ideals. 1

Maybe Mary Astell inspired the "platonism" and "understanding" of our character in The Play is the Plot. Swift at least had based his satire on the "Madonella", "seraphic discourse" and "Protestant nunnery" in The Tatler. <sup>2</sup> Could Lady Camphire, in The Self Rival but get "the Parliament to consent to it", she would build a "Nunnery" in which "Plato's Rules of Love" (II) might be practised. Allowing for comic ridicule, there seems to be <sup>a</sup> plausible basis for thought on parallel lines. She has moreover advanced a degree farther in her office as moral censor for having written a "Treatise" on "Vanity".

So far, the unmarried woman is bound down by the uncompromising educationist's ideas. But <sup>about</sup> ~~at about~~ the mid-century, Foote effects two modernistic amendments, namely, that morality and education need not be trammelled by religion and orthodoxy, and that the aunt whose education comes more obviously to the surface, need no longer restrict her beat from the closet to the watch-post. He nonetheless, builds her up partly from prevalent notions about her, before he really comes to his own. In The Knights, <sup>3</sup> for instance, though he sets her upon a journey in connection with the niece's marriage, he sustains the convention of comic humour when she is made a dupe of, just as her successor will prove herself to be a blundering match-maker or her predecessor in The Tender Husband inconsequentially glowed over a country booby. And he unquestionably accepts the good heart that Steele and Ramsay had inserted in

1. U. Ellis-Fennor, Philological Quarterly, p.290, 1923. (Cf. also "A Supplement on Strollers", E. Colby, P.M.L.A., p.652, 1924.).

2. XXXII, 1709.

3. 1749.

her anatomy. And yet he was far too independent of judgment to have done so with shut mind. Together with cutting down to <sup>the</sup> utmost ~~precision~~ the traditional traits of sentimentality and abstemiousness he ~~as well~~ <sup>also</sup> incorporates the idea of pedantry. "Regulations of conduct", "critical juncture", "concurrence", and suchlike words and phrases hence when coming from the creation of so "thorough-going" a "realist" carry conviction. And that brings us closer to Mrs. Malaprop. Astonishingly, so comprehensive a study as Miss Belden's, overlooks in the same context The Devil upon two Sticks which begins with complaints that "nothing less than a senator of seven years standing can conceive" what Margaret means. A couple of decades however, have sufficed in giving the aunt of Foote's previous play, the status of an emancipated woman, if one might so say. For, Margaret has gone to the core of "Machiavel, Montesquieu, Locke, Bacon, Hobbes....," she has analysed "The Bill of Rights", "Charter of Liberty", "Pragmatic Sanction", "family compact" and what not(I). As such, she refuses to allow restrictions to be imposed upon the niece, who, by the bye, gets time to escape while discussion between father and aunt goes on and while foolishly siege is laid under orders from the former. So "the hungriest of 'hungry wits'.....Sheridan" is hungrier than the critic sets him down for in drawing comparisons between the consecutive pairs in The Knights only and The Rivals. Providing contrast to this type of aunt, Foote <sup>inserts into</sup> ~~studies a play~~ The Commissary <sup>4</sup> in-between with the other realistic story of "the large brick house....with a turret at top" where

liv'd Miss Cicely Mite, the only daughter of old Mite  
the cheesemonger,...just turn'd of fourteen, and under  
the wing of an old maiden aunt, as watchful as a dragon-

And just when it grips the hearer, <sup>he</sup> twitches it off with superb dramatic skill.

Continuing ~~with~~ the enlightened race, Lady Bridget Belmont gives indeed the impression that she could effect some "improvement" in the "Encyclopaedia", and root out all "imperfection" in the "sciences". Ah, yes, but she can as well conduct to the surprise of all the members of the family, a philosophical discussion on "Love" in the manner of Socrates in the "Athenian porch"(II,v). So much does she encroach upon their time that one niece, <sup>feigns illness</sup> to keep up an assignation ~~feigns illness~~, and the other is too glad to be gone to administer first-aid. In her boudoir she again is words, words, and still longer words to impress the new visitor to the house. Mrs. Winifred's pedantry on the other hand, runs her all to the advancement

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|---|--|
| 1. M.Belden, <u>The Dramatic Works of Samuel Foote</u> , p.173. | 2. 1768.   |
| 3. M.Belden, <u>The Dramatic Works of Samuel Foote</u> , p.191. | 4. <u>The Commissary</u> , III, 1675.                |
| 5. Mrs.E.Griffith, <u>The Double Mistake</u> , 1766.            | 6. Mrs.Griffith, <u>The School for Rakes</u> , 1769. |

of the "Ap Evans", So she carries about all the latest newspapers and gazettes, "Salmon's Geography" and "Collins Peerage" are but the

books, I never travel without; and which no person can pretend to keep company, without being thoroughly conversant in.

She'd lost "two excellent matches" waiting for "advice"(I). To make amends, she hurriedly marries the niece on the quiet into "a family of rank"-to a rake precisely, for all her ready reckoners! What <sup>purpose is served by</sup> ~~for~~ the "old maid"/"aunt", but to keep the comic vein alive? If the dramatist spares her the whip, he has to make her a silly old goose somehow.

When interpreting the next play, this attitude should be borne in mind as it had persisted through all the apparent changes since 1717, when an aunt had to raise a voice of protest against plays and players in The Play in the Plot. But in 1773, Lady Rachel Mildew has turned playwright herself mind you, and left prudish treatises of "Vanity" far behind. How laboriously hence she <sup>hunts</sup> ~~hounds~~ around for notes, for alas she has neither sense nor sensibility to interpret life. The jibe at her is missed by the critic engrossed with the "sentimental" theme when he writes:

In praise of one of the virtuous personages she has written a play, which, for popularity's sake, she has enlivened with silly farcical scenes.

Firstly, mud is flung at the woman writer. The "managers of both houses have refused" her work. They do not so much as deign to accept it as a "present". Secondly, the "old maid's idolatry" is manifestly the point.

Whenever she expects to meet him (i.e. the virtuous Torrington)....  
her cheeks look for all the world like raspberry ice upon a  
ground of custard.

Notwithstanding such "repairs", the "hero" is "utterly unconscious of his conquest". The play begins with that commentary and ends with proof of it in the fleeting moments the two are face to face. "What a Pox have the Women to do with the Muses?" ~~had~~ the critic at the dawn of the century <sup>had</sup> fumed. In as few words, might Kelly have said as much of the unmarried enterprising woman now.

1. II. 2. H.Kelly, The School for Wives, 1773.

3. E. Bernbaum, The Drama of Sensibility p. 248.

4. I, i. x. Note, Epilogue to The Double Mistake,  
Nor does Aunt Bridget merit better quarter,  
Who, scorning to abide by female charter,  
Invades a province, to our sex deny'd,  
Aiming at knowledge with a pedant's pride;  
When, after all our boast, we find at length,  
To know our weakness is our greatest strength.

One path of science only wise men say,  
Is left for female learning-tow

At all events, it is to this school of pedagogy that Mrs. Malaprop should belong. (The "aunt" bends under the <sup>e</sup>weight of books. She does not make "fritters of English"). ~~More~~ ~~rightly so, as an unimpaired continuous~~. She is the odd one in between the maiden aunts, the stock stage characters not only of this century, but of the next too. Secondly, the widow, belonging to the triarchy-wife, widow and maid of the Elizabethan times, had survived, as seen in a previous section, barely beyond the Restoration years. All that Sheridan therefore does is to pull Lady Wishfort (The Way of the World) up by the roots, with the hackneyed theme of her time regarding a widow's domination over the 'fortune' factor of the niece; and then he daubs her with all the verbiage that is both an affliction and occupation of the 'old maid'; "the old weather-beaten she-dragon" (III, iii) could well have been out of Foote's unfinished tale in The Commissary or of any other; the 'crocodile' trait completes this hybrid creation Sheridan gets away with on the strength of his wit, original and borrowed. It may be absolutely correct to say <sup>with M. Gabriel and P. Mueschke</sup> that he derived "the outlines of the main plot" of The Rivals from Garrick's Miss in her Teens. But to add that niece and aunt "are more or less stock characters" sounds pretty vague unless placed in the proper perspective which should include a few pairs succeeding as well. Though even in Garrick's play ~~as~~ there is the "virgin aunt" - a "miracle" indeed considering her frame of mind. As for Lydia (The Rivals <sup>which M. Gabriel and P. Mueschke</sup>) it might be pointed out, her romantic disposition ~~traced~~ only into Biddy Bellair (Miss in her Teens) goes a way back via Biddy Tipkin (The Tender Husband) to the pair in Shadwell's The Squire of Alsatia.

Subsequent to Mrs. Malaprop, the advance of education is perceptible in greater degree with Miss Latimer <sup>2</sup> "at her Books" in the "Library" (ahem!) she has acquired. Of course, "the blossoms of Parnassus" all at once shower on Blushenly when he comes to pay court to her niece. And "the mind, the mind" that "must be clothed" of Act I, is all body in Act II - "all sails in full chace, ribbons and gauzes streaming at her top, signals of distress virginity." Succeeded by Diana Grampus - <sup>3</sup> "vain, rich, pedantic", this aunt has a "Treatise" dedicated to her by a one-time usher; likewise, by the mistress to the scamp in the play, and "edifying novel". For her, the rustic is all admiration when she interviews the prospective "tutor"; "What a vast fund of learning my sister Di is possessed of". But the son waiting for

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1. M. Gabriel and P. Mueschke, "Two Contemporary Sources of Sheridan's 'The Rivals', P.M.L.A. 1928.
  2. R. Cumberland, The Natural Son, 1784.
  3. R. Cumberland, The Box-Lobby Challenge, 1784.



"education" superciliously retorts, "Do you think it does her any good, father?"(II).Indeed.  
That<sup>at</sup> is just the point of this play and of another wherein the nephew takes after<sup>a</sup> similar  
pattern of thought.

So you did, aunt, and tutored I wi' a pack of such nice  
harsh words, that ever since I's felt inspired or more  
properly speaking, conspired wi' love and gratitude.

2

Miss Union's brains however, are the most sharpened by knowledge. She works up a  
scheme whereby, in angling for the morbid antiquarian, she is to forge and impose upon him  
a Chaucerian "manuscript". And her stooge Ap Hazard also is to make his fortune by palming  
off an "original" bust of the poet. But Reynolds rides roughshod over the "old maid".  
Therefore, howsoever high her mind soars, in the play she rallies her all to destructive ends  
Miss Union employs herself in breaking off a tie in the interest of her nephew; Miss  
Gloomly, a writer of gloomy novels is ~~at~~ disrupting her niece's home, since her own vain  
desires have been thwarted; Miss Stoic of the "hermitage", "Diogenes the second",--conscious of  
the "misanthropy" that had "chill'd" her soul, though contemplating a start on "Sterne,  
Congreve or a modern German play"(I),--is driven by the same malicious force as a Miss Garnet  
or a Penelope Zodiac ~~is~~. The mouth of the last<sup>named</sup> ~~in the list~~ is full of the "knowledge of  
mathematics, geography and tactics"--(Sic!) "the first stone in the character of an  
unmarried woman"(!); her mind is "properly" filled with "elaborate researches" that leave  
"no vacancy" for "unseemly" ideas on marriage; as for her deed and action, in peeping through  
keyholes, running down characters, aiming amorous shafts, she renders herself as insufferable  
to her nephew as Lady Betty to her brother, and indeed, though hand in glove, each to the  
other. So much for irascibility.

ground up 1836. A word or two about the general atmosphere prevailing, which gave currency to

such characters. Educational interests in the woman's field were certainly strengthened

1. F. Reynolds, The Blind Bargain; or, Hear Him Out, I, i, 1804.

2. Ibid., Fortune's Fool, 1796.

3. Ibid., Laugh When You Can, 1798.

4. Ibid., The Delinquent; or, Seeing Company, 1805.

5. Ibid., The Blind Bargain, or, Hear Him Out.

6; M.P. Andrews, The Reparation, 1890.

1. Consider what a sensation it must have been, if in so conservative a place as Cambridge,  
"The Old Maids Club" was formed. It held its meetings, at a coffee-house after evening  
chapel for the benefit of "literary conversation" since it had notabilities enough. ~~was~~  
Of this party were Dr. Middleton, Mr. Baker the antiquary, Dr. Dickens the celebrated  
Professor of Civil Law, Dr. Tonsal.....

C. Wordsworth, Social Life at the English Universities, p. 156.

All endeavours to obtain details of its origin and history have so far been in vain.

strengthened by literary gatherings of the type initiated by Mrs. Vesey and taken on by Ladies Pomfret and Walpole but which reached the acme with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. She held an almost unrivalled position for nearabouts half the century. <sup>At one such party, records Dorothy Stenton, 1 records that one such party given by</sup> ~~At one such party, records Dorothy Stenton, 1 records that one such party given by~~

Miss Monckton and her mother Lady Galway in 1782; Fanny Burney met Edmund Burke.... They forced contemporary society to admit that there was something admirable in women aspiring to learning and that women who wrote plays and novels could be chaste.

The first mention that comes to notice in that line, is incidentally in <sup>3</sup> play of the same year <sup>2</sup> Which is the Man?. At a certain Mrs. Olio's,

We had all the Law-Ladies from Lincoln's Inn-Fields; a dozen Satins from Bishopgate; with the Wives and Daughters of half the M.Ds and LL.Ds in Town.

Miss Belmour, to whom this account is given, is told still more:

Oh, my entertainment was quite as good as yours! We were in Brook Street, at Lady Laurel's, and found her surrounded by her Literati of all denominations. We had Masters of Art, and Misses of Science: on one hand there was an Essayist, now and then associated with a Moralist. There a Poetaster, here a Translator, -

Not inconsequentially therefore, since there are patronesses in the ascendant, there is a dig into a Diana Grampus, and a prod into each of the Misses Union, Gloomly, Penelope Zodiac, Aunt Deborah - with her load of learning and "observatory" - and the rest, preceding or succeeding. They <sup>perhaps</sup> ~~may~~ stand for the types who had risen; the "prudent piece of still life" (I, i) possibly had drifted from a literary meeting into marriage; and the Misses Frankland and Fussit were brought in indeed as necessary figure-heads among the crowds applauding a new hero on the dais (II, iv). Many a one may even have dreamt of being the lodestar of society in

a cheerful spinster's house, where literati will assemble, amateurs sit in council, curiosities be examined, poems read, and all the bonmots of the town repeated.

Miss Laetitia Vane, the heroine of this last play, makes a heroic effort towards

1. D. Stenton, The English Woman in History, p. 272.

2. Mrs. H. Cowley.

3. III, iii.

4. Ibid.

5. The Way to Win Her, 1814.

6. J. Baillie, Enthusiasm, 1836.

7. Ibid.

8. J. Baillie, The Match, 1836.

1 Note, not "old maid". For this is a woman dramatist writing.

that realisation. She gives up "gay dressing", applies herself to "learning", becomes "a book-fancier, and a blue-stocking virtuoso"(III.i). Finally though, she has her mind made up for her by the niece, who conducts the stage ceremony of placing her hand in that of Sir Cameron's!

It is known through what accident Stillingfleet's "Bluestockings" came to be worn metaphorically by the learned woman from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards. But it baffles reason how through the playwright, the blue gets bluer and bluer on the old maid in individual stage characterization, where she also is an aunt in more than nine cases out of ten.

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\*

ine's Step-  
i/Fool.

Before proceeding with the history in continuity, since a rapid survey has been made of the liberally educated aunt, more cursorily a century-wide sweep is now attempted of the character who has little right to carve her own destiny because of the vital factor of wealth. For the lack of which, the "maid" in the background may be ageing, since the convention being set is, that the "aunt" is game for the fortune-hunter on the stage. Notwithstanding, between the two grows the tale of the old-maid's millions, broadly put; and more narrowly, that of the aunt with the pot of gold. Of course, certain points may of themselves be clarified. For instance, that the ~~old~~ "fortune-hunter", prior to 1700 is really the "young maid" and "widow" hunter and that the "old maid" being the character of the eighteenth century, a good deal of the ~~relative~~ interest that lay in the pre-1700 widow inevitably shifts onto her.

On calculating a little more, it would as well suggest of itself that she is living proof of earlier victimization. For if now she is pursued for her portion, why was she not earlier in the day? The obvious fact is, that the avaricious guardian who conveniently despatched the maid to the nunnery in the medieval times had not ceased to exist in the year after-Jacobean or Restoration. <sup>For that reason</sup> ~~Therefore~~ a Moth and Wishfort <sup>had</sup> been done to a turn on the Jonsonian-Congrevian spit.

25. Extracting evidence from some of the plays dealt with in the last few pages, does not Steele put us a little on the track? The aunt in The Tender Husband is a silly old fool no doubt, in losing chance after chance. But what is there to prevent one from surmising

A G. The Tatler, No. 151.

The "means" employed to keep Mrs. Margery Fickerstaff's "thoughts from marriage", since the family was desirous of keeping her "portion" "among themselves".

that the Lombard Street banker whose sister she is, had not a hand in the affair? Or that cunningly he had diverted her interests and her capital towards his bank? If he can make a deal over his niece with Sir Harry

provided that I have a discharge from all retrospects while her guardian, and one thousand pounds for my care.

much the same way his ancestor did in Ben Jonson's The Magnetic Lady, to cite just one instance, he could scarcely have planned a lifetime with an unmarried sister purely out of love for her. In The Conscious Lovers, the aunt more lowly-placed, had been abandoned for an estate. So, in a nutshell, is the realistic-materialistic world presented to us. This is the inside story. The Restoration artist had dealt with it only from the outside.

Examining tradition as further formed and viewed on the stage, for the fun of maintaining the balance(since possible), it is en passant pointed that if the Cambridge scholar was to found a club in the old maid's name, the Oxford wit sets afloat the thought-provoking theme of the fortune-hunter <sup>in pursuit of</sup> ~~after~~ the aunt in The Apparition (and the guardian turning her out without the maiden's portion). Increased to two in The Play is the Plot, there is the rank opportunist, Machone, who weighs once too often the "old virgin aunt" with "five Thousand good Pounds," and there is the "poor brokenbookseller" Peter Pyrate, who first lays siege to her learning and then succeeds only as a ~~comedy broken~~ <sup>in comedy</sup> bankrupt can. All to the rattling of the "old maid's" bones! Such a theme however, is curtailed to incidental reported speech in The Self Rival, of a certain Mrs. Fulsome with "a deform'd Body, a Face scarce Human, and a Soul more despicable than either", but who retains the "Charm" of "Sixteen Thousand Pounds"(I). Suitors, it is assumed, are not found wanting. This change in treatment and attitude perhaps is due to the woman's hand <sup>of Mrs. Davys</sup> behind the play <sup>rather</sup> than to the fear of a sort of staleness setting in with repeated flights of the old maid.

-47. But some thinking too seems to be going into the question. In the very first piece, <sup>highly</sup> popular <sup>too</sup> ~~what~~, that Garrick for instance, writes for the stage, things look pretty grim. Both old maid and young are to be summoned down to Lethe, <sup>2</sup> apparently as the only way out of a deplorable situation on earth.

Old Maids shall forget what they wish for in vain,  
And young ones the Rover, they cannot regain;

Characteristic of the eighteenth century contradictions, a sharper current goes off against

1 Cf. The Tatler, No. 151. → The "means" employed to keep Mrs. Margery Bickerstaffe's "thoughts from marriage", since the family was desirous of keeping her "portion" "among themselves".  
ii. 2. 1740.

the senior in Bickerstaff's Unburied Dead,

Sieze ....but I promise your Worship, we will bury  
no Man Living.  
Bick. Nor any, but those I shall pronounce Dead.  
Sieze We will not.  
Bick. In general then; All such as are of no Use to the Commonweal...  
All old Batchelors, and antiquated Virgins, who never increas'd  
the Number of his Majesty's Subjects.

Against such drastic measures in the "dramatic satire"- which the first is, and the "Moral  
Drama"- which the second is, a more <sup>ameliorative</sup> ~~ameliorative~~ policy, practical too, is adopted in the  
"allegorical satire"- Fortune's Tricks in Forty Six.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, if Garrick's "Aesop" and  
"Mercury" prepare themselves for a court of inquiry, in this last product, "Favor" and "~~Fortune~~  
"Fortune" dispense with the cases that brook no delay. Among the "Suiters" announced are  
the proverbial bankrupts-"Gamester, Author, Bookseller", with notable reflections on "Comedy  
in the Person of Garrick flouting at the Opera", "Mr. Rich" thanking for favours "conferred...  
this season!" but when it comes to

a Parcel of poor old Maids, and young ones, complaining bitterly of  
your Neglect. They both want sadly to be of use in their Generation,  
and say it's entirely owing to you they are not; for that you know very  
well The Men are grown so mercenary, they will not look upon them  
without Money....The old Maids indeed insist upon being favour'd first,  
allegding that the Youth and Beauty of the young ones ought of  
themselves to be sufficient.....

The clear imperative issued is,

Give ten Thousand Pounds a piece to the old Maids, and two Thousand to  
the young ones--

The controversy in the first half of the century as evinced from the foregoing plays  
rages within the social self. For, while the rational part of it sees that the chances of  
marriage are so terribly dependent on the factor of money, the emotional completely  
disavows it. Hence the rigorous punishment to the aunt for not reconciling herself to her  
state, for not behaving as she should considering the number of years on her back. Hence too,  
recriminations against "antiquated Virgins" for futilely filling up space in the world.  
Notwithstanding this complex attitude, a force seems to hang in the air compelling <sup>authors</sup> ~~it~~ to go  
deeper into the question and beyond the mere ding-donging of it on the stage.

1762-1800's. After 1760, it is assessed by critics, the tone and temper of comedy changes.

The contradictions involving our interest nonetheless, remain unresolved even upto the end

1. 1742, I, vii.  
2. 1747.

of the century. The only satisfaction is that there appears to be greater fluctuation of opinion. <sup>This</sup> Which indeed is better than little or none as it would, <sup>one feels</sup> it is felt, sometime or other shake dead-set attitudes <sup>into</sup> ~~out~~ some settlement.

x

One's attention inevitably is drawn to the well-recognised sentimental comedy, The School for Lovers. <sup>1</sup> Modely is a fortune-hunter oscillating between the gold of the young ward to Sir John Dorilant and that of the latter's sister, Araminta. It is hardly "a fickle lover's duplicity" <sup>2</sup> alone that the author reveals through his behaviour. In letting him settle with Araminta, more in not damning the latter with old-maidism, most in making Sir Dorilant appear an alien to the Kitely race with such <sup>3</sup> ~~ocular~~ demonstration of handing over "deeds" to each of the maids in turn and with advice not to hurry into "compliance", Whitehead makes the play illustrative of the definition

sentimental comedy idealizes life to create a story more agreeable than the lot of human experience, presenting as truth a picture of possible but improbable behaviour.

3

After first making a contribution, in A Trip to Scotland, <sup>4</sup> the author allows "a genial lash to fall on the sentimental tendencies of his time," <sup>5</sup> for the hero in question drops Miss Flack on finding her moneyless. Whitehead apparently is pandering to controversial public taste than writing out of any settled convictions.

A healthier turn discernible in the tide at this stage however is, that the treatment as meted out to gold-grabbers, whether guardians or "lovers," is highlighted. From the former <sup>6</sup> class, the title-role of The Inoculator is taken to task for once. Neither the young Miss Danbury whose entire fortune he has seized, nor the old maid <sup>fortune</sup> whose he is eager to pounce upon, appears in the play. Yet both are well woven in by Blandford, the mainspring of action. He relates how soon after the disappearance of her wealth, the young woman who was "the Admiration and Envy" of the "Country" has been made into "the veriest Drab"(I,i). To catch the doctor's conscience and parchments, he then concocts the tale of the rich old Maid already being angled for. Leaving him on thorns and nettles

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1. W.Whitehead, 1662.
  2. E.Bernbaum, The Drama of Sensibility, p.212.
  3. V.Clinton Baddeley, The Burlesque Tradition in the English Theatre after 1660,p.I.
  4. 1770.
  5. A.Nicoll, A History of English Drama, Vol.III,p.154.
  6. G.S.Carey, 1766.
  - x. That is, contemporary reviews-also taken into account by A.Sherbo, English Sentimental Drama,p.148.

But ten Thousand!- I must outbid the Gentleman.....for if I should read of Miss Such-a-one, a maiden Lady of ten Thousand Pounds being married to- oh, I shall go distracted; the very Thought of losing such a Prize is worse than being next to the 10,000 £. Lottery Ticket-

the hero goes on to impersonate the fictitious Mrs. Buzby. Re-appearing as such, he recounts the "Truth" about the "Hey-day" of her youth, the "Solicitations" in any number, and now

I have long been tired of the Appellation of old Maid, and Most terribly am afraid of dying one.

"Mrs. Buzby" extracts a sum on the basis of a promissory note and "a free inoculation" too(8). The rest follows. Thus is treated the matter of money, <sup>man</sup> ~~marks~~ and matches, Blandford himself not excepted, though he brings round poetic justice.

All combined-whether <sup>disposed of</sup> ~~treated~~ in the bulk in the pre-1760 satires, in a namby-pamby way in The School for Lovers, or in subterfuge in the last play,-the "old maid", it would have been noticed, is a character in abstentia. Yet the myth of the skin-flint and the shark and her fortune is in the making through various stage devices. A truer satiro-comic vein introduces for probably the first time, a relation most beloved for <sup>having died.</sup> ~~dying~~. Madam Ursula's "great-aunt" has left her "four hundred marks a year"(III,vi) in Falstaff's Wedding. On hearing of <sup>this</sup> ~~which~~, the hero's love after years that can be put by in the gross, revives for this old flame of his. A billet-doux is despatched, a marriage is clamped, <sup>on her</sup> and fled are Madam Ursula's illusions much the same way as the aunts' of the first quarter of the century had been.

An odd decade hence, the theme of the fortune-hunting hero catches greater fire. Sir Pertinax Macsycophant, <sup>4</sup> whose sole aim and object in life was

anything....anything that had the siller...the siller... for that, sir, was the northstar of my affection;

consequently,

I ganged till court, till playhouses, assemblies, till kirk... till the anabaptist, independent, Bradleonian and Migglesonian meetings, and till midnight, melting, conciliating love-feasts of the methodists; and there sir, at last I fell upon an old, rich, sower, slighted, antiquated, musty maiden. She was tall as a grenadier, and so thin that she she looked...just like a skeleton in a surgeon's glass case.....

Could the last character be deemed missing at all after such a description of

1. I,ii. 2. III. 3. W.Kenrick, 1767.  
4. C.Macklin, A Man of the World, 1781. 5. III,i.

which this drawn in is but a part? He "got most releegiously intimate we her...in a week", "married her in a fortnight" and now his problem is, he wants "to be rid of her most cursedly that's certain". She has lived long past his calculations, and the "siller" is not forthcoming

Yet the "siller" "most releegiously" is sought for. The Scottish knight is a "man of the world"- a representative type. For a picture of the group, one has only to turn to the town, where individual energy is not wasted since the procedure is <sup>x but</sup> more methodical ~~and~~ as thorough.

Daffodil. Waiter, bring the list of the women of fortune who want husbands.  
 Lord Bonton. Oh! there's nothing new on the list but little Miss Dapper.  
 Daffodil. And she has only thirty thousand; that's far below my purchase.  
 Macphere. Faith, and there is Miss Doily, who has a plumb.  
 Lord Bonton. Yes, but she refused poor Daffy at Brighton.  
 Daffodil. That was because she saw me only once;--for I was always with the Duchess of Dash-she would not lose sight of me for a moment.

Lord Bonton. Saw you once! that was a miracle if she did,--for I'm told she is blind; and well she may, for she is past seventy; but the less seen of you the better.

Villiers. Sure no one would marry a low-born creature, worn out with age and infirmity--because a fool has left her an enormous fortune? 1  
 of fortune-hunters will be remembered

~~Town and country~~, A similar body in Wilson's The Projectors (1664) ~~is referred to~~. The widow then was <sup>sought after</sup> ~~the ton~~ and the old maid <sup>was coming only gradually</sup> ~~just glimmering~~ into sight. A century has indeed swung the pendulum in a different direction.

Approaching the 1800's, as indication already has been given, the campaign against the "old maid" increases in tempo. <sup>At the same time</sup> Consequently, if the guardian or suitor is ~~at all~~ exposed, <sup>along</sup> ~~convulsed~~ with that <sup>goes</sup> ~~fact~~ is the revival of an earlier manner of executing <sup>his punishment</sup> ~~the treatment~~. It is <sup>that</sup> ~~is~~ the "old maid" <sup>is</sup> ~~railed upon~~ <sup>reviled</sup> ~~and vilified~~. In The Travellers, for instance, a parallel theme is maintained between the staid aunt and the niece. But, after quick has whispered in her ear "a tender tale" and set "the old maid flutter" (III, ii), on learning there is no fortune he drops her like a live coal and scurries off. Miss Vandercrab in

<sup>3 however,</sup> The New Peerage is more flagrantly exposed. She misconstrues the feelings of Melville,

1. Lady Wallace, The Ton; or, Follies of Fashion, IV, 1788.

2. N.B. Harrison, 1788.

3. H. Lee, or, Our Eyes may deceive us, 1787.

x. Cf., Parchment the lawyer counselling Lord Squander--driven to the end of his tether: "Suppose then you were to give personal security to some rich Spinster?"

Carol O'Caustic, The Laughable Lover, I, iv, 1805.



obviously intended for a younger person around and she accuses her Uncle ("two and three quarter" years her senior) of "mean considerations of keeping her fortune in the family" (III). He, however, ascertains whether the young man is "an old maid hunter". He is not. Inferentially, all's wrong with her. She has hence her face washed of paints and varnishes and herself steadied down to a staid, settled life.

Yet, were it not for built-up credulity, Phoebe Latimer in The Natural Son<sup>1</sup> would not have aimed at Blushenly. She is rich. He assumedly is a Tom Jones hero. Therefore, it is unbearable that he should <sup>aspire to</sup> ~~pass for~~ the niece and sully the family name. When the widow's star was in the ascendant, she had won a law-case<sup>x</sup> on not incomparable grounds. This old maid, in due order of succession, is all out for an elopement when O'Flaherty gives his foolish-wise suggestion for assistance. "Mercy on me!" exclaims he in unmasking her,

what a fermentation does a little learning raise in a female skull! No wonder that our fortune-hunters poach among these petticoated pedants; they fall into the snare like a pheasant from its perch.

2

is

This idea<sup>3</sup>/more fully implemented by Cumberland in a later play- The Box-Lobby Challenge. Jack Crochet (reminiscent also of characters in the earlier plays of the century) is the low-born scoundrel who could not have cared less for "the antiquated goddess of fifty", "the petticoated pedant", -had it not been for her riches. For the ~~which~~<sup>4</sup>, he acts another Cambridge scholar's part. In The Impostors however, the author turns to the Kitley-Interest type<sup>(though</sup> "reformed", shall we say, <sup>in</sup> of The School for Lovers and The New Peerage) but only to show that he is the same old knave still. Sir Solomon is indeed alert that none claim Dorothy. And the impostors know how keen he is on "her strong box" "falling as an escheat to him", long before he takes one of them, "Lord Janus", in trust. The understanding arrived at is, that he will assist the latter in getting the niece, provided that he in turn help in keeping Polycarp's "hands off" the aunt. No sooner are the last two together than the old man appears or sends for the woman. Plainly put in the end,

My cousin Dorothy is an old maid, and that is a condition not of her own chusing...now, my Lord, her fortune, which is no trifle, sleeps in my hands, and if she calls it out in haste, she will disable me from paying down the full sum upon the nail, which I am pledg'd for to your lordship.

This may well have served as a valediction to the old maid's guards, had there

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1. R.Cumberland, 1784. 2. IV. 3. 1795. 4. 1789.  
2. Webster, The Devil's Law-Case.

not been another story in Cross Partners about a certain aunt's father who made her wait till fortune had been accumulated; during which time she had grown <sup>an</sup> old-maid under the eye of the father's sister, another aunt, that is to say.

Withholding the desire to ferret out more of <sup>fortune-hunters,</sup> ~~these trailing after Dame Fortune,~~ <sup>one</sup> might perhaps <sup>show</sup> ~~be of interest to learn~~ a little more rather of the types seeking an old <sup>lady's</sup> ~~hand~~ hand. <sup>In</sup> ~~Incited~~ to "revenge" on Miss Union in Fortune's Fool for her ruining Lord Danver's marriage, the latter advertises in the matrimonial columns. In response to <sup>this</sup> ~~which~~ appears <sup>the</sup> ~~the~~ Danvers' none too desirable sailor-brother ~~to Lady Danvers,~~ who learning of Miss Union's designs, is instrumental to her downfall. But what gives this situation its <sup>full</sup> ~~value to completion,~~ is the gate-crashing. Before she has done with the nautical vocabulary of the suitor on her hands, servant after servant keeps announcing, "Scotchman", "Frenchman", "Six young Irishmen" bargin impatiently, <sup>driv</sup> ~~running~~ her mad. "Mercy!" cries she,

here'll be the whole town presently-look the doors-shut up the house, and, ~~bye~~ <sup>bye</sup> hear, tell the gentlemen, I don't want a husband-yes, tell them I do-but that instead of having two thousand a year, I owe thirty thousand pounds-

If that does not <sup>set a record</sup> ~~make up a grand total~~ for the <sup>entire</sup> ~~eighteenth century!~~ <sup>Considering</sup> ~~entire~~ <sup>My</sup> ~~My~~, that the old maid, Irishman, Scotsman,--the common antipathies of the century,--are ~~somehow~~ <sup>of such a situation</sup> paired off, the humour has to be accepted for what it is worth. But the other, perhaps more sensational note, also marking the end of the century may be instanced from The Way to Get Married. <sup>4</sup> Miss Sarah Sapless, an old maid, has suddenly died, <sup>upon</sup> ~~whereupon~~, (time enough for mourning) Toby Allspice and his daughter are all anxiety to hear of their entering upon "the f<sup>ing</sup>ering of about thirty thousand pounds". The former's words of praise for the dear departed are stoppered however with "the sum of five pounds, to purchase a ring". "A what?" snorts the stunned relation hardly believing his ears. "A ring", repeats Caustic, the lawyer.

Allsp. Fiddlededee! Superannuated old fool

Indeed, the superannuated fool of an aunt <sup>in The Slave</sup> ~~refuses to die~~, though <sup>her</sup> ~~the~~ devoted nephew in ~~The Slave~~ is looking for the tomb to pay his homage to. Or is it to his fortune?

\*

\*

\*

\*

1. By a lady, 1792.  
4. T. Morton, 1796.

2. F. Reynolds, 1796.  
5. II, i.

3. III,  
6. T. Morton, 1816.

The "Old Maid"/  
Maiden Aunt 1760-1827  
(The First Cycle).

It would be obvious on reviewing the drift of this meandering chapter, that, apart from a glimpse into matters of the heart, while somewhat more had been learnt about the aunt and the time and tide of her education and fortune, the vogue of the senior unrelated unmarried women seemed to have been over with the tottering of the Restoration beau monde. From occasional casual remarks here and there up till 1757, however, one had felt that she had not left the theatre but was waiting in the wings. After 1760, there she is indeed, commanding no inconsiderable applause. And promptly enough does she compel one not to keep her as rigidly apart always from the aunt as one did before. That is as it should be at this juncture, for such continuity one suspects would be at the expense of not a little mordant humour. Of course, when necessary for discerning seriousness of purpose, a separation of mixed groups will be made, even if it is for a comparatively short period towards the end. First, however, it will be helpful (and perhaps amusing too) to acquaint ourselves with the ideas and creations of individual dramatists such as Colman, Murphy, Mrs. Cowley, Reynolds and a few others.

As much time on this part of the century has been spent on scanning plays, as in going through critical interpretations of these in standard works. Nowhere is indebtedness to the "old maid" as such acknowledged as it should have been. Maybe, it is unquestionably taken for granted that she is a stock "humours" or "intrigue" type. But should she not then have <sup>so</sup> been pointed out? Hence the temptation to assume not that the critic does not perceive, but that he is simply unaware of her stage history. That is not to imply or presume however, that one has been able to do adequate justice to the rôle whether in the singling out of the few plays here or even in the enumeration of them all. Far from it. But if the point of the existence of the character is seen, the line of the dramatist's direction will seem clearer. More fully developed by now,

She proves the subject of the comic strain.

1 \*

#### 1. A. Murphy, The Old Maid, 1761

\* Goldsmith and Cooke shared the views of Burke and Murphy in condemning the "unreal" characters of sentimental comedy. Which is as much as to say, that the "old maid" was the most realistic. In fact, Pamela furnished Cooke with a satirical formula for the composition of sentimental comedies. But the interesting point is, that Goldsmith no less than Moore, Colman no less than Kelly/lean against her for support. And Steele had to. As who not?

For a pushing-off start, a couple of sentences are extracted from the "definitely" sentimental plays that are also "connecting links" between the early and late eighteenth century drama. In Pamela,<sup>1</sup> Smatter taunts the heroine for her "Doctrine" which is "fit only for a Convent, or a stale maid of five and thirty";<sup>2</sup> and in The Foundling, a simile runs to the effect;

For the fool loves Mischief like an Old Maid; and will outlie  
an Attorney.

Indeed, links such as these connect only too well with the niece and aunt in The Jealous Wife,<sup>3</sup> for instance, since Harriet's "affection and Duty, and Virtue," are in comical inversion "like a Funeral Sermon" to the aunt, - the keynote to whose character significantly it struck in Act I,

if She's there, watch Her narrowly, Charles! Lady Freelove is as  
mischievous as a Monkey, and as Cunning too. - Have a Care of Her.  
I say, have a Care of Her!

What had preceded thus ~~affits~~ the execrable character of whom enough presently. The situation in this play is, that in order to escape marriage, Harriet seeks refuge with her aunt. The essential point about the elder's subsequent endeavours to match her with Lord Trinket is, "it will add to the Dignity of the Family"(II), "the Honour of our Family"(III);

\*

A handle to a name is the common weakness of the aunts. Lady Freelove therefore calumniates

1. J. Dance, or, Virtue Triumphant, II, IV, 1741

2. E. Moore, II, ii, 1747/8

3. G. Colman, 1761.

\* - for which Mrs. Winifred,<sup>a</sup> a closer contemporary marries her niece to a rake; for which Biddy-Tippikin's aunt<sup>b</sup> shuts her eyes to the common blood flowing in the veins of the candidate as also of the heroine; and for which eighteenth century aunt's traditional trait it would be safer to travel far ahead to Miss Bront<sup>c</sup> than to confuse her with "the grandes dames of the seventeenth century"<sup>d</sup> whoever they are. Or else, remaining within the period, it may be asked why a niece is "base and degenerate"(V) to Lady Camphire,<sup>e</sup> why Miss Penelope Trifle<sup>f</sup> is crestfallen, or why Miss Lucretia Mactab<sup>g</sup> renders herself insufferable.

a. Mrs. Griffith, The School for Rakes.

b. R. Steele, The Tender Husband.

c. A.W. Pinero, Lady Bountiful, 1891.

+Cf., Restoration plays as Otway's Friendship in Fashion,  
Vanbrugh's The Provok'd Wife, etc. for the mischievous type.

d. A. Nicoll, A History of the English Drama, Vol. III, p. 168.

e. Mrs. Davys, The Self Rival.

f. S. Foote, The Knights.

g. G. Colman, The Poor Gentleman.

Harriet when she runs away from her clutches, and she is responsible for Mrs. Oakly's due jealousy too when she finds the refugee in the latter's house. Later she plays havoc with Charles Oakly, the "sneaking, simple Gentleman! without a Title!" that is, with whom Harriet is in love, - since every "type" aunt's "humour" is a "Man of Quality" for the niece. Even a Phoebe Latimer's.<sup>1</sup> But the point of Colman's knife wounds a little more when it goes deeper and beyond the aunts to "musty old prudes" "as nauseous as Ipecacuanha"(II,iii), and deeper still into the "old maid" in the epilogue to the play.

As adroitly in The English Merchant,<sup>2</sup> "one of the most representative sentimental dramas of the age", Colman switches over <sup>3</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>against</sup> wrath ~~to~~ the machinating character of Lady Alton. It may easily be guessed why. This ageing woman fancies she can wean Amelia away from Lord Falbridge's love. "Leave this house; leave London", dictates she her terms, "I will provide you a retirement in the country, and supply all your wants"(II). When her rival scorns this, with the serviceable Spatter's aid she imperils the life of Amelia's father. Aware of her "vindictive disposition" and "violent" envy, Lord Falbridge places Amelia above her resentment, and that works Lady Alton up to a pitch at the time of her final exit,

May your wife prove as false to you, as you have been to me!  
May you be followed, like Orestes, with the furies of a guilty  
conscience; find your error when it is too late; and die in  
all the horrors of despair!

Amply apparent from these two comedies alone is the attitude of one playwright towards this unredeemable character. It is incumbent to turn attention to another, for with Murphy's The Old Maid, a play of the same year as The Jealous Wife, as popular during and after the century, and with the same privilege of having been translated into a foreign language,<sup>4</sup> - the line runs in continuity with the Leonora - Fancyful type somewhat suppressed on the stage during the coquette reform drive. In Miss Harlow, if any differently from her predecessors, it is proved that the old maid is an und<sup>se</sup>erving candidate. Her assumption that <sup>(Clerimont's eye is on her,</sup>

1. R. Cumberland, The Natural Son.

2. 1767.

3. A. Nicoll, A History of English Drama, Vol.III, p.140; classified as "Sentimental" also in A. Sherbo's English Sentimental Drama, p.159.

4. C.Cibber, Woman's Wit.

5. J. Vanbrugh, The Provok'd Wife.

leads to the estrangement of a long absent fiancé. She pays no heed to advice though her own better sense should have prevailed. Hence the malediction, "And old maid in the house is <sup>the</sup> ~~like~~ a devil", and the moral

FADED TOAST  
In vain the ~~FADED~~ <sup>FADED</sup> TOAST her mirror tries,  
And counts the cruel murders of her eyes.

Ironically enough, she marks well her centenary, for a real effort towards discovering her had started in the year 1661. Murphy deserves only the rare credit for revealing that a "Ranalagh" character can coalesce with the domestic type without her having to undergo the stock translation into aunthood.

But just think that when eighteenth century plays are literally strewn all over with bits of her, so far-fetched an attempt at explanation should have been given <sup>as</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>at all</sup>. "Possibly the title of The Old Maid was suggested by Congreve's Old Bachelor". Instead it is asked, 'Should not the title be supported <sup>li</sup> ~~by~~ by the character herself as she appears to the public eye? Is that not ~~more~~ <sup>better</sup> than sufficient ~~rather~~ than going to good old Congreve?' ~~Yes~~, the ingeniousness of the critic runs on

Not only is Hartwell the name of Congreve's bachelor but Hartwell is to some extent the male counterpart of Miss Harlow, though of course she has not, like him, lived a life of debauchery(!)

He takes contemporary reviews into consideration, but to what purport? The three-volumed <sup>2</sup> essay that Hayley was to write, the books that followed after, the wails, comments and epistles since the start of journals like The Spectator and The Tatler, surely had something to do with popular sentiment over and above what the play roused.

The "Old Maid" is not the Miss Harlow of this play alone in a position of "discomfiture" <sup>3</sup> left to reap the fruits of her folly. Take up at random contemporary loose pieces, though bearing in mind also her forbears, and mark the irony in a suggestion such as

There ought to be some to carry on a useful commerce in the frozen latitudes beyond fifty.

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1. H. Dunbar, Dramatic Career of Arthur Murphy, p. 134.

2. An Essay on Old Maids, 1787.

3. H. Dunbar, Dramatic Career of Arthur Murphy, p. 135.

+ Colman's The Jealous Wife in fact, had preceded Murphy's play by a few months. And yet I would not for a moment suppose that the "old maid" therein had anything ~~either~~ to do with the inspiration of this creation.

with reference to the "Misses Fruzz, Odbody, Winterbottom" in general, or "Biddy Bundle" in particular, who in the same ratio as her "natural face decays, her skill improves in making the artificial one"(1). Or note the sarcasm in a debate as follows on a Miss Vermillion,

Mrs. Can. She has charming fresh colour.  
 Lady T. Yes, when it is fresh put on.  
 Mrs. Can. O'fie! I'll swear her colour is natural. I have seen it come and go.  
 Lady T. I dare swear you have, ma'am: it goes off at night, and comes again in the morning.  
 Sir Benj. True, ma'am, it not only comes and goes, but, what's more- egad, her maid can fetch and carry it.

Or again, consider the causticity in the remark on a Miss Sallow labouring "under many disadvantages" in trying to pass for a girl of "six and thirty".--For <sup>of such</sup> ~~which~~ all failings Miss Harlow of Murphy's play is indeed exposed. <sup>A round-up of these few</sup> ~~Such~~ background characters ~~are rounded-up here as~~ <sup>the heroine of</sup> ~~they~~ puts The Old Maid only too well to the forefront, besides helping us <sup>from</sup> ~~draw~~ such ~~internal~~ <sup>his</sup> ~~evidence,~~ form a composite picture of the ~~common~~ society they belong to.

Mrs. Cowley, in her first play, with whatever additions or subtractions attributed to Garrick, is inspired by a similar "antiquated" sententious character. Lady Dinah, name-role of The Runaway, whom George Hargrave vociferously objects to for a mother, dares have <sup>4</sup> ~~her~~ designs on him. She absurdly miscomprehends <sup>his</sup> ~~the~~ proposal, and then in despair blackmails her maid to assist in ousting the "artful slut" who engrosses the attentions of the young man. For the manner in which she exhibits her "pangs of jealousy," she <sup>earns</sup> ~~fetches~~ for herself the same pungent comment as <sup>Miss Harlow in</sup> The Old Maid.

"A disappointment in love at your time of life must be the devil." <sup>5</sup> ~~Which~~ <sup>this is the sort of attack</sup> ~~Which~~, incidentally, amid all the extenuating circumstances, Whitehead had not been able to avoid either with reference to Araminta

.....if the petulancy of thy temper would let me I could almost pity thee. The loss of a lover is no agreeable thing; but women at our time of life....

- 
1. O. Goldsmith, The Good Natur'd Man, I, 1768.
  2. R. B. Sheridan, The School for Scandal, II, 1777.
  3. Ibid. II, ii.
  4. 1776. E. Bernbaum refers to <sup>it</sup> as "sentimental" comedy, The Drama of Sensibility, p. 254; A. Sherbo puts only a question-mark to it, ~~whatever that might suggest~~, English Sentimental Drama, p. 160.
  5. V.
  6. The School for Lovers, III, 1662.

Because she herself is unreconciled to the unmarried woman, Mrs Cowley attacks her in each of her comedies almost, and this without repeating herself. Having dealt with a stock stage type in Lady Dinah, she makes a round of town society, to teach the ageing character a little about the reasonable, seasonable hour of retirement from it. Miss Ogle<sup>1</sup> is reprimanded for infecting the town air and innocent souls like Lady Touchwood newly come to it. She is also deluded with the hope that she can compete with Miss Hardy, "a fine girl; complexion, shape and features", and six years junior to her- if one takes her word for her age. But she is a much paler luminary than Clarinda<sup>2</sup>, who may credibly have been the "Star of Fashion", though now "on the brink of Thirty" (I,ii), she runs breathlessly in chase of Beauchamp by going straight from her toilet-table to his lodgings, and on to the widow's place. Alas, all again is in vain. In this "excellent sentimental play"<sup>3</sup>, there is no mercy for her since Mrs Cowley's sentiments are markedly hostile to the old maid. If already past the first stage of her youth, she ejects her from society as in the two foregoing plays. If she is still young, "the horrors of Old Maidenism"<sup>4</sup> are brought to mind in order to frighten a ~~young~~ <sup>young</sup> cher into the more civil form of existence. Indeed the maid in A School for Greybeards,<sup>5</sup> while assisting her mistress in her flight from "a ridiculous marriage to a proper one", pats herself on the back for the good deed with the words:

or, may I never arrive at higher honour than to nurse Misses  
in their Bibs, and Old-maids in their Spectacles!

And the curtain significantly drops on her words. Mrs. Cowley has no sympathy either with a maid<sup>6</sup> pining away, as she reveals in Georgina's speech:

Love! I wouldn't be in love for all the World! - Miss Gwatkin,  
our Neighbour was in love once- and she grew as pale as a  
horse-radish [ apt simile for 'old maid' ! ]. Foolish creature, if  
she had kept her colour perhaps a Gentleman would have liked her.

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1. The Belle's Stratagem, 1780.

2. Which is the Man? 1782.

3. A. Nicoll, A History of English Drama, Vol. III, p.140. (A. Sherbo makes no mention of it in his book.).

4. A Bold Stroke for a Husband, I,ii, 1783

5. or, The Mourning Bride, IV, 1786.

6. The Town before You, II,iii, 1794.



She will not lose her "bloom like Miss Gwatkin"-goes on the artless heroine.

Miss Gwatkin's history might have gone unnoticed had she not again, when Conway leads her by the hand, reminded us of it- "Why I never keep wakeful about you, and I don't grow pale like Miss Gwatkin".<sup>1</sup> In the same play there is an exclamation that perhaps bears a distant relation to Miss Gwatkin.

Why, this Apartment is as solitary as an Old Maid's morning room, or the Antichamber of a discarded Minister.

2

Thus some indication is given of the serious business of town-life, training for which started at an early age.

....instead of skipping over ropes, I was taught to pay and receive visits with other children and supposed myself a lady who was receiving company.

3

Similar details appear in many another letter of the time. Who, pray, in brisk society, when routs and assemblies<sup>+</sup> were becoming evening occupations and visits earlier in the day, would have been interested in the vapid old maid? As who in a "discarded minister"? But Mrs. Cowley examines the "old maid" from different points of view in moving from play to play, and from first to last, the dominant mood in which she does so, is of utter contempt.

It is of consequence to perceive awhile the workings of the creators' minds as well. In the early plays of Colman, for instance, all intensity of expression goes into the characterization of the "old maid". Subsequently, his interest flags.<sup>x</sup> Similarly Bickerstaffe, although drawing upon Wycherley's The Gentleman Dancing-Master for the main plot, he inserts a termagant maiden aunt for Wycherley's widow-aunt in his first comic-opera Love in a Village.<sup>4</sup> And while talking of borrowings, it would not be out of place to mention that though Sheridan as <sup>already</sup> ~~we have~~ seen, runs counter to fashion in making Mrs. Malaprop what she is, he is quick to effect à la mode an emendation in Vanbrugh's text.

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1. The Town Before You, V, vi.

2. Ibid, I, iii.

3. Lady Harriet's letter to Lady Chatham, 1st May, 1793.

4. 1762.

e.g. in Which is the Man?

x. Hence only occasional expression such as in his Prologue to Miss S. Lee's The Chapter of Accidents, 1780

.... the muses now

Few liberties to naughty men allow;

But like old maids on earth resolv'd to vex,

With cruel coyness treat the other sex.

That's my best nurse, do as you  
would be done by; trust us  
together this once; and if I  
don't show my breeding from the  
head to foot of me, may I be  
twice married and die a maid.  
(The Relapse, IV.i.)

That's my best nurse, do as  
you'd be done by. Trust us  
together this once, and if I  
don't show my breeding, I wish  
I may never be married, but die  
an old maid.  
(A Trip to Scarborough, IV.i.) 1

Murphy's The Old Maid was not his first play, it was nevertheless a bold step which caused no little stir. But either because of opposition or because he had said his ~~will~~ <sup>will</sup> say and felt quite happy about the results, he had no more to do with old maids thereafter. Mrs. Cowley, as has been seen, derives incentive for serious mockery as well as for sportive fun, her interest never quite abating, although the fullest treatment comes in the earlier plays.

Cumberland is relatively slower to receive impressions and though steadier, is inconclusive in both the building-up and the maturing of these. In The West Indian, he evidently thinks of the vacuous scandal-mongering type when he remarks on "a jury of English spinsters". The same idea seems to be uppermost in The Fashionable Lover when Mortimer cynically denounces the extravagance and folly of people of quality, and refused to have anything to do with them -

Me at cards! me at a quardrill<sup>e</sup>-table; pent in with fuzzing  
dowagers, gossiping old maids and yellow admirals; 'sdeath,  
my Lord must excuse me.

Another time, he conceives of her as a tyrannical wealthy relation when Sir Solomon complains about his wife in The Walloons.

....this woman's temper is insupportable; my life is miserable;  
no humble cousin to a rich old maid, ever liv'd more under the  
harrow, than I do with my lady Dangle.

The "old maids" in the society of his earlier play would probably have been rich; as indeed that factor forms the basis of his life-size creations:- the three "learned" maiden aunts in The Natural Son, The Impostors, and The Box-Lobby Challenge.

1. 1777.
2. III, vii, 1771.
3. I, i, 1772.
4. III, 1782.
5. 1784.
6. 1789.
7. 1794.

\* "Spinsters" is an extremely rare usage.  
See Appendix B.

In the first play of the set, the ridiculousness of Phoebe Latimer's favours towards Blushenly to the scorn of her niece and others, is revealed in a series of situations. In Act IV however, it is disclosed by Rueful, who had been a victim, that she has had a "career of conquests". He, in consequence, gives her a good talking-to over "the misery of unequal marriages", <sup>while</sup> ~~although~~ her brother as well makes her see a way out in advancing the candidate Jack Hustings. It is indeed a fall for her to accept one much duller than the Rueful of ~~her~~ younger years had she but then settled down with him, ~~"Puss" more than the "old maid" is~~ <sup>but at last</sup> ~~"worth"~~ notwithstanding, to Jack Hustings she veers round for the "land of matrimony." <sup>Like the</sup> ~~As~~ other authors <sup>whom we have already seen</sup> ~~of course~~ adapting earlier plays to suit their requirements, Cumberland in The Impostors changes the wife and daughter of Farquhar's The Beaux Stratagem to maiden aunt and niece. Thus he learns how to avoid the common triangle adhered to in the earlier play. Skilfully alternated are the scenes between Dorothy and Polycarp on the one hand, and on the other, between Elinor and Sir Charles Freemantle complicated by the masquerading "Lord Janus". "Prudent" love and romantic <sup>are</sup> ~~is~~ shown side by side. Dorothy had indeed "dedicated" her days to "celibacy and retirement" (as Phoebe hers to "books"), she does not "wish the tranquillity" of her heart <sup>to be</sup> "disturb'd."

Polyc. What can I say when you tell me you have devoted your days to perpetual celibacy!

Mrs. Dar. Did I tell you that, and do you always take a lady at her word on such occasions? 1

Further progress is interrupted <sup>back time</sup> ~~this~~ <sup>and at</sup> ~~once~~ <sup>time</sup> by a servant, <sup>time</sup> ~~time~~ By Sir Solomon. Then there is an assignation suggested with due decorum "in the lime-tree grove". Little chance would there have been of the matter fizzling out, had not the old fox of the family played upon her weakness for "family" name. After such exposure, the old maid gives the fortune-hunter over to "let the law deal with him as he deserves". That she does not marry makes her <sup>little</sup> ~~perhaps~~ superior to Phoebe Latimer.

Likewise in The Box-Lobby Challenge, it is in her wooing by another fortune-hunter, Jack Crotchet, that Diana Grampus's folly is observed. In between the interdictions on her niece and the educational problems of her nephew is fitted a scene as:

Diana. Tell me in one word- Are you sincere?-  
Jack. Is truth itself to be believ'd?  
Diana. Faithful and secret?

1

How "secret" it could have been may be gathered from the nephew's side of the dialogue,

Squire. It's no news to me, father; I cou'd have told you this an age ago.

Sir Toby. Why didn't you tell me, dunce, dolt? Then I might have stopt her in time.

Squire. You wou'd, wou'd you? You'll stop the Thames next, I warrant, Laud, laud! how you fuss about nothing. Can't you let the old maid have her Crotchet, and say no more about it?

2

Cumberland has much more of "old Di" to expose in the soliloquy "To wed, or not to wed", in the commentary of the niece's age-group on "the happy bridegroom he, and she the blooming bride", and in yet another soliloquy of hers. This is followed by the "Counsel into Court" scene, the outcome of which is that Jack is exculpated since found deserving of her money. Hence the concluding nuptials!

During the ten years that the author has been occupied with the three aunts (and nieces) in succession, the one problem he himself seems to have been confronted with is, whether to marry the old maid or not. And when he does, it is only to add to the ridicule in the play, a note of mockery afterwards. Another ten years of his career as a prolific dramatist pass, he might well be expected to have some advice worth offering in The Sailor's Daughter, and ~~well at the stage of tendering advice ought he to be,~~

Marry, marry, my dear children; marry, and club your wits to make each other happy; for, depend upon it, 'tis your only chance. And old bachelor is the most melancholy, poor devil in creation, and an old maid is-

Louisa. Never mind what she is, uncle; have pity upon the poor old maids, and say no more upon the subject.

3

as  
but in the splintered thought <sup>makes plain, he has</sup> ~~not~~ still none to give.

1. III.
2. IV.
3. The Sailor's Daughter, III, 1804.

"Let the galled jade wince; our withers  
are unpruned," might almost have been taken as a motto by Frederick

With Reynolds, <sup>in whose plays</sup> the unmarried woman bursts upon the view in many a varied hue-aunt, sister, guardian, even the old forgotten governess. But whatever position she happens to be in, she is the stock villainess of his piece. He starts with no faltering ideas about her and he ~~has~~ leaves behind no illusions. <sup>Never</sup> Feeling ~~never~~ the need, he <sup>never</sup> adopts ~~never~~ a feigned attitude towards her either. Indeed, he tops the list in beginning his career with her, and turning again and again and yet again to carry on his most sustained tirade against her:-as she obstructs a niece's love affair,-nay, ~~a step further than~~ he goes ~~showing~~ <sup>a step further than</sup> preceding dramatists, in making her <sup>a</sup> rival <sup>to the unmarried as well as</sup> ~~beyond the unmarried~~ to the married ~~one~~; he increases the circumference of her actions as a corrupt practitioner in town society with parts and wit that beat down man; and then returning, he lets us see the old hypocritical bigot in a newer light; the old stock theme that the moment a fledgling crosses the threshold of her door, he gets caught, <sup>taken for granted by</sup> is ~~not~~ <sup>with</sup> Reynolds; to crown all, he is the only dramatist who makes her unscrupulously avaricious! With all others, it is either that she is sought after for money or that she is forgetful of her years in seeking a youth <sup>and</sup> most eager to part with her money on that score. Even the match-making aunts think of "Titles" and "honour" and on these grounds promote the nieces. Not so with the professional raconteur, Reynolds.

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Lady Waitfor't, the first of his figures, is a sentimental egotist brandishing and flourishing her "purity" about. But how much of it she has may be seen in the way in which she <sup>exerts</sup> ~~holds~~ power over <sup>Neville's</sup> ~~an~~ uncle <sup>the nephew</sup> to ruin ~~him~~ in the old man's opinion and to degrade him in Louisa's as well. Over her niece on the other side, she keeps a firm hand with threat of power to pack her off to a nunnery. As source of such "mischief" she is not unrecognisable. <sup>2</sup> But quite new to appearance is the next character. Miss Dazzle is the brains behind the farotable racket and night-club in town. She initiates a contract with Smalltrade, and with the assistance of his bank, runs her project to perfection.

1. The Dramatist, or, Stop Him who Can!, 1789.

2. How to Grow Rich, I, i, 1793.

\* In Notoriety (1791) where there is no character, thought of her is there. Nominal the hero is petrified "there'll be no elopement...midst the shouts of old maids...."V.

What will not ours achieve? Lady Henrietta, who has refused my brother's hand and title, will now be his on other terms, and Warford, who is our enemy, will be involved in his uncle's ruin.

But the ruin is caused by the brother's idiocy in introducing the foreigner Pave into the business. However, close on Miss Dazzle's heels is yet another type of a scheming sister. Lady Sarah Savage, all booted and spurred, is more mannish than any woman could be. To compensate for the losses caused by her brother's prodigality, she plans his marriage to Clara Sedley because of her estate and its future source of wealth from the "Copper Mines" discovered therein. And by means of her own alliance she hopes to secure Sir Paul's fortune, furthermore to make Darnley forever in her power by wrecking his peaceful married life.

Miss Union is match-maker, marriage-breaker, cheat, forger, "robber-footpad" all in one. To "defraud the artless and unthinking, of their fortune, health, and happiness" is this old maid's "road to matrimony". She is an object of concealed "affection", annihilated "passion", and extirpated "sensibility". Then comes Mrs. Rigid, who, already having succeeded in getting Mandeville disinherited, manoeuvres to keep <sup>his own</sup> the daughter away from him so that in the event of the marriage with Veritas that this diabolical governess-guardian is also <sup>plotting,</sup> manipulating, half the share of <sup>the girl's</sup> fortune comes to her. At one time, she locks her up in a weird old Gothic chamber with "no food but bread and water, no bed, but straw" and places another "steady old maid", an "old mastiff" to keep watch! Of such a heartless tyrant, who has withal moments of "ogling" and "Platonic love", there is ample exposure by word of mouth and proof of her deed. But Reynold's pleasure in the long-run lies in varying the nature of the unmarried woman's villainy and by showing how thick-skinned she is by contriving telling situations and irony within each play of his.

A couple of observations may be made after this first set of <sup>Reynold's</sup> plays before going any further. Firstly, the unusual combination of brother and sister, both unmarried, may have been suggested by The Heiress. The Blandish team in this play is <sup>a</sup> well-conceived variation

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1. The Rage, 1794.
  2. Fortune's Fool, 1796.
  3. The Will, 1797.
  4. J. Burgoyne, 1786. Note, in Whitehead's The School for Lovers one hardly notices them as a "pair".
- \* Could the author be thinking as well of the salt-mines, that were a source of wealth to Cecilia Fiennes of earlier time?

in the art of flattery-- the brother "with a composition as delicate as aether, to be applied with the point of a feather",-- and the sister, "with an unction of flattery fit for a house-painter's brush" (I,i). So, together they push on well in society. Reynolds' Dazzle and Savage pairs, complements to each other, in How to Grow Rich and The Rage respectively, are developed from mere supporting characters in The Heiress into leading roles in the world of fashion. Later, the successful device in The Delinquent<sup>1</sup> of presenting brother and sister as contrasting characters (which may have been abstracted from Bickerstaffe's Love in a Village and the base of this opera-- Wycherley's play itself)-- is taken up by other contemporary dramatists such as Norton and Moncrieff. More use is thereby made on the stage of the "old maid". Secondly, the following criticism of Burgoyne's The Heiress is applicable to most of Reynolds' unmarried women, one way or the other,

it showed what use could be made of the odious female as a foil to the virtues of the heroine whom she scorns, and it made popular an atmosphere of legal chicanery, forged wills and incriminating documents, which, henceforth, was taken over by many subsequent plays. 2.

Or should it be said rather, that Reynolds shows no disparity between maid, widow or man, that the first of the three can be as mean and selfish as other vicious personages,-- and that she can be if anything, a worse compound of thwarted desires and gross materialism, without scruple or under the mask of prudent morality.

But to continue with his plays. Though our concentration has so far been mainly on the character, the emphasis will now be transferred to the author's methods of exposure. Seemingly, in Laugh When You Can,<sup>3</sup> he has an ideology to expound, that whereas a bachelor can laugh and be happy in doing good to others, his counterpart is the reverse and so must be lynched for her malpractices. Miss Gloomly, that is to say, having a "virgin weakness" for Mortimer, turns aside from her regular moral writings to pen a slanderous letter against his wife-- her niece, to which, Gossemer "The Laughing Philosopher" takes upon himself the responsibility of replying. He therefore, in turn, writes one to Bonus, Mortimer's Uncle, whom the old maid intends marrying if she cannot capture the nephew.

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1. or, Seeing Company, 1805.
  2. Camb.Hist.of Eng.Lit., XI, p.276.
  3. 1798.

"here's slander for slander, Miss Gloomly;" twangs <sup>Gossamer</sup> ~~he~~ on finishing,  
[and I defy all the old maids in Europe to stuff more scandal  
into one epistle.] and if ever two characters deserv'd being  
trick'd and outwitted, it is an old maid who invents false  
reports, and a stockbroker who lives by them! 1

Sure enough, he hoaxes her out of the husband who <sup>5</sup> ~~has~~ been ruining himself over her for  
years, <sup>and</sup> whose fortune ~~thereby~~ falls to Mortimer and <sup>his wife.</sup> ~~the wife.~~ By making her thus the  
laughing-stock of all, "The Laughing Philosopher" bowls the "Weeping" one completely over.

One may be led to think that, conscience-stricken, the author sets himself about to  
restore balance in lines as,

Oh! if everybody knew the blessings of matrimony as much as  
I do, England would treble its inhabitants; and its most  
valuable property would be old bachelors and old maids; for  
they'd be taken alive, and shown as curiosities. 2

But no, gaily he dismisses this <sup>reference to old bachelors</sup> ~~context of the male~~ and uninterruptedly pursues his quarry.  
Indeed, it is more than that, for <sup>with</sup> ~~added~~ vigour in The Blind Bargain he sets a team of two,  
the young bachelor Tourly and the old Sir Andrew <sup>to outwit</sup> ~~with bounding leaps~~ for Miss Gurnet (and her  
partner in villainy, Dr. Pliable). This old maid, as fickle and conceited ~~as~~ <sup>more</sup> ~~as~~ Miss  
Gloomly, more heartlessly grasping than Mrs. Rigid, and <sup>than</sup> ~~the most~~ "virtuous" ~~of both~~ <sup>than</sup> ~~both~~ and  
~~Lord Villars~~ <sup>punished</sup> put together, is well ~~deserved~~ <sup>has been</sup> ~~upon~~ for all her lapses. The blindfolded Tourly  
deposits the Villars' child, whom she <sup>door</sup> ~~is~~ instrumental in kidnapping, ironically on her <sup>door-</sup> ~~step~~  
instead of on the one next <sup>door</sup> ~~(that is Dr. Pliable's)~~; and he chalk-marks the door with the words:

and now, whoever you may be, whether you're a married man,  
a widow, <sup>or</sup> ~~an~~ old maid, ne'er play at blind-man's buff with  
young Oxonians, for we're sure to catch you! 4

He un.masks her to the others, but makes this moment a turning-point in his life, -never to  
marry, never to have rest nor respite, but to <sup>continue</sup> ~~go on~~ with missionary zeal <sup>his</sup> ~~work~~ <sup>has been</sup> ~~begin~~ of  
rooting out vice. <sup>Finished</sup> ~~Through~~ with <sup>Miss Gurnet</sup> ~~her~~ and her preparations for marriage with him, Sir Andrew on  
the other hand, turns to pursue with <sup>single-minded</sup> ~~one-pointed~~ determination his task as lexicographer - <sup>but</sup>  
<sup>of a</sup> ~~different~~ <sup>kind</sup> from Johnson and Bailey, in that he is to set down under words "not only ample  
explanation, but wit, satire, and character". Hers, to "Hear Him Out" is,

"Old maid! - an animal who delights in cards, calumny, curiosity  
and cats, mostly to be found in cold climates - often in no  
climate, and may be taken alive on May-day, Valentine's day, and  
all other days! 5

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1. III.
  2. Delays and Blunders, V, 1802.
  3. or, Hear Him Out, 1804.
  4. III.
  5. IV.



Her nephew, who defies her orders to eject the honest Villars' tenants from his estate, down-right declares that he cannot very well kill humanity itself "for all the doctors and old maids in the universe"(II.v); and her niece, whom she had refused to give shelter to, leaves straightaway for another's door with such grace of thought for the elder as:

ere long, her conscience will inflict such stings,  
that we should pity not upbraid her!

Thus, for the time being, is Miss Gurnet chilled and cast away into a freezing zone.

If for nothing else, for the sheer output of characters, Reynolds gains ascendancy over his contemporaries and predecessors, <sup>although</sup> ~~but such was his influence, that~~ M.P. Andrews, a close associate of his in thought and writing, <sup>differed very little from him in method,</sup> ~~in method too could least take pains to differ.~~ In <sup>2</sup> The Reparation for instance, he sets Pamelope Zodiac and Betty Wormwood like two furies hounding a widow and child, ironically with no love lost between themselves. <sup>is scarcely different from</sup> ~~but the idea of~~ making the unmarried woman into a cold-blooded tyrant, <sup>who</sup> ~~seems to have imbibed from Reynolds,~~ <sup>whose</sup> Miss Stoic <sup>3 who</sup> is none the worse nor better for coming at the end of the queue. She antagonises her brother towards his adopted child and then turns the latter out as well, for being "untutored and ungrateful". And what ruses she gets up to entice her back into her clutches! For <sup>in that</sup> ~~the~~ which, she gets plain dealing at the hands of Mrs. Aubrey, <sup>her very</sup> ~~her~~ "philosophy" is "perverted" and "a veil for worldly and ambitious views". Her own past <sup>4</sup> ~~own~~ beats Mrs. Malaprop <sup>5</sup> ~~(The Delinquent, The Delinquent)~~ sentimentalism hollow.

Didn't she write red-hot love-verses in the newspapers, under the signature of Laura Seraphina; and didn't my friend, Ned Nick, the attorney, answer them by the name of Rolando Furioso? And didn't the press groan for months with Feelings amaranthine! Chains adamantinel and bleeding hearts panting?

And <sup>she</sup> ~~Alas~~, when found out, <sup>was</sup> ~~was~~ sued by the lawyer for expenses.

Thus <sup>one finds</sup> ~~are witnessed~~ divergent means in <sup>each of Reynolds'</sup> ~~every~~ plays for exposing the culprit. Contriving a situation to tell Lady Waitfor't (The Dramatist, III) to her face that she is a "hypocrite"; or against Mrs. Rigid and her partner (The Will, IV) sending a pair around soaked in drink, singing to the refrain "Drink, drink and reform" and occasionally dropping an aphorism, "There's some apology for drunken honesty-but none for sober villainy"; or catching Miss Union up in a balcony (Fortune's Fool, IV), -are fresher methods than the mawkish morality Cumberland

1. III.
2. 1790.
3. The Delinquent; or Seeing Company, 1805.
4. Ibid. IV.
5. Ibid. III, i.

arrives at through amorous scenes on the stage. Even the author of The Travellers<sup>1</sup> for that matter uses a similar device. Nor is Mrs. Cowley in The Runaway highly original. In short, Colman in The English Merchant really revives the "mischief" tradition of the Restoration, while Reynolds carries it to its utmost pitch.

The marvel is, that after satirising the avarice of the old maid so bitterly in his earlier plays and then perhaps from generous motives borrowing the idea of anxiety over a maiden aunt's will from Morton's The Way to Get Married,<sup>2</sup> he tries his hand at a pure joke, for once, in The Exile,<sup>3</sup> but alas cannot help referring back to the lexicographer's definition of the 'old maid' in The Blind Bargain. At first a "curious old ebony case" is brought with due ceremony on the stage by four valets; this arouses Baron Altradoff's "curiosity" -- an infection caught as it were, from the "curious" old aunt. He picks up the key and like Alice entering Wonderland, on opening the case with it, is trapped. In Act III, iv, however, the actual legacy worth an enormous value arrives for the old maid's niece with directions no less strange,

it was not to be opened, because your aunt, having long suffered by a life of celibacy, wished to hurry you into a state of matrimony, and she certainly chose a right mode; for if curiosity were not the most stimulating of passions,

Thus Reynolds enlivens his pathetic opera with a dead old maid's tale, and concedes to a point that she too can part with money. Though when?

sion of "Society" Certain "aunts" and "old maids" bear distinctions without a difference. type and "Aunt".

To wit, the amorous Rachel Mildew and the ridiculous Lady Dinah; the coquette in Miss Bloomer wheedled out of her belief about "the Hay-day of her Charms", and the not less frisky but more severely punished Clarinda from the world of fashion. Of course, the man from the same world may or may not be responsible for her fate as deducible from Old Reynard's words,

I wouldn't marry your Mother till she was nine and thirty.

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1. N.B. Harrison, 1788.
  2. 1796
  3. or, The Deserts of Siberia, 1803.
  4. H. Kelly, The School for Wives, 1773.
  5. Mrs. Cowley, The Runaway, 1776.
  6. R. Hitchcock, The Coquette; or The Mistakes of the Heart, I, 1776.
  7. Mrs. Cowley, Which is the Man?, 1782.
  8. A.B. Porter, The Indiscreet Lover, 1768.

1  
and from Sir Oldstock's

she was a reigning toast...had a whole army of lovers;...either from necessity, or choice, she hung like an overblown rose on the virgin thorn, full four and thirty years waiting for me.....

But again now, the school of chastisement is veritably for the woman. <sup>And</sup> ~~Moreover~~, as a <sup>2</sup> harsher attitude gathers momentum in the 'eighties, there is Phoebe Latimer with her "Flags and streamers", "men traps and machine-guns in every curl", and, on an equal scale, Miss <sup>3</sup> Vandercrab with her "sashes", "ringlets" and her "old-fashioned face with French washes". - But while the former, being an aunt, scales the heights of Parnassus, the latter not being one, feeds herself on sentimental trash like any Biddy Bellair or Lydia Languish. It is however, straining our credulity a trifle too far that before she has got her breath back from her hot pursuit of the "young, and handsome" rival, the "magnet of attraction," as she supposes herself to be, should straight away resign "all pretensions"(V). For Phoebe on the other hand, there is just one more chance in life and she brings herself together to accept it which is not so lame a conclusion.

Two things are clear, first, that certain authors do not adhere to punctilios regarding the appearances of the related and unrelated unmarried woman in this part of the century; secondly, that the favourite type is the severe, puritanical woman who is often imagined to have been created by the nineteenth century Victorians. Also in character, although a Miss Gloomly in a Reynolds' play may be as "mischievous" as the ageing woman from the beau monde, the average author would prefer not to depart from the type but to have the aunt keep up her auntlike trait, likewise the society belle hers. Thus the comical exposure of each proceeds from the accepted norm of her character and behaviour.

However, most of the playwrights belonging to both the eighteenth century and the nineteenth, find difficulty in reconciling the keenness of their desire to keep the "old maid" on the stage ~~with~~ <sup>4</sup> with the need for original presentation. While this difficulty is sur-  
mounted in Indiscretion, <sup>5</sup> in Wanted a Wife aunt and niece are comparatively wooden because the entire inspiration goes into the oddying situations, and the story as such has hardly any

1. F. Pilon, He would be a Soldier, II, 1786.

2. R. Cumberland, The Natural Son, 1784.

3. H. Lee, The New Peerage; or Our Eyes may deceive us, 1787.

4. Prince Hoare, 1800.

5. W.T. Moncrieff, or A Cheque on my Banker's, 1819.

depth to speak of. In the first play, a niece's indiscreet elopement is counterbalanced by her aunt's response to a matrimonial advertisement, and the eventual parley which brings her to town, of course all full of "prudence" and "propriety" and "Family Honour" with regard to her niece. Old "Amanda" at the interview by appointment with gouty Sir Maxim, feels enough of a fool as it is, as he does - when each starts comparing the other with the advertised description in the newspaper cutting. Their embarrassment is increased when Sir Maxim's son breaks in upon them and the "virgin" has to flee. Again, when unexpectedly in the last scene they meet face to face and she runs confusedly off the stage with her old brother sardonically reminding her of "family honour", there is spirit to character-type and to theme. But in Wanted a Wife, the aunt and niece go to an advertising agency and recruit a run-down master and servant for their household; there the position gets reversed: the "servant" is aimed at by the aunt, while he has an eye on the niece. Although the rest of the complications are cleverly worked out, it is all a worn-out fortune hunter's game. Aunt and niece as relations need fresh treatment or it is felt, they are at the parting of the ways.

Similarly with the woman from the world of fashion. There is a very sketchy figure of Miss Flimsy with a few stock phrases about the "so infinite a train" of beaux "at command" in Neither's the Man, but with little supporting action. Miss Chatterall, in The East India <sup>2</sup> ~~one~~ <sup>5</sup> ~~day~~, gets a good non-stop whacking. Scandal-mongering is her meat and drink,

Zor.	But she's so malicious.	
Lady Clara	She cheats horribly at play!	
Med.	She's disagreeable and affected.	
Beau.	She's deceitful.	
Lady Clara.	She's abominable.....	3

Enter the lady herself for all to see, and to hear how callously she had been treated by the spectators after her chariot had collided and she had fallen into one of her "very best convulsions". To beat her at her own game in Act III,ii, Zoraida spins out a long yarn about Miss Chatterall's own "marriage" and "twins", but she remains incorrigible. She goes about breaking off marriages, for

I protest I can't conceive how it is that every body contrives to get married except myself! I'm sure I do all in my power; grudge no expense in fans, feathers, cold cream, pearl powder, and bloom of oriental lilies; and it was but last week, that I paid the Lord knows what for the very best arched eye-brows! 4

1. Mrs. Holford, 1798.

2. M.G. Lewis, 1799.

On the point of fainting, she arrives in Act IV, i.ii, to report to the town how she had been carried off in a "sedan-chair", to be told on alighting that she was a "great bore", put back into it, bound up "tight" and sent back again. Worked up, she makes her exit to move her "Irish uncle" to take legal action; and does not re-appear for the last act.

There is equal skill in the characterisation of "old and ugly" Lady Sorrel in The Way to Get Married.<sup>1</sup> But to this representative of town society, one finds the closest parallel in Lady Alton of Colman's The English Merchant, - the difference lying in the mode of exposure. Over Morton's play, however, hovers the soul of a dead old maid who ironically helps to deal out poetic justice. She does not leave her vast wealth to her expectant relative Toby Allspice, nor to Clementine his daughter, who is fast acquiring the "guinea-table" finesse in order to rise above her class. Her "wayward fate" having deprived her of "the comforts of wedlock", and sincerely believing that "nothing" could "tend more the benefit of society, than promoting the happiness of faithful lovers", in her last will and testament therefore, the deceased Miss Sarah Sapless leaves it all to Caustic "to settle and convey the same as a marriage portion" upon any woman he may think "worthy" (I, i). This "Hymen's priest" in search of the "worthy" comes round in Act V, ii.

Caust.           What say you to your visitor, my cousin, Lady Sorrel?  
                   She's virtuous.  
 Allsp.          I've my doubts.  
 Caust.          Oh fie! no, she's extremely correct, - correct even to  
                   appearances. Her good conduct defies suspicion.

Directly a loud "crash" is heard. Must be "an old blind tabby cat" carps Allspice. At this the "officer" who had arrived in connection with debts and victimizations, drags the "virtuous" Lady Sorrel almost fainting from the "hot house". She had been shut in there by Tangent, the young man she had been pursuing. Miss Sapless' "thirty thousand pounds" that Caustic had almost bestowed on Lady Sorrel thus falls to the lot of the "poor" Julia, whom she had scorned, for whom Tangent had suffered, and whom he is now to marry. Thus is another devotee of the gaming-table exposed.

2

In a much later play by the same author, the type dwindles down to Miss Raven, an "ill boding absurdity", "a walking shadow", whose

very shadow in the garden blights the roses and honeysuckles;  
 and if she pops her head into the dairy, the cream turns sour.

1. T. Morton, 1796.

2. T. Morton, A School for Crown Children, I, iii, 1827.

But it is all words. The author does not know what more to make the stock villains do. Except that in two scenes, he exhibits her feelings towards the man who has since married<sup>1</sup>, and against him her working upon his wife. Gone is the "society" atmosphere that had infused spirit and fire into the first character. The scorn with which he had recalled the dead maid to life and the satire with which he had settled scores with the living one in The Way to Get Married derived something from the collective worked-up spirit of most follow-dramatists against the "old maid". Any type of humour tacked on to her made the comedy "live". Nor was it incumbent to be engrossed with one type. An "aunt" for instance, since she was after all an "old maid" might show some of the characteristics of a lady of fashion or of the stock "intriguing" character. Vice-versa, a Susan Lizard with her learning, her age, her overweening self-confidence could very well have passed for an aunt as, so depicted, she was an exception rather than the rule. A singularly obnoxious aunt like Miss Mactab still was conventionally drawn,<sup>2</sup> and it was quite in common form for one such as she to inspire the riddle,

Pray, sir, do you know what are some men's antipathies?

with an equally inspired answer,

Yes; cats, rats, old maids, double-tripe, spiders,  
Cheshire cheese, and cork-cutters.

It was her vogue round about the eighteen hundreds that had enabled Morton to draw so much upon her in The Way to Get Married and indeed had made it possible for a contemporary to slide into a picaresque Spanish play an "old maid" burlesque. Any hack-writer could at least once traffic safely<sup>3</sup>, while the major drove a steady and profitable trade. She was a home-bred character through and through. That was indeed the reason why.

It occurs to one that had the immediate successors of the Restoration dramatists not been repressed by Collier and other hostile influences, comedy proper would have flourished as vigorously as journalism and thus the character of the "old maid" for example might have been more consistently and exhaustively treated, as in fact it was in eighteenth century periodicals. But by 1800, since the general treatment

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 1. E. Morris, The Secret, 1799.  
 2. G. Colman, The Poor Gentleman, 1801.  
 3. The Gallant Moriscoes; or Robbers of the Pyrenees, 1795.

treatment of the character was still as unsympathetic as <sup>it was</sup> in the Restoration years\* we find ~~spirit of intolerance that nevertheless exists now as it did a century ago~~ <sup>we find</sup> a portrait study such as Miss Liberal's in The School for Prejudice. <sup>Even now</sup> since the problem is a complicated one involving materialistic issues and family relationships, then not unforeseen by Steele in those circumstances. When however, Miss Liberal had been sacrificing her "tender years, passions, and inclinations" to raise her "cousin's consequences", she "was never pitied in her life". After "all my exertions do I live to be pitied" because of being an old maid? She does not want any such pity. But there is a tug-of-war over the two children. She is overbearing and temperamental because she knows the value of money, her only sustained interest in life. Therefore, she judges of everything by that norm. For the match she imposes on <sup>her</sup> the niece, a solution is sought between the victim and her maid, whereby the latter impersonates and the former runs away. <sup>Her</sup> The nephew plays a practical ghost-trick upon her when at the Jew's she is bargaining over the furniture supposed to have concealed treasure in it. ~~She is enraged at the deception.~~ <sup>She is enraged at the deception.</sup> Befooled, hence she is enraged. Old Liberal has it out with her over her "ill-natur'd whims" (IV,iv) once, but with patience tried <sup>out</sup> in the end, gives her a sound moral dose:

Lose sight of prejudice, cherish liberal opinions, endeavour to make others happy, and you cannot fail of being so yourself. 2

<sup>This is reminiscent of</sup> Upon the which Reynolds' had ~~partly worked his~~ Laughing-and-Weeping-Philosopher theme in Laugh When You Can.

The unmarried woman's history really moves in two complete cycles. The <sup>first</sup> one started with Wycherley and Otway in the Fidget-Squeamish pair, carried all the appurtenances of the extant social type. Still the same in the 1760's, it nonetheless, is rounding off about the year 1800. When Hardy, for instance, in The School for ~~For~~ Friends <sup>3</sup> sums Lady Courtland up as "an

1. T.J.Dibdin, 1801.
2. V,iv.
3. M.Chambers, 1805.

\* Accordingly-the revival of the "curse" in the same spirit, etc.,

- a)...if you are not married, and myself too, within a week; ay, an' to advantage; may I die an old maid, and be buried with my face downward! F.G.Waldron, Heigh Ho for a Husband, II,1794.
- b) I am sure she deserves to die the ugliest old maid that ever lived for slighting such an offer. F.Lathom, The Dash of the Day, The Fourth Act,1799.
- c) Dang it, you don't want to persuade me that you mean to die an old maid, I suppose?etc. H.J.Pye, A Prior Claim, II,1705.

Note the wearing-off effect after the first quarter of the 19th century,...and if Jenny Trinket is not Mrs.Major O'Simper, before day-light, may she die an old maid. Earl of Glengall, The Follies of Fashion, V,ii,1829. More so still later.

... but if I don't play it to-night, may I die an old maid? T.W.Robertson, Caste,III,1867.

old maid by her <sup>1</sup>squeamishness, we know exactly how, why and when the phrase came to be especially fitted to the type. And when Julia in The Gazette Extraordinary advocates good-humour, and says that speaking for herself (like Dryden's Florimel) she would not only up to a certain time be seen in society cheerful and gay, but "always", to a "blooming old" age, - we are bidden to observe her not altogether new yet amusing metaphor - "just such a wrinkled wizened phiz, as my Lady Fidget and she is but forty-seven" (I, i).

Such citations give some idea of the completion of one cycle since the characters concerned have now been relegated into the background. The type has been exhausted by the excessive development of the "mischievous" strain so as to sap the vitality of its other elements. In good humour or plain satire, the "old maid" thus has sustained sentimental comedy on surely meritorious lines.

#### 1. Grundyan Interlude.

The movement of the Second Cycle (later taken up for treatment) begins in the 1780's and ends in the 1890's with Albert and Gilbert.

But before studying it <sup>one</sup>we must describe the most notable creation marking the <sup>close of the</sup> First Cycle and recognise that the unmarried woman as so far viewed, both in shadow and in substance is a predecessor of Mrs. Grundy, - though posterity <sup>2</sup>pays its debt to this one character now proverbial in distortion. "What will Mrs. Grundy say?" "What will Mrs. Grundy think?" ding-dinging perpetually in a poor old man's head, shows how thoroughly venacious the woman has become to him and presumably to the nerves of the entire neighbourhood. Yet, she is one of the many reserve group of stage characters whose voice is heard and whose presence is felt but who never appear on the stage. Had she not belonged to a race or tribe, she could not have <sup>been</sup> conceived with such consummate skill and strength. Morton gave the voice a position in his play, and a dramatic force in communicating it through the clearly-cut dialogue of others. By giving a matronly touch to the name in addition, he succeeded in concealing effectively two of the unmarried types he was borrowing from. The first was she whose stern authority could not be countermanded since being above suspicion or reproach herself, she measured all by her own standard. In the average play, she would have ranked with the aunt

1. J.C. Holman, 1811.      2. T. Morton, Speed the Plough, 1800.



who invariably trumpets "advice and example", and if true to her forbears, is a "formal old maid" with a "starched expression", "an honourable picture of prudence"; in her bearing is "stiff as a ramrod", "stiff as a poker"; in the event of an amorous scene, conducting<sup>s</sup> herself with "due decorum", "the delicacy" of her sentiments forbidding "promulgation of the passions". The second type, smoothly decocted from the Dame Chat and prattling nurse of yore, would make it difficult for anyone to avoid her, since her self-imposed task is to make everyone's business her own. Again, easily recognisable in a play from her babbling-gabbling tongue, peeping-prying eye and perhaps pen-in-hand for scribbling down notes. But, behind the stage, both types together form the "old maids cabal".

Need ~~we~~<sup>one</sup> worry much which of the two went more predominantly into the composition of Mrs. Grundy? It is enough that either or both could provoke mixed feelings of inferiority and discomfort in their neighbours and as well could draw attention to themselves. For the first half of the century, were ~~we~~<sup>one</sup> only to collate with sources undefiled in journals, and for the second half to piece out abstractions from plays, which, alongside of the juries or cabals referred to, ~~we~~<sup>one</sup> could safely prove who in line of descent mainly prevented the social conscience (to the irritation of wrong-doers) from falling into any lapses, and who became a nightmare even to dear old innocent souls.

Well after it has attained its maturity, The Tatler<sup>1</sup> erects a "Court of Honour" to acclaim those to whom merit is due and to punish offenders. Enlisted among the judiciary powers is

an old maiden lady, that preserves some of the best blood in England.

And superseding wife and widow, for her exemplary conduct, "Mrs. Mary Pippe, an old maid" also is elected to this august body. By "the unanimous vote of the whole company" <sup>2</sup>lo and behold she is given a seat "at the upper end of the table." These are the chosen few. But about the rank and file that must have gone into the making of the old maid's "court,"

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1. No. 250.

\* Along with the individual "Mrs. Grundy" Morton permeates the play with, he fetches in also the tribe of "Miss Grundy's genteel as they think themselves", yet would not hesitate to "pull caps" for even the nobody "Henry". (Men being scarce for old maids presumably) E.i.

2. No. 262.

information from another paper<sup>1</sup> may be elicited.

they pass their whole time in the most laborious way of life in getting intelligence, running from place to place with new whispers, without reaping any benefit but the hopes of making others as unhappy as themselves ....

Still greater likelihood could there have been of experienced members of the "Scandal Club"<sup>2</sup> establishing their own separate organisation. For even here, "Miss Abigail Verjuice", "an old maid in her 53rd year" is the "president"; Martha Tittletattle assists in making known "the business" of scandal; while Miss Lucy Finical has the distinct credit of having

done much execution at Bath, Tunbridge, Scarborough, the Theatres, Ridottos, Operas and Assemblies.

To turn to the theatre, how well Lady Formal and Miss Prate are delineated in

<sup>3</sup>  
The Jealous Wife:

the Words come from her Ladyship, one by one, like Drops from a Still, while the other Tiresome Woman overwhelms Us with a Flood of Impertinence.

One does not see them. But when Lady Freelove goes to dispose of "these old Tabbies", "as nauseous as Ipecacuanha" as soon as she can, so as to attend to Lord Trinket's affair with her niece, an opportunity occurs for the hero to have his "Tete-a-Tete". In effect, thus dramatising the situation, the playwright does not allow them to escape one's memory; and on in the epilogue too, when he hooks them with

The gossip, prude, old maid, coquette, and trapes  
And parrots, foxes, magpies, wasps, and apes.

This team may be linked with the arch-talkers, "your misses of Thirty in Town"<sup>4</sup> who might otherwise go unnoticed. But what an important role the tribe plays again in the background may be gathered from a crucial situation in The Discovery<sup>5</sup>. Sir Harry and Lady

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1. The Spectator, No.272 (Note ref. to "convocation of aunts, old maids, discreet friends", Gray's Inn Journal, January 19, 1754.
  2. The Gentleman's Magazine, X.p.
  3. G.Colman, II, 1761.
  4. W.Whitehead, The School for Lovers, 1762.
  5. Mrs.F.Sheridan, II, I, 1763.

Flutter are on the brink of a separation when Lord Medway arrives to play the peacemaker with the carefully selected words,

Well, whatever you do, don't think of parting from him, for that would only be making mirth for all the spiteful old maids in town; who have already prophesied, that miss and master would quarrel before a month was at an end, and each run home crying to their several mama's.

The effect ~~was~~ immediate.

Do the malicious creatures say so! - Well, I'll disappoint them in that -

Translated into the spirit of tragedy, they might well have been the Furies or the Omniscient Power that in a collective spirit moves unseen among them. At any rate, the emotional course of the plays alters after the floating image of "old maid" has, with a certain persistence, been brought to mind.

<sup>One</sup> ~~He~~ may study her habits in another region, as described by Foote in his usual caustic manner:

Sir Chr. ...besides the Argus himself, she will be watched by no less than two brace of his sisters; sour as malicious, musty old maids as ever were soured by solitude, and the neglect of the world.

Rack. A guard not to be corrupted or cozened.

2

It is when Miss Ogle leaves her post, when she abandons her kith and kin and goes instead around in the company of a widow known for her gallivanting, that she catches the eye and provokes Sir George Touchwood to an ironic outburst:

Sir Geo. Why, where can a man select discreet protectress for his wife in the present state of society? Formerly, there were Distinctions amongst ye-every class of females had its particular Description; Grandmothers were pious, Aunts circumspect, Old Maids censorious - But now! Aunts, Grandmothers, Girls, and Maiden-Gentlewomen, are all the same creature - a Wrinkle more or less is the sole difference between ye.

Miss Ogle. That Maiden-Gentlemen have lost their Censoriousness is surely not in your catalogue of grievances!

Sir Geo. Indeed it is-and ranked amongst the grievances the most serious. Things went well, Madam, when the tongues of three or four Old Maids kept all the wives and Daughters of a Parish in Awe! They were the dragons that guarded the Hesperian Fruit; and I wonder they have not been obliged by Act of Parliament to resume their function.

1. The Maid of Bath, I, i, 1771.

2. Mrs. Cowley, The Belle's Stratagem, II, i, 1780.

+ Colman's pair is also "Musty old Prudes".

From the aforementioned classifications of womenkind, it emerges that eventually the 'insubstantial' body assumes such 'weight' of character that it is wondered why it does not subject a stray sheep (such as Miss Ogle) to interrogation and chastisement in order to bring it back within the fold. Notwithstanding, unmarried women are above the masses, and from among them some are raised on a pedestal. They are feared and dreaded by evil-doers, and are therefore a sore trial to tempers. Paradoxically though, the public would not have them come down to a commoner level, as if thereby the entire moral texture of society would be impaired. There can however be little danger of this, since the "spinsters" instinct to<sup>1</sup> censure and to judge, is far too deeply ingrained. Why else would Belcour for instance, wish to evade their decree?

I am a West Indian; and you must try me according to the Charter of my Colony, not by a jury of English spinsters.

The guard, it must be borne in mind, that cannot "be corrupted or cozened" cannot be accused if overbearingly severe. It has nothing to gain; the public cannot choose but go by it and accept its verdict as final. And it would be the most exceptional case to be qualified with the remark:

I really believe, that if he were to be tried by a jury of spinsters, they would not hesitate long in pronouncing him- Not guilty.

Indeed, Dashington the hero has a "mighty advocate" in Leonora, for he is carrying away a<sup>2</sup> victim immured against her will in a convent.

The reputation established early in the century by her selection among the panel of judges in The Court of Honour (The Tatler) is secure even after its close. Such is the faith reposed in it, that though a party concerned is not genuinely fear-stricken, to safe-guard its own interests, it accepts the general opinion. Thus the widow Mrs. Dacca, really not<sup>3</sup> interested in marrying an old man, alleges as an additional reason her dread of the judgment of this court.

I should certainly in such case be brought to a Court-Martial of Old Maids; who would cashier my character without mercy.

Attributable to this body is the summary power à-la-militaire, because there is also the

1. R. Cumberland, The West Indian, III, vii, 1771.
2. J.G. Holman, What a Blunder! II, iii, 1800.
3. Carol O'Caustic, The Laughable Lover, II, i, 1805.

graven image in the public mind of their clarity of vision that never can be clouded by any threatened invasion of emotions. The laws of reason are the only laws that exist in their frozen zones. Acting both from inner and outer compulsion they are thus the benefactors as also the beneficiaries at the cost of narrow interpretations of "happiness".

Holding further inquest over Mrs.Grundy, her area of jurisdiction could be covered by correlating such graphic accounts, since she, in her individual capacity, bears as awesome a presence and as pervading an influence as the sect. In philosophical abstraction of thought, she may well be the one in many and the many in one. How otherwise could the quintessence of the Grundyan disposition have been formed to have so made itself known? All those who busy themselves with making and creating news on the stage, contribute to the making and creating of Mrs.Grundy's character. For instance, Lady Rachel Mildew<sup>1</sup> in search of an actress for her rejected play, gets information from her milliner about the "contraband silks" that the "foreign minister" has brought. Upon "inquiry", she discovers "a country girl just eloped" with "an Irish manager"- the latter being no less than her niece's profligate husband impersonating the unscrupulous party (I,iii). Miss Juvenelle<sup>2</sup> carries journals that "gall" others for the news she has published and is publicising (III,i); Miss Penelope Zodiac<sup>3</sup> descends from the clouds "to join in the invectives...with all that benignity for which old maids are so remarkably famous". She has "talent", "had always a head for finding out secrets" (I,i); Miss Chatterall<sup>4</sup> "to the printer's with a letter" "can't stop a moment", for "tomorrow's newspaper" must serve a new story up "at every fashionable breakfast-table in town" (III,ii); although Miss Gloomly<sup>5</sup> has already proved that "out of ten scandalous stories, nine are sure to be invented by old maids" (III).

Consider also those who perpetuate the requisite newsy atmosphere, by the display of their especial gifts of elocution. The "sober, stay'd prudent.....maiden aunts, with their weather-beaten remnants of antiquity"<sup>6</sup> could perhaps be left aside to their "good natured reflections"<sup>7</sup> and for background effects. Instead, note may be taken of a Miss Eston,<sup>8</sup> whose

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1. H.Kelly, The School for Wives.

3. M.P.Andrews, The Reparation, 1784

5. F.Reynolds, Laugh When You Can, 1798.

7. M.P.Andrews, Dissipation, 1781.

2. Mrs. Cowley, More Ways Than One, 1783.

4. M.G.Lewis, The East Indian, 1799.

6. W.Kenrick, The Widow's Wife, 1767.

8. J.Baillie, The Trial, 1798.

voice precedes her appearance and remains on the stage after she has crossed it (I,i). She takes words out of Royston's mouth again and again in Act III,1. Exasperated, he somehow manages to have his say since he cannot very well stop her mouth with a "peck of chaff". An entertaining situation develops as he persists with his subject and she with hers. Subsequently when she comes, others leave, so that the authoress has to do without her in the next two Acts. What is Mrs. Clacken's function in Knave or Not?<sup>1</sup> but to blab all about Aurelia and her fortune to Monroe? When she has done this she abruptly marches out of the play (I,vi). Step a little beyond 1800, and Mrs. Fidget is complained against by Timothy Quaint

.... when I came to live in this house, I never opened my lips for the first quarter- The thing was impossible; your eternal chatter almost starved as well as dumb-founded me: I was compelled to eat my victuals at midnight; for, until you were as fast as a church, I was forced to be as silent as a tombstone.

He continues with his agony, but this time to provoke her.

I am an odd-fish-a thorn-back, I suppose, or I shouldn't be able to deal with an old maid.

Mrs.F. Old maid!-Slander!-impudence!-puppy! Have I liv'd to this time of day to be call'd old maid at last?--I never, till now, seriously wish'd to be married.

Even if Mrs. Fidget's "serious wish" were to be granted, there would still remain plenty of unmarried women to be absorbed into an organization.

<sup>One</sup> ~~She~~ may easily imagine how it would work. Away from the chatter and clatter on the stage, is the complicated network of the general intelligence branch. Speaking of individual members, who knows but that "the old maid constant...at her parish church", or "an old maid in despair" perhaps, or she who perchance may be left "to die an old maid", or yet again as she who may be content to live "a solitary spinster" (I,i) may not be as alert an agent of information as the chatterbox we are acquainted with? She believes "everything heard" and repeats it "as a matter of fact". Periodically, there would, in all probability, be a general session to which would drift the "gossiping old maids from

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1. T.Holcroft, 1798. 2. A.Cherry, The Soldier's Daughter, I,ii,1804.  
 3. Mrs. E. Griffith, The School for Rakes, 1769. 4. S.Foote, The Cozenars, 1774.  
 5. Mrs.E.Griffith, The Times, 1779. 6. J.G. Holman, The Gazette Extraordinary, 1811.  
 7. R. Cumberland, The Fashionable Lover, 1772.

quadrille-tables by special invitation "to a snug dish of tea and a little scandal" and to join in a refrain- "Life still has one comfort for maids of three score"<sup>1</sup> (II,iv). Like<sup>2</sup> Modish after the fatigue of talking scandal, and flattering old maids", they would all "moisten their palates". Besides gossip and scandal, politely left by the public to the "old maid's cabal",<sup>3</sup> are "drabs" as "duty" "decency" (IV,viii) and such queer, prudish, miscellaneous matters. And so it may very easily be conjectured how and why juries and courts are formed, and how and why reputations come to be cashiered. Or if interest is keener, to cite a particular instance, clues may be found in regard to the secret service rendered by Sarah Snaggletooth and Grace Grogblossom since only Tabitha Fry<sup>4</sup> comes forward to give untold relief to a father about his missing daughter. Together and between them, however, it is evident that they have to do the job. Some have to do the running, some have to do the planning and some have to be at the execution and prosecution work. No doubt, functionary powers would be assigned to each at their "cabals". Thereafter, each old maid is to be at her task,-the "So pure and so prim maiden of sixty"<sup>5</sup> not spared.<sup>6</sup> But would the Mrs. Grundy of Morton's imagination be rotund in shape? If so, to all appearances the genealogical tree falls asunder.

Were all assumptions rejected, one fact would still be indisputable - that of Mrs. Grundy's continuing existence as an irksome character. Say then, should she be referred to as a presence or but a wandering voice? Clear and deep is heard a note in a Prologue..<sup>6</sup>

..... the muses now  
 Few liberties to naughty men allow;  
 But like old maids on earth, resolv'd to vex,

Deeper still in Ways and Means,<sup>7</sup> "gabbling girls, ugly old maids, and all that"(III), and deeper, with Lady Flippant fastening on a Miss Squintum "with one eye worn out in searching for defects in beauty, and the other on the decline" when a marriage is in the air.<sup>8</sup>

....Then to have the tribe of antiquated maidens, disgusted wives and disappointed widows railing at your prudence, yet, envying your situation.

1. M.P.Andrews, The Mysteries of the Castle,1795.

3. T.Holcroft, Knave or Not?,1798.

5. M.P.Andrews, The Mysteries of the Castle.

7. G.Colman, or. A Trip to Dover,1788.

8. Macnally, Fashionable Levities, IV,11,1785.

2. F.Lathom,The Dash of the Gay,1799.

4. W.Roberts, The Fugitive,1791

6. G.Colman's to Miss G.Lee's A Chapter of Accidents,1780

<sup>1</sup>  
Nominal is deflated over the lost chance of an elopement whereby he might well have earned himself a place among the most colourful of romantic heroes.

there will be no pursuit, no advertisement-or what's best of all, carried to the Fleet or King's Bench, midst the shouts of old maids.

When all is said and done for the old maids' service in watchfulness over individual and social morale, the eighteenth century head needs must bend down in reverence, rather than toss up in annoyance.

2

Alas but with what wishful thinking does the Gothic tale go round in the year 1811, about the hair-raising deeds of a "Wood Daemon"-devouring babes in their cradles and leaving mothers weeping and wailing behind

but in the neighbouring provinces she's (the Spirit) not so dainty; there all is fish that comes to her net; and she has such an amazing appetite, that I warrant, she'd swallow even an old maid.

This takes one aback. One should have thought that (as already seen) Steele had in the fragmentary play The Gentleman invented "St. George" to fight the "Dragon" who could also go mandise on such a dish. The old maid had been saved, and she in turn had saved the life and character of many. But alas, unceasing labour had put her on the decline, till by the time of Mrs. Grundy a voice was all that remained of her. And wasn't it a Voice, by Jove!

The Problem of the Age.

Parting from Mrs. Grundy, but lingering awhile over the same section, one observes that the plural number or alternatively, the repetitive usage of collective nouns as "court", "jury", "cabal" with regard to the unmarried woman in the eighteenth century is reminiscent of the numerical issue of the widows raised in the last chapter. Corresponding likewise, is the fortune-hunter business. Even if it is maintained that the Restoration dramatists were probably guilty of gross exaggeration, the same can hardly be said of the writers of periodical literature in the eighteenth century, who, more often than not, refer to "old maids" as a group or members of a body. Together with the dramatists they support one's contention that if not exactly alarming, the situation of the unmarried woman was

far from desirable. It would appear to be even worse, were note taken of the bitter-sweet

1. F. Reynolds, Notoriety, V, 1791.

2. M.G. Lewis, One O'Clock! or, The Knight and the Wood Daemon, I, ii.



Susannah Frosts and Dorothy Singles, of the humorous irony over "a lady in the virgin bloom of sixty-three", or of the moralism behind "a lethargic virgin of seventy-six". Concentration merely on passages dealing with figures upwards of one renders it certain that the range of the marriage problem is fairly widely treated. And complaints against and pleas on behalf of "the reproachful denomination of old maids" <sup>4 only accentuate the point.</sup> ~~hardly but it only in addition.~~

One of the numbers of The Tatler reads as follows,

...There is no less than an absolute necessity, that some provisions be made to take off the dead stock of women in city, town and country. Let there happen but the least disorder in the streets and in an instant you see the inequality of the numbers of males and females... This over-stock of beauty, for which there are so few bidders calls for an immediate supply of Lovers and Husbands;

If there is a veiled allusion to the trait of "curiosity", a stock point of joke over a woman, a certain quantity may be subtracted from the "stock" accumulated. Notwithstanding, the public mind is being opened towards a vital issue. A personal note of concern added in another paper <sup>6</sup> reveals that the matter is being pursued with more seriousness.

And what is to become of our poor Daughters: for those have their Passions and Appetites as well as our Sons. Is there chastity to be rewarded with the comfortable Appellation of Old Maids? Are they to pine away their lives in a useless, to most of them I will say a disagreeable State, without any Opportunity of vesting their good Qualities in the two Principal Female Characters, that of Wife, and that of Mother.

One comedy <sup>7</sup> ~~tackles the matter~~ <sup>double</sup> ~~walks at a distance~~ to a ~~double~~ purpose,

A Fox o' these Universities, say I!—these young Collegians follow their Studies so closely—there's not a Wench to be had for 'em—.... And what would vex a good Christian's Heart, the Maids at Home here are above Fifty.

Slipping past a few decades, <sup>the same question</sup> ~~it~~ is wrapped up with loud laughter, nonetheless not light, for there is a reference to "five fallow damsels" besides the character of an old maid in the play.

1. (The Spectator, No. 217 (Susannah Frost); The Tatler, No. 210; (The Covent Garden Journal, No. 7)
2. O. Goldsmith, Cit. W., LXXX, viii.
3. The Idler, No. 53 (Cf., Dr. Johnson's remarks on "antiquated virginity" The Rambler No. 39 and his advice to Unmarried Ladies, Ibid., No. 97.)
4. Universal Spectator, No. 465 (Refer also to the "Convocation of Old Maids, G. Mag. VII, 1737, p. 9)
5. The Tatler, No. 195.
6. The Covent Garden Journal, No. 57.
7. E. Moore, Gil Blas, III, 1751.
8. Mrs. Cowley, The Belle's Stratagem, I. i, 1780; (Note an appeal to the "old Bachelor" in The Tatler, No. 261.)

"News! More than in three Gazettes. The Mamas, with female families, are going to petition for a Bill- to compel Bachelors to marry!." <sup>Even</sup> ~~As for~~ the declared Shadwell of his age, Reynolds, who leans long upon the character in his comedies, is ~~also~~ compelled to dole out a grain of the truth in an Epilogue, ~~when he does not.~~

"Old Maids, and young ones, all are in the straw."

Hayley would not be reck oned chief in the dramatic line from any angle, but important as the first to go in for research on the Tribe at a universal level, his homely advice to parents and guardians has therefore to be considered.

He who wants to dispose of a tender young Maid,  
May take a good hint from the gingerbread trade:  
For egad an old maid is like old harden'd paste,  
You may cry it about, but nobody will taste.

2

Which, in fact, is more than a prelude to his Essay on Old Maids.

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1. F. Reynolds, Speculation, 1795.
  2. W. Hayley, The Happy Prescription, III, i, 1784.

The Second Cycle  
1780's - 1890's

If not precisely under his banner, but with Hayley as a strong champion of the unmarried woman's cause, the second cycle of her stage history gets going in the 'eighties. What primarily has to be done about her, the writers consider, is to rid her of the stock garb: that is to say, the "old maid" is to be an individual and not a bag of tricks; the "aunt" is not to suffer abrasions and abuses simply because she is an old maid; and neither is to have unsolved emotional problems, at least not the perverted reflexes as the dramatist is fond of vexing her with. But since most of the dramatic talent, as has been seen before, is propelled in the reverse direction, this movement is much too slow, and left mainly to a few adherents to a principle, each seeking to use the stage as a vehicle. Mrs. Cowley's loss notwithstanding, women dramatists have distinct voices among these few. Not that there is blind support raised in opposition to the camp in existence: it is mainly to give a new approach to the subject, which later blended with Victorianism, put pressure on the earlier forces if not quite to decamp, at least to restrain their tone.

The authoress of The Miniature Picture<sup>1</sup> starts however, from scratch. Hurling aside such weighty barriers as authority, education, religion, family honour and so forth-~~which~~ which had stood in the way of personal relations and had prevented possibility of closer ties, she reduces the aunt, Mrs. Arabella Loveless, that the simple, innocent soul, she reveals herself to be when in speaking about her independent, coquettish niece she declares in all humility,

I do not know which delights me most, her philosophy or vivacity; my ignorance proceeds not from my not searching into my own heart, but that no one has taken the trouble of asking if I had one or not; for you know, Miss Camply, I am an old maid. (Laughing)  
Eliza. (taking her hand) And so would I be one too, if at your time of life that title would sit upon me with so much good-humour and dignity- 2

As old and young friends, Mrs. Loveless and Miss Camply between them contrive a plot which is instrumental in the settling of Miss Loveless's affections. But when, in the meantime, the aunt speaks to the niece in a friendly manner, holding up as an example, Eliza Camply not herself,

1. E. Craven, 1780.

2. I.i.

x. e.g. From the two-act play The Contract (Franklin, 1776)-which may well have been the basis of the full-length Cross-Partners (1792) mentioned later, the feminine hand of the latter play eradicates even the caption "old maid" in the dramatic personae.

but this young girl of the niece's age group, the very forward niece scoffs:

Thank heaven, my dear aunt, your wish will never come to pass...a formal...prim.....demure....Lord, aunt, I dare say, poor soul, she will die an old maid.

Mrs. Arabella. If she does, then it will be from choice, and not from necessity.

1

Distinctions are made: one type of the unmarried woman is on view, another is suggested. Neither however, strikes one as disagreeable, because the authoress is light in tone. Between the aunt of this play and of the one following, whose good offices extend beyond the blood relation,--the inception of the idea of the Universal Aunt may well be considered as laid! It might have been à fait accompli, had the stigma of "old maidism" not demanded the dramatist's first attention.

2

For, although the same free and easy atmosphere prevails in The Fugitive, insofar as the woman's world goes, Rachel Cleveland the aunt, has too minor a role to show her personal relations with her niece. Greater emphasis is laid on her assistance to the young fugitive, Julia Wingrove. Because the latter is in disguise, the foolish brother, Admiral Cleveland, suspects the usual casualty when Rachel insists on a private interview:

Aye, Rachel, now you have flung aside propriety....Particularly your reasoning sort of sensible, elderly gentlewomen...for when they have passed the equinox of life, they know they fall with a trade wind, and the devil can't stop them, till they are snug in a harbour with a yoke fellow, after a tedious passage of difficult virginity.

3

This blustering old man ~~is~~ <sup>thus</sup> on tenterhooks, is made the butt of laughter. He is delineated as a contrast to the placid sister, particularly at the end when he wades in streaming with perspiration over the "Canterbury tale" of her being run away with, but seeing her sedate and serene, stammers in contradiction of himself, that he for one did not give "much credit to the story.

because thinks I, an old maid, whatever be the value of her lading, is a sort of neutral vessel, that all nations, to do them justice hold very sacred from attack.

4

In this one and only play that the author sets his hand to, the obvious intention is the exculpation of a much wronged person. In treating a similar subject, another dramatist goes to the extreme of declaring the social

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1. II.
  2. J. Richardson, 1792.
  3. V,1.
  4. V,v.
  5. H.S. Conway, False Appearances, V,1788.

right of a woman to maintain her independent status. And the play closes with the significant lines:

You're charming as you are, we must agree,  
And to be happy too<sup>1</sup> be always free.

Little encouragement however, as is not unexpected, is extended in this direction. Emphasis rather is based on the supposition that freedom is the cause of woman's instability. Clear from the manner adopted in The Miniature Picture to fix Miss Loveless, less marked in The Fugitive, but, going back a little in time in The Coquette, the danger of the most innocent levities is sufficiently stressed. Even a cursory glance through such a book as Social Caricature in the Eighteenth Century,<sup>2</sup> supports the apprehensions of such authors. In "The Female Coterie"<sup>3</sup> of the year 1770, a concentric picture of flirting, drinking, and playing of cards with high stakes answers well to Mrs. Inchbald's<sup>4</sup> characterization of Miss Dorrillon in Wives as They Were and Maids as They Are. The moral, "A maid of the present day, shall become a wife like those of former times" (V,iv) is her more humane way of interpreting what Colman, Reynolds and Norton condemn much more harshly. It would not be wrong to assume, therefore, that the strengthening of opinion against the unattached woman in society may have been due to the notoriety of the set of ladies who, "during the last ten or fifteen years of the century were continually held up to ridicule or reprobation".<sup>5</sup>

It is possible therefore, to deduce the picture of the aunt as a settled being with proclivities towards the domestic type easily envisaged during Victorian times. Each impresses her own way in The Miniature Picture and The Fugitive, but the thematic interest in her increases in Cross Partners.<sup>6</sup> Thus Lady Diana for instance, has<sup>had</sup> for twenty years had to bear the twin-tyranny of a father, and an aunt: the former by force of the "marriage contract", has made her wait till the fiancé returns with a fortune; and for an intolerable length of time, she has had "an everlasting Aunt, who lov'd me too well to let me marry and be happy while she liv'd". (I).

On the awaited person's arrival, the scene wherein the old man and the old maid wheedle each other into tearing up the contract, adds a note of thought to the double cross-partnering situation, created by the niece and her suitor-which otherwise would have been a hackneyed, farcical affair. The "ignorance" factor pointed out by woman-

1. R. Hitchcock, or The Mistakes of the Heart, 1776. 5. G. Paston, Social Caricature in the Eighteenth Century, p.27.  
2. G. Paston. 3. Plate XVII. 4. 1797.

dramatists of this group is touched on later in the 1890's when, in the plays written by the opposite sex it becomes a minor, although a stock debatable issue. Having ~~for instance~~ witnessed the aunt's confession in The Miniature Picture, Mrs. Mutter complains here to the same end, more or less.

Mutter. ...my young lady uses me for the world as if I was her old maiden aunt.

Herbert. How's that pray?

Mutter. She never tells me any of her secrets, Sir. 1

One would be quite inclined to believe, conjectured as it is already by critics, that the "Lady" who wrote Cross Partners was none other than Mrs. Inchbald, since she launches the subject of the unmarried woman more for our reflection than for theatrical purpose. This is well illustrated in Every One has his Fault.<sup>2</sup> A single small scene (I,ii.) shows the restive, fretting Miss Spinster who

never has had a husband to soothe and soften her disposition; and there should be some allowance made for that.

Transformed with a touch effected by Harmony, in speaking well of the old bachelor to her, and of the spinster to him, in Act V,iii she has but a silent role to play. Solus comes first to excitedly announce that he has got married and then leads her<sup>in</sup> to the surprise of her cousin who in fact would most gladly have given away the bride. But that is beside the writer's purpose. Between the acts she prefers to find time to suggest a revolutionary creed;

men, only, have the right of choice in marriage. Were women permitted theirs, we should have handsome beggars allied to our noblest families, and no such object in our whole island as an old maid. 3

It is a grave omission in view of the above<sup>x</sup> to sum up Every One has his Fault as an exhibition of "a series of ill-assorted or ill-judged marriages,"<sup>4</sup> when the "old maid" is exonerated under the title "Miss Spinster" even before the remedy of her becoming Mrs. Solus is sought out.

However, in her last play, To Marry, or Not to Marry,<sup>5</sup> is to be found Mrs. Inchbald's maturest deliberations over the proposition discovered.

1. Cross Partners, II,i. 2. 1793. 3. III,1. 4. The Cambridge History of English Literature, XI, p.274

x. M.P. Andrews in writing the epilogue makes the usual insinuations:

"Let me be wedded to a handsome youth",

Cries old Miss Mumblelows, without a tooth,

"These worn-out Beaux, because they've heavy purses,

"Expect us, spinsters, to become their nurses.

5. 1805.

4. fitter for Murphy's The Old Maid than for Every One has his Fault.

With her characteristic kindness, she first presents a benign, protective woman to whom Hester flees with the eulogy, "I had rather stay with you by half, and <sup>be</sup> your companion or servant.--I'll read- I'll sing- I'll work- I'll do everything to please you." (I,i.) An Mrs. Mortland deems it a "privilege" to be "old" if it means any "service to the young one" (II,ii.). But the second realistic touch is given in the delineation of the elderly sister as one who lives in awe of her younger brother, "richer and wiser" (I,i.) than she is, to whom she is no more than a house-keeper; hence powerless to take any initiative under his roof until he gives sanction. Thirdly, it is the cross bachelor who needs toning down by marriage. Not the least important is the consideration of the "difference" in "sentiment" between a single man of certain age, and a single woman of certain age. The one does not marry, because he won't- the other because she can't."-(I,ii.). Finally, a point is emphasised which apparently counts against the male dramatist, that, married or unmarried, there is that something as the dignity of age which may be spared a woman since it is not so very necessary to man. Shown already in Cross Partners, in the play under review Willowear comes to Mrs. Mortland with an offer after he has been "slighted" by the rest of her sex, quite certain of his reception here but is completely taken aback by the response:

Mrs. M. If you could, Mr. Willowear, marry such a woman,  
I give you in reply that at my time  
of life, I feel for every man the same disregard,  
the men all felt for me in my younger days. 1

A refusal from a "maiden lady of fifty" is almost unheard of so far in comedy. Miss Spinster of the previous play was evidently about a couple of decades younger, hence the difference of treatment. The women of all these plays are in reality, individuals and not types brought in for the stock burlesque or farcical element. Any move towards them is not merely exploratory but is also with human understanding.

Applicable to dramatists of this righteous school is a remark recorded about Joanna Baillie to whom we now turn. An anonymous publication of this authoress's first set of plays had set the entire literary world guessing who it could be. The enraptured Miss Berry was sure it was a "woman merely",

because both the heroines are Dames Passées, and a man has no notion of mentioning a female after she is five and twenty. 2

Which was no mere divination! The average playwright presented her after a certain pattern

1. IV, ii.

2. M.S. Carhart, The Life and Work of Joanna Baillie, (Yale), pp. 14-15.

but made little effort to study the character more deeply and still less<sup>to</sup> consider her dispassionately. In fact, he often thought of the "gossiping" old maid, but equally often of "cork-cutters",<sup>"curiosity,"</sup> and "cats".<sup>1</sup> Joanna Baillie in The Trial turns Miss Eston's tongue into the eternal clatter of a vacant heart and mind. The flitting interests of the ageing, yet not aged woman in society she attributes to her and makes her simply boring company. And she succeeds in doing so. To talk, however, does not imply malice and scandal all in all. Here Miss Eston is worlds removed from someone like Miss Chatterall in M.G. Lewis's The East Indian.

<sup>2</sup>  
In The Second Marriage, is the most daring of her experiments about which there should be no two opinions. Lady Sarah, marking the advent of a new character, proves that the right age for marriage is when one is malleable. If Seabright chooses this "gherkin", it is out of the hope that he will use her rank as a stepping-stone to riches. But, "narrow minded" by nature, and with that disposition strengthened by circumstance—having been left too long in her single state "to support high rank upon a very small income" (III,ii.)—she no sooner steps into the Seabright home than light, life and laughter are snuffed out. And with her larders and wardrobes emptying of their "riotous plenty, she makes it too cold for children to grow at all. There is much less chance of Seabright thriving if time for his leisure and friends, also under her control, is to be used solely for profitable ends. When at last he is ruined, and Allcrest comes to reclaim his sister, with what joy the news is received by both youngest child and oldest servant as well as by the friend who together with them, has just ended the play of a "devil's trick" on her to give her sound warning to reform. Seabright himself exclaims,

Take her in heaven's name! I received her not half so willingly  
as I resign her to you again.

<sup>3</sup>

The final parting could not be more softened than it is, by showing the heroine relenting towards the youngest child, not without the realization nevertheless, that separation is the only solution.

This is obviously a much more comprehensive survey than that presented through Mrs. Bijou's characterization in The Two Connoisseurs.<sup>4</sup> This "little, fat, ancient, and well behaved maiden" [that was] is unconvincing. From "the stiff ramrod" comedic type, Hayley has changed her physiognomy which in point of fact, would have been more appropriate to



her character, for she had made her husband's "benevolence" shrink since marriage ("puff" it up" instead "his vanity into a giant", I.). She is merely one who practises false economy, which incidentally, is a trait better developed in Miss Prudentia Strawberry in The Climbing Boy.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, it cannot fail to be seen that she degenerates into a type despite the new interest she arouses. How much she may spend on showing-off as a "lady" since her brother has been elected to Parliament, is not to be calculated. One mean advantage she takes of his position is "getting letters franked without having to pay for the postage. What absorbs us even more is the introduction through her of a social idea, very like the one with which we are familiar in Galsworthy's The Silver Box. The function here, however, of Miss Strawberry's suspicion of a poor "idiotic" Wretch as the only possible thief, is really to broaden the contrast between her and her brother--all kindness and charity personified with his untutored prose at command for a quip -

Anything to relieve my mind from that confounded maiden speech- I wish I could procure a second hand maiden speech, or an old-maiden speech, one that some other country member had left off, and was not much the worse for wear.

2

The roughly cast Mrs. Bijou and the better recognised Miss Strawberry are typical bundles of inconsistencies, yet not complex in any way. Much more straightforwardly constructed are the two striking "old maid" characteristics of "stinginess" and "suspiciousness in the widow camouflaging as an unmarried woman in Look before you Leap.<sup>3</sup> Closest in application to Lady Sarah however, comes Emerson's remark in Temper;<sup>4</sup> "It is incredible upon what small incomes single women contrive to make a show". But again, it is the country towards which his gaze is focussed, not towards the town, nor towards a representative combination of the two. To Joanna Baillie, therefore, must go the credit for finding facts intelligently, and for conceiving intellectually a problem play with a Dame Passé for considered disapproval, as differentiated from common prejudicial attitudes towards her.

Apart from evidence of the seriousness of her aim in varying her experiments, the writer's own voice is heard through Lady Goodbody in The Country Inn,<sup>5</sup> initially after the routine manner, but with reasons added later. The match she proposes is unsuitable but a niece who has passed her twenty-sixth year "should look pretty sharply about her", because she is a "single maiden" (not "old maid"), and "a married woman is always more respectable" (4).

1.R.B. Peake, 2. III, iv. 3.G.W. Lowell, or, Wooings and Weddings, 1846, 4.R. Bell, 1847, 5.IV, i.

With the same intention although with a new tinge of humour, she introduces the "type" aunt, and, not through a stage scene, nor through a flash-back ridiculing a woman of dignified age, but in this case by indirect means. Hannah (a niece), urged on to an elopement, quotes tragic precedence for her superstitious refusal,

No, no! old aunt Gertrude went over the window to be married,  
and she fell and broke her leg, and never was married at all. 1

There is an escapade in the play but it is no matter for rumour or scandal. "She is of age", so that the sooner she is settled the greater will be the relief. A similar view reflected is in The Match.<sup>2</sup> Laetitia Vane is an aunt, obsessed with a sense of care and duty, unnecessarily ageing in her single state and reducing all her effort to naught because of her vacillating nature. She cannot make up her mind about the education of her nephew which at all costs must be first rate; she cannot decide about the house she is to buy; and, worse than all, she cannot bring herself to answer Sir Cameron's question. With comical inversion, the niece has to play the elder's part:

It is for my interest if it be for yours; and let me put this hand,  
which has always been kind to me, into a stronger hand, that will  
bear the rule over it in kindness. 3

And the aunt "will endeavour to reform" to "make a good beginning" after this!

Whereas the majority concerned with this feminist movement establish the case, either that the "old maid" is not sour and ill-intentioned (the proof being in the manner she befriends the young), or that she is not to be<sup>the</sup> drastically punished stock character in comedy, Joanna Baillie files the suit of the "single" maiden lady.<sup>x</sup> Together however, in their claim for respectability, these dramatists, by fitting themes to character, could not more opportunely have strengthened the position. It was, of course, sheer accident and fortunately so, that they were not there as early as the Colman-Murphy group. Then there would have been a lesser chance of continuity straight into the Victorian era.

Besides, the force of the opposition would not have been so keenly felt as to surcharge

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1. IV,1. 2. 1836. 3. III,iii. 4.

x. Cf; The Mirror "Old Maids of Bedford", Vol XXV, 1835.

"The good town of Belford swarmed, of course, with single ladies- especially with single ladies of that despised denomination which is commonly known by the title of old maids....

a large portion of the population consisted of single ladies, that it might almost have been called a maiden town", etc., etc.

periodical and prose literature with sickly sentiment which, perhaps, demanded re-orientation of thought among dramatists. Or, shall we say that <sup>h</sup>were the latter failed, the journalist built up the breach?

If the opposition aimlessly pushed into a play "superannuated aunts" "stiff as pokers, and cold as claret", <sup>1</sup>would not attribution have been annulled by a passage such as the following from the pen of an eminent critic and essayist:

an Old Maid is an object of general ridicule; and is there not injustice and even cruelty in this? Do people speak of curiosity, of prudery, of scandal, or of ill-temper, they speak of them as the common attributes of an Old Maid. From my own experience I have not found that these ill-qualities are more common to Old Maids than to others; nay, ~~one~~ of the most amiable women I know is an Old Maid <sup>x</sup> .....? 2

Or again, would not the obiter dictum "Rosebud Truelove, a spinster of three score" <sup>3</sup>dying of "affection of the heart" find expansive equivalents as in "My Aunt Honour", 4

for ten years the reigning beauty of her native village....  
.....she was by turns our nurse, preceptress and play-fellow. Our love, our duty, our respect, were all lavished on her; she was our kind aunt, our dear aunt, our good aunt.....? 6

Or in her counterpart "My Aunt Sophia" ? Or yet again, in the epistle on the "very lovely woman" who at the age of sixty five 5

was a model of happy existence....as she had no husband to humour (!) nor children to engross her care, she had adopted the unfortunate and the distressed....,

as the Dames PASSES in The Miniature Picture, The Fugitive, To Marry or Not to Marry, besides the good women in Cross Partners, or The Match in the world of comedy? Apart from all this, half-a-century already having passed since Hayley wrote his Essay, a sort of "Ready Reckoner" on their "varieties, characters, and conditions" is published <sup>7</sup>in 1835 as a symbol of renewed scientific study prior to any such training imparted to the public mind.

Returning to the legitimate fields, there are dramatists who while <sup>in</sup>all sincerity falling into line with women writers, as greatly overdo their role as stalwart defenders as those who fill the columns in contemporary periodicals. The discernable reason is that

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| 1. T.E. Hook, <u>Exchange no Robbery</u> , 1820.   | 5. Ibid, Vol.VI, 1834.                  |
| 2. C.Lamb, "Old Maids", <u>The Indicator</u> , Feb.21, 1821.   | 6. <u>The Parterre</u> , Vol III, 1835. |
| 3. <u>The Usurer; or. The Departed not Defunct</u> , IV, iii, 1833.  |   |
| 4. <u>The Ladies Cabinet</u> , Vol.V, 1834.  |   |
| 7. <u>Old Maids</u> . (Pamphlet). See E. Carrington's <u>Confessions of an Old Maid</u> (1828) which at length goes into the types of existing, and probable, in unmarried as well as in married life. |   |
| x. Though Butler on Ainger's <u>Life of Charles Lamb</u> remarks that Lamb was somewhat of an old maid himself!  |   |

there is on the one hand lack of vision or inspired thought, and on the other, that the desire for theatrical effect supersedes all else. Consequently, what tall tales they make us swallow! Examine the two Knowles! One reading of their plays is heavy enough. Instead of a second attempt, how gladly would we make profound obeisance to their efforts in support of a difficult cause. Of The Maid of Mariendorpt for example<sup>1</sup> the over-stretched theme may be read thus; if a Christian fellow-feeling for the Jew can arise, why not for the old maid? Other hurdles are then comparatively easy to override. If Hans belongs to the servant class, no matter; if Esther is ten years older than this boy, no matter again: She can teach him "to fetch kisses" and so make a "man" of him. Thus the mockery of the December-May scenes in the past, or the "class" problem that from Robertson's day persisted even throughout Galsworthy's, are points neither examined nor elaborated, since a stroke-of-the-pen solution is so much easier.

Mad. Ross. I have always set you down for an old maid.  
Esther. An old maid!  
Thank heaven I'm only five-and-thirty yet.  
Old maid indeed, and only thirty-five!  
I yet may live to be a grandmother!

2

And, because of the author's over-enthusiasm, so she will! The woman artist had been considering how far she could reasonably go with the maid who ~~was~~ on the wrong side of five-and-twenty, and she had found her a "fretting" difficult person to deal with after that age. Esther, however, laughs not hysterically but with humorous confidence, and that even over the most tantalising question that ever concerned woman! Barrie's rendering of it (considered in the next chapter) would make perceptible the difference between fine art and the crude. Knowles, however, in his next play,  
<sup>3</sup>  
Old Maids, introduces two probable types represented by Lady Anne and Lady Blanche—the one glorying in her single state, repelling men, and the other suffering them "to plague them". According to the latter, Lady Anne is "an old maid by anticipation!"  
"Oh, how I dote upon a staunch old maid!",<sup>x</sup> "She stands up for liberty". Men have

1. J.S. Knowles, 1838. 2. II, i. 3. 1841. 4. IV, iv.

x. The author's "roundabout" in this play, bears a striking parallel to the method of "Four Old Maids", The Mirror, Vol. XVIII, 1831.

I love an old maid! - I do not speak of an individual but of the species....

....An old maid is not merely an antiquarian, she is an antiquity....

She inhabits a little eternity of her own, she is Miss from the beginning of the chapter to the end. I do not like to hear her called Mistress....for that looks and sounds like resignation of despair....I do not know whether marriages are

far too many "rights", she goes on to say:

Ours are the rights want champions! We should be lost  
without old maids,....

1

Each is brought to countenance love the romantic way. Lady Blanche, behind a literal mask, Lady Anne wearing the metaphorical one in undertaking to train a man for her co-mate.

Leave an old maid  
Alone to make a man, reforming him  
After the fashion likes her.

2

The enigma arises when preparing for the happy ending. "How shall we answer old maids for this?" (V,1.). Eventually, <sup>from both</sup> comes the moral: they would still be old maids were it not for the men who "saved" them; and (but?) if others fail to secure a mate they must "endure" their position with a "good grace". This, however, does not prevent them from talking <sup>interminably</sup> about "wedlock's chains" being the more desirable finale. J.S. Knowles seems to condense the sprawling ideas in <sup>the</sup> ~~his~~ summarising sentence: "Speak well" of the old maid. Only be sure you don't become one yourself".

3

A more lenient view has to be taken of The Maiden Aunt since this author-turned-dramatist shows exactly how much he feels for her. He compensates her for the disparagement at the hands of others, by exalting her. Miss Sarah Wilmot has a "youthful spirit" because she has loved "the sunny side of life". And where "love is", does "love the sight of it". It is a wonder: a great wonder indeed!

An old maid talking of love! - I always thought  
The mention of it would turn their faces sour,

and that "faithless husbands" and "tormenting children" were their pet subjects of discourse. This is all mere prattle. The prim formality of countenance has gone with the 'ideal' wind. And the solemn dignity that cast around gloom would have had entertainment value for a Shadwell or a Reynolds. This author asserts that "Pleasure in another's pleasure", generosity, and a blazing trail of other virtues follow the old maid. Consequently, she is given the upper hand in plotting with the niece to teach a lesson to the man who has made her wait on his pleasure for so many long years and then presumes that he can be a Don Juan to the niece instead. It would indeed have taken away her self-respect had Aunt Sarah accepted him when he veered round again to offer the marital knot.

A strongly improbable element prevails in most of these plays. Yet the idea of catching the old man in his own trap as in the last play is permissible on the stage if well done. On the other hand, whatever the device adopted, it would be a mistake to hope to get ideas from a man of the theatre as Buckstone most certainly is. He gets the maximum entertainment value out of the five graded maids and bachelors in Single Life by first showing that the "democratic region of celibacy has its bickerings", as he states in the advertisement to the play, and, later he provides the easiest stage remedy of turning them into "Lovers all". Thus the "most acrimonious of old maids", the "sharpest vinegar"-Miss Snare—who is also on her last legs, has a husband dealt out to her as to the other four types in correspondingly descending degrees of age. To complete the business, there is also among them the prim and proper man-catching aunt Miss Macaw, who begins Act II with a sermon to her romantic niece on "matrimony as a general prologue to all tragedies of life" and ends it with a kiss to Damper, which is but a prelude to the next startler for the niece: "Marriage is not a subject to jest upon". Hence the "important engagement is to be carried through with "precipitancy" (III,i.). But the aunt in the covention of the school in review, has a "good heart"; she is the niece's "very best friend". Had she not taken the latter under her wing, "I know not what would become of me"(II,i.). Buckstone is not harsh. He does not allow improbable matches to materialise, although he takes a little puckish delight in the chase and the flight. Hence in this context, it would not be irrelevant to allude to his well-known farce Popping the Question,<sup>2</sup> cleverly though he dates it back to the year 1789, for it is higher-spirited than a that-time mockery of a pair of old maids with one bachelor between them. Our new-old hero however, ogles his ward while she in turn marries a man of her own choice. Yet, if this is<sup>2</sup> "farce", what is Single Life but a string of flighty situations with only the ends under control?

In any case, very few rules are observed by most of these dramatists. Temper is a<sup>3</sup> full-length comedy by another author and is really only a more detailed farce than Popping the Question. However, the play is well balanced. Each old maid emerges from the "tranquil retirement" of the country to travel to London for matrimonial pacts. Rivalry ensue each minimises the estate and property of the other to "a Lilliput Cottage" and "Famine Hall"; each backbites and "looks daggers" towards the other, and of course, see "rings" at

licences" in the eyes of the fortune-hunter between them. After all such stock theatrical devices as fainting-fits are exhausted, the storm converges on Tweedledum -Tweedledee finding each other out and chiming together that they have

Miss Old....unmasked a hypocrite.

Miss Field. A felonious hypocrite.

1

The widow and daughter do the same kind of thing in Alma Mater. In the former play, "old maids" are substituted by the "Derbyshire spinsters" over whom and whose "temper" gets ruffled. In Alma Mater, there is really no pressing need since there is no ancient maiden in the play, yet there is a biting comparison of one

as hungry for a husband as an old tabby verging  
on the desperation of thirty-nine and three quarters. 3

This is, however, tantamount to quibbling. It is quite appropriate, while dealing with the unmarried women's problem, to wipe out of existence her predator, the fortune-hunter. Hence, reversing of the normal procedure in the <sup>incidental</sup> introduction of Misses Lucy Love and Polly Dove in Raby Rattler <sup>4</sup> suing Messrs Flogg and Muggyson for having invited them to a supper and leaving them to pay for it. They do not remain concealed when the owner of the ware-house arrives. But nothing is done about their claims. The scamps are sent on to the high seas and in moonlit lands in much the same manner as insolvent parties are despatched by Dickens to the colonies. Perhaps Stirling's idea was borrowed from the novelist. At any rate, a play of the same year, The Battle of Life, <sup>5</sup> is an adaption of the latter's work, in which the good Aunt Martha has a part to play. Thus, in both ways, by clearing away the old-maid pest (fortune-hunter) and in building up the myth of the woman who, whatever her "domestic trials ages ago", has led a "sympathising" life ever since, this author is determined to help.

There is a point which perhaps could be mentioned before dramatists of major importance are discussed. Stirling's The Battle of Life is set in the year 1746. And this particular year is significant. For, with Aunt Martha, the author <sup>the gulf</sup> seems to have bridged.

-241- (cont'd)

....yet is near sixty and a virgin.

And Hoadly in The Suspicious Husband:

Jack Maggot....my aunts think you begin to neglect them; and old maids, you know, are most jealous creatures in life.

Frank Ranger swears they can't be maids, they are so good natured.

In the 'eighties a move was made towards a policy of amelioration of the condition  
....(to p.242)

of the "old maid" in order that the aunt, also being one, may not have to hear the brunt. Soon afterwards the argument was advanced that the unmarried woman was unjustly made a scapegoat for the human weaknesses and failings to which women in general may be susceptible. Steele and Ramsay's aunts in the plays referred to, are anxious Marthas, but we do not see that they are loving companions to their nieces. Nor is the aunt in Garrick's farce a study in that light. The idea of the "Miracle" occurs to him, of the "good natured" aunt to Hoadly. There is nothing beyond, and by the Victorian times, when all the threads<sup>are</sup> pulled together, such a relationship is an accepted fact.

The time gap having thus been filled, it is easily realised how as she grows older the old maid first reconciles herself to her single state, and then how she builds up the spirit of good cheer. Incidentally, the author of The Afternoon of Unmarried Life<sup>1</sup> seems to be behind the times, if the marking-time of two years, as stated in the dedicatory footnote to "The unmarried Gentlewomen of England", is due to the fact that the "subject had not been brought before the public to the degree it now is". For our part, with the whole background in mind, it is easy to visualise how an aunt like Miss Lindsay in The Wife's Portrait<sup>2</sup> comes into being. She is not an individual. She is an institution with spirit and soul absorbed in the sorrows and sufferings not only of a niece, but of her brother's entire family. Times are hard, nevertheless her motto is "Cheer up, all will be well"(I,i). She teaches the lady wife how best to "bear with a husband who loves her," poverty is likely to whittle love away. To the struggling writer, her brother, she preaches in turn, how not to be blind to a woman's love. A short separation between the two, in the circumstances, seems to be for the good of both. And quite religiously philosophical she is about it!

so full as life is of accidents that may part us at any time - so sure as it is that the dearest of us must part at last; but I'll not grow melancholy; at all events the present seems brighter, and why cloud it with fears? No, I'll hope for the best, hope for the best.

3

But this hope is for them: she has no existence of her own.

To meet any suggestion or implication that the poor are less wanting in humanity than the rich, since that note of realism is to be clearly heard in the works of dramatists like Marston(leading to Galsworthy), in his next play, despite her money and independence, Miss Fortescue at the age of nineteen appears to have an "auntliness" about her. With uncanny

1. 1858. 2. J.W. Marston, or, A Household Picture Under Two Lights, 1862.  
3. II,iii. 4. Pure Gold, 1863.



sight, ~~the friend of her girlhood days~~ <sup>she meets</sup> ~~she meets~~ <sup>a girlhood friend holidaying</sup> on the continent, ~~entrusts~~ <sup>she meets</sup> the care of her child to her in case of need. Fifteen years pass. The friend dies. The daughter now of marriageable age, lives under Miss Fortescue's roof well-cared for and happy. Fortune-hunters are about: ~~In fact~~ <sup>pursuing</sup>, a peer has been ~~after~~ <sup>after</sup> the foster-aunt for as many years as she ages in the play, and ~~the number increases to two~~ <sup>the number increases to two</sup> with a handsome portion to her ward in the offing. How they are staved-off is beside the point. Alongside of the authood parable <sup>is</sup> the object of bringing the calender forward <sup>is</sup> to portray the Victorian theme of Love-that-is-too-deep-for-words. Miss Fortescue inspires and encourages Lancia to pursue <sup>the</sup> his ideal of "patriotism" <sup>with which</sup> ~~that~~ the age is obsessed. <sup>with</sup>. At the end, is it a "brother's" love on his side and a "sister's" on hers? Mutually, the deep currents come together as was foreseen by even ~~deeds~~ <sup>the most obtuse</sup> among the audience but indeed not by ~~them~~ <sup>these two</sup> on the stage.

In keeping with Victorian standards, Marston makes his maiden aunt and auntlike unmarried woman the source and strength of other souls' development. Espousing the cause of the down-trodden and the oppressed, it was, one imagines, impossible for him to be deaf to <sup>such</sup> indignant cries ~~like~~ as:

...People want to put us apart; but where? There is no "siding" into which we may be "shunted" till the generation coming up has run its course.... a woman knows full well, at that dreaded time when her friends have set her down for an old maid, that her reputation is fixed.

tists of the  
itional Phase.

Wresting from all or none of the contemporary dramatists his attitude toward

the "old maid", Albery, one feels, is both original and courageous in breaking away from the cup-and-saucer school. Skipping even so, over passing allusions in other plays <sup>x</sup> of his, the probative force of one's support is for "the queer and quaint", "the Hon Miss Kenreutie" in Wig and Gown, <sup>2</sup> who, even to-day, would have comic vitality because she possesses individuality, and is a creation ~~above all~~ <sup>quite</sup> and beyond Roberson's range. <sup>t</sup> Mention of the latter is specifically made since the notion prevails that Albery is his disciple. <sup>3</sup> Agreeing with Wyndham Albery that he is not, one narrows down argument on the issue that Roberson makes no contribution <sup>either</sup> ~~this way or that~~ to the older unmarried woman's position. <sup>This is</sup> ~~Surprising enough~~ <sup>in view of the vitality of</sup> when the social attitude ~~seems to be fairly alive~~.

Hence, both to substantiate this point as <sup>well as</sup> ~~also~~ to indicate the types that

1. Maiden life as it is, and as it might be, Pamphlet, 1862.

2. 1874.

3. Introduction, The Dramatic Works of James Albery, ed. by Wyndham Albery.

x e.g. Married, I, 1873; The Crisis, I, 1878; Duty, I, 1879.

might well have occasioned the creation of Miss Kenreutle, evidence is drawn from dramatic and non-dramatic literature. An account occurs of a brace of "invitees"

whose peculiarities of countenance, and dress, and demeanour, bespoke their relation to that dishonoured part of the community usually designated "Old Maids"...

to a social gathering who could have instilled some desire to retrieve an Aunt Dorothy or a Miss Rachel from "merciless persecutions". A sharp and short theatrical rendition of the descriptive presentation ceremony akin to the preceding, is of a Miss Spike in black, with plain parted hair, at whom the most superbly dressed among the lot spits out "Old Maid" (II, i). Likewise of a Miss Stingwell, who, at the moment of her introduction, is spared so much as a <sup>mark</sup> ~~mark~~ of exclamation for utterance. <sup>Apart</sup> ~~Aside~~ from the existing animosity distilled in such photographic insets, the dramatist <sup>thus</sup> ~~thus~~ draws upon the condemned tribe for a dash of drab realism against the spectacular. As a break from <sup>monotonous</sup> ~~some~~ uniformity, another <sup>however</sup> ~~however~~ invents a Miss Brown, and by arming her with the singular appendage of an umbrella, typifies a change beneath the surface character. One imagines an audience of the 'fifties being taken aback <sup>by</sup> ~~with~~ her confident bearing from the moment of her entry. On hearing of the events leading to "Old Maidism", of the suitors leaving her for the "seventy-five percents", for "the estate" and for "the distillery" in succession, <sup>until</sup> ~~then~~ she had been roused to take legal action for breach of promise (III, ii.), - it <sup>practically</sup> ~~sits~~ bolt upright. It is easy to shock it with a tale of stark falsehood. The <sup>final</sup> ~~surprise~~ <sup>after all</sup> ~~is~~ that she is not an unmarried woman <sup>causes a relapse into</sup> ~~represents it perhaps~~ <sup>as to</sup> ~~no~~ doubt whether the character in reality <sup>was</sup> ~~could have been~~ acceptable. Such as she is, Miss Brown is of the world of theatre, but conceived of in a spirit of kindness.

For the same conjunctive factor, one harks back to Laetitia Vane (J. Baillie, The Match). The best of her intentions towards her nephew notwithstanding, is it not ~~a~~ strange ~~thing~~ for her to ~~be~~ subjecting her future husband to the craniologist's check-up? It could be <sup>argued that</sup> ~~argued~~ whether she shows <sup>but that this tendency was</sup> ~~signs~~ of becoming a "queer" type, stopped in time by marriage to a "strong" Man. So it could be said of the heroine of Look before you Leap. Belligerent and vivacious as she is in turns, had she veritably been a "Miss", would she indeed, could she have the "queer" way, collared poor Oddington into marriage? <sup>It may be noted in passing that</sup> ~~In~~ <sup>there</sup> ~~passant~~ <sup>is the "queer"</sup> ~~in~~ The Ticket-of-Leave Man.

1. The Spirit and Manners of the Age, Vol. 3, 1827.
2. J. B. Buckstone, Rural Felicity, 1834.
3. D. Boucicault, The Life of an Actress, 1855.
4. G. W. Lovell, Look before you Leap, 1846.
5. T. Taylor, 1863.

depositor" who insists on keeping her "five thousand" in "Mr. Gibson's office" in gold, as she believes neither in banks nor bank-notes<sup>(III)</sup>. None of these actual or probably<sup>e</sup> eccentric cases could come from anywhere but the realistic world of Misses Spike and Stingwell, whose merciless persecution in the mass goes on. Moreover what accrues from such a conglomeration of characters is that the transitional cross-currents are between the man of the theatre who exhibits a "type" and the humaner dramatist who tries to enter the feelings of an idiosyncratic character. This the latter does in order that he may develop her into an idealized study, or else be able to give a picture of her persecution in truth. On the whole, he reveals the conflict in his own mind when he either says nothing about her, or when he cannot help assigning the central position in the play to her. It is never as if she were a character assimilated into his system to be reflected naturally and with ease.

Out of these faint lines from an oblique angle, Albery creates the strong-willed straight-backed "kind old tyrant", Miss Kenreutie. And he introduces her with an Ibsenite touch when she comes to the Cootes for a twofold purpose, that is, "if you'd been single all your life, and did not like it, you'd be "queer" at my age"(I), hence must see to it that a marriage between the doctor "going thin and pale" for love of Victoria Coote materialises, and the absurd tyranny of the latter's mother ends. Besides such a presentation of the wooing theme through her is the queer fact that she should be chosen to single out the addle-pated barrister, "a jest among attorneys", - whose gown has been converted into a jacket for his son and the bag for household shopping, - in order that he may take up the case against the imposter claiming to be son and heir to her deceased brother. Whether Coote's was a part written out for Toole, or the actor gave character to it, at least in the play Miss Kenreutie performs this function. In the Court of Common Pleas during recess when she stimulates the disconsolate with sherry she encourages him with the words, "You're doing very well, and right always conquers in the end."(II). When the session is resumed, as compliments to each other, the pair stand out, unique in comedy. Her promptings, however clear and correct, may not have taken the case very far, had it not been for a fluke of his. The case is won. Coote's days of penury end since he traces his own lineage to the peer's. The love theme halts, however, for class superiority now turns parental heads. Consequently, the scene at Muddlebury junction where Miss Kenreutie commandeers the doctor<sup>(about to arrive at a</sup> ~~x Cf, the woman with her will in Van Druten's London Wall.~~

destination, bringing not only the lovers together but establishing her reign as "Aunt". Not because of the nineteenth century idealization of "aunthood" but stirred by the naturalistic approach the Ibsenite law asserts itself before the influence of Ibsen is felt. (Shaw is supposed to be the main purveyor). Hence Miss Kenreutie declares that

It's bad enough to be an old spinster, and only have  
nephews and nieces instead of children of your own.

1

She cannot, therefore, afford to miss the second best and be addressed as "Aunt". If she loves children, the next question is asked, why did she not marry?

Because in this foolish country when a woman sees a good useful  
looking sort of man that would suit her, she can't march him off  
to church and marry him whether he likes it or not.

2.

This, it will be seen in the following chapter, is a much broader viewpoint than the Shavian. Besides, the way in which he intersects the conventional "old maid" with the more respectable concept "spinster", reflects the author's heart and head more clearly.

Nonsense, no woman's an old maid if she can help it<sup>1</sup>...  
I'm an old spinster of sixty-two; it's no fault of mine,  
but I'm sorry for it.

3.

Miss Kenreutie is a woman of sound sense and judgment who stands for rights and principles. Thus, through her, Albery heralds the new schools of thought and the revolt so shortly to come.

For "an old spinster of sixty-two", seventy-two, higher up, lower down, the next dramatist of the transition and the last in this cycle, is "sorry, heartily sorry." But over Gilbert the quarrel with critics is renewed. One of them says that his "man-trapping" spinsters "positively litter the ground". Why, he asks in fact, with "his inventive fund of humour" did Gilbert so often make

a mock of those pitiable creatures who are and sometimes plainly announce  
that they are, on the bargain counters of marriage? Socially, he cannot  
have been brought into (touch ~~with~~) with these petulant spinsters,.... 4.

An answer at this stage of the unmarried woman's history is evidently redundant. No sensitive artist has to come "into touch" with the class personally. How could he be impervious to wails and moans that read the air? That "The Gilbertian Idea"<sup>5</sup> found expression after he

1. III, ii.

2. III, ii.

3. III, ii.

4. A.H. Godwin, Gilbert and Sullivan, pp. 123-4.

5. H. Rowland-Brown, Cornhill Magazine, L 11., p. 503, N.S.

\* Cf. Lady's Calling II, 1, 5 (1873). "An old maid is now look'd on as the most calamitous Creature in Nature".

had broken away from the influence of H.J. Byron and Robertson is particularly true about the latter over the same point made at the beginning of the section about Albery. Added to which is another, that Gilbert's idea of the spinster existed independently of them, before, during, and well into the end of the "Savoy" opera-period, and that the welter of traditional or peculiarly Victorian thought found mysterious transformation through his word, phrase and line.

It would be presumptuous to remind readers of the technique adopted by this "English Aristophanes" in any of his works. The "mantrapping" device and the topsy-turvydom used by Gilbert are to convey what he really considers right and proper, morally, aesthetically and in the natural order of things. The exigencies of time and space not permitting an analysis of his operas, it would yet not be possible to ignore them completely.

To begin with the play Randall's Thumb,<sup>1</sup> however, Miss Spinn chases Bangles so far and so much that he feels "confoundedly miserable", at least, so he says. And Gilbert mocks the spinster, at least so we think. When the view is adjusted the perspective changes. The old bachelor is stupid running after Edith. Could he expect the young girl to "light his cheroot and warm his slippers" for him? He evades the most obvious partner so long as this mirage lasts. Let her get drowned in the rising tide, or dash her brains against the rock to which she leads the party to picnic and he does not care. But only till then.

Yet, the whole intention is to make him see plainly and squarely. What else is a poor spinster to do other than what she does the Gilbertian way? Perhaps it is too exaggerated a demonstration of how necessary it is for a woman to be practical! But the old bachelor is not trapped. He discovers for himself that "she's a trump" and that he has been silly wasting time when at their time of life so little of it is left.

Much more could be elicited from the conventional theme. Gilbert levels against Randall the incriminatory charges that could be brought against the whole fortune-hunting tribe, blackguardism, swindling, forgery, even murder. He sends the police with warrants for the "notorious" criminal's arrest. But the voice of justice delays action which hails from the direction of the spinster. Miss Spinn announces that Randall has been through a vamped-up marriage, and then the niece follows her with the conclusion that the seventy-year old great-aunt Penelope "was the quietest and dearest old lady in the world" (III). The traditional tale of the spinster, the broken bankrupt who makes her his game, and the aunt who had

1. 1871.

had a sullied reputation once-upon-a-time (the author here referring<sup>1</sup> to a "dead soul"), is made ship-shape by Gilbert.

On the same theme there is another important play.

<sup>1</sup>  
In Foggerty's Fairy, Gilbert started his peculiar prose fairyland with its romance and realism alike upside down. The fairy "Rebecca", who causes the complications besetting the path of the perplexed little hero, is a practical and entirely English fay. 2.

This creation apart, there are two old spinsters in it who skim the romance and realism. They are Miss Delia Spiff, the "eccentric-looking" type (that Albery had humanised), and Miss de Vere, "a tall stately lady of middle-age and tragical demeanour". To the first, Foggerty had fallen victim when he was starving while she was rolling in bank-notes. But when the scales fell, he bolted and started a career of romance with the second. He thinks he has closed those chapters of his past life and he begins the great adventure of life with the trusting young Jenny, who, needless to say, thinks she is his first love as he is hers. At almost any moment the wedding march will begin. But in swirls Delia Spiff for her claims against niece Jenny. Gilbert then proceeds to settle the stock triangular war with which we are well-acquainted. Indeed, there has been more than enough of this ridiculous partnering, of fine young men throwing themselves away: it is a preposterous state of affairs! From the very beginning had it been "a standing joke in Fairyland" (1). Hence the most heroic of deeds that Gilbert performs through his "English fay," is of "Spiffing" out the sentimental aunt who forgets all the dignity of her years, and who forgets her duty by her stock relation. The author's better Victorian sense prevails over the auntdom. We are told that Walkinshaw also had an Aunt Sarah of whom he had been thoroughly ashamed because of her addiction to the bottle (he had cleared that point about Aunt Penelope in Randall's Thumb) and had consequently put her to sleep with a sound dose of "a pound and a half of arsenic". Then follows the moral of topsy-turvydom. If Walkinshaw had in the circumstances turned murderer, the offence is pardonable. If, on the other hand, Miss de Vere had put all her romantic faith in Foggerty, since she is not too senior in years, Gilbert will not allow her to issue the writ for breach of promise. But Gilbert will marry her, since she has a past now, to Walkinshaw who also has one. As for Jenny, she must be shaken-up to accept the fact that boys will be boys, but that women must not change. She must forgive and forget and marry Foggerty. The boy who

1. 1881.

2. Walter Sichel "The English Aristophanes," Fortnightly Review, X.C., N.S., p.687, 1911.

x Gilbert borrows the "large green umbrella" type initiated in Look before you Leap.

has been haunted and hunted by Miss de Vere has perhaps been thus taught to be steady in life. Of course, we are re-assured of the fact that the sentimental spinster aunt has been quite "spiffed" out: a punishment Gilbert does not have to repeat therefore in his other works.

Having full faith in the constancy of a woman's love, but leaving the necessary passing phase of flirtations and raptures to young maidens, he turns to the old maid for deep, enduring passion. Because of this, she can never appear ugly in his eyes. In fact, he develops the element a trifle too sentimentally in Sweethearts<sup>1</sup>. But the play is re-readable because of the universality of the idea that for the homely type of woman such as Jenny is, time comes to a stop with the first and the last love. "Homely" does not imply that she is plain but that she is the type who would like to have a home of her own. She is not flirtatious in Act I as is generally assumed.<sup>\*\*</sup> When she and Spreadbrow together plant the sapling and then part for thirty years during which time the sapling grows into a big tree, the situation is symbolic: they, the human pair has missed "The Tree of Life". Spreadbrow had never been over-enthusiastic in his love, has had at least one spree directly he had left Jenny, and had become intoxicated with his success. So much so, that even her name was obliterated from his memory. And thirty years later he comes to warm his hands by a domestic fireside while Jenny has lived there in her dreams. Her thirty years have been one long day.

It is difficult to decide which old maid should be dealt with next. There is

plain and massive Lady Jane,<sup>2</sup> the only one of the rapturous maidens with any personality, originality or constancy. She knows what she wants- a husband to love and children to bring up, and Lady Jane is a homely person who would make a devoted wife and excellent mother.<sup>3</sup>

To say that hers is not an "edifying" chase, (measured by Victorian standards) is the narrowest possible interpretation of the artist's method. In being the first to declare that an aunt's love for the largest horde of nieces and nephews is, at most, the second-best love compared with that of a mother for her child, Albery has advanced a creed which Gilbert is corroborating. They are both evaluating the maternal instinct in a way which no dramatist had hitherto considered attributable to the unmarried woman. Aunthood is a half-way concession, but what is a woman to do who is denied even that? If Lady Jane is given one place,

1. 1861. 2. Patience; or, Bunthorpe's Bride, 1881. 3. G. Lambton, Gilbertian Characters,

<sup>\*\*</sup> e.g. by Professor Nicoll.

Among the set in this opera I would emphatically say, for she has her sisters in the other operas to bear her out.

Dame Carruthers<sup>1</sup> must be given another. The "eminently worthy" woman has an occupation which could well have filled her mind. Then she has a niece who could well have filled her heart.

Dame.....Is it not so, Kate?

Kate.....Ay, mother 'tis even so.

2.

But aunthood transmuted into motherhood with the maximum economy of words is not gratifying, for immediately adds the aunt, marriage for a few brief moments would be chosen by any woman rather than die "an old maid".

Critics indulge in lengthy arguments about why she, who retained charm even when old, who was a good and upright woman, failed to get a husband earlier. Responsible guardian as she is, would she have neglected the upbringing of a niece for her own selfish needs? Only when the nest is about to be emptied, does she make a desperate flutter. By the side of Dame Carruthers Aunt Hannah<sup>3</sup> lines up. She does her best to tell Rose Maybud, her niece, to fix her affections and to canalise her goodness into the normal, natural flow of life. The professional bridesmaids in fear of being disendowed, in looking for a bride, come up to Hannah, but certainly not to sneer and leer at her. They name the probable man. The probable man loves her. But she is vowed to eternal maidenhood, because an age ago, she had given her heart to a big, bad boy. And though the big, bad boy had made her dreadfully unhappy with his goings-on while he lived, his death had not changed her love in the least. On her being carried away to the castle when his spectre appears, she still prefers him to any other. The first Baxon or the tenth, what Gilbert says endlessly, endlessly is, that every man will have his fling, that Jenny may as well accept Foggerty while she is young, or like Dame Hannah she will pine away for the worst as Jenny (Sweethearts) does even for the best.

Gilbert's moral law and his aesthetic idea have to be taken together to be seen in the round. All is in perfect order. His mind moves on so fast, that it is we, who, when we stand and quiz over one character at the expense of another, find the topsy-turvydom naturally upsetting our view. If we keep pace, we find that Katisha<sup>4</sup> lives a life of "silent sadness" because she is plain; but she has a woman's heart. If she takes long

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1. The Yeomen of the Guard, 1888.

2. II.

3. Riddigore; or, The Witch's Curse, 1887.

4. The Mikado; or, The Town of Titipu, 1885.



to train a man to love her, and he flees the moment he sees a handsome face, Gilbert is ready to have the executioner's axe fall on the head of the false man. But the aesthetic law brings morality within its fold and he sends an older man to attend on her, for young love cannot assimilate with love that is weary with waiting. And he also brings to the fore a Dame Hecla<sup>1</sup> who believes she still has time for "little pink and white billet doux", and who is anxious to keep appointments of her own making. But since she has played fast and loose all her life, despite her wealth, Gilbert will not easily relent to her. However, we must not pause long over Katisha. We should only show ourselves to be stupid in Gilbert's eyes. So plain a fact requires no language. We feel for her. He wants only that of us. There are the simplest possible reasons for condemnation to single life and there are the most complex of all complications when the man's viewpoint is taken into account.

But, spinsterhood to aunthood, aunthood to motherhood, or spinsterhood in itself, he feels his way into the heart of the character, and he enquires into the ulterior motive of her act, before he promotes her from one sphere to the other, for he admits of no supersession of claims. Each of the characters in correlation reveals progressively the complete Gilbertian idea. The conventional farcical treatment he "spiffs" out of the realm of the theatre; the Victorian ideal of the good he upholds. If she does not reach that height, he adopts the totalitarian policy. But he is on the threshold of the modernistic world. Ibsen's move towards feminism is already being felt. A searching analysis into the unmarried woman's problem from the universal standpoint as well indeed in relation to the insular English mind, waits only for the intellectuals. They are to weigh and consider the burden of the Victorians even as the Victorians had taken over from the eighteenth dramatists, who, in turn, had dealt with the legacy that the Restoration predecessors had left behind them.

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1. His Excellency, 1894.

THE TALE OF THE OLD MAID AND THE YOUNG.  
(The final Phase)

1890-1921 A word should be said about the dates to be affixed to the third and final phase of the unmarried women's history. "After 1870," writes a critic, "there was a revival in drama." Says another, "from the 1880's the New Drama looked increasingly to Ibsen for inspiration." If dated from the time Granville Barker starts writing and Shaw joins him in the Court Theatre programme, then, for all practical purposes, the "New Drama" really starts after 1900. For me however, all that is "new" about it is that it diverts the Feminist Movement to the cause of the unmarried woman. A critic maybe ends the period at 1921, because he perceives fresher "tendencies"; the significance of the date from the present point consists in the fact that the last vestige of Victorianism is traceable to this year or thereabouts. But it is mainly in relation to "types", or, more strictly speaking, to certain individual characters in continuity that I apply the term "New Drama."

The greatest difficulty envisaged in carrying the task through to some final result, is in finding some process of selecting from abundant material. Apart from which, it is found that, in spite of diversity of opinion over marriage reform, divorce laws, suffragettes, and such obstinate questionings on the part of the Ibsenities and non-Ibsenities, - dramatists of both camps advance the thought of the time towards what may be reckoned as "active morality". What this might mean had better first be clarified. They propel the case of the unmarried woman not by whimsically shutting their eyes to her or opening them to suit convenience, nor by branding her good or bad in deference to public opinion, but by accepting her in order that they might explore her character both from the objective and subjective standpoints against a particular set-up. Conceding, as a result, the basic rights of womanhood to her, as well the human rights to determine her own future, they come to a head-on clash with conventional morality. Furthermore antagonism arising from their weighing in the balance the advantageous position of man, to some extent at her expense, they make demands

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1. E. Reynolds, Early Victorian Drama(1850-70), p. 13.
  2. George Rowell, The Victorian Theatre, p. 91.
  3. Archibald Henderson, European Dramatists, pp. 336-7.
  4. A.E. Morgan, Tendencies of Modern English Drama.

for the overhauling of the existing socio-moral order. The infiltration of Ibsenite ideas in the 80's, the surge of new ideas in the 1900's, and socialistic trends of English growth thereafter open their eyes to new vistas and combine to frame her Magna Carta.

In the main, it is Barrie through his so-called fancy narratives, Shaw through his disputatious dissertations, Barker through his self-defined "facuality" and Hankin through his cynical realism, who create a climate of opinion of the why and wherefore of her unmarried state. Hence, though taken up separately at first, these dramatists are far too well known for their plays or their general ideas to require an introduction. And for the brief symposium to follow, a few others would also be drawn in. By which time it will have been realised that their thought needs little stressing since it had been moving in three main directions, towards the aunt, the mother-woman, and the victim of parental tyranny. Accordingly in the sub-sections that follow, certain facts are given about poor dear human nature, together with some rueful comment, until the history draws to its close.

ARRIE. This Scottish dramatist is given a position of precedence, for if on the one hand he assimilates Ibsenite thought to such a degree as to transmute the tragic norms of the Norwegian to his own serio-comic vein, on the other, he is not forgetful of native conventions. For example, to the designing old-maid, the eighteenth century match-breaker, he gives new character and quality in The Professor's Love Story.<sup>1</sup> Miss Goodwillie is Lucy's antagonist till the buried "offer" is unearthed from the trash in <sup>the</sup> "letter-box" especially erected for the purpose an age ago. But Barrie evolves a simple <sup>e</sup>xplanatory equation. Take away love, and the spinster with thwarted desires comes in between the Professor and Lucy. Give the lost love back, it is "a voice from the dead, telling me not to part true lovers"(III). If "cherchez la femme" is the name of the disease her brother suffers from, cherchez l'homme is the remedy whereby Miss Goodwillie's hardened crust falls off.<sup>2</sup> Archer was critical of the play because he overlooked the Ibsenite twist to the stock character of intrigue when 'Barrie 'gaed his ain gait.'

Why Miss Goodwillie does not allow her brother to grow up is a story the author has hardly begun. She would not have known how to occupy herself. Would Ibsen's Misses Tesman,

1. 1894.

2. H.M. Walbrook, J.M. Barrie and the Theatre, quoted ~

it may be asked, have allowed their nephew to go to Hedda Gabler had they had the power? When, in fact, he had gone, did not the desire to possess, to rear a new life, resurge on seeing him back with a wife? Leaving this to speculation, let us follow up the Norwegian and the Scotsman in at least John Gabriel Borkman and Mary Rose. What is the reason for such conflict between the two sisters in the first play if the nephew-son eludes the grasp of both? What is the tragic concept in the next? A mother never grows out of her maternal love and desire for possession while the son grows <sup>much</sup> too big for it. Mary Rose, alas, cannot pick him up in her arms any more. The embryonic idea in The Professor's Love Story and Mary Rose is not dissimilar. Miss Goodwillie's treatment of her brother as if he were a little boy is the modern expression of the maternal instinct as distinct from the aunt's "friendliness" for the niece that the more humane/school of pure English thought had invented earlier. Barrie, in addition, gives to the spinster a moral force that absolves her of all wrong. By labelling her with a name (Goodwill) that is virtue itself, and by adding the diminutive form of the suffix 'ie', - Barrie indicates that the bearer never grows too big (or too bad) for love. Goodwill is deep down, even in an 'old maid'. And the diminutive 'goodwillie' becomes in colloquial speech associated with terms of endearment. (Mrs. Inchbald in her time had raised a fretting 'old maid' to the rank of 'Miss Spinster' - Every One Has his Fault). But he does not limit his view simply to Miss Goodwillie <sup>5</sup>with, who is an old maid by accident, for in the scenes between Pete and Henders Barrie takes us on to a lower level to have us witness the probability of Effie's old-maidhood, since he would have us know more.

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The canvas of the next play could not have been wider. The Wedding Guest deals with one source of the unmarried woman's question as arising out of her romantic illusion of love and life. Lady Janet, the aunt, had once upon a time broken off her engagement on discovering that the man she loved had a past. Paul, whom her niece Margaret marries, has a past too. She, in turn, has built her love on her idea of what a man should be, and is disillusioned. Kate Ommamey, \* a "virtuous" woman, \* had fallen in with Paul, a "good" man. But she too had believed that even if they did not marry, he would be hers for ever. Barrie cures woman of her 'bliss-in-ignorance' and lets her soul grow through acceptance of facts. Thus, realistically, the stock character 1. 1900. \* One would read a meaning in the name of 'Fairbairn' in The Wedding Guest. And some <sup>more</sup> in other plays as well.

of a 'suspicious old maid', the romantic young maid, and the new question of the unmarried mother are entangled and unravelled.

Lady Janet is bitter, she wants to help the niece, to guide her, to <sup>strengthen her</sup> ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> ~~use~~ <sup>use</sup> her with courage and confidence on her wedding-eve but alas, how can she? She is "only an old maid!" On learning further about Kate Ommaney's past connections, she attempts buying her off Paul and keeping her out of Margaret's married life, but meets with a disdainful remark that makes her shrink:

What can she know about women! What can the virtuous spinster know? I have borne a child; I am a woman. What are you who dare interfere with a woman- you childless thing! 2

Indeed, though she still righteously wails against God and the ways of man,

Oh, you men, you men! Why does not God speak and make the way clear for women. 2

Lady Janet <sup>now sees how</sup> ~~has no more a~~ <sup>was her sense of</sup> ~~limited vision as to~~ her own superiority. Kate Ommaney has taught her so much, that she regrets <sup>e</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> she had not the <sup>heart</sup> ~~courage~~ to 'forget' and 'forgive' when she was young. At any rate, she <sup>heals</sup> ~~accommodates~~ Margaret's relations with Paul in the name of

the woman who bore him.....(and with more emotion)... another woman also asks that of you, a woman who has grown old without being a wife or a mother- a woman who thinks that her poor tragedy is a heavier one to bear than yours. 3

She expands considerably from the narrow-minded woman of Act I, and Margaret too from the sweet and innocent child of ten <sup>- the age at which</sup> ~~that~~ her father had kept her ~~at~~ all her life.

Notwithstanding, another side of the question is, <sup>as</sup> ~~and~~ he is. Therefore, Barrie takes the "suspicious" and the "romantic" characters respectively in hand and tempers them.

<sup>So</sup> ~~Therefore~~ too, he accommodates Kate and her child in the midst of "English" society. He concedes to the unmarried woman the rights of motherhood, with scorn and compunctions of conscience left to the man, and the glory of it to her. The Wedding Guest is termed a "Problem Play" with Ibsen's influence, that for all others had to say then, made Archer

<sup>4</sup> "rejoice". But the "problem" is much wider in connotation, <sup>is suggested by</sup> ~~I dare say~~ <sup>that</sup> ~~that~~ <sup>approaching it</sup> from the hero's angle <sup>with only Ibsen in mind.</sup> ~~over the schoolmaster~~. Even in the case of the "Halvard Solness" hero (Ibsen, The Master Builder), some aspect of English Tradition should have been recognised, <sup>for instance</sup> ~~for~~

~~To wit~~, the idea of "wedding guests" in Gilbert's Foggerty's Fairy, wherein Victorianism does not go beyond the pale of respectability. And while talking of Ibsenism, ~~some~~ <sup>one</sup> may

1. III.

2. IV.

3. IV.

4. H.M. Walbrook, J.M. Barrie and the Theatre, p. 64.

\* In days of 'Patient Grissills' it was always wife and mother.

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notice in The Wedding Guest some sense  
~~appreciation should have been sensed~~ of the tragic poetry of Ibsen's "We two shadows" holding  
 hands towards the end of John Gabriel Borkman, transmuted by Barrie's charm into the tableau  
 at the close of <sup>the play when</sup> ~~The Wedding Guest~~ <sup>which</sup> Lady Janet holds out her hand, and Mrs. Ommaney  
 rests her weary head upon the shoulders of the woman who  
 may become her friend.

It needed Barrie's inventive genius to avert a probable sisters' tragedy of say, Ibsen's  
 aforementioned play in Quality Street. And yet could there be more gloom and despair, more  
 tender <sup>ting</sup> pathos and fitting <sup>by no means</sup> presentation of a ~~minor~~ problem? Quality Street is known  
 "everywhere" for "the old maids" Misses Susan (and Phoebe) and Willoughby (and Fanny) with others  
 on the way to a similar fate.  
~~more in the same way.~~ There was a comic by-play in The Professor's Love Story of Effie waiting  
 for "five" years and Pete afraid of risking a thing "for life"; and such, it was revealed,  
 was the dispensation of Providence, that Miss Goodwillie remained where she was, ~~added to~~  
 and, <sup>being</sup> <sup>Lady Janet</sup> <sup>has had to retreat</sup> ~~which, such indeed was the way of man, in The Wedding Guest, that Lady Janet retired from life.~~  
 In Quality Street too, "so long ago", a naval officer came, and Susan "so fond of sewing",  
 had got ready a wedding gown. But something happened.

Even plain women, Phoebe, we can't help it; when we are  
 young we have romantic ideas just as if we were pretty. 2

And the wedding gown is with such hopes passed on to Phoebe. But V.B. comes and goes <sup>and</sup> ~~Without~~  
 proposing! That's just like Quality Street. So pretty Phoebe "of the ringlets" locks herself  
 up. Nine years pass or ten, and quietly we are told of the economic plight of maids in a genteel  
 society, of even a Phoebe fading <sup>away in</sup> ~~and~~ earning a livelihood.

Men go away to fight "great battles". Plain Susan and fair Phoebe are left "to fight in  
 a little one".

Women have a flag to fly, Mr. Brown, as well as men, and  
 old maids have a flag as well as women. 3

They try to keep it flying. Everyone knows with what desperate toss of her ringlets, Phoebe  
 manages to dance back into life. Let Susan slide. Yet how <sup>does</sup> ~~fare~~ <sup>fare?</sup> Patty?

I ha' been looking out at the windows waiting for him to oblige  
 by turning the corner this fifteen years. 4

And what about the many <sup>others</sup> ~~more~~ reading romances, "mesmerised" by the happenings inside, uttering

1. ~~Ed. 1902.~~

2. I.

3. IV.

4. II.

"excited" little cries over <sup>the</sup> ~~to~~ "hot, burning-" "greedily" turning pages to learn the end. "I fear 'tis the mark of an old maid." If therefore a "follower" comes along, like a chorus all the maids of Quality Street drift in. Perhaps, if an older sister's ship is foundered, she is happy, "Phoebe at least will not be an old maid." So speculates Miss Willoughby as well. And while Miss Turnbull makes her own dash for a Spicer or a Blades<sup>y</sup>, so indeed does Fanny.

Barrie is not a "fairy tale" man of the theatre even if he adopts his own methods. Critics of the time said that Quality Street echoed Jane Austen's Persuasion. Though this point has since been refuted, it has not been asserted with any strength that Barrie was very much a part of the movement, that he was speaking for his own times and at the same time making amends for the unspoken voices of the eighteenth century in casting "a musk and lavender" atmosphere over his play. Besides, each time he takes up the question, he probes much more into it than ~~giving~~ <sup>give</sup> merely a new angle to entertainment at the unmarried woman's cost. When Barrie's wand waves over, say, Rebecca of Ibsen's Rosmersholm, it transfigures her into the spinster-housekeeping sister in The Professor's Love Story. Loyal to conventions as well, he gives new thematic values <sup>the</sup> to aunt-niece <sup>relationship</sup> in The Wedding Guest, and Quality Street, ~~respectively~~. Were one to take account of all his references to maiden ladies, one would reach ~~to~~ the conclusion that his eye seems to be on the mass, as if concerned with some solution, some change in public sentiment.

To my mind, Barrie is too much thought of as an elf-and-fairy man. He surely has his own realistic ideas. Only he employs them with an art none too common. By far the best practical guide to the easily shelved ~~away~~ unmarried woman is Maggie, the heroine of What Every Woman <sup>2</sup> Knows. While ~~though~~ she has a heart for one of "these grand noble loves" with her "neck slit from ear to ear,"-she has no illusions about herself. Indeed, <sup>she knows</sup> fairly well ~~she knows~~ that "charm" is

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1. A.E.Morgan, Tendencies of Modern English Drama, p.252, etc.
  2. 1908.

a sort of bloom on a woman. If you have it, you don't need to have anything else; and if you don't have it, it doesn't much matter what else you have. Some women, the few, have charm for all; and most have charm for one. But some have charm for none.

Therefore ~~does~~ her courage fails her on the question of age, despite her heroic endeavours to amend her brothers' statement in Act I. But to her twenty-seven years, Barrie adds six more of waiting till John Shand hits on a career, and teaches her that it is integral worth that counts; that to make up for age and appearance, if she learns, learns and learns, and maintains her sense of humour, she will be the right support to "the Scotsman on the make", and the true comrade in his life. But alas, after she has got herself up in French and type-writing for his sake, after she has got him known in the Parliament for his Shandyisms (really hers for he has never laughed in his life), John Shand falls under the influence of the singularly charming Lady Sybil. Maggie however, permits him to be carried away, for by now she knows her own value and she knows his worth as well. The surface bloom on a young woman, does not carry much weight. Within a few days he finds Lady Sybil a bore and she ~~tries~~ of John Shand's company. What is worse, his future is at stake, for he had all along taken Maggie's inspiration for his own, and gets a true estimation of his inner self on this temporary separation. How quick he had been to forget his past, of the time he had worked as railway porter and iron cementer to pay ~~for~~ his way to the University; of the time he had shared his bed with a poor companion and lived on a barrel of potatoes. How daft he was not to perceive that Lady Sybil did not possess that background ~~character~~ <sup>Lady Sybil's</sup> which Maggie and he have in common and which is the source of his strength. ~~The former~~ <sup>Lady Sybil</sup>, in reality, was in for an easy catch since the moment of his election. But Barrie shows how much easier, for all her charm, it is for that type of catch to slip.

By positive action Phoebe (Quality Street) had to assert her charm, by positive action Maggie develops a charm in personality and by their positive actions each of Barrie's old maids renders herself charming to us in promoting the chances of those, for whom it is not too late to make a start. That is Barrie's philosophy of life. Not particularly a part of his "weakness for persons who don't get on".

SHAW. Shaw's polemics baffle. Were an attempt made at marshallling his ideas about the unmarried woman, <sup>shown</sup> that is to say, ~~shown~~ of the various <sup>'isms'</sup> ~~sons~~, would it even then be



safe to assert his last possible word? In the earlier years, while he may well be thought of as the leading exponent of many a cause, he merely takes mental notes and occasionally comments on this one girl (or woman) or that, graduated into what she is by the immediate conditions of opportunity and upbringing. In comparison with his contemporaries, <sup>who almost begin their dramatic careers with it</sup> it is only rather late in the day that he warms ~~up to~~ the question on its own merits. <sup>while they almost begin their dramatic careers with it</sup> And then when he does, he assigns to himself on the one hand, the task of providing solutions to a representative case on the basis of the fundamental laws of Nature <sup>about</sup> and on the other, of propounding theories ~~for~~ the discriminating character and as well of granting exemptions for the exceptionally circumstanced. In other words, conventional marriage for the overwhelming majority and fastidious considerations for the few ~~in other words~~ are his guiding principles.

During the years <sup>when</sup> ~~Barrie~~ (1894-1902) <sup>Barrie</sup> mingles his smiles with Ibsen's tears, Shaw flits with amazing skill from one topic to another in presenting Ibsen without tears <sup>not only</sup> and his own "Shaverism" <sup>but also</sup> thereby. Not till 1903 (Man and Superman) is he very curiously inclined towards this side. There could, of course, be a long-drawn-out debate over his earliest unconventional heroine or any <sup>of his</sup> later <sup>ones</sup>, and for that matter, over what he says about the New Woman. But, divested ~~of~~ the economic and socialistic structure, how much remains of Blanche, for instance, in Widowers' Houses? <sup>1</sup> In The Philanderer, <sup>2</sup> to the half-baked modern woman he <sup>gives, in succession</sup> ~~opens the~~ his controvertible "advanced", "rational" and "Ibsenite" (I) views ~~on the man-woman relationship~~ on the man-woman relationship; he is keenly critical of the unwomanly woman rolling cigarettes at the Ibsen Club; he tries <sup>to reach</sup> conclusions on other ~~hands~~ <sup>matters</sup> such as her economic independence and other ~~unwomanly~~ <sup>unwomanly</sup> ~~stirrings up~~ but again says little in essence, on the unmarried state in itself.

Cogently, Vivie may be dealt with as the first strong woman who has grit, a way of life, "a gospel of Getting On" <sup>due,</sup> not improbably ~~due~~ to her grinding her brain at the most masculine of subjects <sup>As a</sup> mathematics. <sup>she</sup> Consequently, <sup>he</sup> has ability to relax over a whisky, a cigar and a detective novel. Even so, it is doubtful whether she would have eschewed romance altogether had it not been for the discovery of her mother's profession. Vivie's importance therefore lies in Shaw's successful case of revolting against a parent, of bidding good-bye to "conventional authority", and of soundly establishing the superiority of a "respectable woman". The <sup>question</sup> ~~factor~~ of marriage could be quibbled over. Should she have gone in for it, the tainted

1. 1892.

2. 1898.

3. Mrs. Warren's Profession, 1898.

blood that flows in her veins would have marred <sup>in any case</sup> at any rate, the prospects of an enduring tie. But that is going <sup>too far</sup> beyond, for of the two men in the picture, one overlooks the convention of Mrs. Warren's ~~un~~married state, the other cannot <sup>set</sup> ~~work~~ aside the matter of money. That <sup>itself</sup> settles the question, ~~of itself~~. Vivie has the sense to see through it all, has the nerve to stand up to a dignified departure from a normal life, ~~maybe~~ <sup>perhaps</sup> as a violent reaction to her mother's feeble ~~will~~ <sup>though it might be said that her strength & soul as developed by</sup> ~~weakness~~. ~~Maybe~~ her soul's strength as rooted in education has met this ~~same~~ reaction half-way.

<sup>The inference is that</sup> ~~Inferentially~~, the proviso of Education makes all the difference between Vivie and the average girl denied that privilege. For whom, therefore, marriage is the only other opening to life. But that meets with immediate non-compliance in Shaw's next play, The Admirable Bashville, unless the same principle of reaction as applied to Vivie is applied also to Lydia Carew. The latter's background has been steeped in booklore and she has had enough of it. Besides, this uncommon "owner of lands, rich, learned and most wise" lady, is "yet most lonely" (I) - <sup>state is due to the</sup> which ~~ostensibly~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~to~~ Life Force. As such, it overcomes both the conjecture of "reaction" and the proviso of Education. It can only be surmised that the Vivie type would be the rare exception. Lydia Carew is the average, distraught with the common fear,

I sometimes think I shall old maided be  
Ere I unlearn the things he ~~(father)~~ taught to me. 2

She could gain socialistic support on the plea that her education has been faulty. Equally on the other hand, <sup>she</sup> could ~~she~~ be opposed on the ground, that the very fact that ~~shows~~ <sup>shows</sup> her conscious <sup>ness of her deficiency itself</sup> ~~of what is lacking in her~~, could <sup>her to take</sup> ~~give her~~ spur for the necessary provision and remedy. To all intents and purposes, "education" is no substitute, it does not offer the answer. Ignoring Julia in The Philanderer as raw, <sup>then</sup> between Vivie and Lydia, 'education' is itself on the horns of a dilemma. Unless again another chain of reasoning is offered in Vivie's favour, ~~that~~ she will have enough to do ~~to~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~struggle~~ <sup>struggle</sup> for existence without thinking ~~in terms~~ of marriage.

Shaw however shakes credence once too often. What he <sup>n</sup> ~~laughes~~ <sup>laughes</sup> forth in the beginning of a play, he may not hold on to <sup>to</sup> the end. ~~Thus~~ <sup>Thus</sup>, the class creed he begins with in The Admirable Bashville, of Cashel Byron's alliance (or misalliance) with the heiress, he blows up by announcing him to be not just scum but son to a father with a string of <sup>christian</sup> names to his credit. He gives a wry twist to the story of Rosalind's love for the ~~wrestler~~ <sup>wrestler</sup> Orlando in Shakespeare's 1. or, Constancy Unrewarded, 1901. 2. II.

Orlando in Shakespeare's As You Like It. So at least it seems to me.

Let us look at even the very serious Man and Superman. In Act I, he starts with the sociological problem of the unmarried woman's right to motherhood, but it is worth noticing how far he goes with it. He creates through the assembled prudes no little hubbub over Violet, while she is locked upstairs-- a sight not fit to be seen outside of the housekeeper's room. And he singles out Tanner to declaim his disapproval of their riff-raff notions of morality with his high-browed talk on woman's "highest purpose." And he raises the contention higher by quoting Biblical authority-- "to increase, multiply, and replenish the earth", and so on. In jubilation, this mouthpiece of his is hence to rise and go forth with his offerings-- "money", "respect", "congratulations", "every chance for the child" and what not. There is brilliant oratory over "Nature" on this side, and the shams of religiosity, respectability coming to cross-purposes with it on the other; there is again some splendid plain speaking and, inevitably, his favourite discussion over "love" and moral "passion". Then is introduced the conventional antagonist, Miss Ramsden "a hard headed (not hard 'hearted'?) old maiden lady" who in her turn attacks the "wickedness" of the world, denounces the very idea of Violet meeting the man any more, and, in accordance with her narrow creed, declares that the girl should grovel on her knees, a repentant sinner.

Dramatically, Violet comes from her penitentiary-- a full picture of "intelligence and pride" and gives to them all a bit of her mind, particularly to Miss Ramsden, in "the voice of a schoolmistress addressing a class of girls who had disgraced themselves". After all that, under the weight of conventional codes of morality<sup>\*</sup> Shaw funks the issue and says that she is "married"; that for reasons best known to her and her husband it has been kept secret; and that she is "not a wicked woman like the rest".

Now, in depriving the "unmarried" Violet of the earlier support which the audience would desire to keep in order to see an actual solution, Shaw leaves his 'idea' in the air.  
\* "Institutionalism, far from curbing the individual, gives him a feeling of security in matters that affect society as a whole."

P. Braybrooke & C. Palmer, The Subtlety of George Bernard Shaw, p.101.

The above, in the context, apparently is a correct interpretation of Shaw. Contention however is against the building up of his argument-- that motherhood is in itself, irrespective of man-made institutions, rather in conformity with Nature's conventional law upheld by early religion,-- the supreme height to which womanhood can reach. Also, that it completes her individuality. Possibly, it is his dramatic way, if paradoxical, of impressing the importance of the institution, particularly in view of the free thought then in the air. Possibly too, it is a shaft directed against the married woman who does not desire children. Whereas Shaw is in fact, in favour of large families. Hereby no account is taken of Violet's role in the play of holding the balance between British aristocracy and American capital.

Though ousted from the 'intellectual' group for his 'fairy charms', had not Barrie proved the braver for the "good" woman in The Wedding Guest? One would have admired Shaw had he sought ~~out~~ some dialectics <sup>for</sup> in keeping Violet unmarried rather than such backsliding. Furthermore, from Act II he starts his argument ~~at~~ <sup>of</sup> Bergson's Life Force. (Incidentally, he comes nearer a common man's language in Buoyant Billions by ~~the~~ calling it a "specific" form of "animal magnetism", III) <sup>To this he</sup> and joins ~~with~~ Maeterlinck's theory "about the bee", whereby man is the "marked down quarry", "the destined prey," and woman the pursuer. This is not the place for discussing Shaw's philosophy, but he seems to exult in getting the better of everyone by pouring out words and bewildering understanding. If Nature's Law is followed by Woman (hence 'married' or 'unmarried' should have no specific significance here), it is <sup>a</sup> one-sided law he adheres to. What about Nature's male-bird, <sup>whom</sup> ~~that~~ She endows with colourful plumage to entrance the homely female? What also about the voice She gives to the Male to carol and serenade the mate with? In countries where Nature is more closely, shall we say, instinctively followed, serenading is still (also customarily?) left to man. If on the other hand, Shaw's ratiocination is put to the test, it is scarcely scientific. He ought to have examined the probable 'age groups' at which this game of pursuing starts. <sup>would this have been</sup> Not ~~at all~~ a difficult matter for him when he could so astutely advance <sup>among</sup> the notion that the maximum number of years the human child needed and desired the parent was "six" <sup>and</sup> ~~and~~ other <sup>such</sup> ~~such~~ Shavianisms. Supposing that the "prey" struggles and escapes, does the woman go on till she falls into her grave? Supposing that there is no 'opportunity' for the pursuit, what would the stickler for truth next do?

Having however switched off his argument from the unmarried mother in Act I, he conveniently goes round ~~past~~ it in his discussion on love and marriage, on the contest between the artist and mother-woman carried on from Act II to Act IV. If 'creative' genius, he propounds, leads to productive results from distant love, <sup>example</sup> ~~for~~ Dante's, Petrarch's, does

1, 1947.

\* I am not quite sure that I follow the consistency of such an analogy as the following over Ann, "the woman" and the "determined huntress" in Man and Superman.

"Shaw shatters the conventional lie that man is the active agent in wooing, a lie that has produced sour old maids, who die attempting to love God merely because they have been deprived quite often by convention, from having their fair chance of loving Man." P. Braybrooke, The Genius of Bernard Shaw, p. 155.

+ Cf. O. Wilde's "pure" heroine. A Woman of No Importance, 1893.

the distant-beloved thereby experience a sublimer sort of fulfilment of purpose? If not, would this sacred sacrifice at the altar of pure art be branded 'old maid' (<sup>the</sup> Life Force having passed her by) at the same level as the 'loving' but 'non-marrying' type of man <sup>with whom</sup> Octavius is compared?

Ann. Oh, it's the same with women. The poetic temperament's a very nice temperament, very amiable, very harmless and poetic, I daresay; but it's an old maid's temperament.  
Tanner. Barren. The Life Force passes it by.

<sup>The first</sup> 'old-maid' casualty ~~is~~ is due to the distant-worshippers; ~~the second~~ to the arty-arty man who may not marry; ~~the third~~ to the artist-man who is no good as head of a family, worthless as breadwinner. Conceding ~~the~~ the fact that these cases are rare, ~~one may add~~ <sup>fourth</sup>, the type of the Lady of Shallott ~~who~~ weaving her web by night and day, waiting for the knight to come her way. <sup>The</sup> Life Force passes her by. So says Shaw, So she knows, <sup>1</sup> And none <sup>2</sup> the wiser. His eventual farcical solutions in John Bull's Other Island and Misalliance are no solutions. He knows the facts and yet refuses to face them. He is the man with superior brains and he is the apostle he often plays at being. Therefore ~~does~~ <sup>must</sup> one draw the argument out. <sup>Even</sup> Combining <sup>this</sup> with the impression ~~one~~ gets from his plays on eugenics, he works out no equation between the old maid by necessity <sup>(if there are fewer men to go round)</sup> and Caesar's wife with the curse of sterility, ~~it is like some other man to go round~~. And incontestably, in the very first act of the philosophical play, Man and Superman, he sweeps on to say that the only reward worth having the richest experience for woman, is that of motherhood.

The odds being in favour, <sup>the</sup> Life Force is Shaw's gospel to be accepted. In application, it <sup>puts to</sup> rout such a set idea as romantic love, because romantic love sticks a person frightfully to one person and place, and by implication, renders the central being inert, incapable of growth. To Nora therefore in John Bull's Other Island, wasting away her life's dreams on Larry for the past eighteen years, he sends Broadbent as an external force with all fair

1. 1904

2. 1910.

\* It is indeed subjecting human nature to the vagaries of Shavian mathematics to say that "Nora Reilly in John Bull's Other Island,... has silently and dismally pursued Larry Doyle in absentia while he was away for eighteen years..."

A.H. Nethercot, Man and Superman, p. 85.

In fact, <sup>it is</sup> because life for her has stood still that Shaw tows the robust Englishman across the Irish Sea. She has ceased to think beyond the man who has given occasion for this fixation of hers. But the Lady of Shallott type I mention would have the visionary ideal before her. Would she too be a 'pursuer'? <sup>She would</sup> Some opiate then, some mandragora, <sup>to</sup> <sup>kill</sup> her of fanciful thoughts, if, at any rate, she is to be branded after Shaw's Law.

+ Cf. She: The day of ridiculous old maids is over. Great men have been bachelors and great women virgins.

.....contd.

chance of immediate remedy and success. Nora's age we do not precisely know, "her photographs stopped at twenty-five"(I), but she lives in a world of unreal charm which has an attractiveness for the mundane Englishman who, by the <sup>way</sup> ~~eye~~, should have "some one to hug occasionally" (IV), it being an absolute necessity <sup>for</sup> with his nature. Besides, it would "plump" out her muscles and "set up her figure" to something nearer human shape than the etherealness ~~in~~ <sup>consonant</sup> ~~her~~ <sup>previous</sup> with her existence. ~~At any rate, Larry seemed to have nothing to say, she~~ much less, <sup>and</sup> neither knowing from whence to pick up the interrupted thread of a teen-agers' friendship, they <sup>part</sup> ~~walk away~~. There is <sup>more</sup> ~~a world of~~ meaning in crying her heart out on "a good broad chest....not less than forty-two inches" than <sup>in</sup> sobbing away alone for Larry who had come after eighteen years and gone within a few moments of their meeting. Though she might not have married at all, and <sup>might have</sup> ~~died of~~ "heartbreak and disappointment", that was <sup>up until the moment she</sup> ~~turn~~ she had been touched by Broadbent!

I think you might understand that though I might choose to be an old maid, I could never marry anybody but you now. 1

By all manner of means, he is going to exploit his matrimonial alliance to the fullest. He will reap a good few votes by the "caterpillar creed" of an Englishman, stand himself securely in Parliament, and with his adroit/skill for business, develop and colonize the part of Ireland under his feet. But Nora is a simpleton with grand ideas of her superiority over others on her £40 per annum. She will have a part to play, a calling in life as Larry preaches with curt sincerity,

There will be no more neglect, no more loneliness, no more idle regrettings and vain-hopings...but real life and real work and real cares and real joys among real people. 2

Shaw had provided his antidote to romantic love in Arms and the Man, wherein the young Raina, hero-worshipping Sergius in the wars, had been swept off her feet by the man bespattered with mud and blood, by the chocolate cream soldier of thirty-five, by the "hero" ~~in the end~~, who was

...contd from back page..

He: They may have regretted it all the same.

Sir P. I must remind you, Miss Buoyant, that though many women have regretted their marriages there is one experience that no woman has ever regretted, and that experience is motherhood. Celibacy for a woman is il gran rifiuto, the great refusal of her destiny, of the purpose in life which comes before all personal considerations: the replacing of the dead by the living.

Buoyant Billions, III.

1. IV.
2. Ibid.
3. 1894.

escaping shell and shot. There is little dissimilarity between her in the balcony scene gazing out into the stars and snow of the Balkans, and Nora, at a modest estimate, of double her years in age, straining her eyes in the moonlight at the top of Round Tower, where she stands waiting for Larry. Broadbent goes out to meet her instead, and though he would have proposed within the first two minutes, twenty-four hours is the maximum Shaw allows!

It should be noted however, that he wastes no words over his foil to Nora- Aunt Judy, who also is an unmarried woman. This placid product of a narrow life free from strain, a representative of the type born busy, who does not bother to take a firmer grip on life, passes well for a commentator, much in the manner of a rustic character of Hardy's.

In Getting Married,<sup>1</sup> whether it be regarded as his chief comment on "the problems of marriage and divorce"<sup>2</sup> or more finely as his compendium on "problems, not of marriage, but of getting married",<sup>3</sup> one must look for conclusive remarks on the unmarried woman. Lesbia is evenly compounded of all the elements so far dealt with in the previous plays individually - namely, 'education', 'the mother woman' (embodying in herself the controlled principle of 'life force') 'romance' (with a good smooth polish of culture, - independence, and impeccable taste). Indeed, for twenty years has the old English Soldier chivalrously paid his court while "lots of fellows" after this "tall slender lady in her prime: that is between 36 and 55" have now given up and got married. But Lesbia is surer of her demands than she ever was, is more precise in her reasons for not marrying. There are "plenty" like her with character, good looks, money and offers, regular old maids, particular about their belongings, with a keen sense of beauty, neatness and order, sufficiently well-stocked minds to enjoy good books and music, too self-sufficient to be bothered about accommodating themselves to any man. Speaking for them all of the Bourgeois class,

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1. 1908.

2. A.E.Morgan, Tendencies of Modern English Drama, p.64.

3. A.S.Downer, The British Drama, p.306.

I ought to have children. I should be a good mother to children.  
I believe it would pay the country very well to pay ME very well  
to have children. \*

But if the country is particular about her having a man in the house too for her child,  
she cannot take the responsibility of wifehood at the expense of good motherhood. And as an  
"English lady" she will not be a mother except "on honourable terms", <sup>W</sup>Whatever happens,  
<sup>One may</sup> Talk of romance. Of course she has been in love with wonderful men, "heroes!  
archangels! princes! sages! even fascinating rascals!" That is why it is impossible for  
her to have the house going stuffy with tobacco smoke and the carpets <sup>getting</sup> ~~being~~ soiled with  
muddy boots. There are prevalent notions about certain things that must not be spoken in  
the presence of unmarried women, <sup>and,</sup> just as well, for she hates "sloppy", "slovenly" people,  
"people who can't sit up straight, sentimental people". Hence she remains still unmarried,  
still independent, still a

"glorious strong-minded old maid of old England."

Shaw rationalises, coats with the sweetest sugar, the conventional notion of the romantic  
old maid; combines with her the type that went into the makings of Mrs. Grundy, that is to say,  
with <sup>a</sup> character so strong as to keep others in awe of her; and <sup>at the same time he</sup> canvasses for the mother-woman.  
~~in addition~~ He lays his account with her refined intellect and intelligence besides, for she  
has her great part to play in the evolution of the superman. But <sup>he holds</sup> with tenacity, ~~unalterable~~  
that unless the State undertakes the responsibility of fertilising her grit on "honourable  
terms", she stands on her guard, she stands on her dignity. If one opens the question still

further as to whether there is any woman who has predilections neither for motherhood nor

\* See last chapter. -----

\* It is not a "curious" doctrine. Shaw is not thinking of "the horn-rimmed spectacled young  
maid's right to motherhood", "the perfectly strange woman who should have the satisfaction  
of becoming a mother". Nor is he using "a good deal of tact" in submitting it to the  
heading "The Old Maid's Right to Motherhood".

(P. Braybrooke, The Genius of Bernard Shaw, pp.61-2)

Shaw is one of the many writers tackling the problems and rights of the unmarried woman old  
and young. But while they go into broader issues and greyer reality in considering the  
urgency of its solution as the following pages will reveal,

Shaw in Getting Married limits argument to the select few. But

"his criticism of the marriage system on the ground that it saddles  
the right to have a child with the obligation to live with and look  
after a man."

(C.E.M. Joad, Shaw, p.95.),

includes also a demand upon the state for an alternative system that effectively brings  
about a better breed in its population, and ensures that the children of so refined  
a woman as Lesbia do not go unborn.

However, if value is given to the following lines

"In his Self Sketches (1949) Shaw adds a sort of postscript when he reminds  
the reader that Lesbia has hinted" that her imagination provides her  
with a series of adventures which beggar reality."



wifehood, should one imagine the Vivie type "on the make"? That means drawing a line of demarcation between the feminine woman and the "manly" woman. And yet the desire for motherhood notwithstanding, the idea of the 'refined old maid' is contained in Getting Married. ~~But~~ <sup>if not</sup> in any case, reversing the "pursuer" theory, is it to be deduced that she is a-natural and a law unto herself therefore? <sup>When</sup> ~~all~~ <sup>is</sup> said, Shaw is a believer in institutions, in old ones, till the new come into force. Until then, there is glory enough in her cause and state for her to <sup>think of</sup> stoop down to common man.

The question, after it has been ~~now~~ <sup>directly</sup> tilted at the voluntary unmarried woman in the previous play, brings up in <sup>its wake</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~near~~ the criminality of the "old, old, OLD people". In all manner of ways, Hypatia in Misalliance, hammers on the point that they compel the younger generation to sacrifice their youth and life to good and correct standards of their making, after they have had their fling; they "cackle, cackle, cackle" on things dull and meaningless to their daughters who merely wait their turn for something to happen to them; they harness them into service for the last comforts of age. Girls, in short, not living their own lives, wither away, "without even a gardener to snip you off when you're rotten."

After Shaw has discharged his shots at the dullness and boredom of parental homes wherein involuntarily unmarried lives are led, he ushers in the triter types, who "don't always marry for happiness", but just allow themselves to <sup>1</sup> drift on the traditional stream and marry because they wish" to be married women and not old maids".

Thus, the best life is apparently that motivated by "Life Force", to which the laws of reason do not apply when it is a game of the pursuer and the pursued. Any obstruction in its way, any passive attitude towards it, <sup>Shaw</sup> ~~therefore~~ <sup>him</sup> throws into a state of exasperation. But on the other hand, there is the philistine woman of his creation for whose independence he has the deepest regard. He grants freedom to her, and yet the staunch moralist remains apprehensive of freedom running amuck. Could one not infer that he mistrusts middle-class and plebian morality since he does not extract any type of "Lesbia" pattern therefrom?

...contd from back page 266.

with fluidity Shaw gets out of the concept of the bourgeois-socialistic state that seems to be in his younger mind when advancing the unmarried heroine's case in Getting Married.

\* So she is classified by A.H. Nethercot, Men and Supermen, p. 121.

x. "Getting Married" demonstrates the diversity and mysteriousness of sexual relationships, Misalliance demonstrates the diversity and mysteriousness of family relationships."

E. Bentley, Bernard Shaw, p. 157.

1. Fanny's First Play, 1911.

"An exquisite and fascinating entertainment...a thing of rare distinction...a pathetic, almost tragic fantasy, not without a touch of brilliance." Quoted, C.B. Purdom, Granville Barker, p.30.

is  
"Prim, Privacy and Prude" / ~~pounded on~~ until shattered; the Victorian thrice-barred casement  
(or ~~the~~ double-locked gate) is shaken till flung open; the Victorian education in "duty" and  
"maiden-modesty" is ~~knocked~~ <sup>taken away</sup> down for burial. Prunella is "taught everything" ~~a~~ new. Such is  
the effect of extreme restraint, that for a time, she dances, laughs, sings and loves ~~to~~ in  
immoderate measure. In poetic imagery, the trio, round whom <sup>revolves</sup> ~~revolves~~ the ~~equilibrated~~ story  
of tyranny, revolt and freedom, may well have been translated into witches, but for an  
<sup>willingness to face</sup>  
~~admittance of facts:~~

We old maids forget what youth is like. Perhaps without  
meaning to we made life too hard for her. 2

With Housman's moral support in Prunella, Barker gets over whatever mental reservations  
he may have had before (evidenced in the confusion or profusion of thought behind the jotted  
idea in the first play). Confident of his own judgment, he takes the next logical step by  
~~by~~ investigating the reasons of his viewpoint in The Marrying of Ann Leete. Honor in The  
Voysey Inheritance 2 has a "mission in life" that "isn't a pleasant one" (II). After this  
assertion from the first play has been repeated he goes on to protest that she is "a  
phenomenon common to most large families." Hence <sup>one might better take</sup> the three aunts in Prunella, ~~the~~ <sup>one might as</sup>  
<sup>credible</sup> ~~believe~~. However, since there were boys in the house, Honor was "grudged schooling". There  
was besides, need for her at home. So she became "bottle-washer", "mother's right hand",  
a slave of all work, with "the patience of an old maid" (II). Seeing that she is, more than  
others, a victim of a corrupt civilization; seeing also on post-mortem the parent how  
utter blackguardism prevails, "machine-gunning" the country from one end to the other, is  
the only neat end to it all. In fierce sarcasm the Bolshevik Hugh declares,

I wonder why they [parents] bothered to give her a name. By the  
time little Ethel came they were tired of training children. 3

As a contrast to Honor, however, Barker introduces Alice Maitland "of any age to thirty."

- 
1. III.
  2. 1905.
  3. V.

Nor need her appearance alter for the next fifteen years"(II). The gravest reason he attributes to the "charming spinsterhood" of the latter is, that she hails from the North, where, <sup>one</sup> ~~assumedly~~, people are not yet <sup>c</sup>ut off from the healthy influences of Nature by the perversities of civilization. Honor is a stunted figure, whose life is a "burden". Alice is a person with character, whose soul has an athletic quality. She <sup>is</sup> ~~magnetic~~. Honor is, at best, an object to be pitied. Nothing can be done about her at this stage.

In Prunella, The Voysey Inheritance and Waste, Barker is absorbed with the questions of education, Nature and Life Force. A fusion between the three in the first play might well indicate a return to Rousseau's cry 'Back to Nature', preceding the time of the French Revolution. The conceptual "old maid"/"spinster" difference in the second play suggests that Honor belongs to the first of the two specifications because deprived of <sup>the</sup> 'Life Force' as also education. Neither of these shortcomings is felt in regard to Alice (spinster), evidently because she has <sup>some</sup> consanguinity with Wordsworthian characters. Further on, the word "education" when transferred from Prunella to Frances Trebell in Waste, bears the same root connotation. Prunella "yawns" over books; Priscilla in the same play used to hold them upside-down, because far removed from life. Frances Trebell is a highly educated woman who might have been an intellectual headmistress of a standard school, had she not left off work to housekeep for her bachelor brother. But <sup>she</sup> says ~~she~~ too, "books are quite unreal. D'you think life is a bit like them?"(I). She has no faith in "arid intellects". "They're either dead or dangerous". And she has also, ~~realized~~ <sup>realized</sup> after the age of forty, that "most women must express themselves through men". When however, the weight of Amy's death on account of his child is dragging Trebell down, Frances entreats,

1. 1907.

\* Note:- In John Bull's Other Island (Shaw), Nora away from civilization has retained some charm-which the 'civilised' Englishman is to exploit. In What Every Woman Knows (Barrie), as a contrast to Maggie, Lady Sybil from the civilised side of the world (she lives in London) is the sultry siren with none too healthy influences or motives. In Revolt (Calderon), Renie comes to Glasgow to escape any further influences of her English lordly home. Even as early as 1891, ~~in~~ <sup>in</sup> Henley and Stevenson's Beau Austin it is the heroine from the North who reforms the corrupt character in Tunbridge Wells. And Wilde ~~casts~~ <sup>casts</sup> into "English" laws and the fashionable, successful Lord Illingworth in A Woman of No Importance for despoiling a fresh innocent "flower", i.e. the titular role.

Let's go away somewhere...my joy of life has been withered in me.... we must kiss the earth again...take interest in common things, common people....Think of flowers in a Tyrol valley in the early spring...There's Italy....There's Russia full of simple folk. When we've learned to be friends with them we shall both feel so much better.

and Trebell is least in a mood to accept a <sup>life,</sup> ~~life~~ peripatetic, the sister's desire suggests that Barker did see Nature in Her Feminine Form as having a chastening and softening influence on the woman, <sup>and</sup> ~~Even~~ further, <sup>if</sup> ~~that she takes special care of the unmarried woman~~ <sup>that she takes especial care of the unmarried woman.</sup> one bears Alice from The Voysey Inheritance in mind, The education which Frances similarly should have received from that source would not have left in her a feeling of emptiness. It is after this chance of going to Nature's lap is gone, after Trebell has shot himself, that the Life Force asserts itself. Frances then begins to realise. "You have children.... Ah, but once you've tasted the common joys of life...once you've proved all your joys as a man or woman." (IV). At most, considering her reference to "men" in Act I, the alternate is there, Nature as a substitute for <sup>the</sup> Life Force or as a curbing factor to it.

Or is it the unattainable that we strain and struggle for, <sup>to which</sup> ~~that~~ Barker is directing our gaze? ~~Any~~ undergoes that criminal operation and dies. Frances would have fuller development of her soul through the child she cannot have. And what irony is contained therein! Soaring dreams are woven in the play for the future of the country/through the child with the perfect education that is superior to all religion nay, religion itself; for the <sup>unborn</sup> child that has <sup>died</sup> ~~is no more~~ with any ~~chance~~ cannot come into being with the intensest will and desire of Frances. Talk of waste!

1\*

Barker turns to facts in The Madras House. To what end are men and women <sup>such</sup> a long time in the making? No natural unfurling, no effoliation of character, no motive for existence is there at all in the Huxtable family- a representative unit of society, <sup>and</sup> a reflection on <sup>a</sup> ~~its~~ civilization which, <sup>considering the attitude of parents</sup> is just a veneer on savagery. <sup>considering the attitude of parents</sup> What goes on in it (play) is not a symposium; it is a seance. The author is not wiser than his characters, does not employ them as spokesmen to give utterance to his firmly formed opinions; rather, he is briefed by them to transmit their experiences- instead of Mr. Barker's characters being his "medium", he in a special sense is theirs.

2

1. 1910

2. D. Scott, Men of Letters, pp. 157-8.

\* Note on the question of 'influences', the following account.

"...when Barker had first read his play to a small company, including Shaw, the latter sat grinning throughout the evening and went away and wrote Misalliance. A resemblance between the two plays is unmistakable." C. B. Purdon, Granville Barker, pp. 102-3. Indeed. In many more presently to be seen.

Why is the air being poisoned and putrefied with the slow decay of the Huxtable lot? Indeed, such is the first and last thought of Barker, their "medium".

The difference between one Miss Huxtable and another is to a casual eye the difference between one lead pencil and another, as they lie upon one's table after some weeks' use; a matter of length, of sharpening, of wear.

With grim setface he therefore picks up each in turn and scratches out clear-cut types, leaving it to a successor to give them a dead-alive soul if he will. Laura <sup>as</sup> ~~for her~~ house-keeping <sup>it is to be the model for many a</sup> ~~has~~ contemporary copies <sup>as will presently appear; if</sup> ~~presently appear~~. Minnie and Clara are inclined to religion <sup>with effects on their</sup> ~~probably leading to results in~~ later life, as may be seen in Clemence Dane's Mariners or Noel Coward's This Happy Breed; Julia is "now over thirty and very unhappy" ~~as~~ like Priestley's thirty-year-old ~~(or thereabouts)~~ holds in The Linden Tree, Music at Night or Eden End; Emma would perhaps have developed into one of the ~~bunch~~ <sup>who appear</sup> ~~so far as Emma~~, in Van Druten's London Wall; Jane, the youngest, it is still hoped, gets something out of her "wildness" though there <sup>chance is small.</sup> ~~is a~~ least possibility.

More types in Act II appear when the scene shifts to the drapery establishment. Miss Chancellor <sup>behind her</sup> has the tradition of the eighteenth century virtuoso, ~~beaten~~ <sup>he</sup> hence her existence in that office for the "morale" of the place. The irony is that Life Force proves too strong for Miss Yates. ~~Manifestly~~ <sup>this is obvious.</sup> with the born libertine Constantine Madras around. And one little guesses how many of the charming mannequins would be having their lives messed up. But at the hearing of Miss Yates's case, "Miss C." ("jealous old cat...crossed in love she was") drops a brick on the existing state of things,

some women, marry happily and well...and all women can't...  
and some can't marry at all. These facts have to be faced,  
I take it.

<sup>This is</sup> Precisely what the play is meant to do.

As noticed before, Barker chain-stitches his ideas consistently. ~~only~~. In one of his blackest moods, on seeing Honor (The Voysey Inheritance), Hugh had <sup>g jibed</sup> ~~pricked~~ <sup>rightly</sup> sharply, "In a less humane society, she would have been exposed at birth" (II). Coming back to The Madras House, the inconstant Constantine pierces the Pater pretty well for his

six daughters, neighter married, nor now with much hope  
to be...better to have drowned them at birth...

as "unwanted litter while yet blind". It would have been "pleasanter" for him and

1. I. \* I do not use the word as an exact antithesis to 'individuals'. But as Scott Fitzgerald says, "Begin with an individual, and before you know it you find that you have created a type." (quoted E. Bentley. Barnard Shaw 160)

"how much better for them".<sup>1</sup> Out of the seventeen women in the play, the bulk are not allowed to have their own existence. An odd unmarried case comes to a compromise with life. Such indeed was the bitter-sweet motif in Prunella. And what little of sweetness there was, had to be dropped with our author's youthful fancies for his mind was in a ferment.

But for a while one takes leave of the man with manifold ideas, and asks: 'Who surpasses whom?' Is it Barker the artist, or, for once, the uncouth barbarian in Rococo<sup>2</sup>? If one thinks that the knock-down blows are over the Rococo vase one is sadly mistaken. But if one sees that it is "The Futile Female" versus the rest, (especially Mr.Ugnow) (though each is defending rights to the property in question,) the value of this study in discordance is not missed. For thus would the play be best defined. "Britannia-like", Miss Underwood commands the whole show. She terrifies her brother, throws his wife into "a perfect dithyramb of despair", boxes the wife's brother's (Mr.Ugnow) ears,

"He called me a Futile Female. I considered it a suitable reply."

Upon which she could well have tackled a whole regiment with an umbrella. When she slams the door behind her on "The Married Woman's Property Act", Mr.Ugnow has courage to complain of "the unwomanly insults" hurled by the "Futile Female". When she returns, he funks the qualitative epithet! No matter. His abstracted speech earns for him a jab that brings tears to his eyes. While others are discussing the heirloom, she is taking aim - one step, two - !! "Did you feel the thimble?" The vase in the ensuing mêlée totters and falls. Simultaneously, Miss Underwood buckles under the weight of a niece.

Call Rococo, if you will, another study of the aunt-niece relationship, Prunella being the more carefully executed first portrait. Yet, Barker is not waging war on the entire tribe. In fact, he meets the guardian leaders of education and custodians of civilisation at cross-purposes with each other over her. Notwithstanding, the woman who leads a purposeless existence irks him. If she has dedicated her life to an ideal, he pays no little tribute to her in Farewell to the Theatre.<sup>3</sup> If she has developed a sense of self-realization he gives no little honour to her in The Secret Life.<sup>4</sup> Elinor Strowde is the moralist of the realists' school, happy in being "busy". She is the force behind her brother's work, and

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1. III.  
2. 1911.  
3. 1917.  
4. 1923.

is his political hostess. This promising team he had left at the parting of the ways in Waste. But in the present play, the brother presents a bouquet,

I ought to respect your confident sanity. It has been a strong wall about my more domestic self these forty years. Father bequeathed it to you.

Probably the war years in between have opened Barker's eyes to her immense capacity <sup>for</sup> work. But the same years have taken the bark and bite out of him too. Something of the soul had already been taken away by the Censors' coming down upon the noble spirit behind Waste.

<sup>2</sup>  
L.HANKIN. Over Barker's "fellow worker", one has least to speculate, for though Hankin too goes as close to life, he conceives character straight and proper for the stage. And whereas Barker is methodical in back-stitching his ideas with types, Hankin has a logically progressive outlook in developing the history of the unmarried woman without repeating himself and without leaving <sup>undone</sup> the main job he wanted to do, ~~namely~~ Talking, for example, of the first <sup>plays</sup> of both authors, there is the conventional restraint exercised by the aunts in Prunella and The Two M<sup>3</sup> Wetherbys, respectively. But Hankin takes the <sup>more</sup> active <sup>ones</sup> step in dealing with the elder as well, as will soon be apparent, when he leads the younger <sup>4</sup> on to their individual roles in life. In the next, The Return of the Prodigal, <sup>4</sup> is a character belonging to the past and present asking for release (cf. Barker, The Voysey Inheritance), and in the third, The Last of De Mullin, <sup>5</sup> is the woman who has carved her own destiny and ~~points~~ <sup>might go on</sup> therefore to another. And so on. There is no over-lap<sup>p</sup>ing. In the breaking away from the old, in the awakening of the young, in the resolving of consciousness into action, <sup>\*</sup> is successively manifest the revolutionary's creed and contribution to a movement. Relatively, Barker's thoughts are far too deep for the stage and far too closely packed one with the other.

Hankin raises the curtain on a grossly selfish Victorian. Aunt Clara (The Two Mr. Wetherby) has had her share at least of everything that matters so far as an aunt goes, money, home, religion, nieces and nephews. Yet she expects her law to prevail, to such degree, that the niece married to the "bad" Mr. Wetherby already having separated, she ~~is~~ <sup>drives</sup> the other one married to the "good" brother, to the same straits. She and her nephew are ever

1. I As dedicated to -

2. Three Plays by Granville Barker: The Marrying of Ann Leete-The Voysey Inheritance-Waste. Sidgwick & Jackson.

3. 1903.

4. 1905.

5. 1908.

\* Since The Charity that Began at Home (1906) deals with the professional woman and since The Cassilis Engagement (1907) deals with class and caste mainly, I overlook both ~~these~~ these plays here.



at collecting subscriptions for conversions and missionary meetings, but are unctuously against any forgivings and forgettings. When, with difficulty, the two brothers are together in Act II, they <sup>hit on</sup> ~~seek~~ their common grievance.

Dick: ....by the way, how do you like Aunt Clara?

James (the 'good' brother): Hang Aunt Clara!

Dick (blandly): That's exactly what I said.

In Act III, matters between the two nieces and their respective husbands are sorted out on "No Aunt Clara". The resolution adopted is, "She must go away". Hence, <sup>we have</sup> the final note, "We must have our house ourselves, and live our lives our own way."

It is not ~~with~~ impetuous ~~speed~~ that Hankin conducts revolt, nor is it with the impatience of youth that he shatters shibboleths. He allows the audience to grasp a situation clearly. Consider, for example, what a current of air and action comes in with the titular role in The Return of the Prodigal. He <sup>enters</sup> dramatically ~~enters~~, refurnishes himself with health and strength and all he needs, strikes a commendable bargain with the <sup>f</sup>ather and elder brother, bid good-bye to them and to his "wasted opportunities" in order to "live life now". But what happens to his sister Violet? Little had he thought that the simple soul living "comfortably" at home, with "no anxieties, no temptations" had a tale untold to unfold.

Your life is your own. You can do as you please with it, use it or waste it as you think best. You are free. I am not.....!

Living in the same place from "year's end to year's end", having no companions, no interests, no future of her own, "the years go by and my youth with them". The good brother at home, and <sup>the</sup> father are set on taking <sup>o</sup> position in the country, and the 'dear' mother is comfortably resting in the nest she got for herself at the right age of "twenty-one". All three get the best of the spirit of dutiful service out of her. But then what happens to her? Nothing. Who thinks about her? No one. Hankin <sup>leaves</sup> ~~res~~ the position at that.

Then he comes prepared for settling <sup>e</sup> accounts in The Last of the De Mullins. There is no son in this family to distract attention. But of the two daughters, Janet who had risen and gone forth into the world, now returns after eight years "a very handsome woman of six and ~~thi~~ thirty"; while Hester, seven years younger, who has remained behind, is a shabby "lean, angular girl" - a wasted life. The law of the 'prodigal' son applies in inversion to the daughter, who, the parents think, has prodigally scattered her youth abroad. She brings <sup>with</sup> her a fortune in the son she will not sacrifice for all the temptations they put in her way to. - -

come back to the De Mullin fold. She has won her independence; she cannot cramp her soul again. She would have liked to have had a husband, but, <sup>being</sup> none forthcoming, ~~indeed~~ she cannot be compelled to marry that man they say 'seduced' her. Indeed not. He is seven years her junior. If marriage it is to be, <sup>it must be</sup> inferentially, with the right man alone.

From the stifling, suffocating place <sup>which where it was not 'gentle' enough</sup> where, if Hester had wanted to marry a 'Brown', ~~it~~ <sup>and</sup> was not 'gentle' enough where, if she had wanted to "do something", the "gentility" of the De Mullins imposed a ban; Janet eventually had to go her <sup>own way</sup> ~~own~~ way against the unending din and clang of 'duty', 'honour' and 'obedience'. She is ready to depart again, but not without <sup>some</sup> ~~her~~ parting advice to Hester <sup>who is</sup> breaking into hysterical convulsions,

Your best years are slipping by and you are growing faded and cross and peevish...You will be an old woman before your time unless you marry and have children.

De Mullin solemnly warns her of a bitter day of repentance. "Never! Never!" she passionately cries in contradiction, for she has "lived".

These poor women who go through life listless and dull, who have never felt the joys and pains a mother feels, how they would envy me if they knew! If they knew! 2 \*

One among these ~~they~~, besides Hester of course, is Miss Deane, "a bulky, red-faced, short-sighted woman...very fussy and absurd in manner", "always was, wasn't she? Snivelling over poultry? To make up for a child? But even she has a heart somewhere about her."

Barring the senior relation who stands for a conventional idea, the meanest unmarried woman that blows on Hankin's stage, carries some fraction of his sympathy. The Last of the De Mullins, is, however, <sup>dealing</sup> ~~confronting~~ with the block as a whole. Janet and Hester and Miss Deane in order of their importance stand out against the "flat" of the Bulstead girls (how many, <sup>perhaps</sup> ~~one~~ cannot say). But then so do Phoebe and Swan against the faded and fading ever so many of Quality Street. We are pretty certain when the almost uniformly withered and withering spectres too stalk past in The Madras House, and when the "old maids" through <sup>phrases</sup> ~~phrases~~ distilled go packed together in Getting Married or cascaded down words in Misalliance, that all these playwrights visualize the nature of the problem well enough ~~as~~ not to merge it with or submerge it under the general heading <sup>of</sup> ~~Woman~~.

~~Relevantly, the elders too come into the picture. But, whereas Barrie spares them the pain by making them into 'chubs' dear little grown-up children, Shaw quite often <sup>cheerless</sup> ~~resents~~ them~~

1. III.

2. Ibid.

\* Cf. Barrie, The Wedding Guest, Kate Ormaney-"What does the virtuous spinster know?" Words that are a revelation Lady Janet.

Relevantly, the elders too come into the picture. But, whereas Barrie spares them the pain by making them into 'chubs' - dear little grown-up children, Shaw quite often chastises them with his rhetoric, and Barker as often reveals that he is a revolutionary impatient of them and their systems. Harkin the youngest, has his own sense of thoroughness. If, for instance, he throws out an Aunt Clara, or kills a De Mullin- thereby symbolically ending a school that holds back the onward flow of things,- in the same proportion as we feel the close of the 'old', to that extent we experience his stronger moral force coming upon and replacing it. In other words, his revolutionary and evolutionary processes are simultaneously propelled, and what is more, always from within,<sup>32</sup> as in the case of Galsworthy or the dramatists' of the Repertory Theatre Movement. Taking other plays of his in our stride, it is hard to resist from saying that Harkin showed positivists some way towards finding place for the unmarried woman in the changing pattern of social and moral thought. Like his contemporaries, he also traffics in ideas, but he has the dramatic instinct to adhere to his own principle of giving out one idea for a person at a time and do so in a telling way. Thus a Borridge (The Cassilis Engagement) or a Miss Triggs (The Charity that Began at Home) is absorbed into the system of the audience, the capacity to take in any more being lower at that level. Then nor since has the extreme view been applicable that a dramatist must either let "truth" go to the "devil" or his play "go hang"<sup>1</sup>. Most plays bear reviving if one overlooks topical allusions or alternatively, revises the texts.

But now to turn from the individual dramatist to collective thought on the aunt, the maternal woman and the domestic martyr respectively,- to complete thereby the centuries old history of the unmarried woman.

Ants- ancient. As artificial barriers give way by degrees after the 1890's and the artist sets out to explore character in relation to its proper milieu, he resuscitates the conventional insufferable aunt ousted by the Victorian ideal, and treats both side by side with new realism. According to his interpretation of the first, she is no disgraceful rival to the niece as the eighteenth century had made her out to be, but if she does stand in the way of happiness, it is because of her possessive and thwarted maternal love, conservative thought and rigid attitude. Religion and morality (earlier it was 'puritanism') moreover, not proving integral values in her, throw doubt upon the values of the institutions she is associated with.  
 \* Contrast Shaw.- In Misalliance an aeroplane comes down from the sky to relieve Hypatia's problem. In John Bull's other Island, a surprise hero comes all the way from England for I.S.Maugham, Collected Plays, Vol.II, introduction p.xvii.  
 Nora.

Hence the dwindling faith in religion and loss of respect for her on the part of rising generations. The second of the two- the Victorian ideal, stands in contrast with the first for modernity of thought because of the elasticity of her mind, the progressive development of her soul. Therefore she furthers the right cause and is loved and looked up to in consequence. But since the play involves much more than an entertaining tale, the functional role of each extends to include the spirit of the times.

The Ancients. Leading the line of the ancients is a later Victorian dramatist. An earlier stage tradition having made it almost an instinct with Pinero to be critical of the unmarried woman, he consistently uses the four aunts in Lady Bountiful,<sup>1</sup> The Times,<sup>2</sup> Trelawny of the "Wells"<sup>3</sup> and His House in Order<sup>4</sup> respectively, to that effect. Had it not been for his limited vision, they could well have been adjudged as representative at least of the particular society he deals with. The first two plays (of the same year incidentally) are artlessly encumbered with the past types. The surface dissimilarity between the Victorian Miss Brent (Lady Bountiful) for instance, and any eighteenth century aunt had to be there. In keeping with that, he introduces her in all solemnity, setting both characters and audience to perfect attention:- "Aunt Anne speaks her Mind". So runs the heading to Act I. But underneath this methodical housewife with her chatelaine ready to hand, underneath this astute business woman with her knack of finding out who's who and what's what,- is an old type who, however well-intentioned, had seldom given proof of being a good match-maker. Like that stock maiden aunt, she has a weakness for a man with a title and presumed financial security.

In promoting Lady Bountiful's (niece) marriage with Sir Richard Philliter, who could have been her father, she causes no little suffering. Admittedly, she is right in stopping the niece from being any more liberal than she has been towards her uncle and his son Dennis, admittedly also the latter is fond only of the turf and the stable. But this already distresses Lady Bountiful. Besides, Dennis does not know that she has been maintaining his father. Hence the aunt commits a blunder in separating the two lovers.

That the two mutilated lives are through sheer theatrical accident brought together

matters least to us, the fact remains that excluded from the "shoals of sentiment"<sup>5</sup> is the

1. 1891.

2. 1891.

3. 1898.

4. 1906.

5. H.Fyfe, Sir Arthur Pinero's Plays and Players, p.68.

unmarried woman, the basic attitude to whom has changed not a whit. As such, she has in her little Victorianism that contributes to this essentially Victorian play.

From one type of antagonist, Pinero simply tosses to another in The Times. Miss Cazalet could similarly be assigned to the eighteenth century. If she publishes scandal, she is not the first of the old maids to do so, though in being managing-proprietor-columnist to the newspaper, she may well be the first in the tradition of the educated aunt. But she is unconvincing. Pinero rough hews and combines set notions of one time about the unmarried woman with Ibsenism of the present. If as a "lonely" woman she mothers the paper through its "teething" stage and other "infantile complaints" (II), if she goes into "affection's little comedy", teaching her niece to call her "mother", if she is also the "inconsistent, miserable, ill-conditioned woman", as she has been "all her life" (IV) and as she declares herself in her penitent mood,-- all this does not cohere with the description Pinero gives of her-- "vivacious, handsome, well preserved" etc. She could have been made deserving of sympathy despite the fact that she is the central character of intrigue.

The lapse of time however between 1891 and 1898 is for Pinero's good. He discovers a medium of expression that is closer to life in Trelawny of the Wells. What is more, he gives a highly original sketch of one of the 'great' Victorians, Miss Gover.

the aunt- the great-aunt- the great bore of a great-aunt!  
the very mention of 'em makes something go "tap, tap, tap"  
at the top of my head. l.

Since she lays down all sorts of rules for good conduct and behaviour- namely, a girl may not see her fiancé "alone", or walk out with him "alone", nor "sing", nor "sneeze", nor "sit on the floor", she is, in short, the character who from now on stands for all that is conservative. Therefore youth rises in revolt and is critical (through her) of old laws and the insentient ways in which she adheres to them. Though Pinero's treatment is wilfully farcical, he gets out of this just sufficiently outlined character enough of the storn authoritarianism that the age was noted for.

And in His House in Order he makes up for what was lacking in her strength.

To establish "method", "system", "discipline", to keep a dead sister's remarried husband's house in order, to maintain control over the governess who has supplanted and become Filmer's good-for-nothing second wife, Pinero uses his patent force of opposition.

From first word to last, Geraldine the maiden aunt's "chilling" manner, her "cold" stare, her general iciness cuts like a keen shaft through Nina's love of life and good things. That marriages were not then solely between individuals but also between families, (e.g., the Ridgeleys' influence and interest because of their daughter's son) could have been imagined. But that the unmarried woman should be their chosen representative, brings Pinero's treatment of her from 1891 onwards to a climax. The Ridgeley daughter dead was a paragon of beauty and excellence; so Geraldine sustains her ghost in the house. Nina, nevertheless, keeps wondering whether she was in any way like this "horrid" sister who has turned a lawful wife into a back-bencher in her own home. The 'paragon', it is discovered had an affair, and the nephew is a product of that. He is not Filmer's son. Now is Nina's time for revenge. They shall come down upon their knees to her, as she has ~~done~~ to them "since Geraldine was sent for;

ever since Geraldine took up the reins again....She shall crawl to me-  
Geraldine shall- as I've crawled to her;....often I've cried myself to  
sleep, after being tormented by Geraldine almost beyond endurance; cried  
half through the night. She shall be meek and grovelling now, to me-  
consulting my wishes, my tastes, in everything; taking orders from me  
and carrying them out like a paid servant. I shan't be terrified any  
longer at her frown and her thin lips..... 2.

Nina is worked up about lowering "those steely grey eyes" of Geraldine's and getting her tentacles into her adversary, but is deterred from doing so. Geraldine however has to leave. And high time too. Alas, but she has henceforth "nothing to do". But no more to be said.

That His House in Order is "well constructed", built on "situations", is a common point of appreciation with contemporary and later critics. What needs revision nonetheless, is the statement that "the characters have not much in common with real life"; that there is lack of "spontaneity"<sup>2</sup> in the play as a whole. The cold warfare between the two camps under the same roof and the resultant atmosphere that gives to the play a decided value, is in fact, obtained from the contemporary theatre workshop. But the very "common" ideas that Pinero has assimilated and infused into his characters from "real life" are on

(i) The question of the unmarried woman- on which <sup>one</sup> ~~has~~ already brought forward sufficient evidence to show the widespread interest it was arousing.

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1. III.

2. H. Fyfe, Sir Arthur Pinero's Plays and Players, p.245 (Quoted).

(ii) The subject of class as a factor leading to the success or failure of a marriage; this had gained momentum since Robertson's day of plainer statements. Hankin's cold cynicism about a vulgar Borridge marrying into a world wherein lords and countesses abounded was to be only a different way of bringing up the question in The Cassilis Engagement. In Pinero's play, it is a much more acute "situation",<sup>x</sup> since antipathetically, the average Victorian regarded the girl working for a livelihood as a casteless, classless thing, as it were. Nina is the penniless daughter of a parson. Worse, she has been "governess" to Filmer's boy. It could not but be "an egregious blunder" on the M.P.'s part to stoop so low as to marry her. Not long after, the cultured and refined prove how impossible it is to accommodate her. In poetic justice, she unearths a skeleton in the cupboard of these très distingués thereby enabling Pinero to solve the problem of the people who don't matter with such counterpoises leading to the final swing of the balance in their favour. In Trelawny of the Wells, the marriage of an opera singer without any method or system to her way of life, to the grandson of the Vice-Chancellor, Sir William Gower, is again a lamentable happening in the eyes of the chosen few with centuries scrolled up in their names. All these factors combine in the making and breaking of a Miss Robinson's<sup>1</sup> alliance. Pinero stretches out a real situation to the length of a play as it approximates to the social picture of the time.

(iii) The aunt, both as a stock force of conflict in the marriage theme and as a measure of the abiding values of old morality;<sup>is</sup> encountered in Miss Gower and Geraldine respectively. But in the latter case, alongside of the prevailing aunt's role in supervising lessons and moulding manners, alongside of the aunt-figure factor fitted with the bunch of keys at her side, much as the senior Miss Blount's (Lady Bountiful), is the story of strength matching strength. Nina is "pretty" and "rebellious", Geraldine is "handsome" and set- each a loose definition of the Venus and Diana cult, or, of the school of psychology, one with a self expressed, the other with a self repressed.

Dramatists by preference keep to straighter purpose. Points of view of different generations do not meet. That is certain. That influences upon the young are undesirable is made even more so. In Prunella (Housman & Barker) for example, we are critical

1. E. Baker, Miss Robinson, 1918.

x. Not to be confused with "the situations" in the structural sense, for which alone critics commend it.

of the aunts because of their exacting control over a Life Force waiting for release. But Prim, Prude and Privacy conducting Prunella's lessons, teaching her to mind her P's and Q's (the 3 P's- a 'queer' and 'quaint' set!), to con "The Gentle Reader", are true to Victorian life, and at the task of shutting windows and doors<sup>x</sup> as true to the way of life as their elders had taught them.

Similarly, in Hankin's The Two Mr. Wetherbys. Of substantial weight indeed is Aunt Clara, since in her, the stock obstructionist's tendencies are comprehensively drawn, and with a vividness that enables us to fill out Pinero's Miss Gover too. We are filled with a sense of deep disgust at, firstly, the part she plays in the marriage theme. As she makes it out to be, the question of niece Constantia's reconciliation with her husband is not an individual affair. The more members of the family present, the greater will be the steam let off, and the remoter will be the chances of reconciliation. So the Aunt wills it, as thus she can keep her side of the family in a compact unit. Indeed, she has no right to quarter herself in niece Margaret's house either. And if there, still less right has she to exact the time and service of Margaret's husband besides, to an insufferable degree. Because she will be there, because she will continue to have her relations around her, Margaret and her husband have little life to call their own. So another marriage is going on the rocks.~~thereby~~

Secondly, with regard to the aunt's tutelary powers, Margaret is susceptible to changes for the worse. The aunt instils into her antagonistic feelings which she in turn has no right to harbour over her husband and his relations with his brother. But Aunt Clara is the root of all trouble. She tutors the good Mr. Wetherby into accepting her law that the "modern" habit of forgiving will not do because the wicked in their ways will exploit the good. (So does she). She also tutors Constantia into accepting that the cause of so many unhappy homes lies in the "modern" wives who are only too ready to forgive their husbands. Hankin gives new colour to the old stock trait of 'hypocrisy' since he seems to look sceptically on all virtuosos and religiosos from Adam's time on. With Aunt Clara as one of the agencies and her priggish nephew another to turn wheels behind wheels of Conversions to Christianity- both of them dead-set against the primary laws of love and

x Note: Another age conspicuous for "shutting casements"-was the Restoration. To keep to the men of the Victorian times, however, they are characters of excesses, with large families at home and affairs outside. With wives kept busy at rearing and daughters prevented from looking out, a Browning-Barrett elopement could indeed have been commoner.



forgiveness,- "All religion be blown to bits!" is the cynic's sentence. In a more direct way, an author with little comment to make on life in comparison with Harkin, substantiates the 'falseface' analysis as under,

Auntie is a witch. She doesn't look like one- she looks like a perfect churchwoman and member of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, which she is- but she's a witch. 1.

Taking Trelawny of the "Wells" and Prunella alongwith The Two Mr. Wetherbys, the character of the aunt is stereotyped clearly enough for it to be said, that if His House in Order, Rutherford and Son,<sup>2</sup> Mr. Pim Passes By<sup>3</sup> and A Bill of Divorcement<sup>4</sup> are also added to make the set fairly representative,- a varying interpretation, a shift in the emphasis may be the only flexible method of making any of them look original. Impermeable to change and intolerant of modernity, she becomes the law-giver of the family and upholder of tradition. As such, the clichés respectability, duty and the like obviously are simplifications of these same factors when associated with her.

This is exemplified in the homebred Aunt Ann (Rutherford and Son), who has her own set notions on everything from a baby's cap to the most stirring invention of the times. What's the good of "butterfly bows", they don't keep a head warm. What's the earthly use of a man "fiddlin' on wi' a lot of old cogs and screws half his time, trying to find out the way to prevent a railway train going off a line" when he cannot so much as furnish his wife with a "decent black to show herself in o' Sundays." (I). Dare one indeed say anything about Rutherford who by doing his duty devotedly has risen from nothing? The incensed nephew at one time asks,

Aunt Ann, have you ever in your life,- just for a moment at the back of your mind- wished Rutherford's at the bottom of the Tyne?

The retort he gets is priceless.

Are you taking your medicine regular?

Family honour and name is of course an eighteenth century inheritance. In application of these to new themes, Aunt Ann considers no girl good enough to be anything more than the nephew's wife or the mother of his child. That token value must be made clear to the "stranger" married five years back or ten. And it must be accepted unquestioningly. None is to "answer back" in the house. In the upper class, Lady Marden (Mr. Pim Passes By)

1. A. Bennett, Sacred and Profane Love, I, i, 1919.

2. G. Sowerby, 1912.

3. A. A. Milne, 1919.

4. C. Dane, 1921.

is a greater authority than a family solicitor- "she could tell what the County what Heaven really thought" (pardon a slip of the tongue) about an entangled situation. "Yes, yes," George readily agrees. For five years he has been living with Olivia on the principle of love, strong and enduring. Mr.Pim passing by drops in to tell that her precious husband is alive. Lady Marden's verdict on consultation is, "the marriage must be annulled". But there has been no "marriage". Well then, "Olivia will return to her husband." Anything to avoid "publicity". Nothing "of the sort" has ever happened in "the Marden Family before" (II). Mr.Pim hazily turns up again. It was a gross mistake. The man was "choked to death by a fishbone!"

Lady Marden: A dispensation of Providence.... One can look at it in no other light. (II)

Once again the law-giver takes command of the situation. On the quiet, "nobody need know"; George could go to London and get "married" (Olivia's husband "died only a few days ago") in the "Registry Office". The professional solicitor alone need be there to testify the fact. Lady Marden is out of the picture for other developments when Olivia refuses "to marry".

Religion embodied in varying degrees in the aunt, varies in its influence on the family and family name. Aunt Clara's missionary, fund-collecting spirit turns a good Mr. Wetherby off compulsory religion (and meetings) and subscriptions and on instead, to the club. His falling in with the irreligious brother who can go under no false pretences, bodes no good for the "family" name. The niece might as well sever her connections with the husband. Nothing worries Aunt Ann so much, not a niece out in the cold, not a nephew gone, but "disgrace on the house", "all Grantley talking, and to-morrow Sunday" when people have nothing else to think of- assembling and disassembling in church. Lady Marden's "Providence" slides smoothly with the word of man and its bearing on the "County talking". Carlotta's Aunt (Sacred and Profane Love) in a "Queen Anne house" with its "white curtains" amid "workpeople's cottages- rather dirty" is made a "witch", and under the banner of religion, enabled to cast a spell on everyone around. But in grim seriousness, Miss Fairfield (A Bill of Divorcement), as conscious of "duty" and the rest of it as Prunella's sable spirits Prim, Prude and Privacy, strikes us as the most religious barrier to progress. Her nephew is a mental case. Yet his wife, so pretty and so helpless, has to be on the defensive when Miss Fairfield speaks her mind against a second marriage. Margaret is

surely "on the brink of deadly sin"! And the frightened woman sits back as she has sat for fifteen years since her husband virtually passed out of her life. Her daughter Sydney is consequently in rebellion against "Aunt Hester and her Prayer Book", Aunt Hester and her "deadly sin", "Noah and the Flood". All must be quiet while Aunt Hester reads the service (and Sydney picks up the knitting to occupy her time). Sydney is a twentieth century product of a nineteenth century family suffering from inherited insanity. Her mother was not told of it. That is really why the daughter is in revolt. She wants the truth.

Here's a shadow, here's a trouble, here's a ghost in the house-  
and when I ask you what shall I do you talk about your blessed dignity; 1.

She is besides in love. That means that if she marries she passes the disease on, while if her mother marries, she gets out of being victimised any more. But the additional problem in the event of herself taking the risk is that she must at all costs take the aunt off Mother's hands. If she says that, her young man will not agree.

Hilary Fairfield, however, gets away from the asylum: Complications again. Miss Fairfield's religion works up again. God has sent him "in time". "Whom God hath joined let no man put asunder" (II), she drums into Margaret's head. And Margaret thought she was free for once. She thinks now she is trapped. It is a maddening situation. Sanity expressively comes in with the Doctor,

Your duty is to see that those conditions are changed. If your laws forbid you, you must change your laws. If your church forbids you, you must change your church; and if your God forbids you, why, then, you must change your God.

2

But in the play the Aunt stands for God, for a religion that stands in the way of law and change. It is indeed the aunt who opposes any change- even if it be for the better.

So from the type, to the individual,- from the eighteenth century, onto the nineteenth and into the twentieth,- till the last of the Victorian shadows and ghosts flit and stalk, this force of contention holds the stage, with the strongest spurt of the flame in The Bill of Divorcement.

(And) The Moderns. Each almost a new creation, the one constant characteristic of an aunt of the second category is her modernity of thought,<sup>x</sup> her susceptibility to expedient change.

1. I.

2. II.

x Probably she evolves out of the 'good' educated type such as Foote's in The Devil upon two Sticks, Joanna Baillie's in The Match and the benevolent Victorian aunt e.g. in Marston's The Wife's Portrait, Gilbert's Ruddigore, and so forth.

Perhaps she is as remarkable for her activity. But even as an old fixture in the home she suggests such a capacity, for she opens the windows of shut minds around while she may be at the prosaic task of house-keeping. More often than not though, one knows not where she lives, nor is there any time to ask that question of her. Hither she comes, thither she goes. The one quality that binds her to Steele's creation in the past is that, stern or soft in expression, she has positively a heart of gold. By virtue of it, she places herself on no pedestal, claims to possess no superior qualification, not even in the manner of a Victorian predecessor. Firmly rooted ~~to~~<sup>in</sup> life, she knows the frailties of human nature from experience. Hence she is able to develop a tolerant disposition. Hence the geniality she engenders, easing therewith the strain between age and youth.

Miss Foster in Beau Austin<sup>1</sup> is supposedly a 'period' piece. She does little to speak of. Much less is she in the know about events taking place under her very nose for she is "an old maid brought up in a work-basket". So at least her nephew, who came of age but yesterday, says. And we would readily agree, considering the state Dorothy, her niece, is in. But that she is a departure from tradition and a harbinger of modernity may be substantiated from her free talk with the niece--one-sided though it is. In her day, Beau Austin had been the ton. And she had had the privilege of walking her first minuet with him. To-day too, though she has a touch of the gout, a glint comes into her eye on utterance of his name. Old-maidism, one gathers, is the result of her ambitious dreams of him. However, knowing only too well what "sour grapes" mean, Dorothy positively must make haste. "I hate to see old maids a-making" (I.i.). Though ~~that~~ all women may be "virtuous", a "prude" is something "I regard with abhorrence"; though she is 'five and twenty', with a fortune in hand 'tis not too late. For a girl to eat well, look well, set destiny upon its course; for a boy to climb the heights (to scale down the Beau)-- is new thought and healthy desire. Nor can the aunt stand vulgarity of any sort. Fancy the maid calling to passers-by out of the window! That shows breeding.

From talk to action, from dim-sightedness to clairvoyance: such is the advance from Miss Foster to Lady Janet in The Wedding Guest.<sup>2</sup> Miss Foster could guess nothing of Beau Austin's affairs with Dorothy; while Lady Janet, on her first glimpse of Paul penetrates:

"I seem to know your face. Ever been in this part of the world before?" She herself had

1. Henley and Stevenson, 1890.

2. J.M.Barrie, 1900.

once been betrothed, but had subsequently discovered something about her man's past. She recognises the family likeness between that man and this. And to think that she- in doing a little act of kindness on her way to Niece Margaret's marriage, by bringing the fainting woman, Mrs.Ommaney (ominous?) for succour,- should have been instrumental in bringing Paul's 'past' along. Spontaneously arises her prayer for Margaret that she is going to be united to "a good man" (I); but she is ill at ease till she has got to the bottom of things. Whereupon, appalled by the resulting impact on the innocent niece's heart, as a practical way out for both parties she implores Mrs.Ommaney- "I will give you thousands. I will beggar myself" (III), if only she keeps out of Margaret's life. Further on Lady Janet goes knocking at doors at all odd hours, while the father, who never had the courage to face life anyway, sits placidly at home over his game of draughts and his glass of wine with a friend. He could easily have prevented the pass to which the marriage of the morn has come by even-time (for the couple has separated). Eventually, however, she effects reconciliations. Having learnt from her own regretful sacrifice in the past, and at the hands of the woman she had accused, she teaches the better lesson of forgiving and starting again.

The aunt comes along with aid and remedy and brings things to a perfect finish. And once, just once does Phoebe (Quality Street)<sup>1</sup> in her distress invoke help from No-land; that too, when that traitor Captain Brown comes upon her in her wedding-dress unawares. And what a train of complications niece "Livvy" brings. She has the audacity to take charge of the whole situation. "Livvy" is invited to a ball. Aunt Phoebe naturally has to retire 2with "the headache". Without so much as a word of warning, "Livvy" demands a chaperon for the ball. Susan has to step heroically from "old maid" of Quality Street up to aunt of a grown-up niece, and perform her duty. No "excellent" aunt may say no to a niece. But there's no saying when it will dawn upon Captain Brown that he must see Phoebe through "Livvy". He is daft to take so much time; "Livvy" consequently has to prolong her stay. Now when he does see aright and comes to claim Phoebe's love, "Livvy" has to have the headache instead. And the old maids of Quality Street, whose eyes and windows command the Throssels' door, grow suspicious. They have been no stranger arrive, they have known of no "brother-James's daughter". Notwithstanding, learning of the malady, they flock to enquire after the patient's health. Can they not just have a peep through the bed-curtains? And they bring arrowroot for "Livvy", just as the soldier had brought medicine for Aunt Phoebe.  
1. J.M.Barrie, 1902.

Confusion upon confusion!

And when Susan and Phoebe are together, they tear their hair over the "scandal"; worse they will have to 'starve' if they cannot get rid of "Livvy". Phoebe cannot pause to think; "This horrid, forward, flirting, heartless, hateful little toad of a Livvy." (III), she bursts out passionately. Both the sisters wring their hands. Alas! What can they do! Then Patty, the maid, takes Captain Brown into confidence and tells him of their plight, and he acts the real soldier. He takes a lot of wraps, and swathes the non-existent Livvy in them, carries her into his carriage, <sup>and</sup> gives Patty directions to reach her safely "home". The proceedings being watched from windows, the way is clear for Susan to see the nuptials of her sister. And candles are lit in Phoebe's eyes and curls are coaxed back when she obeys the dictates of her heart in accepting the hand of Captain Brown. One may rest assured, after having witnessed Susan act her part as aunt so well, that with superb charm will real aunt-hood sit upon her when the day comes. Ah, when it comes, candles of a sort will be lit in Aunt Susan's eyes too.

The pair of aunts in Fanny and the Servant Problem<sup>1</sup> are transfigured with a saintliness that is enigmatic. Dressed exactly alike, with their silvery hair and similar tones of voice, they might well be in communion with regions above, as they lingeringly look at the sunset and think of lilies in the sunniest room. But all the arrangements are for a nephew returning from abroad with a wife. So they descend from their etherealness. For they have to think of "a foot-warmer in the carriage". Yet they are not of the earth earthy if they implicitly believe all the stories the nephew has been writing in his letters regarding his wife Fanny's relations scattered in various key-posts all over the world, though he has picked her up from the café-chantant singers. They believe in sympathy. Anything lacking in such a character will be overcome in time. Theirs, therefore, is a universal religion while the religion in their servant's hall is dogmatic. Indeed, in the absence of a lord and mistress, the butler and his twenty-two strong staff rule the house; so it is from that direction that moral texts appear. With hammers and nails these are to be fastened on the walls of the sunniest room, with lilies bedecked, waiting to receive lord and mistress.

It turns out, however, that Fanny is the runaway niece of the butler. That puts things in a new light. If Fanny stays, the retinue must be discharged. But her husband is distressed over what people will say. Then both the aunt with the "beautiful hair" and the aunt

1. Jerome K. Jerome, 1908.

with the "beautiful eyes" (IV) tell him that the first Lady Bantock "had danced with George III himself, but that did not rule out the fact that she was a butcher's daughter." And they steal out ~~at~~ tip-toe, leaving him to meditate and find courage to proclaim openly that Fanny remains his wife. Of course, as a condition, her ancestry may never be mentioned as Lady Bantock's never has been.

Such a motif is perhaps best suited to musical comedy, as the play finally became. Nevertheless, the ancient characters are the most soundly modern in outlook, with commonsense enough not to permit emotions to bowl them over. Jerome reaches one extreme (as above) in making the aunt as femininely soft and supple as can be; and another (as follows) in giving her a robustness, a sort of open-air health. Not improbably, the independent woman as she was emerging and the ideal as conceived in the mind may have struck a newness into the second character.

Miss Susan Abbey,<sup>1</sup> a cheerful bustling soul, leaping over a fence the sooner to reach the trouble-spot has the most compromising attitude towards her niece Beula and her husband Percival. She hears both sides of the quarrel, and patches it all up. But it flares up again as they sit down to a meal. After coolly and calmly eating the meal she carried with her, she firmly tells the niece that she will not have her if she leaves Percival, and calls them both a pair of silly fools, bound only to make troubles because each wishes to dominate the other; whereafter she jumps the fence (tearing her dress) to go to the source of this incendiarism. Miss Hobbs, naturally "the disappointed old cat", is in the new garb of the political woman, encouraging others of her sex to stop being slaves to their husbands. She is putting the institution of marriage in jeopardy, till Wolff seizes her to tame and marry here. The aunt evidently thereafter is ~~suspected~~ expected to preserve her sanity too, for marriage laws are inviolate only if rightly operated.

A counterpart to Miss Abbey is perceptible in the inflexible aunt in What would a Gentleman do?<sup>2</sup> Guided by her distant vision she jogs along and showers her benevolence with a sternness none can withstand, not even the hard brother in trouble, whom she meets again after a quarrel lasting fifteen years. The good deed done, the niece settled happily, away she marches out of sight again. But is it distance that makes hearts grow fonder?

--- Aunt and niece (and nephew) forge ahead well enough if otherwise placed. Proximity, in

1. Jerome K. Jerome, Miss Hobbs, 1899/1900.

2. G. Dayle, 1902.

this case, seems to wear the rough edges off each other's nature. Not that it is an amiability they attain at saturation point, but a spirit of camaraderie which pleases an observer more. Ask Aunt Eliza,<sup>1</sup> as Mrs.Dot, her temperamental niece, does,

Why does anybody ever want to marry anybody?

Aunt Eliza: That is a question to which during the fifty-five years of my life I've been totally unable to discover an answer.

2.

Yet Mrs.Dot is determined to marry again. Aunt Eliza doesn't find the man particularly clever, handsome, or amusing- and the niece agrees. But because she is head over ears in love with him she must. And Aunt Eliza must be a "perfect brick" in helping her remove the obstacles. Why, of course, if it's anything in reason, she will. "But it's not in reason". The girl is in love. "Well, I'll do it all the same". And the aunt bolts off to London to get two special licences so that Mrs.Dot can whisk aside the characters in her way- by putting cars under their bodies and thrusting licences in their hands.

Renie Dalrymple in Revolt<sup>3</sup> leaves her "stately homes of England" and her father who is an "economic parasite" and simply dumps herself on her aunt Miss Partridge. "I have to put up with it as best I can." "Oh, you wicked woman!" ejaculates Renie. And they get on shockingly well together in Glasgow- at the sale for "remnants of the last extinct fashion", and at the bicycle shop where aunt and niece together study the "atmosphere of work and practicalness". Together they pass their days in a commune as they hold high hopes for Jeff's success. All their plans and schemes are, however, sabotaged. Renie, notwithstanding, marries. But nothing goes wrong with "our" relations.

One would take Miss Latimer<sup>4</sup> to be a counterpart to Miss Partridge for two strong reasons. Firstly, in the unfinished text that Hankin left behind, Miss Latimer was "Mrs.",<sup>5</sup> mother to Gerald, whereas in the extant play she is aunt and the young man is obviously her nephew. Secondly, Hankin had little faith in old relations: for example, the aunt in The Two Mr.Wetherbys. Miss Latimer is by far the more complete of the two. But Calderon has fused his talent with Hankin's, a stronger dramatist. The result is therefore the richer. Thinking in terms of basic character traits, the joint-product is as "kind-hearted", "ill-dressed and outspoken" as Calderon's own piece is. She has besides, the same clearly

1. S.Maugham Mrs.Dot, 1908.

2. II.

3. G.Calderon, 1912.

4. Hankin & Calderon, Thompson, 1913.

5. J.Drinkwater, The Plays of John Hankin, Vol.II, p.221.



defined socialistic thought, for instance on labour and wages in Thompson (I). The hall-mark of modernity one furthermore takes to be the rational optimism, which again both aunts have in common. In perfect friendliness Miss Latimer plays up the game with Gerald on the one hand; and with the perfect sympathy of a broad-minded woman she weans Helen on the other, from her romantic love, and transplants in its place the realistic roots of "nice healthy people that one can marry and be comfortable with" (III). "Oh, if only I were going to be an old maid like you!" exclaims Helen, her affection for this "grim and masculine old maid of sixty" beginning to grow deeper. "So you shall, my dear," commentatively chimes in the elder, "You're just cut out to be an old maid," but of course, brings the younger ones together with her practical common sense.

It is not fair to try to merge the individuality of one aunt into another's. But as more and more realism gains ground, the aunt becomes an integral decisive factor in the course of the play. She is the person who sets her mind to a thing, and goes on pursuing it correctly till she gets it in order to promote <sup>the deserved</sup> happiness of others. Aunt Gertrude's comprehensive argument with her niece in Milestones<sup>1</sup> is estimable. Twenty-five years back (Act I in the play) she was in love. Had she overcome the difficulties in her way then, she would have been a different woman.

And now look at me! Couldn't I have ruled a house and a family?  
 Couldn't I have played the hostess? (In another tone). To-day the  
 one poor little joy I have in life is to pretend I'm your mother.  
 Look at my position here. I'm only-- 2.

We know what she is. In a flat tone of despair, she tells Emily that love too dies out with the years and that there never is anybody else after the first love. There may be dozens still to pick and choose from, but they seem the wrong men always: Hence unacceptable!

~~You must show me~~  
 You must show some courage, my girl. Don't be afraid of anything, and especially not of arguments and threats. What does unpleasantness matter, after all? It's over in a month; but a mistake lasts for ever.

Emily: You'll help me?

Gertrude: That's all I live for. 3.

That's what all these aunts live for. Gertrude is closer to the niece than the actual mother is. For the rest, perhaps the mothers don't exist, nor do the children need them when the aunt proves the guardian angel in times of stress and strain.

1. Bennett & Knoblauch, 1913.

2. II.

3. Ibid.

Although her own frame of mind too is unsettled, as for example in Mariners,<sup>1</sup> where a parallel relation and atmosphere exists and niece Joan is on the horns of a dilemma, the aunt in piercing agony cries, "Better to break your heart than let it shrivel"; it is not worth while going by the stupid, uncalculated remarks of people like Lady Sara who reduce marriage to a mere "lottery,"

Grant that they wrecked themselves; but think of the stars they steered by.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is a lesson of fortitude that she teaches, regardless of the fact that when followed an utter void would be left in her own life. A selfless creed indeed. Remarkably clearly moreover, do the authors of both this play and the one preceding sift maternal love from that of the aunt, and so teach us the reason why aunt and niece are close allies; not only on the ground that both are unmarried and live in subordinate positions; there are other circumstances through which the aunt develops a humaner attitude. Sheer emotional necessity yet so compounded, in fine, strikes a deeper chord with the niece's own love and understanding.

As the dramatist soars into the truer spirit of comedy, the aunt gains in dimensions. A sort of atmosphere is diffused from her person into the play as a whole. There is something forced and unconvincing about Jerome's characters; Gertrude is one of the many strands woven through a family saga; Miss Latimer has a distinctness that is uncommon; but with Aunt Ellen<sup>3</sup> is wafted a breeziness, compacted of the mountains she hails from and of the earth of the Geoghegans she comes down to. But why has she not got married? Alas, but could she have ratified the motion of marriage with all her grand ideas gathered from the "Free Press", the "Eagle", the "Examiner" and perhaps the "Clarion", which Miss Partridge (Revolt) also subscribes to? All these notions are fanned by the mountain airs, so to speak. Hence she flurries along with her latest scheme for "a co-operative shop" in which one of the stick-in-the-mud nephews can find some future, to say nothing of present security. They all know Aunt Ellen for her plans. "A great woman" she is, when something tangible is in the offing. But Aunt Ellen now really struts and spreads her wings when the family comes to a deadlock with Duffy over his daughter Delia and the whiteheaded boy Denis. First ~~she~~<sup>she</sup> tells the tall tale of the possibilities of Denis's mining resources in Canada, but that he cannot marry the girl. Duffy threatens that he will drag the whole troop of the Geoghegans to the

1. G.Dene, 1927.

2. III.

3. Lennox Robinson, The Whiteheaded Boy, 1916.

court for breach of promise and get a round sum out of them into the bargain. To be sure, the troop is marched out for the time that Aunt Ellen is to take to get round the man. Her chain of syllogisms starts in Act II and ends with Duffy renewing his springtime proposal for marriage. She likes to remain free. He'll see the lawyer then about the Geoghegans in the morning! She comes round. And the history of their youth restarts. His hands however, are off Aunt Ellen's waist when one by one they line up again for the results. The play ends on her announcement that after she is married- "the boldest plan she ever made"-- she has a plan for all her nieces (who were becoming old maids). One may be sure Aunt Ellen will do something for them, when they all so vibrate to this great woman. None can accusingly ask her why she did not think of them till now. Ah, but till now, she had believed in woman being free. The case has altered since.

It is no joke, the way an aunt takes live interest in the most neglected of her nieces and nephews alongside of those better known abroad. In fact, we must first broaden our own vision if we want to meet hers in the picture. And we must also rise ~~up~~ to her heights through the little things one pays little heed to in the common run of things. Look at Miss Farrington<sup>1</sup> -an octogenarian- saying "hooray" too to the clever games the younger ones play now-a-days! At the same time, who says he wants any help? Aunt has casually glanced through her pass-book and there is a deal of money lying idle that she would be in no hurry to get back. None speaks up though Bob is in no little trouble. She has the clairvoyance, while Gerald and Bob do not even know how the affairs of their own hearts will shape. Ask Aunt. She is of commoner clay no longer at that age. That is why when all other dramatis personae have their entrances and exits in the common ways, Miss Farrington suddenly catches the eye descending a flight of stairs. (I). Another time, lo and behold, up there - one rushes to meet her in the balcony---the balcony to which once upon a time only a Romeo-Juliet pair laid claim.

To turn to another octogenarian: to meet Jennifer Varwell<sup>2</sup> for the first time, come unto the yellow sands and stretch the eye as far as the blue of the enamelled waves meets the gold in the sunshine; stretch the inner eye then to see how far the blues of the sea and of the sky have partaken of Jennifer's eyes that once were blue; further stretch the same inner eye then to see how far the golds of the sands and of the sun have partaken of Jennifer's

1. A.A.Milne, The Lucky One, 1917.  
2. E.& A.Phillpots, Yellow Sands. 1926.

hair that once was gold.---After that Jennifer may be met. There she sits in her wheel-chair ruling the waves, "looking for all the world like my late, old friend, Queen Victoria. Regular Queen's weather you've got, Jennifer." (I). Only Dick the ne'er-do-well, the clever brother who has gathered his philosophy from the roads and the inns, only he fathoms the true depths of this great Victorian. Nieces and nephews find life hard and look forward to what Aunt Jennifer will leave them, therefore when in the next Act she receives her last birthday honours, they bring presents for her. But Jennifer knows what's what and who's who. She does not have to waste her short time looking into each bundle trundled along simply to catch her eye. The will has already been made. It has been made for quite a while now. And when the time comes for it to be read, Jennifer's spirit reigns. The justice of heaven is in each letter and word. Nought casts an honest heart down "like the funeral of a real good woman. They're so damned scarce." (III). In this requiem by the philosopher-of-the-road-and-the-inn, is inscribed the spirit and soul of the 'Universal Aunt' too.

The Question of the Mother Woman      The concept of the mother woman introduced during the transitional phase of Victorian drama acquires meaning during the 1890's. Difficult to swallow, still harder to digest, cataclysmic the concept assumedly is feared to be, if followed out. When the unmarried woman had from age to age stood in one category, and the married in another, the situation was comprehensible. But this new-fangled idea quite unsettles the Victorian. Between Darwin's discovery and Ibsen's law, he could not have found apter times for the application of the proverbial devil and deep sea strait that the conservative country was heading for. Admittedly, the full weight of such thought does not travel to the theatre. But it does filter through the dramatist's mind when he is compelled to elucidate the cause and effects of the social upheavals. He is constrained, moreover, to keep an eye on the Feminist Movement sweeping on, since the independent woman emerging therefrom is no mean force to reckon with.

Importance in the context may not be given to the raw girl who is going giddy with the freedom of an Ibsen Club, say, in Shaw's The Philanderer; but certainly to the woman who is discovering a new measure of meaning to life, who is fathoming the wrongs done to her and who is airing her own views on man. Her revolt is against the humbling of her pride by a compromised marriage. If she is one of his conquests, or if he has in any way betrayed her trust, she finds tongue for expression, she asserts her right to deny him even at that crucial stage

when he has robbed her of the right to marry anyone but him, since, it is by going to that length only that she can win equality. It however rests with the dramatist how far he is going to carry that point. A breach of promise may be enough to make the woman refuse marriage subsequently. But such provisos, necessitated by new conditions, point to one direction- that marriage, on no grounds, is to be built on weak foundations, and that responsibility lies equally on both the parties.

A few points of view would help in understanding the turmoil of thought before 1900. Take a modern one in Beau Austin<sup>1</sup>, the self-explanatory title, the subordinate position of the woman, the period of the play notwithstanding. Rather, a rendition of an old hero's story under Ibsen's prevailing influence, helps. Dorothy Musgrave, a sensible, twenty-five year old woman, who had taken the Beau for her idol, has been deceived. Six months pass of his absence from the place, a week more after his arrival, and when he appears under threat and persuasion, though Dorothy does not know that part of it, she poses a question,

.....And now I am unworthy to be the wife of any gentleman; and you- look me in the face, George- are you worthy to be my husband?

"No, Dorothy, I am not," comes the confession, furthermore, continues she, "How should I kneel before the altar, and vow to reverence as my husband you, you who deceived me as my lover?"  
2.

And so taken up, he is reduced more and more to remorse and supplication. The new woman thus is taming the wildest man, despite her own cornered position.

Conjectures over A Woman of No Importance<sup>3</sup> may be fanciful and false. Was Wilde at all influenced by the idea in Beau Austin? How far by Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles (1891)? Had his play anything to do with the stains on his soul his critics bespatter him with? But he is daring, more daring than authors who anticipate him in 'tornadoing'<sup>x</sup> the arbitrary socio-religio-moralistic laws. He lets the child of the unmarried Mrs. Arbuthnot arrive in the world (it is still in the womb in Beau Austin), he lets it grow to full maturity (it dies in infancy in Tess), and when about to start life with his father- Lord Illingworth - gives Mrs. Arbuthnot the right and power to divulge past secrets. Bird of the same feather as old Beau Austin and young D'Urberville, Lord Illingworth started his "fashionable" and "successful"

1. W.E.Henley & R.L.Stevenson, 1890.

2. III,vii.

3. O.Wilde, 1893.

x St.J.Ervine, Oscar Wilde, pp.234-42 uses the word once too often. Even with regard to the author's other plays.

career of contaminating "pure" women twenty years <sup>before</sup> ago. He "made" a girl love him,

made her love him so much that she left her father's house with him... She loved him so much, and he had promised to marry her! He had solemnly promised to marry her, and she had believed him. She was very young and-and ignorant of what life really is...she had a child-she implored him for the child's sake to marry her, that the child might have a name, that her sin might not be visited on the child, who was innocent. He refused.

He took away all that was "sweet, and good, and pure" in her. He left her "no joy, no peace, no atonement."

Nothing can heal her! no anodyne can give her sleep! no poppies forgetfulness! She is lost! She is a lost soul!

And now, twenty years after, he is still at his game. He encroaches upon "the purest thing on God's earth" whom Gerald, the son, is to marry. The latter is incensed to kill him, when the mother stays his hand and discloses that Illingworth is his father. This is Act III.

As satirical and bitter is Wilde in Act I about the injustice to woman. Man escapes branding. He escapes punishment. In Act IV, still the same, "The woman suffers. The man goes free." The worst part of the tragedy is, that women too are hard on her, they flee from the "tainted thing". As atonement for the wrong, Gerald wants at least delayed justice in her marriage, as a "duty" Mrs. Arbutnot owes to other women, for the sake of the "name" the son can rightly bear, in the "name" of the "religion" she believes in, the "religion" she has brought him, her boy, up on too. But

How could I swear to love the man I loathe, to honour him who wrought you to dishonour, to obey him who, in his mastery, made me to sin? No; marriage is a sacrament for those who love... not for my own sake will I lie to God,...no ceremony, Church-hallowed or State-made shall bind me...

Mrs. Arbutnot is heavy in her heart for all that she has had to undergo for the child, for the sick soul she <sup>had</sup> carried to Church.

I have never repented of my sin when you, my love, were its fruit...You are more to me than innocence. I would rather be your mother-oh! much rather!-than have been always pure,

Wilde writes this play as a manifesto on the "pure" woman. He does not let "The President of the Immortals" (Tess) end their sport with her. He lets her live her life in the pleasure and plenty of her children. Indeed, he gives to the woman of no importance the privilege of ~~striking~~ <sup>word</sup> the finale, that it is the man rather who is of "no importance".

"Like the philosophers of Greece, Wilde..talked and lived his wisdom", but he did inscribe a little of it in such a play too. ~~From beneath the~~ <sup>sides</sup> ~~main and supporting~~ <sup>2</sup> ~~show~~  
1. A. Gide, Oscar Wilde, p.14.

"quip and epigram"<sup>1</sup> Shaw borrowed of him, who knows that the greater compatriot pilfered a handful of ideas from the lesser's Lady Windermere's Fan and A Woman of No Importance and put them together in Mrs. Warren's Profession<sup>x</sup> and The Philanderer with Shavian skill? Howbeit, on the most keenly controversial issue of the meaning of a woman's life and the definition of womanhood, Wilde set on a par the pure and good wife (Hester) and the pure and good mother (Mrs. Arbuthnot) and with all the seriousness of conviction<sup>2</sup>, as must be apparent to one unprejudiced by background histories of any nature. It is, moreover, through the two unmarried women<sup>†</sup> in the play under discussion that he expounds the flaws in society, and through them too he propounds the solutions in honest obedience to moral and religious laws. But Wilde lacked, alas, the art and artifice to act the apostle in a manner acceptable to the conservative.

To this school we now turn. In The Case of Rebellious Susan,<sup>3</sup> the author is articulate enough in dedicating the play to "Mrs. Grundy". Sir Richard, furthermore, states the accusations of the woman in revolt for his not having prevented her marriage in time with the words- that she would in the circumstances have been on "the highway to be an old maid" and at that "precise" moment would have been railing at him for having spoilt her "chances" (I). In due course, he brings up the Victorian moral against women with "distorted and defeated passions".

Nature's darling woman is a stay-at-home woman, a woman who wants to be a good wife and a good mother, and cares very little for anything else. 4.

The perfecting of the institution of marriage is this author's demand. Not that there is anything faulty in it, but that it is rendered so when worked by "imperfect creatures".

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1. A. Nicoll, A History of English Drama, Vol. I (1850-1900), p.194.

(Cf. St. J. Ervine, Oscar Wilde, p.235, that "epigrams" only save this play in particular, as well as others.)

2. Ibid. p.192. The critic states the reverse. (Cf. "It has no veracity from start to finish." St. J. Ervine, Oscar Wilde, p.242).

x Or Mrs. Jarman's Profession as it appeared for its first production. The Theatre, N.S.xxiv, Dec.1894.

3. H.A. Jones, 1894.

4. III.

† An interpretation as the following goes off at a tangent.

"Wilde, who edited an intellectual woman's paper for some years, and who often had a high opinion of the capacities of the women he encountered in literary society, deliberately intended to draw attention to the sexual equality of rights."

G. Woodcock, The Paradox of Oscar Wilde, p.157.

As strongly does Grundy refute the Feminist Cause. <sup>1 as the title indicates,</sup> The New Woman is "as old as Eve", but he combines with it the current topic of "a true man's love". True love granted, the problem of the sexes, in regard to freedom, subjugation, and all else, is resolved automatically. Directly or by implication, even when advocating that "one thing, the one thing every woman wants" is true love, he maintains the cause of both motherhood and wifehood.

Consider lastly, the analytical view appropriately appearing under the heading "Women-Wives or Mothers."

Broadly speaking...woman, fresh from Nature's mouldings, is, so far as first intention is concerned, a predestined wife or mother. She is not both...the wife woman...is the well-beloved, the chosen of the male artist. Weekdays and Sundays he paints her portrait. Shakespeare returns to her again and again, as though it were hard to part from her..... 2.

e General Opinion. Maintaining the same order,- the exposure and reform of the man with a past (Paul), the defence of the institution of marriage (Paul clears his conscience to Margaret), the importance of "a true man's love" (both in the case of Kate Ommeney and Lady Janet- but neither having it), the exaltation of the principle of motherhood (in the first and <sup>in</sup> the moan of the second for being neither wife nor mother)- all these four points are thrashed out in Barrie's problem play, The Wedding Guest. Circumstantially, and while giving full vent to thought, he grants to each character the best within his power and proves himself to be the most modern in laudably placating the most conscience-stricken, or for that matter, the most conservative among the public, in thus grading his unmarried women. The vital point he has in common with the authors of Beau Austin and A Woman of No Importance is, that repentance is not for woman alone. Dorothy, Mrs.Arbutnot and Mrs.Ommeney openly maintain that they are in the right. If related to tradition, any such case at one time would have been deported to a nunnery, and then or later, at any rate considered suitable for tragedy.

Shaw does not subscribe towards such thought about the re-installation of a 'virtuous' and 'pure' woman back in society since in Mrs.Warren's case he paddles in the sociological problem of her 'profession', and since the supreme and glorious state of motherhood he declares, is to be reached only after the first condition of marriage is fulfilled. Violet in Man and Superman is an illustration. The question of victimization and betrayal of woman by man least arises with the inauguration of his 'pursuer' theory. According to it, she probably

1. 1894.

2. The Yellow Book, pp.12-16, Vol.III, Oct.1894.



heralds her own doom; even is responsible for the Don Juanistic traits in him since she lures her counterpart into the pleasures of the chase.

Inspired by Ellen Terry,<sup>1</sup> Shaw however creates the young-old-maid-mother-woman par excellence, in Lady Cicely.<sup>2</sup> By sublimating her instincts, her very housewifely propensities in the large-scale project of campaigning and missionizing, substantiated by her mothering of Captain Brassbound's brigands, the author writes out love in her case for any particular "person". Indeed, how could she manage "people" if she had "that mad little bit of self" left in her? That's the secret of her success, of her perpetuating her intelligence, humanity and good looks through her noble work, Philistine withal.

Turning to a minor dramatist, Jerome treats as rag and rot this idea of emancipated womanhood; of any theory that halves the whole in the sex. Because she is a "female", he rips off her preposterous bowler-hat, walking-stick etc. in The Celebrity, and dresses her up in decent womanly attire befitting her thirty-five years; because she has the 'wife' in her he shows how hard she is at buying off the cock whom the moon-calf, John Parable, favours; because she also has the "mother" in her, he elaborated upon her fads for children's schools. With her notions of serviceability both towards a crank and a cause, she is no more than an eccentric type, or perhaps more correctly speaking, an aborted personality. A comparatively unknown author, in The Waters of Bitterness,<sup>3</sup> analyses that Miss Marsden is neurotic because "the instinct of sex" is "suppressed", (II). The pathology of the case reveals besides, that the conflicts remain unresolved because of the apathetic attitude of family and society. Had the members at home not thought it infra dig her looking after children as an occupation, she would not have been morbidly lonely. Her love for the young artist springs from this. Because she is, to her own mortification, unable to harmonise the maternal and sexual urges within her, she shoots herself. That the author in his preface appeals to the most "careless reader" to investigate sympathetically the problem and within the play leaves it to the doctor to acquaint us with the diagnostics of a neurotic type, - are points that may not be overlooked Granville Barker's production (of an abridged version of the play) moreover, is something that adds to its value. In fact, one of his own characters was to end his play, Waste, on the same feeling of "loneliness", on the same desire for "children" and the "common joys" of

1. A.H.Nethercot, Men and Supermen, p.96.

2. Captain Brassbound's Conversion, 1900.

3. S.M.Fox, 1903.

life, in preference to the aridity education had brought in its wake. Similarly, Hankin was to sum up in The Return of the Prodigal, Violet's companionless, boring life with one aborted desire, "to have a house of her own!"

On a re-valuation of the question it is noticed that the first phase of exploratory thought set into motion through Beau Austin and A Woman of No Importance, with other plays mentioned and unmentioned ranged in between, reaches a fullness of expression in The Wedding Guest. Shaw's philistinism notwithstanding, a second phase involving the psychological aspect of the sublimation of sex, takes off from Captain Brassbound's Conversion<sup>8</sup>. The bifurcated personalities in The Waters of Bitterness and The Celebrity probably owe one part of their existence to it. Simultaneously after the 1900's with equal speed to that with which Shaw popularises the idea of the Life Force in Man and Superman the third phase of frustrated and wasted lives is accelerated through plays like The Return of the Prodigal and Waste.

The year 1908<sup>1</sup> however, brings the issue of the unmarried woman broadly, and of the mother-woman specifically, to its culminating point. From the peculiar clime of the time evidently, Masfield's genius soars to "things exulting and eternal", as he writes in his dedication of The Tragedy of Nan to W.B. Yeats. And so another new gem is presented to the distinguished Granville Barker for production. Indeed, it occurs to one on examining the composition, when did a young maid ever speak before to her lover of the wonder

for to 'ave little ones. To 'ave brought life into the world.  
To 'ave 'ad them little live things knocking on your 'eart, all  
them months. And then to feed them. 'Elpless like that,,,? 1.

Nan sees "plain" and "right" as against the young man's visualization of "nothing cherubic" about them.<sup>x</sup>

One child "squalling" and another in the "grate" is hardly his picture of  
\* In a letter to Ellen Terry, Shaw asserted that he had eschewed the sexual interest he had maintained in Candida, hence got greater fascination out of Lady Cicely.

† To mention a few plays:- J.M. Barrie, What Every Woman Knows.  
St.J. Hankin, The Constant Lover.  
Ibid., The Last of the De Mullins.  
Jerome K. Jerome, The Passing of the Third Floor Back } 1908  
Jerome K. Jerome, Fanny and the Servant Problem.  
J. Masfield, The Tragedy of Nan.  
G.B. Shaw, Getting Married. }

x In the time of Shakespeare and Heywood, the maid was persuaded into acceptance of the "leaving-a-copy" ideal of marriage. Compare also a version of Apes-in-Hell theory of apes being the children she might have had.

1. II.

domestic felicity. Nan stabs the "sinner"-- the "young man" in his "beauty" and in his "strong hunger" in order to "spare" "women crying, the broken women", who may be "led away" and cast aside as she. He had swung over to Jenny when her kiss was still warm upon his lips and while his blood was still "singing" in his veins with hers. Deprived of the joy of her love, the "her little one" yet to be born, of the "beautiful times"-- her hand with the knife rises and falls with finality.

Look into another "masterpiece", "poignant and yet not without cheer".<sup>1</sup> Drinkwater praises The Constant Lover with uncommon words and feeling. Here is a hero who also flits from beauty to beauty for he is "a constant lover" "constantly in love". The "cuckoo" is a "clever" bird to him. It sees the "folly" of "nursing" and "school-bills". From hedgerow to hedgerow it flirts and lays eggs in another's nest which saves all the trouble of "house-keeping". The young girl looks away. "I don't know I do like cuckoos after all. They sound to me rather selfish." She believes "most birds like bringing up their chickens and feeding them and looking after them." Pondering over the "lover's" May-time philosophy for a moment, and over his idle talk amid the sparrows' chatter and the thrush's call, she abruptly breaks away for the man who is sincere, whom she will marry and make "very happy".

Compare these excerpts with Janet's (The Last of the De Mullins) maturer thought and fuller expression because here we have a woman who has been through the experience.

To know that a child is your very own, is a part of you. That you have faced sickness and pain and death itself for it....To feel its soft breath on your cheek, to soothe it when it is fretful and still it when it cries, that is motherhood and that is glorious!

2.

Yet in the basic emotional texture it is similar to those preceding. Append to this Janet's relentless logic:

Woman had children thousands of years before marriage was invented. I dare say they will go on doing so thousands of years after it has ceased to exist.

3.

and the soundness of the "mother" question is self-evident. But Harkin sends only the younger girl on the conventional high-road to marriage because it is possible. He is practical, not, as some might think, a disbeliever.

In the first of these plays, the heroine puts an end to the lover, in the second, turns away from him, in the third, bears the child because a husband suitable to her is not in the

1. Introduction, The Plays of St.J.Harkin, Vol.I.p.21.
2. III.
3. III.

in the offing. Sixteen years old or thirty-six, it is the same ideal of motherhood; it is the same cynical disregard for insincerity, however young and handsome the man be; it is the same awareness of an inner and outer morality with her. Each dramatist thus, while earnestly trying to understand the problem of the unmarried, is also building up an ethical code by analysing to precision the problem created by man. Faith in the child also, in its innocence replacing the imperfect man,<sup>z</sup> has another ring of truth as when seen more broadly from Nan's angle when the King's men come with the news that her father was innocent.

And you come here, do you, to tell me that? You have a thousand men beneath you, a thousand strong men like the man there. And you have judges in scarlet, and lawyers in wigs. And a little child out of the road could have told you that my dad was innocent. A little child of the road. By once looking in his eyes. l. +

Of course, the playwright has also in view the Amy type in Waste, for example, who revolts against the idea of bearing a child. Jerome however, in The Master of Mrs. Chilvers concentrates on the one hand to the "intellectual" woman who indeed maintains that it is too much for the "nerves", though on the other, the moralist in him directs attention to the problem of the wee one left on the "poor" women's doorsteps.<sup>x</sup> Since even Prunella (Barker & Housman) bears the latter stamp, maybe the socialist humanitarian of the time also teaches the unmarried mother not to look upon a babe as a blot of sin whatever motives or circumstances may have induced her to commit the act.

So it is not sheer accident that Shaw's Getting Married also appears in the peak year of 1908. Though Shaw is cautious. He does not ration out thought for even strong-willed individuals as Lesbia. He is for state theories, for supply of children on "honourable terms". But he is embedded in bourgeois thought. Lesbia has a house, books, music,

#### 1. The Tragedy of Nan, III.

z Such a tempo of thought and emotion as is evidenced from the 1890's onto these plays would not cohere with an extremist's statement like

"Just then the suffrage movement was in full swing, and sex hatred had been added to the list." Jerome K. Jerome, My Life and Times, p.158.

+ Allowing for an idea such as Galsworthy's in The Silver Box, (1906) on justice.

x Cf., A full theme in E. Stirling's The Rag Picker of Paris, 1847.

~~Individuals as Lesbia. He is for state theories, for supply of children on "honourable terms".~~  
 But he is embedded in bourgeois thought. Lesbia has a house, books, music, culture, above all chivalrous knights waiting decade after decade to hear if she be willing. Widely <sup>different is</sup> ~~apart falls~~ the realist. He concedes to the woman the rights and privileges of motherhood because it is incumbent on him to do so. Certain working conditions might create problems. Barrie's Kate Ommaney, to wit, was a model in a studio at the time she got involved; and Barker's Miss Yates, a mannequin in <sup>a</sup> ~~the~~ drapery establishment. Is it the fault of either if the man is not worthy? Since there is nothing wrong about her, the least her creator can offer is the child she finds some happiness of life in. She has a trade at her fingers' ends, hence needs no one for financial support. Hankin's Janet finds a calling for herself and takes pride in rearing her son on her resources, however meagre.

The heroine of a popular repertory play, Hindle Wakes, occupies the central interest because point by point she asserts equal rights with Alan. She cannot marry him, he does not earn brass enough for his own living; he cannot be relied on, for at his father's word he is ready to give up his betrothed, <sup>If he gives up</sup> one girl to-day, her turn <sup>may</sup> ~~might~~ come up next, <sup>even</sup> ~~what~~ though <sup>she is</sup> ~~his~~ wife. But she's a "Lancashire lass, and so long as there's weaving sheds in Lancashire" she (and her child) will not be found wanting. She will be living her own life. And that in the school of realism is competence, heroism, virtue itself rather than fizzling out to a "Futile Female" (Rococo). <sup>Janet embodies</sup> ~~More~~ <sup>does Janet embody</sup> ~~distrubingly~~ <sup>u</sup> ~~does Janet embody~~ the spirit of the times in Rutherford and Son. This poor withered woman of thirty-six has had enough of the cheerless life under Rutherford's roof. And in desperation, the only way out she seeks to get is in and through the love of Martin, a man at her father's works. How much has she envied the down to earth life the commonest woman leads! And how much has she thought of the riches of their souls! When the child in her womb breaks the age-long chains, for the first time confronting ~~her~~ father, shrilly echoing his words, "What more!", she unburdens her grief:

Theirs isn't the dead empty house, the blank o' the moors, they've got something to fight, something to be feared of. They've got life, those women we send cans o' soup to out o' pity when their bairns are born.

Such reasonings and new questionings notwithstanding, old morality <sup>is</sup> ~~does~~ not <sup>abandoned.</sup> ~~lie prostrate.~~ Jones, whose Victorian idea about the institution of marriage has already been <sup>mentioned</sup> ~~entertained~~,

1. S. Houghton, 1912.
2. G. Sowerby, 1912.
3. II.

further thought on the none too easy problem of rearing the child in The Life. To escape penury and want, the younger of the two sisters recklessly involves her honour with a not undeserving candidate to clutch him subsequently into marriage. As chance would have it, he dies. The child in due course arriving, she leaves his upbringing to a paid woman under supervision of the good sister, to marry the next rich man coming her way. But the closely guarded secret is out when misunderstandings with and suspicions about the innocent elder sister start arising. Thus a sort of parable flows into the midstream of realism.

2

Probably, the principle of motherhood is at the back of another author's mind too when he re-interprets religion,

That fierce old virgin, Cornish Merryn, prays  
To a young woman, yes and even a virgin-  
The poorest kind of woman and she says  
That is to be a Christian: avoid then  
Her worship most, for men hate such denials,  
And any woman scorns her unwed daughter..,

since religious feeling is indubitably being invoked in lines like

motherhood shall be open to all women...I am not married, as you know-and none of you think the worse of me for it, or regard me as depraved, or immoral-for you know, and I know, and God knows, that I am none of these things, but a woman who craved for a child and could meet no man whom she loved enough to give her whole life to him. And I plead, and our paper pleads, for the thousands of women in like case to mine.

3

Sutro may not be ranked as high as the preceding dramatists in terms of originality, but he carries the torch on. What is more, by such means as the after-dinner paper-reading that opens the play quoted from, he makes a direct appeal to the audience for support of the new moral law, which, he enunciates, is not less stern and strong than any. <sup>Can</sup> ~~Would~~ Oscar Wilde's sincerity of purpose, ~~for all~~, indeed, behind his "tornadoes", still be doubted? Considering all, ~~does~~ not Shaw ~~appear~~ <sup>at</sup> ~~another~~ cleverer, ~~at~~ evading real, live issues and yet maintaining position as leader?

1900's. The 1900's set one off again into another of the usually overlooked avenues of martyr in enquiry, branching from the previous fields ploughed. One character, who cannot very justly be called a type, and yet may well be so, recurs quite often. As martyr to parental tyranny, the unmarried woman is a pitiful sight. That she has a dead soul is pitiable enough, but greater is the pity when the dead awakens, yet cannot get release. There are chains all

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1. 1914.
  2. G. Bottomley, Lear's Wife, 1915.
  3. A. Sutro, Freedom, I, 1916.

around <sup>but nevertheless are there</sup> ~~but there are~~ claims upon "Poor Honor" and "Poor old VP", and upon <sup>the</sup> "Poor dears" and "poor things". "Poor" is the only spark of human feeling, the common badge for this suffering tribe, because the parent is a service-absorbing parasite. Therefore at <sup>the</sup> another end, the spirit of insurgence springs up and instead of waiting and wanting, quite a history is in commencement. The time is up for a daughter to remain any longer a creature for compassion, a victim to circumstances. "Stunted" Maggie pushes up to great things from small; "well-proportioned" Maggie <sup>6</sup> ~~prefers~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~risking~~ single destiny to "safe" shackles; Madge frees herself, spares herself the calling of a Maggie, though the most heroic of all filial slaves, in insurrection, is the Maggie who gives Papa Hobson his Choice. But be it this Maggie or that, she <sup>only heads</sup> ~~too leads~~ a <sup>sequence of</sup> ~~plain~~ Jones <sup>and</sup> Kates ~~in name~~. For one is just coming into consciousness; one struggles a while and falls; the other never has thought, never sought, never will think, never will seek. The "kind" parent has seen to it, that a daughter born of respectability shall indeed have no conscious life of her own. Call the "poor" a dear by decent Victorian standards, call the rebel a red by bolsevik standards/-a mere matter of opinion. "But have you ever heard of Moloch? No:- Well, Moloch was a sort of a god- some time ago." Talk of "parents in the Bible sacrificing their children to Moloch."

In view of such gleanings, it needs must be pointed <sup>out</sup> at the very outset, that since an examination like

It may seem hard to 'believe' in the possibility of such extremes of parental tyranny and crass mismanagement of daughters; but when Mr. Barker wrote this play (The Madras House) such practices though perhaps rare were not altogether out-of-date...

by one critic tends to be in rather a gingerly manner, and since the findings of others are only fragmentary and impressionistic, it is necessary to go ahead with a few post-1900 dramatists in order to reinterpret some of their plays; also, to bring about thereby some awareness of the fact to a reader's mind that not even the fringe of the present question had been touched by earlier playwrights/-whether of the sentimental, domestic, realistic, or any

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| 1. G. Barker, <u>The Voysey Inheritance</u> , 1905.                      | 2. St. J. Hankin, <u>The Return of the Prodigal</u> , 190 |
| 3. G. Barker, <u>The Madras House</u> , 1910.                            | 4. St. J. Hankin, <u>The Last of the De Mullins</u> , 19  |
| 5. J. M. Barrie, <u>What Every Woman Knows</u> , 1908.                   | 1908.   |
| 6. E. Baker, <u>Chains</u> , 1909.                                       |   |
| 7. S. Houghton, <u>The Perfect Cure</u> , 1913.                          |   |
| 8. H. Brighouse, <u>Hobson's Choice</u> , 1916.                          |   |
| 9. G. Sowerby, <u>Rutherford and Son, I</u> , 1912.                      |   |
| 10. S. Houghton, <u>The Perfect Cure, II</u> .                           |   |
| 11. A. E. Morgan, <u>Tendencies of Modern English Drama</u> , pp. 102-3. |   |

other school. Indeed, ~~only too smoothly~~ had they <sup>had only too smoothly</sup> glided past it, ~~only too smoothly~~.

Barker, Harkin and the rest eventually, all concur in investigating the fundamentals of certain long-standing home and family laws. ~~Thereafter,~~ Some of the revelations ~~run-up~~ are, ~~namely~~ that the twelve-pillared Georgian house, the middle-class domestic temple, the living-room-kitchen, any Englishman's "castle", in short, is a prison-house to the dutiful daughter; that it is the parents rather who fail to do their duty by her; even that when occasionally she chooses to shape her own destiny, they throw their conventional irrational selves in her way. On the whole therefore, here is a story of human bondage and as well, ironically enough, of a wasting and wasted life in the place of her birth and growth.

Barker and Harkin, both because they lead in laying bare the circumstances of the case, and because they make a good complementary team in doing so, are placed in juxtaposition for the characters of their make. From an individual study in an earlier play each proceeds thereon to clarify the general position of broods perforce kept from fledging. These duly serve as introductions both to the passive group of sisters to follow in sorrow, as well as to the group that plunges headlong into doing and daring.

<sup>1</sup>  
"Poor Honor" is unschooled, untaught. "Her fate is a curious survival of the intolerance of parents for her sex until the vanity of their hunger for sons had been satisfied." (II). As a consequence, her senses are dulled, her instincts deadened from overwork. She is nurse without being a mother, housekeeper without any house of her own. At the beck and call of one and all, the wages she receives are food and shelter. Therein rests her content, therein rooted her filial gratitude. Naturally, the illness of a parent wastes her strength, his death her tears. Any sort of <sup>disparagement</sup> ~~beating-up~~ of his name and honour gives the unkind-  
<sup>2</sup>  
est cut to her. She has, in fact, no soul no existence of her own. "Poor old Vi" on the other hand, can think her own thoughts, has the capacity to understand that living "from year's end to year's end", "always, always" in the same place, investing a father with a muffler, a mother with a shawl, knitting socks for "old Allen", pouring out coffee for one brother and working out handkerchiefs for another, is all waste, waste, waste. The tragedy is

1. G. Barker, The Voysey Inheritance.

2. St. J. Harkin, The Return of the Prodigal.



she cannot speak out her thoughts to them, or get away from her prison. "Mother wouldn't understand"(IV), is her most poignant cry. <sup>Mother</sup> ~~she~~ had got a home of her own at the right age. <sup>She</sup> ~~she~~ has lived her own life. She is getting service gratis. As <sup>does</sup> who not? The essential difference <sup>between</sup> between Honor and Violet ~~is~~ is a dead soul and <sup>a</sup> soul prostrate because it knows that a flap of the wings is in vain. The bars will not yield.

The Madras House and The Last of the De Mullins combinedly unfold the story of the dead, maimed and <sup>s</sup>masacred souls out of which works a spirit of revolt. We learn, in larger measure, of the extensiveness of parental wrongs and of the manner in which these wrongs are exercised. But while Barker begins and ends his play with parents out-Heroding Herod, Hankin saves a soul, sends it in flight, and works out a revolutionary ethical code through her. <sup>Examining</sup> ~~Closely~~ the <sup>case</sup> ~~exposed~~ of the eldest unburied in The Madras House. "one hopes" that she has at least the wherewithal to dream, "if only of wild adventures with a new carpet-sweeper." Impossible to break through her imperturbability or through Emma's idolatry for that matter, -from the hint about the way in which the Mater had cured Julia of her wantonness when the latter had got fondly attached to a collar marked "Lewis Waller", -it may <sup>deduced</sup> ~~deductively~~ be ~~affirmed~~ that theirs is only an earlier arrested growth. The same may be vouchsafed for Minnie and Clara. But Julia has not yet been completely desensitised. She is still "very unhappy". As for the twenty-six year old child, Jane, "she is too young to know her own mind"(I). <sup>Consequently</sup> ~~Consequently~~ the gentleman who had dared propose to her, <sup>has</sup> ~~was~~ been thrown out for his impropriety. Since this "unwanted litter" had not been drowned at birth, and since the law said nothing about the "stifling of instincts"(III), Barker could not very well have dragged the culprits into court on charge of infanticide or instincticide much as he would have liked to.

Advocating strongly the rule of the male, the Patriarch in The Last of the De Mullins had once locked Janet up. Of an independent frame of mind, she however, had contrived to escape in order to assert her own rights of womanhood and insubordination. On her return with her child after some years, he again <sup>wishes</sup> ~~would~~ to place her under tutelage, to extinguish the identity of the grandson <sup>by</sup> ~~in~~ merging him with the "honourable men and pure women" of his ancestry -provided that she marries. But whom? That question apart, ~~in~~ violating the parental character of rights, Janet has acquired a charm, a life of her own, a purpose to live for and

\* J.C.Trewin(The Theatre since 1900, p.81) limits this "study in repression" to "the younger generation of suburban Denmark Hill."(8)

an ideology to propagate through womankind. Contrastedly, what a mangled form is Hester's, who has submitted. In fact, she has been growing idiotic over the "singularly unattractive" Curate Brown with "the most enormous feet". De Mullin's venom rises at the very name of marriage. Much less is there a chance for one that will declass him. But his iron hand is prevented. One of the ten Bulsteads ("the plain one") lures the man away<sup>1</sup>; And here had Hester, even before Brown had appeared on the horizon, probably been flushing over the predecessor, Snood, with "very red hands"(I). Alas, but who's really to blame for driving her crazy?

Corresponding to such absurd attachments of Hester's are Maggie's in What Every Woman Knows.<sup>1</sup> Quite obviously, the minister of Galashiels, who has had "many a pound of steak" in the Wylie home, for whom Maggie had worked on a pair of "slippers"(which, by the way, she had begun for William Cathro, his predecessor), was as thoroughly unbearable a specimen as he seems always to have been. He too, like Hester's Brown, had gone and married. Generously though Maggie's father and brothers are throwing sealskin muffs and silks on her to wean her away from romantic notions, one is still a little suspicious of their having had something to do with Mahers' "stunted" growth. Leastways, on two grounds<sup>\*</sup> one, that there is no other woman about the house, Maggie being quite in charge of it; <sup>and</sup> two, that the Wylies have started from small beginnings—they could not very well have afforded a hired servant. Maggie ostensibly has been nurse-cook-mother, sister-in-sorrow to Honor, Violet and Hester. The Wylie trio laying out £300 on the student Shand on condition that five years hence (we know what Maggie's right age is), should such be her wish, Maggie could claim him—is dour humour in Scotch tradition. About daughters' "portions" and "settlements" somewhat presently, but that Barrie gives a queer twist first and then takes the story off the rails does not detract one from the not infrequent allusions in plays to the spinster-curate

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1. J.M.Barrie,

\* e.g. J. Heywood, John, Tyb and the Curate, 1533.

<sup>+</sup> ~~part~~ - a diluted joke of the nun-friar type. Miss Shepperley for instance in Mariners, both to escape from boredom and the thankless job of housekeeping for relatives, had run into religious interests because of the Rector. Other complications <sup>make</sup> ~~and~~ certain characters come to a tragically <sup>emol.</sup> Presumably, without digressing any further, the pair from the Huxtable family in The Madras House are permitted to canalise life's values into religion after the "dear" parents have sized up the religious hero in the background as quite a harmless sort of animal. Nevertheless, each is a bleeding soul seeking relief and release.

Of equal importance ~~to~~ the understandable Life Force principle calling the unmarried away from the home, is her inner drive towards motherhood. But a factor not to be underrated is the stifling atmosphere created by the inconsiderate parents which makes it well-nigh impossible for her to breathe. The option of marriage may be acceptable sometimes solely on the last account, though it cannot be <sup>said that any of these reasons is of less weight than the others</sup> ~~entirely eliminated, nor the other two stopped at any particular time.~~ Janet in The Last of the De Mullins is a woman above the average, with active intelligence and clear-cut aims. Haggie in Chains is the middling sort, having one trait in common with the former, that she must be free of centuries'-old chains. Life with mother asleep in one chair and father in another, life passing away with the kettle in one hand and poker in <sup>the</sup> ~~an~~ other, must have woken her to take up a job in a shop. The tedium of that having grown upon her too, she had accepted engagement to a rich widower. It doesn't work. The raison d'être is somehow missing. The joie de vivre is just not there. Why do

1. C. Dane.

2. E. Baker.

\* Specific support to the following statement

"Although a clergyman had long been considered the right person for a governess to marry in polite circles."

(B. Howe, A Galaxy of Governesses, p. 88.)

is available too, e.g.,

A. W. Pinero, The Hobby Horse, 1886. When Mrs. Jermyn goes a-slumming under the borrowed name of governess-companion Miss Moxon. The honest parson, Noel Brice of course, has to bear the blow in the circumstances.

O. Wilde, The Importance of being Earnest, 1895. The amour between Parism and Dr. Chasuble is brought to fruition.

St. J. Hankin, The Charity that Began at Home, 1906. The only time Miss Triggs glows is, when on introduction she gets mistaken about Hylton's being "a real clergyman."

A. A. Milne, Make-Believe, 1918. The children whom Miss Pinniger teaches are quite tickled over this "Dearly Beloved" of Curate Smilax's.

On the other hand, in broader application, it is as continuous.

St. J. Ervine in Robert's Wife, (1937) however, sublimates the love of the spinster engaged in Parish work.

Notwithstanding evidence such as the above, one assumes that the "governess" got caught by the eye of a dramatist primarily because she was an unmarried woman, less on account of her profession.

people marry? Why do they get involved in more chains? She realises she would break from one sort to bind herself down again. Chains with a difference. Nonetheless, chains. So she breaks away from an uncommon chance of a cushioned future. The mother married for love when young. At this time of her life she too, alas reasons it out that a soft job, fetching a substantial sum, with life insured, ~~it~~ <sup>even</sup> is an ideal match, ~~what~~ <sup>her</sup> though he is senior in years or has seen married life before.

Maggie, on the contrary, is full of dreams. She wants to take risks, to stir things up. One feels sorry she is to continue to waste herself away, to put up with the grunts and snorts of duty-~~and~~ <sup>adoring</sup> parents. Similarly bored stiff is Hypatia in Misalliance.<sup>1</sup> Similarly irresponsible are her parents over the question of marriage. Worse still, as daughter of the house, "all day long" she must "listen to mamma talking", "at dinner she must listen to papa talking", and "when papa stops for breath" she must listen to Johnny "talking". If only, cries she, could a "holiday" be had "in an asylum for the dumb"! "If parents would only realize how they bore their children"! Fed up with "respectability" and "propriety", she wants something to "happen", for "destiny" to take its course. She wants to be "an active verb"- "to be, to do, or to suffer." It is not merely an old cry of youth against age, of an individual daughter oppressed in exclusive surroundings. It is the burdensome voice revealing for the first time in history, what has been "going on day after day, year after year, lifetime after lifetime"; it is the querulous mean sounding the depths of timeless griefs.

Girls withering into ladies. Ladies withering into old maids. Nursing old women. Running errands for old men. Good for nothing else at last. Oh, you can't imagine the friendly selfishness of old people and the maudlin sacrifice of the young. It's more unbearable than any poverty: more horrible than any regular-right-down wickedness. Oh, home! <sup>home!</sup> parents! family! duty! how I loathe them! How I'd like to see them all blown to bits!

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Living her own life, living any life, "living, instead of withering" -is the slogan of the mute, and of the articulate.

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1. G.B.Shaw.

\* One is astounded at such an explanation, if explanation it be:

"Why is the home a girl's prison? Because, at the time the statement was made, she could not earn her living in factory or office," C.E.M.Joad, Shaw, p.84.

Cf. Elinor's pathetic cry

"Oh, never mind England! It's I who am going to decay!  
It's I who am wasting all my life in this hole (the six  
hundred year old Shale Abbey)! Will no one come and take  
me out of it-buy me for a slave or something-  
anything-anything! "

H.A.Jones, The Lie, I, 1914.

In response to ~~this~~<sup>1</sup>, Renie Dalrymple renounces "young ladydom" and "squire's daughterdom"(I) and adds her own full cry, -it ~~never~~<sup>2</sup> does any good "trying to be wiser than nature"(IV). And Fanny Jeffcote wakens Hindle, first<sup>3</sup> by her daring deed; then, by withholding her assent to the parents' decision without her "consultation"; thirdly, by refusing to jump at Alan because she does not want to "spoil" her own life! Most sensational of all is her contradiction of the Mater's rigmarole on the restitution of "reputation". If she(daughter)has lost her name, she does not see how by "marrying" a man whom they call a "blackguard", she can turn into "an honest woman"; and if, after marriage, he remains "blackguard" no longer, she does not see why she should be used to make an "honest" man of him(III). She simply cannot comply because she sees through the conventional parental logic instigated by crass cupidity. The parental door hence shuts her out. But Fanny has her own life to live. Little wonder Lascelles Abercrombie declined to produce the play "as being too strong meat for the Liverpool public."<sup>3</sup>

Houghton had no leanings Ibsenwards. He was no party man. He was the true artist, outspoken, responsible withal. He could not very well have posed a question to the public and left them to ~~puzzle~~<sup>1</sup> over it. The ~~duties~~<sup>2</sup> of parents and the hero needed a thorough revision. He therefore gives Fanny a chance to speak her mind<sup>n</sup> as Renie(Revolt) gets it or Maggie(Chains). The rising woman, in the fitness of things, stirs up hope for her sisterhood and fresh morals for her oppressors, parents and man. It is said that the opportunity to leave Birmingham gave Houghton's soul swift development. While accepting this to be true, ~~one~~<sup>noticeable to that</sup> it is ~~otherways too marks~~ the theme of the first play, The Perfect Cure, as an embodiment of that spirit. And while ~~it~~<sup>this play</sup> may be considered deserving of praise, since the author skilfully manages to sustain interest throughout despite the fact that there are only four roles, our interest mounts when the villain of the piece is found to be the father, leading a double life, a perfect hypochondriac at home, a typical club-man tossing off a glass when he goes out of an evening for change of air. But he takes especial care to see that the door

1. G. Galderon, Revolt, 1912.

2. S. Houghton, Hindle Wakes, 1912.

3. Introduction, The Works of Stanley Houghton, Vol. I, p. xlix.

+ For once, one gains support of a direct point of view, i.e., "one feels that Fanny was obviously right in refusing to marry him."

E. Reynolds, Modern English Drama, p. 140.

is locked and the huge, big key is in his pocket. Madge, his daughter, must not be at any pranks. <sup>fact</sup> Indeed, the young man dogs the pater's steps to his destination, and then sprints ~~to~~ <sup>climbing</sup> towards her. The suspicious elder, returning all too soon to collar the honest suitor out of the same window he had come in by, is expected, though novel in handling. But a newer newness lies in Houghton's introduction of Martha, a maid who can never be shelved, "a sort of female Peter Pan"(II), who opens Madge's eyes to the slow destruction of her destiny by the father. There is nothing wrong with him. Why, he is almost a whistling young boy again on seeing this old flame of his. Yet with what self-commiseration and ~~what~~ ruses he endeavours to keep Madge's affair from maturing. She however, has since learnt and gives it to the father,

She (Martha) has made me see that I was looking at everything in the wrong light. She showed me that if I did not make an effort to get away from you, I should stop here year after year, growing older and older, and more and more in your power, until I shouldn't be able to get away at all. The house has been different since she came into it. Before it was dull and close and stuffy. Now it's bright and cheerful and sweet. She seems to have let in the fresh air and sunshine.

\*

The advantages Martha has had are <sup>she</sup> independence, money and interests. Consequently, is well exercised in body and mind to spot out in the world around, too, kindred parents to those in the Bible "sacrificing their children to Moloch."

The curtain opening on Madge's entry with her father's shoes in the foregoing play <sup>shows</sup> ~~brings~~ the daughter <sup>to be</sup> ~~degraded~~ beneath Honor (The Voysey Inheritance) and Violet (The Return of the Prodigal). From housekeeping daughterdom she has fallen to abject slavery. More <sup>daughter</sup> ~~degraded~~ is Janet's position in Rutherford and Son. With her "expressionless tired face and monotonous voice", her "slipshod and aimless" movements, this "heavy dark woman carrying a pair of slippers" forebodes mighty thunder and storm. To say the least, each member of the family contributes adequately in silence and speech to the <sup>common</sup> ~~mutual~~ atmosphere of disagreeableness and intolerance. But Janet is conspicuous. Her brother's long speech on "Moloch" and the "sacrifices", "human sacrifices" from "a great dirty town" to the "ugly head", however, brings about the real awakening. "Where did you get that?" she eagerly asks. "Get what?" "What you've been saying." She does not fully comprehend the biblical myth(!) yet how apt is her interpretation,

I. III.

2. G. Sowerby.

\* The Martha type has since been revised as the robust social-servicing spinster, e.g. in St. J. Ervine's Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary, E. Williams's The Corn is Green, and so on.

"Dedication" (she picks out the word from John's vocabulary) we're dedicated all of us to Rutherford's (Father). And being respected in Grantley. 1

When the heavily-built father comes in, settles down and stretches out his legs, and she unlaces his boots hesitatingly, in "silent revolt" and with a "sullen face," it seems she is still turning over the words on Moloch in her mind. Noticing what ~~she~~ she does, Moloch Rutherford spits out at her, "Ud like to tell me to take them off myself, I dare say. And I been working all day long for you." She is mum. They will are, particularly when John has it out with him. The brother, for that while, rises however to the height of a hero in ~~his~~ eyes. But when Rutherford leaves the room, sceptically she relapses into thinking that he will "give in the soonest way back" as always before, by saying he is sorry. "Nothing...nothing" will change the house.

We've all wanted things, one way and another, and we've let them slide. It's no good standing up against father.  
John. Oh, who listens to you? (Moving to the door) Disagreeable old maid!

Father or brother, which member of the family treats her with any grain of fellow-feeling anyway? The aunt curls her lip at "her and her sulky ways...She used to be had enough as a lass, that passionate and hard to drive. She's ~~ten~~ times worse now she's turned quiet." And then shoots <sup>out,</sup> "It's a good thing nobody's married you- a nice hoose you'd make..." All this is the middle and the beginning of Act I. <sup>It</sup> ~~The end~~ <sup>with</sup> ~~is on~~ Janet and Martin having a passionate kiss! They part before Rutherford <sup>quietly</sup> comes in; but ~~his quiet~~ <sup>his quiet</sup> spells <sup>little calm.</sup> ~~hang in the air.~~

For five-and-twenty years <sup>has</sup> ~~has~~ Rutherford <sup>held</sup> ~~held~~ <sup>his power</sup> ~~monopoly~~ over Martin at the Works, and with her "damned woman's ways" this female goes and drags "the man's heart out of him". ~~So~~ <sup>Thus</sup> ~~breaks out~~ the brooding storm <sup>breaks out</sup> between daughter and father in Act II. Martin is Rutherford's "servant", that he pays wages to, and like "any Jenny i' the place.." His venom rises.

Janet. ...You think of this that I've done separate from all the rest-from all the years I done as you bid me, lived as you bid me.

Rutherford. What's that to do wi' it? I'm your father! I work for 'ee, I gie 'ee food and clothes for your back! I got a right to be obeyed! I got a right to have my children live respectable in the station where I put them.....

Janet: Oh, you've no pity...I was thirty-six. Gone sour,  
Nobody'd ever come after me, not even when I was young-  
you took care o' that. Half of my life was gone,  
wellnigh all of it that mattered.....

She is no longer afraid. She tells him to his face that she has envied the poorest women  
"with their bairns wrapped in their shawls and their men to come home at night time". He is  
near striking her hard, but she keeps him away with her impassioned outburst. She is now  
a dignified woman and if he turns her out of his house, she is glad to be let out of "gaol".  
Whatever happens, she will no more "go on living" as she did, under the roof of a father who  
has ruined her life with his grind of "getting on".

and you've got me <sup>to</sup> me to take your boots off at night-wellnigh  
wish you dead when I had to touch you...Now!...Now you know!

Act II ends here.

The curtain rises again on Janet telling her sister-in-law (the only person who is not  
of the blood of the family) of her dreams in the most inspired poetry, of the courage she has  
had in facing father, of the child she is to have. And then to Martin she tells the story  
of her solitary childhood, of the loneliness thereafter. But Martin is wrapt up with his uproo-  
-ed self, a broken man. Rutherford has taken his life away. And he too goes, leaving her  
behind. Blind as it were, she stumbles out-alone, in the cold and dark-the father's door  
shutting on her.

This tragedy is <sup>dealt with</sup> ~~taken up~~ in its entirety because it is supposed that Janet is just one  
of the many ground down by the ruthless capitalist, that like the Rutherford boys she goes  
never to come back. They go out to live only in different parts of the world. Janet staggers  
out straight into the jaws of death, a disillusioned woman, scarcely to "live". And when  
she did "live" though each person was set against Moloch, were they all not against her?  
Hankin could manage to kill a De Mullin to save Janet with her new race, because De Mullin  
was already a dying class. Hankin speeded up the parting guest. Githa Sowerby had to yield  
to Rutherford because the machine lords were coming up like mad. But, whichever of the socio-  
economic strata caught the dramatist's vision, he went not a little out of the way to show that  
the hardest job on his hands was that of recalling a daughter to life, of digging and delving

\* I see no "light in her eye" <sup>nor</sup> glow in her poor soul as she steps out.

(A.E. Morgan, Tendencies of Modern English Drama, p. 195.)

+ This is the point demanding inclusion in an evaluation, such as,

"This theme (Rutherford and Son) of a fight between different  
generations and the impossibility of reconciling their  
outlooks was also treated very effectively by Arnold Bennett in Mr. Widdowson"



her out of the "home", even if it was to throw her out into the cold and dark world. At least she could have a breath of air, whatever else happened. From Barker's stillborn tribes, thus the Revolution makes headway with "Death or Life" as the slogan.

Ascending to the uppermost level in Milestones,<sup>1</sup> whether taking each of the Acts separately representing an age, or the play as a whole, covering the years from 1860 to 1912, while, on the one hand, it is sensed how swiftly the nation is progressing—ships are being built, industrial magnates are amalgamating, typewriters are coming into counting-houses, telephones are being installed and electric-light plants are as stirring events as new baths (hot water too), new baronets and new Bills,—on the other hand, there are the same family ructions over every daughter's marriage. In Act I, one girl is head-strong enough to remain single. In Act II, another gives up her love. Since the family is coming up on the peerage roll, she cannot very well marry a common engineer, a socialist at that (who reads, of course, nothing redder than William Morris), hence submits to marry a lord, decades her senior. The irony of it is, that because she herself has since rued the day, she stands in the way of her daughter, who in turn, has fallen for another engineer not much different, and plans to go to Canada with him. The same <sup>note of</sup> self-commiseration (cf. the father's in The Perfect Cure), as one is acquainted with, starts. The daughter is accused of hardness of heart, selfishness, shamelessness, and what not, till like a <sup>repentant</sup> sinner she is, all tears, brought down on her knees. ~~When~~ comes the sanest adviser, the girl of Act I, now an aunt,

All this self-sacrifice is a sad mistake. None of us can live for ever. When your mother is gone—what will you do then?

2

It is only in comedy that the mother's life of regrets ends after twenty-six years with her old lover turning up and marrying her <sup>at the same time as</sup> ~~alongside of~~ the daughters' <sup>marriage takes place.</sup> Had he not, another life would have been wasted to fill the <sup>w</sup>man of Mater Moloch (in Janet's case it was Pater).

between Thus, and further, through the varying texture of each play could be found and Mammon.

some new link, some simple continuity, some fresh answer to a question raised by a

contemporary. How to end the misery of the enforced unmarried state is vexatious enough

indeed. But how to resist Moloch when Mammon holds both the reins of <sup>Moloch's</sup> ~~his~~ reason and the

chords of <sup>his</sup> ~~his~~ heart, there's the greater rub. Violet in The Return of the Prodigal

1. E.A. Bennett & E. Knoblauch, 1912.

states somewhat about the parent in connection with her lost chance; to complete that somewhat for us, the Huxtable parent in The Madras House declares <sup>that</sup> none need come forth "save for the girls alone". A marriage portion saved, and the man goes whistling by! Wheels within wheels proppeled Mammon. And Nan's Tragedy is the result. For had her father, in reality, committed the crime it would scarcely have mattered. Had Dick only known she had the bag of gold, would he still not have been hers, and hers alone? It is only when she directs him to carry it away to the avaricious aunt and to come back and marry her for love that he is really staggered; Rutherford had steadily risen. But had he not stealthily been exploiting Janet as part of the same process? Since he supplies her food, shelter and clothes, he reserves the right to bully her into the menial state. Over the same small mercies, Lear's descendant in The Perfect Cure holds forth about Magde- "the thankless child", "sharper than a serpent's tooth".(I). She indeed shall not, <sup>he</sup> decrees ~~he~~, walk off with" a comparative stranger"; Of course, a Voysey could put by a pretty penny out of Honor and still ~~obtain all sense of~~ <sup>given him</sup> the filial homage due.

"Who," one asks in exasperation, "is craftier than whom?" Since all the difference between one parent and another that can possibly be made out is in the cloak covering a body or the mask concealing a face. Going in and out from home to home, each time it is to con and old lesson anew about Selfishness being never quite so far when Duty is so perilously near. Dethic <sup>(the father)</sup> <sup>1</sup> in Judah, for example, <sup>go</sup> does not <sup>with</sup> bowl and sandals ~~only~~, ~~nor~~ with hand supported by <sup>his daughter</sup> Vashti's shoulder, but he earns no little through making the virgin daughter "fast and pray" and play the saint while he advertises his own ware (of "occult sciences") that will lead him to the House of Fame. <sup>2</sup> The grandfather in The Lie could not have been more depraved with one hand outstretched to reckless Lucy- "little fairy godmother"- for all the spare cheques she can extract out of her husband to be payable to him, and <sup>with</sup> the other ~~trying to drive~~ <sup>ing</sup> the elder unmarried sister to accept gifts and tokens from ~~Didin~~ though these might have compromised her. How much Maggie's (Chains) parent, ~~in train~~, or Fanny's (Hindle Wakes) is torn to shreds over either's security, had better not be asked. But he leaves scarcely a stone unturned in capturing the gold-plated suitor and he scarcely lets her forget the daughterly homage due.

<sup>3</sup> In The Whiteheaded Boy, a family is prevented from being sacrificed any more than it has been for a boy's career (in Dublin!). But not till the <sup>unvalued</sup> ~~spare~~ one has been martyred.

- 
1. H.A. Jones, 1890.
  2. Ibid., 1914.
  3. S.L. Robinson, 1916.

Look at Kate there, worn out and grey before her time, an old maid. Wouldn't she have married then years ago to Jer Connor only we hadn't a penny to give with her, it all being kept for the laddo...

who has spent "ships of money" and "doesn't even pass his examinations."

What's keeping Jane from marrying Donough...What's keeping Baby (she's thirty if she's a day) at home...Denis, Denis, Denis. . . 1

<sup>however,</sup> ~~She~~ dead-beat, throws up the hoax of being the bright blossoming one of the brood. The coils around Jane and Baby thereupon loosen. As for the "quiet poor thing, no harm in her at all, very useful in the house." Her past has been broken, her future is a blank. Does the mother care? Did she ever care? Particularly since after the miracle had happened-Denis, a boy! after "those three lumps of girls."

2

Indeed, declares Hobson, the upholder of the "British Constitution", the representative of the "British Middle-class",-his three lumps of girls are his, and nobody's concern. And that's that. They cannot be "uppish" in dressing above the standard required for his shoe-shop they are not big eaters; they work for "their keep". As for "wages"; Whoever heard of a father paying wages to his daughters? However, says Jim the neighbouring shop-keeper-friend, he must think of marriage and "settlements". "Settlements indeed!" The men may go hang if "settlements" are what they're looking after. At any rate, he's in no hurry. One girl, well perhaps, for a start may do, but Maggie's "a bit on the ripe side for marrying", ( sotto voce ) "she's too useful to part with." But Jim has seen 'em do it at double her age."

To the two daughters he says (believe him!) he'll find men of his own choice.

Maggie. If you're dealing husbands round, don't I get one?  
Hobson. Well, that's a good one! You with a husband?  
Maggie. Why not?  
Hobson. Why not? I thought you'd sense enough to know. But if you want to know the brutal truth, you're past the marrying age. You're a proper old maid, Maggie, if ever there was one.  
Maggie. I'm thirty.  
Hobson. Aye, thirty and shelved. Well, all the women can't get husbands. 3

Worked up, Maggie gets into action directly his back is turned. She calls up Willie, the "marvel" of the workshop who does not know his worth. And she collars him into a marriage bargain since he has hands for making shoes, and she has a head for boosting up sales. Let others think and say what they will, she will and does indeed make a man out of Willie. Why if Maggie, the thirty-four old Maggie-without-charm in What Every Woman Knows learns to make a regular Parliament man out of Shand, Maggie Hobson starts Willie on slate and pencil,

starts him on the first kiss, starts him on to believing that he is "Mr. Mossop" and "Willie" no more!

Setting aside this side of her story, learning that Papa Hobson had taken a drop too much and fallen through a window into a warehouse, which incidentally belongs to a young man casting for one of her sisters, Maggie sends for the suitor. She sends also for the other young man casting for the other sister and gets him (he's a lawyer) to draw up a case against Hobson. Thus shall be obtained a good sum which the two may divide between them as marriage "settlements". Papa Hobson runs to Maggie for counsel. A respectable "British middle-class" man to be dragged into court, to be <sup>practised</sup> ~~used~~ upon for his money- 'tis simply outrageous! So Maggie comes to his aid <sup>to</sup> to keep him out of court; and she comes to his aid <sup>again</sup> when the shop and he are both going to the dogs. She alone, the maid who had been shelved, who had been taken to be "ingratitude" itself, the "thankless child" comes to his aid. Even the Doctor in attendance, knowing her value, prescribes "Maggie" for Hobson when he is ill. Maggie, the, the thirty-year old maid, who was well past the marrying age, hence rises to fame and puts little Salford on the "international theatre map". But she really owes her reputation to the Janes and Kates- "poor dears"- who fall by the wayside, and never a tear for them.

But what ~~will~~ will not a daughter do for a parent provided that she is not kicked by the shoes and slippers she fetches and carries for him? Why, she much sooner in that case would run a shoe-shop, having learnt that trade at home, and teach him a lesson in <sup>the</sup> the bargain. Aye but, so long as she can, what will not an "unselfish, noble-minded" daughter do? Miss Montmorency, <sup>2</sup> to support "a paralysed father" "entirely by her own exertions", becomes professional "intervener" in "all fashionable divorces". After all, she has to minister to needs, and the lawyer has to earn his living too. Knowing what "English law" is, this woman "of refinement", <sup>who,</sup> as a "governess" might <sup>well have</sup> ~~be~~ in a "very good family", spends a night in the lounge of a hotel playing cards with the man seeking divorce (a "detective" is round the corner for safety); and in the morning her partner ~~settles~~ settles all at his office! Knowing also however, how faces get "simply ravaged" in the process, she makes a special brand of cream and carries out a course of treatment on the wife, (III). All this, ~~and you,~~ on top of "duty" at home.

1. J.W. Marriott, Great Modern British Plays, p.421. 2. S. Maugham, Home and Beauty, 1919.

\* Note the author's compassion and love further,

Zack: "I wasn't any use, not real use, like Paul (his brother).

I couldn't boss things like he does, I was just there

and tried to tell the old maids that their day would come." Zack, I, 1916.

"Poor" Sylvia too. "It's easy enough to do your duty when duty is dangerous and exciting" but when mother is bed-ridden, she does "cheerfully" the most difficult thing. All through the war, when she was pining to get away, she stayed at home. The mother dies after years of suffering, leaving practically nothing, <sup>certainly not</sup> ~~much less~~ the daughter's youth. And though Sylvia would have been "a good wife and an excellent mother"(I), she gives up even the man she might have married, for he has lost the "faith" in battle which she has <sup>ur</sup> ~~natured~~ in peace.

Veritably suffering, or knowing the luxury of <sup>the</sup> service and attention of young daughters and so making the best of pretensions to suffer, the Victorians at least knew how to live, and live their lives out at that. The last of them, to wit, <sup>2</sup> turns over to the sere and yellow leaf of ninety before he gives up the ghost. Bladys - "the glorious young poet," who "never grew old"; the old young poet, who "had his friends, more friends than any man"; the man, who "had to be the head of a family ~~too~~"; above all, the family-head, <sup>who</sup> ~~indeed~~ had to have a daughter, <sup>too; had</sup> Isobel to keep him "active and alive, to sharpen his brains on, to nurse him and to wheel him about"(II). When he was alive, they all said Isobel was "a wonderful nurse", a "born" nurse, that Isobel wasn't the "marrying" sort; what would "Grandfather" have done without her, or rather what would Isobel have done without Grandfather, so on, and so forth. So they said.

On his last birthday, after she had decked the room "for the great man", Isobel however, had sat down to reminiscencing. How long was it since she had danced her last waltz? "Eighteen" years? Or was it "eighty"? "Eighty years ago." Or was it "only eighteen"? A "few faded memories" of the "smell of the pine woods" and of the hand, had <sup>disappeared</sup> ~~recalled~~ away buried

1. S. Maugham, The Unknown, 1920.

2. A. A. Milne, The Truth about Bladys, 1921.

\* The author allows "faree" a place in comedy. Hence the inclusion.

Religion being the more important issue of the play, the character loses individuality for any further consideration. Note however, that though Somerset Maugham nowhere belongs to the school of realism, he repeats this crippling state of affairs, time and again.

e.g. The Constant Wife, 1927. In Act I, Mrs Culver speaks of a "little friend" who goes to her with her griefs because "her mother had never wanted her to marry and it would mortify her now to have to say she had made a mistake."

The Sacred Flame, 1929. Harvester (when Mrs. Tabret says that a son who is doing very well in the world would not, fond as he is, give up all for a bed-ridden brother) "Not at all - the country is full of dessicated females who've given up their lives to taking care of an invalid mother."

For Services Rendered (1932). This tragedy is supported mainly <sup>by</sup> the "old maid" Evie, who, in her "thin, cracked voice" <sup>ironically</sup> ends the play by singing the anthem while the Pater speechifies on the "English home" and good old England.

in her world of dreams. But she comes <sup>she comes</sup> back to life <sup>she comes</sup> with the sound of Royce's voice <sup>with</sup> the "refrain" of the <sup>that he hums</sup> waltz <sup>here</sup> that Royce hums. <sup>Isobel</sup>

that's always the problem, isn't it, whether the old or the young have the better right to be selfish.

After living for "eighteen" years on her sap, Bladys dies. The funeral over, <sup>Isobel tells</sup> to the dying <sup>man's secret to the</sup> expectant family waiting to hear the will; <sup>Isobel tells</sup> the dying man's secret <sup>that</sup> that Oliver Bladys was not a poet; that he did not write the works attributed to him; and that he had betrayed the friend of his early years—the friend who was the real genius, the friend who had died young. Bladys had simply been stealing the honours due to another. So, while the rest of them are all speech and action for getting the money, even tainted money, the latter part of Act II is all Isobel. First, led on by her dreams, as it were:

Yes, you have lived your life; you have had interests, a hundred interests every day to keep you active and eager...(almost to herself) But I say, what of me? What has my life been? Look at me now—what am I? a wasted woman. I might have been a wife, a mother—with a man of my own, children of my own, in my own home. Look at me now.

A weighty pause. Then,

You thought I liked nursing. "A born nurse"—I can hear you saying it. (Fiercely it bursts out after all these years) I hated it! Do you know what it's like nursing a sick old man—day after day, night after night?...Ah, but I was doing it for Bladys, for the sake of his immortal poetry. (She laughs—such a laugh) And look at me now, all wasted. The wife I might have been (in a whisper) How beautiful the world was, all those years ago!

They say nothing. There is nothing to say. They see nothing. There is nothing they can see.

Gently they go out, leaving Isobel to dream her dreams as the lamp burns low.

And the critic hacks her down with the words,  
Alas, we were not interested in this lady and her unborn children, but in old Bladys. His ghostly and admirable figure returned again and again to remind us that the dramatist had taken himself too seriously and his art not seriously enough.

2

\*

Alas, for Milne. Alas too, for such masculine criticism handed down. Isobel in Act III is

1. I.

2. Ashley Dukes, The Youngest Drama, pp. 101-2.

\* e.g. J.C. Trewin, The Theatre since 1900, p. 160.

"The Truth about Bladys...for a moment does offer a real problem." What is the "real problem"?

B. Brook, Writers' Gallery, p. 100, has a couple of lines on the "death-bed repentance of a literary impostor" and the family interest in the "legacy". That is all.

bitter for the father had hurt her so. She had been giving her life, and he had all the time been laughing, playing at his game. She, therefore, will not permit his money to be touched. She will publicise facts. But is it for revenge? Or is it because she wants the truth to prevail? The critic ignores the fact that the dead Bladys has to live through Isobel, even as when alive he had lived on her. Her steeliness however, bends. Royce woos her in the name of the "daughter" they might have had. Like all properly brought up girls, Isobel replies, "You must ask my mother". Royce obeys, "Isobel's mother, will you marry me?" Alas, for the tyranny of parents. One overlooks such inconsistencies as in Act I Royce declares that he had "separated" from his wife, for Isobel's love clung to him, and in Act III that his wife "died ten years ago". Milne is over eager to make up for Isobel's wasted life and a smooth path to "till death do us part". At long last.

The Victorian has been seen from Voysey at the earlier period of his history on to Bladys, the nearly last survival of his strain. He has been seen in substance, and his ghost still haunts for the crimes he perpetrated. He has been seen waxing in power while youth grows pale and spectre-thin; when the fire and fury of the revolt of the years before 1916 dies out, and passivity and resignation take their turn again. It is not known whether Kate or Clara were really resigned or ultimately settled down at peace with themselves; it is not known whether Maggie was able to take the risk of breaking the chains on all sides. As little is known of the unborn children of their dead tribes. The shadows of the Victorian family appear to possess the things they may have been deprived of in the parental home in Possession<sup>1</sup>, but the maiden daughter Julia, who seems never to have left it, takes her seat in the comfortable armchair by the fireplace. She indulges in the sense of herself, in her thoughts in solitude and her sighs - the very picture of 'genteelity'. With soft effusiveness, she greets a returning sister. As for news, "I didn't ask questions". One never does. Or the mother too appearing, on being asked one by a wayward daughter, disappears. Julia knows better. Like a judge, enfin, she literally has donned ermine too.

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1. L.Housman, 1921.

Housman's The Family Honour (1947) is a most delightful and at once touching comedy on a father's death-bed repentance and gesture to atone for the sin of having turned away the one man, who had come to ask for his daughter's hand, because of his own selfish demands upon her. One gets to love the grown-up little brothers who too do not want Honor to marry, and then in "honour" see that she does. But without parting with the money the father left for her dower!

Of everything now in fact, she uses always the best. "Nothing wears out or gets broken." The two sisters come back to quarrel. Julia alone, when time has silvered her golden hair, sits hoping for peace at last. But did she have scores to "settle" with "dear" Mamma that she has occupied her room? Questions may not be asked. Strictly forbidden. But what happened to dear Papa after the Governess ran away with him? Julia does not desire her peace to be disturbed. Who married, who quarrelled and who parted are skeletons that had best be shut in the one too many Victorian cupboards. She, unintruded upon, must now go on with her crochet work, weaving her sighs and her thoughts and her sense of herself therein. But can there be any real tranquillity so long as apparitions keep appearing and disappearing? Alas! Alas! The world is not a place to idly settle in. 'Leave your crochet work, Julia. Arise and go forth. Wash your hands and announce to the others- Supper is served'.



Conclusion

In retrospect, the unmarried woman's history is seen to have incontrovertibly consisted of two potential forces, namely, of suppression and revolt. From the beginning, there was intolerance of life in maidenhood; the maid, on the other hand, was agitated over the way they precipitated her into marriage, indeed, over the type of married life they had to offer her. They terrorised her with "apes in hell" and threatened her with imprisonment in the nunnery; she shuddered at the thought of either, and yet dared being doomed to the one, on an unpropitious occasion fecklessly ran for cover to the other. By and large, the cause of her desolate state accrued from the growing acquisitive mind. It was quite common for an elder to dictatorially thrust a Sir Drybones or a Speedwell upon her, while the rich widow sped away, well in control of the more eligible candidates in the field.

Troubled over all such topsy-turvydom, the Elizabethan dramatist was compelled to come to the maid's rescue. With an amazing elasticity of mind he shot ahead to the most modern dramatists with his ardent feminism. Point by point, joining issues on her behalf, he put the stage out to the twin purpose - entertainingly albeit - of education and propaganda, and taught his audiences how and why to reckon her at her worth; and to realise at the same time how far wrong they were. He gave her wit and whim to denounce the monstrosity of such a belief as "apes in hell", and in diverse ways made them see that it could bode anything but good, Dekker going the farthest in hoisting an egregious abettor of it on his own petard. And notwithstanding the consensus of opinion that marriage was the beau ideal of woman's life, many a contemporary thought over and sought out ways and means as alternative openings, too. Particularly since, Massinger excepted, he felt that the nunnery gave no answer.

Alongside of the fundamental belief that it was an institution opposed to the natural course of life, the Restoration dramatist in his turn raised a wave of nationalism against its holocaust. Of course, this he was all the more able to do since the maid's victimization to it had continuously been going on over a marriage portion or over the old issue of misalliance.

Also down the years while the Elizabethan dramatist had been building up faith for and admiration in the repressed heroine, he had concurrently been rousing animosity against the "heav'n be prais'd, the husband's dead" licentiousness of the widow. Wherefore had he been able to instal her as a Shylockian-Machiavellian stock force of conflict to the former. Since she became a still more arrogant social figure, since she had even more of a gala time during

the carnival years, the Restoration playwright grew louder in his denunciation than his predecessor and more pointed in his satire too. Thus the mainstream of comedy went on with the same elements of conflict as had been passed on by tradition. Likewise, the defence of the maid was carried along the course of the not infrequent enforced-marriage theme.

A break with tradition, nevertheless, arose over the continued unmarried state of a woman. The Restoration artist saw none of his predecessor's roseate ideals that took no account of age. He alighted on the "old maid" and his senses sickened at her sight. In his plain dealing, he spared not the young maid in society either, but sniggered at greater length over the older and sneered at her for not retiring with grace. When, howbeit, the victim appeared not in view, 'Ah', insinuated he, 'she has fallen prey to temptation, and so crouches hiding her face.' Or say, as opposed to the society type, she was sober and plain, he saw her as sour and sullen, self-righteously formulating rules of "honour" and of conduct. Say again, she was of the contemplative frame of mind, he promoted her first to aunthood and then poured scorn on her for the Puritanical mask she wore. Female Malvolio's amorosness galled, whereas he chuckled with delight over the nut-brown maid in nun's apparel.

In the century following, even so, she became the dramatist's favourite force. He raised her to aunthood, bringing into that status both the maximum of stage delights of education, and proving that none other was fitter for custodianship of family honour and virtue. Nonetheless, the "old maid" thorn kept rankling in his side, despite the fact that she was giving a crispness, the only touch of keenness to comédie larmoyante. The paradoxical position arose veritably because he himself could not get reconciled to her as a person and yet was not the least bothered about resolving her unmarried state. So when after 1761, he ushered in the genre of non-sentimental comedy, he resurrected with no mean vigour the Restoration society type that had been buried during the coquette reform drive of the 1700's. Going a step further than his predecessor he executed her on charges of scandal, calumny, mischief-mongering and what not; meanwhile he persecuted the "old maid" in the house for "the devil itself", "the devil's dam"; he sprang upon her anywhere with "corkscrews and cats", and laid his whip upon the aunt too for being not a whit better. Indeed, the additional lash he cut her with was specified as being for her learning. Paradoxically, while he was venting his spleen on the "sibilant" sour, sombre, staid, stiff ("as a poker" or is it a "ramrod"?) type, the pestiferous "Mrs.Grundy" flew out of his hands as an independent force.

Time decidedly was ripe towards the end of the century for the woman dramatist disconcerted at such behaviour, to step in with a demand for sympathy and a plea for human understanding. Feminists such as Hayley, or Knowles a little later, added voices. Whereafter, under the Victorian era of a suspicious, mystifying silence, under the braided Victorian pall of virtue, loyalty and religion, despite the little Marston said in her defence and the little more that the dramatist of the transitional period started saying, literally a reign of terror grew.

The supreme importance of the post-1870 playwright, more particularly of one belonging to the post-Ibsenite years was that he stretched out his left hand to the younger, his stronger right hand to the older, unmarried woman when he joined forces with the Feminist Movement, and made his iconoclasm a unique event in the history of dramatic literature. It might not have taken the shape it did, and it might not have achieved final success with him, had the social upheaval too not been in progress. And indeed, it might not have reached its climax, had his approach to her problems not been realistic. Motivated by newer impulses, he gave them freer expression, because of the firmer grasp he had on the values of life itself.

Not that there had not been signs of restiveness and revolt at any time before. Outspoken after her way had many a Restoration hoyden been. Daughter had risen against father and had cast aside all restraint. In a meeker, milder manner so had many a one before and after. She had to. That was the only way. The late eighteenth century dramatist could not doggedly have followed conventions, of say, the 1600's, had not conditions remained unaltered, had not the forces of repression still been exercised. How uniform the suppression has been is further obvious when the December-May matches or other misalliances are taken not simply for the dramatist's stock-in-trade during the three hundred years, but co-ordinated with each developing phase of the acquisitive order. To-day it is a man with an estate; tomorrow with a title; turning the calendar over a century, that is, to the end of the eighteenth century, a Governor in Colonial Service, and in Arnold Bennett's time maybe, a share-holder in steel-works and coal-mines. The attitude of a parent is static all through. Alternately, it can be inferred by a process of arguing backwards that the Moloch who was seen roundabout 1921 calculating investment of a daughter's portion in factory, shop or son's education, was none other than the relation in surveillance over the "old maid" and her inherited chest in the eighteenth century, or the guardian thrusting a Restoration romp into the nunnery. Indeed, each is in a sure, strong line of descent from the earlier Kiteley or Interest who assiduously kept off suitors or kept supplying

the wrong ones, which amounts to the same thing. In the years to come, he was happy enough in being a service-absorbing parasite, such as one saw in the year 1921. He was responsible for turning a daughter into the wasted life discovered by the dramatist of revolt.

Therefore the revelation that history repeats itself. But whereas 1680-1700 and correspondingly 1780-1800 approximately might safely be taken as periods in which some sort of a taking off of a limited, myopic vision and tradition is perceptible, for example, in the delineation of the stiff "old maid" in the first case and the softer type with or without the label of "aunt" from the second period,-- the 1600's and 1900's are remarkably parallel in their comprehensive survey and approach. There is the same fresh desire to examine the institution of marriage in relation to the unmarried women's demands and problems. First and foremost is the one for the right suitor. On which point, a Delia or a Julia in the earlier period turned aside from marriage just as a Fanny or a Janet does in the later; or the "useful sort of thing about the house" remained pent till Madge and her tribe fight for economic independence, for a "trade at the fingers' ends." When the Elizabethan-Jacobean dramatist thought of various fields of work for his creations, although he could not very well have spoken of emoluments -- fighting as he was Honoria's cause against Mammon-- he too was probably thinking of the economically independent woman proper-- a phase which really starts for the unmarried working "type" after 1900.

Howbeit, as remarkable is it to weigh and consider that giants like Shakespeare and Shaw are so conservative in their attitudes towards the problem. Hence space has been given to lesser playwrights, so that the consensus of opinion be borne in mind too. It is evident that, an increasing trend though there is to take up special studies of particular authors, any problem when studied in co-ordination with a contemporary's treatment of it, takes certainly new colour. Shakespeare's attitude to the nunnery, Shaw's attitude to the mother-woman may be taken as more cases in point. Again, it becomes clear that Congreve's Lady Wishfort is not a being in isolation; a product of the individual author's mind certainly, but with a tradition for her setting that must be taken into account. Had the Honoria-Mammon question not been pursued, such information might have remained as much in the dark as the ancillary reason why it was necessary to create the maiden aunt. Likewise, Mrs. Grundy might forever have remained a sole voice.

A pioneering survey such as the present study must leave fields unexplored. The hope is that they cannot remain so. This pen or another will have to correct criticism in related paths where impressionistic and fragmentary it is still inclined to be.

APPENDIX A.

(OLD MAIDS AND PETS)

Mother Woman. The repression -of- instincts idea had its comedic interpretation far back (pp. 294-304) in time although the artist did not know that the observational eye by which he was guided, had anything to do with the protracted analyses of the 1900's. He was vaguely aware of a particular type of unmarried woman who showered her affection on a pet animal. Eventually, in the give-and-take of conversation, he realised that the pet was a necessary appendage to her, and he presented the idea compactly, in a way similar to that of the "old maid" regaling herself over "tea and gossip". Since she was at the time regarded somewhat cynically, her possession of a pet would manifestly have been looked upon as little better than a perverted taste and interest.

To watch the processing of this type would be nevertheless the only relevant step one could think of taking; and the only way of pursuing it confidently would be to keep on the trail of the animal. But what accrues from this, curiously enough, is a narrative which begins not at all on her side though ultimately ending as it does. On reflection, one may wonder at one's own forgetting a vital point, that for a maid on her own to afford the luxury of a pet - for luxury indeed it was - should have been scarcely possible. For she had first to secure her independence, which in comedy meant obtaining her fortune and a man of her choice. Therefore, the alternative of spinsterhood in petship was out of the question. Yet how did the association grow?

~~Scraping together Noses from here and there.~~ It does not help if it is remembered that a lover's gift of a dog was lost by the stupid Gobbo in The Merchant of Venice <sup>1. Nor</sup> does ~~not~~ it contribute very much to our understanding of this point. Neither does learning of Champaigne's wife who had the wealth and will to spend

....as much on Monkeys, Dogs, and Parrots,  
As would have kept ten Soldiers all the Years.

2

Nor again for that matter, of a widow adding to her retinue "monkeys, squirrels and dogs".

3

A closer contact with the maid is reached through the exasperated complaints of a Lord Brainless who finds La Pupsey constantly engaged with a lap-dog in The Marriage-Hater Match'd. He has to end "Rivalship" with the animal since the typical coquette of the early eighteenth century finds this a novel way of dalliance with her love. Fantast may be given ear to for proof:-

4

5

1. W. Shakespeare. 2. A Larum for London, Sc. vi, II, 758-9. 3. J. Shirley, Hyde Park, 1632.  
4. D'Urfey. 1691. 5. C. Molloy. The Coquet: Or The English Chevalier. II. 1718.

I always am in Love with one Thing or other; But I can't love more than one Thing at once. There's not room in a Woman's Heart for more than one Object at a time. A little while ago I was passionately in love with my Parrot, now I begin to grow tir'd of that, I'd give anything in the World for a Monkey; and if that should be so unfortunate as to grow out of Favour, as who can answer for one's Heart, perhaps the next thing I should take a Fancy to, maybe either a Lap-Dog, a Husband, or a piece of China.

Similarly, in some of the papers of The Spectator, passages recur parallel to the <sup>preceding</sup> plays. In one, a Jack Freelove is in a pretty fix for having

made love to one of those ladies who throw away all their fondness on parrots, monkeys, and lap-dogs.

As so many imported objects were shown off with vanity, animals were some of these besides for instance, the 'black' footmen and China fans seen in Hogarth's paintings. A Lady might brag of her finest porcelain broken to pieces by the pranks of a monkey. Indeed, one of Mrs. Centlivre's plays owes a situation to the animal.

Suffice it to say that vanity, luxury, coquetry, in turn are attacked on this point until well into the mid-eighteenth century. Instancing from another journal, a Lord Stakeall is driven to the end of his tether over such purchases by his wife. So also, much later, a young girl's playthings are "little Pompey", "little kitten", "squirrel" and a "mackaw". A perfect menagerie! But in the last quarter of the century, as new trends in comedy come in and as the "old maid" is picked up and pecked at, the earlier associations suddenly snap. Whereupon the animal becomes a companion-piece to her, and the young maid, wife and widow are ruled out. Lady Teazle's Aunt Deborah had a "lap-dog" (II.i) in the country: it was the niece's daily occupation to comb it. In The Maid of the Oaks, "Lady Sproze" is a similar background character who talks morals to her parrot. More pointedly, in The Heiress, a footman sniggers on going through his memorandums.

Ladies in the straw; ministers etc; Old Maids, Cats, and Sparrows, [Note-pets and chatter-chatter] never had a better list of how d'ye's...

The only explanation of this violent break with tradition, and conjunctively to the establishment of such a tie is that the more forward type of unmarried woman is given her "intriguing", "mischievous" character of yore; but the sedate, retiring type, the plain Jane and Maggie without any charm, the type who contributes to the composition of Mrs. Grundy, is thus raked up. As aunt, her "possessive" instinct or her virtuousity,

1. No. 343. 2. Gray's Journal, 1754. 3. A. Murphy, The School of Guardians. 4. R.B. Sheridan, The School for Scandal, 1777. 5. J. Burgovne, 1774. 6. Ibid. M767.

as "old maid" her "cat" or her "cattishness" is ready-to-hand material for criticism. But why she takes to a "dog", "cat" or "parrot", the most sentimental playwrights care least to examine, since they care least for her. The post-Ibsenite-Fredian author would not take long to interpret buried streams. However, once the idea is introduced, it is easily woven into the fabric of the work. And Reynolds would not be himself if he did not cut into it at once as bluntly and finely as he could in an Epilogue.

"Old maids grow cross because their cats are dead;  
"My governess has been in such a fuss  
"About the death of our old tabby puss-  
"She wears black stockings-Ha! Ha! What a pothor,  
"Cause one old cat's in mourning for another!"

A fairly dismal prospect appears before Emma's eyes in The Dash of the Day,<sup>2</sup> Enchanted by "shops and smart men, and coaches and things" of London, she has precious little desire to be "moped up with a cat, and a dog and an old maiden aunt, and such stupid animals" (III.i.) in the country. But, one supposes, it would be sheer waste of effort to reason over the whys and wherefores of any such sketch when the dramatist is at this time cracking his jokes over "old maids, cork-cutters, Cheshire-cheese and cats".

Skipping over a couple of decades or so, more intent thought, though without the least suggestion of continuity, is perceptible. Simon Mealbag in Grace-Huntley<sup>3</sup> refers to "little Alice" following him "as naturally as a cat does an old maid"(II.i.). Later on, in the same play, Alice soliloquises,

Well, I wish somebody would marry me. It's all very well  
for people to talk about old maids; but, for my part, I havn't  
the least wish to be a fidgety, cat-loving old maid-

Here a type crops up who, both for want of better occupation and for some relief from loneliness, vacuously seeks a way out with a pet by her side. Fairly quickly after this outline, a completely rounded-off conception of life appears in All's a Delusion.<sup>5</sup> A serving maid deliberates over a radical reform which would end the infernal matrimonial machine's erratic functioning. Were she only to come by a substantial sum,

Then the old maids, with their snarling black and tanned Charleys, that are adopted instead of a husband, or for want of an infant, they would discard their little mongrel proteges for ever. They would then get husbands, and dear interesting infants would have a preference to the snarling canines.

This desire to revolutionize society, to live for a cause, is occasioned by the realistic approach to social and domestic themes. The surprise reversal is, that through

1. The Will, 1797. 2. P. Latham, 1801. 3. Henry Holl, 1833. 4. III.ii. 5. I.ii. 1847

so strong an adherent to these as Tom Taylor, a counter-current should have been started.  
 Miss Leech, <sup>1</sup> an inconsequential character in his An Unequal Match is derisively described as a "spinster and toady" (II), and even before she is seen it is known from the guest complaining about the all-night yap-yapping of "her Dutch pug", that she is still a type on sufferance. Some newer way of spinster-pet relationship might have been expected to have been employed at least when the author had introduced the "topic". Or perhaps, his "realism" consists in the presenting and not in the "solving" of a problem. In Robert-  
<sup>2</sup>son's Progress, a simpler way of "telling" the audience that she is a spinster is to give Miss Myrnie a "lap-dog". Henry James was obviously aware of the existence of such a set type. In his first playlet, <sup>3</sup> faultlessly written, he presents a heroine who is getting soured by solitariness, and who is dreading the approach of her thirties and with "a cat" to make her life "much more complete".

Despite the fact that quick and fast publication of material for an ameliorated attitude towards the unmarried woman had little effect on even the major playwrights, ~~they~~ might have given an additional touch of realism to their works by bringing the animal on stage along with the old maid. On reading so much that Planché particularly has to say against equestrian drama, a little pet, one feels, would have done little harm. Rather it would have complemented a type to completion. Be that as it may, the pet <sup>is</sup> heard of on and on as in the routine manner one hears is so much of conditioned thought on things, ~~in the routine manner~~. Correspondingly, little value could be given to what Minnie Gilfillian impishly says of herself <sup>4</sup> that she will take violently to the habit of drinking tea, since she is to be an "old maid". And, she adds, she will go and buy a "kitten". Of course, although she gives up Clement for the sake of Lavender, Horace Bream is waiting for her.

The "old maid with her pet" thus is all along spoken of. The animal is rarely mentioned except in association with a woman who is unmarried. Scarcely even does a second Miss Leech appear for we know that she is the old maid who possesses the pet. After 1900, the unmarried woman herself speaks of it, as if the animal were a part of her life. Miss Bugle for instance, dining at the Tidmarsh's, is breaking her heart over "poor Coco", and this causes an amusingly mistaken concern,

1. 1857. 2. 1869.

4. A.W. Pinero, Sweet Lavender, 1888.

5. F. Anstey, The Man from Blankley's, III, 1901.

3. Pyramus and Thisbe, 1869. (There are only 2 characters, a bachelor and an unmarried woman. They marry.)



Miss Flinders. Dear Miss Bugle, you're not looking at all  
yourself this evening. Aren't you well?  
Miss Bugle. How can I be at ease, Cecilia, when I am so full  
of Coco?  
Miss Flinders. Cocoa is easily digested.  
Miss Bugle. You misunderstand me. I was not referring to a  
beverage, but to a bird/my poor cockatoo, who may,  
for all I can tell, be breathing his last at this  
very moment.

Thus the perverted instinct is, more or less ridiculed for the first time.

Similarly, Miss Deanes sits up at night nursing her "sick cockatoo". But Hankin holds her up as an example to prove his "motherhood" theory to be correct.

Miss Deanes! Even she has a heart somewhere about her. Do you imagine she wouldn't rather give it to her babies than snivel over poultry?

Janet, the unconventional mother, is a healthy normal woman contrasted with this lump of abnormality. It is well to remember, however, that a century and a quarter have passed before the person and the idea are complete. To keep a pet is neither to talk "morals" to nor to make up for human company. It is a transference of the maternal instinct which gives a new complexion to the type. For, the wife-woman and the mother woman are being introspected more scientifically by the dramatist. Nevertheless, in general, the thought continues:

Well, then, I suppose I shall have to keep a cat, or get married. 2 though the amendment is, that the senior woman (Martha) herself speaks of a woman of about her own age as observedly she exists. At least, she is not any slip of a Minnie or Winnie jabbering away of old maids and tea and pets. Martha therefore, as being, incidentally, a woman with a healthy outlook on life, derides the idea of the type to greater purpose.

And yet it is after 1921, that the rounded-off type appears. One of the spinster in The Same Star mollycoddling her Pekinese and talking baby-language to it, proceeds from realism to actuality. In conjunction with such tacit assertions and interpretations, it is safe to present what is said in defence of the nuns in Medieval English Nunneries -that a "feminine fondness" for something "small and alive to pet" is not "easily eradicated". Was not that the reason why Chaucer's Prioress kept feeding her dogs with wastrel-bread?

1. St. J. Hankin, The Last of the De Mullins, III, 1908.  
2. S. Houghton, The Perfect Cure, II, 1913.

3. E. V. Lucas, 1924.  
4. E. Power, p. 307.

## Appendix B

Woman and Work.

(a)

In the conclusion to this thesis, some indication has been given of the working woman inviting attention to a separate study. Even here it might be expected that a few pages would be included on the treatment of one fending for herself in the three common fields—~~weaving~~, spinning (until, perhaps, the revolution brought about by the invention of the spinning jenny?) needlework, and domestic employment at least until the 1920's.

Despite evidence in social and industrial histories about man also, earning his living at the wheel, it surely has been looked upon as primarily a female concern. This well may account for the fact that while the various guilds associated with the wool and cotton trades take fairly representative parts in the Chester, Coventry, Townley (or Wakefield) and York Cycles, the spinsters' seems to be conspicuous by its absence. And although this point would be strengthened on the basis of the spinning scenes in liturgical and non-liturgical plays in which women only are shown in this occupation, yet since there is no life-size figure of the "spinster" proper, any study of her would have been at best, an uncertain business. That Noah's wife sits at the wheel, or that Madge Mumblecrust in Ralph Roister Doister turns her hand to the distaff, is beside the point. Contemporary sermonising authority inspired the creation of the shrewish intemperate woman so that Noah could preach to married men: "if you love your lives, flog wives while fresh." Because of the common abuse of women, the unmarried Madge's tongue, too, had to "run on pattens" and she had to be portrayed as a creature of easy virtue. And while it is far from being a factitious cry from behind the shut cottage door,

Who makys sich dyn this time of the night?  
I am sett for to spyn:.....I might  
Ryse a penny to wyn;

1.

Mak's wife could not have been proved to be superior in morals to her sheep-stealing husband, and had to be made an accomplice in the crime. Nor indeed, could the titular-role of Patient Grissil (J. Phillips) have been permitted to grow old at the wheel to mitigate indigent poverty, for the dramatist had to throw all his weight on the patient Grissil ideal of a wife.

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1. Wakefield Cycle.

\* For a woman, the wheel is the answer to economic distress. In D'Avenant's The Just Italian (1630) for instance, when Niente tells Alteza that her husband protests against her credit, she screams excitedly:

Is't come to this?  
I'll be a crooked spinster first, and with  
My spittle and my flax procure my bread, (I.i).

Thus, except for the work it provides for idle hands to do on stage and the down-to-earth realism it gives to the setting and to the atmosphere, spinning in itself rouses little other interest. One point nevertheless is pretty clear: it occasions no denigratory remarks. Rather, in course of time, the public-spirited Dekker suggests this honest woman's vocation<sup>\*</sup> to Dorothea when he takes up to Bridewell in The Honest Whore (Pt.II,V,ii), and Fletcher seems to desire correction likewise for the depraved character in The Scornful Lady:

"Pray send this ferret home; and spin, good Abigail". (IV,i).

though both these characters are past shame, past repentance. In his turn, the stronger feminist Massinger inverts the law and gives to Sophia in The Picture the power to set the wild courtiers, Ricardo, and Ubaldo, spinning and reeling sans intermission on half-starved stomachs until they are "physick'd."

Apart from and alongside the respect that the dramatist apparently entertains for her, from the beginning of the seventeenth century the literal use of the concept, "spinster", is rivalled by his desire to expound it to the populace as a legal appellation for an unmarried woman. Hence while Shakespeare alludes to "The spinsters and the knitters"<sup>1</sup> "The Spinsters, carders, fullers, weavers"<sup>2</sup> and again, probably, has in mind the person at this sedentary occupation when he writes:

Nor the division of a battle knows  
More than a spinster;.. 3

Hawkins in Apollo Shroving<sup>4</sup> introduces a character as "Mistresse Lala Spinster" because she is unmarried. Whereas in Actus Primus he calls "Mistresse Indulgence Gingle" - "a cockering mother - a spinster because she spins "wool and flaxe". Ben Jonson, of course, could be depended upon to couch the word in strictly legal phraseology;

My lady is a spinster at the law,  
And my petition is of right. 5.

-----  
\* Hence the term "spinning-house" for early reformatories. Though the one mentioned in the O.E.D. is as late as 1803 in Cambridge.

Compare however,

Thou mig't spin out thy dayes to get thy foode,  
or turne base prostitute and sell they blood.

R.Daborne, The Poor Man's Comfort, IV, 1655.

1. Twelfth Night, II,4.

2. Henry VIII, I,2.

3. Othello, I,i.

4. 1626.

5. The New Inn, II,ii,1629.

Henceforward, although it is of interest to observe that in the same proportion as the connotation of "The person who spins" is dropped with the passing of years, so does the use of it for the "single woman"<sup>2</sup> grow. If we also bear in mind the increasing frequency of the "old maid" references in the eighteenth century, it is still more intriguing to discover that the same dramatist who proves to be a choleric enemy of the "old maid", seems to be saner and serener about the "spinster". One reason is that he restricts his idea to the younger woman, and another that he considers for the most part the technical application of the term.<sup>4</sup>

Probably, therefore, Mrs. Inchbald and Joanna Baillie as has already been pointed out, try to replace "old maid" by "spinster". From about this time, paradoxical although it may appear, the modern dictionary meaning of "spinster" as the commonly used word for an "elderly" unmarried woman, starts taking root. So, indeed, does the pendulum swing: if, in the first part of the seventeenth century, the difference between the spinner and the single woman is harped upon, it is now between the latter and the "old maid". Consequently, the nineteenth century accumulates venom against "spinster", too. Whence comes Albery's turn to elucidate both terms (in Wig and Gown) as also the devastating criticism it gives rise to in the twentieth century.

Dias. But your aunt is a woman too.  
Carlotta. No- she's an old spinster. 1.

Suffice it to say, that howsoever closely had the track of the term "spinster" been pursued, the question of the working spinster at all events would have fizzled out.

1. A. Bennet, Sacred and Profane Love, I.

\* e.g., you stay to see of us such spinsters, we should hold you here forever,

J. Fletcher, The Two Noble Kinsmen, I,iii.

You of this Queendom are Buffcoat spinsters, a kind of epicures in your souls.

The Female Rebellion, III,2, 1642?

Tell your Queen I'll reign

A king of men in spite of all her power

Of Spinsters.

Howard, The Woman's Conquest.

/ e.g. "Martha Metre, Spinster of this parish"

Waldron, The Maid of Kent, V.

"Celia Bright, of the same parish, Spinster."

C. Johnson, The Masquerade.

"Elizabeth Sterling, Spinster."

Colman & Garrick, The Clandestine Marriage, III, i.

Or the labelling of Constantia Neville as "spinster" in the dramatis personae of O. Goldsmith's She Stoops to Conquer.

"Old maid" examples from these authors are taken note of in Chapter V.

(b)

The needlewoman's story could be put in a nutshell. The one impression sustained for well over three centuries seems to be that poverty and sin go hand in hand, or that the commonly sought-after prey is the single woman working for her living. As the Hostess in Shakespeare's Henry V puts it plainly:

We cannot lodge and board a dozen or fourteen gentlewomen that live honestly by the prick of their needles, but it will be thought we keep a bawdy-house straight; 1.  
and, reflecting metropolitan morality, Malvole<sup>2</sup> boasts about knocking "Sempsters". Decades later, in the Restoration years, "Sem'stresses and Bawds"<sup>3</sup>, "Outcasts of Sempstress' Shops"<sup>4</sup> or even later, diversions of "Opticks with the Pretty Sempstresses"<sup>5</sup> - similar associations and comments substantiate the same point.

Of the few and far-between life-size portraits, such as that of Jane Hammon's,<sup>6</sup> in one century, Aurelia's<sup>7</sup> in a second or Marie's<sup>8</sup> in a third, it is invariably an abject study that gnaws at the heart-strings. In front of dying embers, sewing until her eyes become sore under a fading lamp, it is a worn and weary soul, the last of the three, that we hear soliloquising,

What a present is mine, and what a prospect is my future.  
Labour and watchings in the busy season- hunger and want  
in the slack, and solitude in both. 9.

The shop in which Jane works is surrounded by prowlers, at the door of Marie's hovel a baby is deposited, in both cases, of course, a slur is being cast on the needy woman's name. But it is futile drawing a distinction between one character and another, indeed between an imputation evoked at one time, and another.

Ultimately it needed the dramatist of revolt to cut through tradition-bound opinion, and win respect for a Miss Pixsent<sup>10</sup> and economic independence for a Janet.<sup>11</sup> Not that conditions for the working woman, as Barker revealed in The Madras House, were particularly favourable, but the time to take things lying down was over.

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1. II, i.
  2. T. Marston, The Malcontent, 1604.
  3. W. Wycherley, St. James' Park or Love in a Wood, 1670.
  4. -do- The Plain Dealer, 1676.
  5. T. Baker, The Fine Lady's Airs, 1708.
  6. T. Dekker, The Shoemaker's Holiday.
  7. G. Golman, The English Merchant, 1767.
  8. E. Stirling, A Rag Picker of Paris, 1847. In Planche's The Merchant's Wedding, Plotwell's sister was "prenticed" to a seamstress at the age of thirteen when her father died.
  9. I, i.
  10. H. A. Jones, The Lie.
  11. St. J. Hankin, The Last of the De Mullins.

By and large, what is worth knowing about the English Abigail<sup>1</sup> in general literature has been made known to us. The decision, therefore, to comb out characters exclusively from within dramatic literature had to be abandoned. At any rate, to the almost even tenor of "cracking maidenheads", by far the greatest yield from Elizabethan times up to the Restoration would have been of court matrons, pandaresses, nurses of easy virtue,---or of pubescent maids-in-waiting, chamber-maids, and attendants, who indeed, not being the type to keep "long Lent"<sup>2</sup> would have been of little consequence to the present subject of inquiry. Were even the negligible number falling into the category of "good" women taken into account, there is scarcely more underlay of thought going into their portraiture than that in apposition, the mistresses whom they serve, really gain in dimensions.

However, most of the denominations of the domestic staff are heard of for a limited time. And though the "maid"-- as the serving-woman is colloquially called-- has a longer career, yet since, as a class, she maintains her place at more or less the same lower level, the interest she creates is subordinate to that of the heroine's. By a simple process of elimination therefore, probably the one character who could have been found deserving of a sketch is the so-far-unmentioned governess. But that she, too, is left to the end of this study is because her position fluctuates in each succeeding age and it happens to belong only to an individual phase in the history of the Unmarried Woman.

For about three-quarters of the century starting from Shakespeare's allusion to "the moon, the governess of floods" in A Midsummer Night's Dream (II,i), the root connotation used is that of one "invested with authority"<sup>2</sup>. Later, Fletcher's individual sense of exactitude is revealed in The Sea Voyage into which he introduces a character described "Governess of the Amazonian portugals". She, as supreme commander, faces mutiny only when a ship of men is jettisoned; for then the women of the Desert Island no longer can continue to keep to the law of "obstinate abstinence." The same meaning is obviously in this author's mind when in The Humorous Lieutenant he installs a "Governess" as "mistress of the house" (II,v), evidently because Celia is in her nonage and yet unmarried. In this play however, the "governess" establishes kinship with the court bawd who is looking for a fresh victim to satisfy the king's lust; in compliance she receives the gifts, and despatches the heroine bedecked to the royal palace.

1. e.g., in D.M. Stuart's book of that name.

2. S. Johnson, Dictionary, MDCCLV.

\* Or who pay "the waiting woman's ransom" as Beaumont and Fletcher in The Little French Lawyer put it.

Cf...I know your aunt will not deny/Any of her chambermaids to practise on. J. Shirley, The Lady of Pleasure, (II,i).

Apart from such satire on the nurse-of-easy-virtue element in a governess, another integrant value is disclosed in Middleton's Anything for a Quiet Life when he writes of

A matron's sober staidness in her eye  
And all other grave demeanour fitting  
The governess of a house.....

1.

the most eloquent testimony to which is Massinger's Pulcheria in The Emperor of the East. She, indeed, is the "phoenix" of a "governess" for extending her rule well beyond a home to that of a state, and above everything, for disdaining to wear the "yoke of marriage".

In place of this rarer earlier character, the dramatist from the 1660's to the 1700's quarters governesses everywhere. He indicates the process of his tightening-up of the existing moral code, and gives, at the same time, the pungently expressed reason for digging up "a Matrona",<sup>2</sup> "a most unhappy virgin",<sup>3</sup> "an envious, amorous" governess-aunt,<sup>4</sup> a "eunuch" of an "old maid"<sup>5</sup> - in short, any antique relic - that because she has not married, because she is thus unable to get pleasure for herself, she prevents others from getting it. Hence he promotes her to "Governante", "Governant", "Governanto" or "Governess", who, be she never so vulgar, declares,

Why what should I bee, but as I am, a wise sober and  
discreet governess to a company of young ladies.

6.

Why moreover, does whoever in the play giving the new portfolio explain at length her duties, and even how exactly she is to execute them, if not to enable the author to balance effectively the time taken in constructing her with that taken in pulling her to pieces.

Thus, on the one hand, a father's<sup>7</sup> "design"

Is for to pry into her (daughter's) actions,  
Her thoughts, if possible, to finde  
How her affections stand, and to whom;

an uncle<sup>8</sup> more obtusely lays it upon the "governante" to keep "a diligent eye" on the niece,

1. I, i 2. Love a la Mode, 1663. 3. T. Porter, The Carnival, 1664.

4. J. Crowne, Sir Courtly Nice, or, It cannot be, 1685. 5. R. Steele, The Funeral, or Grief a la Mode, 1701. 6. M. Wavendish, Wit's Cabal, Pt. II, Sc. 4, 1662.

7. Love a la Mode, I, ii. 8. E. Ravenscroft, Ignoramus; or, The English Lawyer, 1677.

9. A. Behn, The Dutch Lover, 1673. 10. A. Behn, The Rover, or The Banished Cavalier, 1676.

\* In fact, the synthetic quality of her character has to be borne in mind.

The "companion" aspect of the "governess" will be dealt with later. But I evaluate Marston's Philocalia "an honourable learned ladie companion to the princesse Dulcimet" in Parasitaster or, The Fawne (1606) as a companion-piece to Massinger's creation. I would not dilate any more on the latter than I have done before; Philocalia's "stiff learning", "meditations", "great bloud, firme age, undoubted honour" etc. (III) lead one to the conclusion that she is Marston's idea of perfection no less than Pulcheria is his contemporary's. The Spanish or Italian in origin - "duenna" such as in M. Pix's The Different Widows; or Intrigue All-A Mode is once too often mixed up with a senile, albeit popular, figure from English broad comedy. The Governess duenna in A. Behn's The Emperor of the Moon might serve as only another example.

"to suffer her not to go far abroad," "to permit no stranger to speak to her; she gives Clarinda<sup>1</sup> the chance to see any man but Don Maxcel, and him too "but thro a Grate or Window or at Church"; Hellena<sup>2</sup> is far too troublesome in the house, till tomorrow when she is to be packed off to a nunnery, - "Callis" roars the brother, "make it your business to watch this wild Cat"; a mother<sup>3</sup> shrieks in concern:

You Cecropia, when they are in their Chamber lock the Door upon them, and keep the key, or I will strangle thee....

and, bemoans Miss Hoyden<sup>4</sup>, "nobody can knock at the gate," but presently her governante-nurse must "lock" her up.

On the other hand, we witness how restraint is resented. But it would be a waste of time to recount the number of times that the dame in train is thrashed for not living up to her reputation as a "precisian", and also for being an "old maid". It would be equally futile to enumerate the expletives hurled at her for clanking open or shutting chains and locks. She gets a bad name and suffers all but hanging.

A point of argument at this stage might nevertheless be raised as to how much share the newly awakened social conscience over the subject of female education had in the sudden spate of Restoration governesses. For while the convention-bound part of the dramatist's mind at best rechristens the old familiar nurse and attendant as such, the receptive part of it bends to such problems as those of defence and security in the home or in an institution<sup>z</sup>, of the dual control system of the teacher and the taught<sup>x</sup>, of the curriculum to be formulated and enforced,<sup>+</sup> - indeed, in comic reversion, the result of it all coming to naught. Thus, a brace of daughters "run away from their governesses" in The Cheats of Scapin<sup>5</sup>; Olivia escapes from

1. A.Behn, The Dutch Lover, 1673. 2. A.Behn, The Rover, or The Banish't Cavaliers, 1676.
3. T.Shadwell, The Scowrers, III,i,1690 4. J.Vanbrugh, The Relapse: or Virtue in Danger, 1696.
5. T.Otway, III,i,1676.

z Thus in M.Cavendish's The Female Academy (1662) "a large open Grate" is fitted up for the pupils, so that the public from outside may see for themselves and be satisfied that all that is being done is to the betterment of life's values. In the context, a note should be made of Hannah Woolley's The Compleat Serving Maid (1677), excerpts from which were to appear subsequently in The Compleat Gentlewoman; and of Mary Astell's A Serious Proposal to the Ladies; and of Defoe's An Essay upon Projects wherein he differs from the woman educationist with the words "No Guards, no Eyes, No Spies" over ladies in a plain moated building to which no male visitors were to be allowed (pp.285-7); as well as of Locke's treatise On Education.

x e.g. the governess-ward position in plays.

+ That is to say, mainly puritanical governess- who in Shadwell's The Squire of Alastia ~~the governess of the Alastia school~~ ~~who is making "Clawing Rock"~~ for instance, snatches away books on poetry from Teresia and Isabella that the "light" of "Virtue" and "religion" might dawn on their minds. In The Scowrers by the same author, besides watching and waiting the prudent woman has been at the task of teaching her pupils "to churn and make cheese, clouted cream, Caraway Cake and to raise Pye-crusts." That he mentions the religious worthy Quarles is another pointer in the same direction. The historical assessment might be considered alongside: "The standard of education amongst the Quakers was markedly high. The poorest among



"being mew'd up at Hackney-School" and Teresia from her "Governante" in The Younger Brother<sup>1</sup>; Lady Addleplot's "fine Daughter Jenny" and Nincompoop's "Ungracious Molly"<sup>2</sup> are stolen away while the Governess of their Boarding-School is "a-making Clawing Rods"; why, "at five years old the Vixen" in She Wou'd and She Wou'd not<sup>3</sup> has fasted three days together to spite her Governess". And so on! It is all the same story. Even later into the eighteenth century, to hear about

a boarding-school romp, that slaps her mother's face, and throws a bason of scalding water at the governess.

4.

is not quite impossible. One assumes nevertheless, that this bondswoman would, like her counterpart in The Election<sup>5</sup> belong to the same conservative household as conceived of in Shadwell's time if she complies with her mistress's injunctions:

.....Was she (daughter) in the stocks this morning:

Gov#. Yes, Madam.

Mrs.Freeman. From her manner of holding her head one would scarce believe it.

Rare, however, as it is for one to get a glimpse of such a team at dual control, it is not less exceptional to renew acquaintanceship with such a diabolical figure as Mrs.Rigid in The Will.<sup>6</sup> But we already know why Reynolds's creation is along traditional lines!

The day of the governess in any authoritative position is in reality over. Somewhere around the 1780's we have to start afresh with a young, needy product of a boarding school who enters to the education of the genteel, or perhaps with a fortune-fallen young lady, either of whom might struggle to emerge as the first type of career-woman-heroine through the comédie larmoyante no less than through the school in opposition. It is a mistake to ask for subtler nuances in the nomenclature of "companion" and "governess" too, as has been explained before in a footnote. For, a "Companion" may become a "Governess" in a home just as a teacher\* may seek better prospects "companioning".

Obviously, a grande dame has to be looked to for employment. When this favour has been granted, an historical chapter on the slow strangulation of the employee begins. Lady Kitty Crocodile's treatment of Miss Lytall in A Trip to Calais<sup>7</sup> is a case in point. The relationship between the two, as it has stood each to each during their entire trip abroad, is that of arrogant dominance and of "patient sufferings"; of the lady of quality as moraliser and of the proselyte as one never-to-be-forgetful of her "station" or "breed".

.A.Behn, or, The Amorous Jilt, 1695. 2. T.D'Urfey, Love for Money; or, The Boarding School, 1690. .C.Cibber, or, The Kind Imposter, 4. H.Kelly, The School for Wives, I.iii, 1775 5. J.Baillie, II, i, 1802 .F.Reynolds, 1797. 7. S.Foote, 1776. (Cont'd)...then needed at least a degree of educating that would permit the easy reading of the Holy Scriptures, etc." D.Marshall, English People in the Eighteenth Century, p.226. Hence the strait-laced governessing aunt probably assuming a stock role.

Likewise, Lydia in The School for Arrogance <sup>XIV</sup> ~~develops an~~ <sup>becomes</sup> awareness that Lady Peckham "does not fail to make inferiority feelingly understand itself;" and Aurelia in Knave of Not<sup>2</sup> is mortally afraid of being "driven away by the arrogance of Lady Ferment, which <sup>may</sup> education does not permit me to endure."

The phase of genteel endurance ~~which~~ <sup>which</sup> the "companion" is supposed to be an outcast of love's domain yet not a stranger to virtue, ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> two irrevocable commands which the Victorian is to impose on the "governess" <sup>finds</sup> roots in this branch of literature at this time. In fact, the idée fixe that the young heroine is an orphan, occasions the sentimental and idealized <sup>writing</sup> ~~stuff~~ about her. Varyingly characterised, Louisa's philanthropy in The World in a Village <sup>3</sup> is to reduce her to a penniless state in order that Squire Allbut's extortionism <sup>may</sup> be thrown into bold relief. And her subsequent service at his house, is to set to advantage as well, the former's singular talents against the latter's (and his wife's) philistinism. While the point about culture is substantiated similarly from the fallen-in-fortune Augusta and the rich half-baked Fanny in Life's Vagaries <sup>4</sup>, as also about this governess-of necessity like Louisa preferring a humble state to affluence built on the ruins of unmerited adversity, the situation, in fine, about woman and work is only too realistically put. As when Sir Hans declares that Augusta is worth "one hundred thousand pound", and Fanny stands aghast,

Lord, how can you tell such fibs/ George, she's only my governess, and as poor---- 5

Therefore, in the nineteenth century she grows into <sup>a</sup> ~~a~~ charity institution of <sup>some</sup> ~~kind~~ kind. Plays like Henrietta the Forsaken, The Dream at Sea <sup>6</sup> and Mother and Daughters <sup>7</sup> indeed speak of the lady bountiful who takes "a poor deplorable orphan" as "humble companion" to her daughter. But these are, really speaking, of infinitesimal value when compared <sup>with</sup> ~~to~~ the stacks of novels on the broken-spirited governess-companion of the Victorian age.

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contd-----  
Susannah Lizard as a contrast to the young Rosa. Indeed, to draw our sympathy towards the latter.

1. T. Holcroft, 1791.
2. T. Holcroft, 1798.
3. J. O'Keefe.
4. J. O'Keefe, 1795.
5. IV, ii.
6. J. B. Buckstone, 1834.
7. -do- 1835.
8. R. Bell, 1843.

Now if you were a poor governess--(Walks about arm-in-arm with her)--with forty pounds a year; with one dress of worn marino for week-days, and a faded silk for Sundays; with thick, clumsy boots, instead of dainty Balmorals; darned gloves of cloth, instead of primrose kid; obliged to trudge to your task in all weathers, and to return at night to a third-floor room, lit by a single candle; why, then, I could prove my love. What joy to throw my fortune into your lap, and to cry Cinderella, thou art a princess!

1. II, 1866.  
2# Harriet Martineau's Deerbrook (1839), Lady Blessington's The Governess (1839); the Bronte sisters' Jane Eyre (1847), Agnes Grey (1847), Shirley (1847), Villette (1853) and more; Mrs Gaskell's Mary Barton (1848) and Ruth (1853); Charlotte Yonge's Heart's Ease (1854) and The Daisy Chain (1856) Mrs. Henry Wood's East Lynne (1861) and The Channings (1862) George Eliot's Scenes of Clerical Life (1858), The Mill on the Floss (1860), Felix Holt (1866) and more. <sup>Such novels as</sup> ~~Articledresses~~ as Mrs Craik, Rhoda Broughton, Anne Thackeray and Jane Brookefield furthermore do not complete the list. Nor do their collective or individual works exhaust the subject.

e.g., Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, Wilkie Collins and others.

E. A random look ~~besides~~ into the journals and letters of the age makes it quite obvious that the woman-at-work is catching the public eye. A single article for instance, in The Edinburgh Review (Vol. CIX, Jan.-April 1859, p. 336) on "Female Industry" contains a mine of information. "Three millions out of the six adult Englishwomen work for subsistence; and two out of the three in independence" states the general position. But excerpts from and comments on the Governesses' Institution contained therein throw flashes on the woman in this particular profession.

Such a close-up would have been of value, were one collecting statistics, as <sup>\* it is in no way to any</sup> ~~nowise in the~~ dramatic purpose lengthened out.

In effect, leaping reflectively from the 1780's to well-nigh a century ahead, one discovers that the history of this essentially Victorian heroine is still a history of poverty, yet a complete departure from tradition in the sense that neither is she reduced to it from affluent circumstances for the time of the duration of the play, nor indeed is there any romance about it as the late eighteenth century dramatist or his <sup>immediate</sup> ~~old~~ successor was fond of telling his audiences. Rather, the inquiring mind looks into the events that may emanate from poverty and youth left rudderless; into the far-reaching effects of poverty on the character of the person earning her livelihood; and on into the attitude of man and society towards her. ~~Evidence of suspicion is~~ <sup>evidence of suspicion,</sup> There <sup>is</sup> from the beginning, but as the years recede from the Victorian era, it seems clear that the earlier were only stages towards a general post-mortem. After which, the dramatist's verdict is, <sup>there were never so many</sup> ~~that the wolves were never~~ <sup>so many</sup> in the wide, wide world as in the Victorian home itself where she sought shelter. They preyed upon the stricken innocent. And they treated her as an outcast for sins and crimes scarcely of her asking.

<sup>found that</sup> ~~Tr~~ rapidly running through a few plays for the substantiation of the preceding remarks, <sup>it is</sup> trouble <sup>is soon</sup> ~~takes not long~~ brewing with Haidee while she is at the merchant Denham's waiting for an appointment. Fawley Denham, the son, is opportunely intent on enjoying a rather compromising flirtation, and gossips of the town insist that the governess is his mistress, Perhaps also, that she has been contracted by the mother. She, however, is saved.

- 1. P. Thomson in The Victorian Heroine, discusses the governess's case ~~quite~~ at length.  
 \* With shades of difference, facts and figures are available in plenty later on in the century for when the novelist leaves off, the dramatist seems to pick up. To mention one late Victorian only, Pinero ~~makes~~ records of a sixteen-year old, Beatie Tomlinson as "a young Lady reduced to teaching music". She does not "grub" with the family and is paid "five guineas a Quarter". (The Magistrate, I, 1885); universal almost in application, though he predicates it to Miss Heslerigge is the aforeheard, "she ain't got no'ome. She is a orphan, studying for to be a governess." (The Schoolmistress, I, 1886); hence Miss Moxon has been "some sort of governess" ~~x~~ (The Schoolmistress, I, 1886), ~~hence Miss Moxon has been "some sort of governess" ever since she could "lisp"~~. (The Hobby-horse, I, 1886); Lucy is orphan-niece to the rich Miss Caulet. Notwithstanding, she is true to type - "a pale, sad-looking girl wearing spectacles," befitting a career of "a soothing companion for an old lady" or "tutor to some backward or delicate girl". (The Times, I, 1891). Where a Nina (His House in Order, 1906) or Josephat (Preserving Mr. Pannure, 1911) does not submit her state and soul to the stereotyped lachrymose manner, she causes a sensation. A stage of suffering is brought about somehow, but leading to the inevitable finale <sup>where</sup> "class" barriers are broken.  
 @ e.g. in the plays mentioned on p. <sup>345</sup> of this appendix.  
 2. J. Albery, Crisis.

But "Marcelle", poor orphan, is not. At the darkest moment of her life, having been advised by friends who saw her "accomplishments," she <sup>had taken</sup> took up governessing in a home where there was a married "elderly gentleman",--whom she looked up to for his "wisdom" and "gentleness". He, of all, <sup>had</sup> involved her in the act, The result of which was Sir Geoffrey--to whom she recounts her past in the play. Because, in fact, the lord and master is quite unreliable, Lady Pagden <sup>2</sup> makes herself thoroughly disagreeable in society for trying to dispose of "a far too good-looking governess to be in any respectable household". The implication and veracity of such a remark could very well lead ~~us~~ to the famous cross-examination scene for which Mrs. Dane's Defence <sup>3</sup> is known, since it unravels out of what unsavoury past the gossips have ferreted out about the heart-winning "Miss Hindemarsch" during the governess/ companion phase of her life. If Filmer has dared marry one (Nina) half his years in age, <sup>4</sup> how <sup>may</sup> has he treated her? Pity mounts <sup>when considering</sup> ~~connecting~~ the way in which Josepha, <sup>5</sup> too, is crushed down. She is more captivating than Nina,--than all of them, perhaps, since she seems to be a sort of Massinger's "idea of perfection" come to life the Pinero way. For having inspired Mr. Pamure with the most bristling sermon, she is completely taken aback by the emotional upsurge he gives demonstration of. Innocent fool that she is, she thereupon <sup>to the aunt</sup> takes her case of conscience under the <sup>burden of the</sup> faked story about the "governess-friend!" ~~in the aunt's~~ <sup>She is then</sup> ~~And to be sure, she~~ cornered. "Exactly the same standard of conduct may not apply to those working for their bread-and-butter." One passes over her sufferings leading therefrom, including the incident of attempted suicide when none of her admirers comes to her aid. But from the makeshift arrangement in her London home, it <sup>becomes evident</sup> nonetheless ~~is evident~~, that while Mr. Pamure can still join the "Guild of Fine Souls", whatever her feelings, old men, little men, married men or bachelors--all make it too hot for her to be anywhere working for a livelihood.

"Help hound the governess down"--taking Josepha's own satiric words when she breaks into a spirit of defiance over the treatment accorded to her, <sup>is</sup> indeed an apt heading to the section of the unmarried woman's story. Anyone can frame any sort of charge-sheet against her. Mrs. Jermyn <sup>6</sup> ~~to cite an instance,~~ borrows the "very, very poor" ("Pleasant" withal) Miss Moxon's name when she <sup>goes</sup> ~~is~~ slumming. ~~goes~~ But when one-sided heart complications ensue, "Miss Moxon 1. Albery, Duty, 1879. 2. O. Wilde, A Woman of No Importance, I, 1893. 3. H. A. Jones. 4. A. W. Pinero, His House in Order. 5. A. W. Pinero, Preserving Mr. Pamure. 6. A. W. Pinero, The Hobby-horse.

XVII

Moxon" is threatened with an "unfavourable" report to "The Governesses Institute"(II)! Miss Farren is suspected of theft simply because she is a governess. All "rigid morality", in essence, as the Judge declares in the play, is exacted of the poor.

Hence, when the playwright examines the character of the unmarried woman under such appalling circumstances, his tone alternates between the sentimental and the cynical. Miss Priscilla Motherwell, for example, is a glorious find for being

one of those who are very old at four and yet quite young by forty. At three-score and ten she'll be a gay young thing,

and Miss Scott, too, for

keeping the schools in splendid order . . . (and) is the best, kindest, dearest lady with the wisest head and noblest heart. . . ,

while Miss Dyott is not only in <sup>direct</sup> line of descent <sup>from</sup> to the governess with "clawing-rods," <sup>she also</sup> making, but in her "scholastic establishment" christened imposingly "Volumnia College," <sup>she</sup> trains an orphan such as Peggy "for to become a governess" and "to play jailer over bleeding hearts", Changing character, scene and situation, another schoolmistress Miss Dodd, "a very prim lady" in her "neat little apartment" is contrasted with Miss Gage, (in the same play) erstwhile teacher at school, <sup>but</sup> now "companion," who plots and schemes to marry Lord Bapchild in order to get rid of ~~poverty~~. Yet in a normal state of affairs even she would have bypassed "a weak easy fool of a husband." Indeed, <sup>one</sup> might <sup>well</sup> ask, <sup>if it is probable that</sup> would Miss Dyott (The Schoolmistress) <sup>and</sup> have stooped to taking part in opera bouffes to meet the somewhat extravagant tastes of the bankrupt Peer she has married? It is necessity of some type or other that makes all principles fly to the winds.

Love and honour! That sort of stuff doesn't go down to-day, Nell. I wan't going to be companion to Aunt Kate all my life, and dress on her thirty pounds a year. \*I meant to be Lady Tallerton, and I took the only way to get him.

The "quiet, ladylike" Miss Elliston submitted to Thompsett's courting her with the same ardour as he "urges sinners to repentance at street corners on Sunday afternoons", for anything at the

1. A. Sutro, The Bracelet, 1912.

2. J. Albery, Marriage, I, 1873.

3. J. Albery, Pride, I, 1874.

4. A. W. Pinero, The School-

5. H. A. Jones, The Manoeuvres of Jane, 1898.

6. H. A. Jones, The Lie, I, 1914.

mistress.

7. R. Bester, Don, II, 1909.

\* Norah in Maugham's The Land of Promise has worked for ten years for the same wages. Miss Pringle in the same play has had thirty years of "th' bitter bread of slavery till-till it tastes like a plum-cake" (I).

Janet in Harkin's The Last of the De Mullins prefers to be "in trade," "If I were a school teacher or a governess or something genteel of that kind I could only afford to dress like a pauper." (I).

time seemed better than "loneliness as Mrs. Bonington's companion". But since he treats her as his "slave and property," she realises to her cost that it is only an affair of changing ownership.

For the sort of treatment that a governess/companion normally gets, a peculiar temperament also develops, which is, to suspect any overture of love or kindness. And nine cases out of ten she is right. <sup>At</sup> one moment <sup>1</sup> Kate ~~Triggs~~ melts towards the ardent Norman Tower, <sup>soon</sup> only to learn ~~there~~ after that he is not for marriage without money. With cynicism aggravated tenfold, "Man is for sale", she bursts out,

heart, soul, body, mind and estate without reserve and open to all bidders. I am only a governess—I have no money to buy you!.....I thought, at last, that I had met a man. A man whom I could love/whom I could honour/whom I could even obey.

2

Lucy Rimmerton likewise had thought it strange, passing strange that a man should "really care" for her.

I always tell him he might have done ~~as~~ much better than propose to a poor governess without a penny.

But need he have been told as much? With the first flight towards success, he himself starts scanning the peerage roll! Small wonder <sup>that</sup> Miss Seaton can ill-afford to place faith in "Lord Strathpeffer" when, <sup>almost all</sup> ~~was not~~ from among the Toomers, Bodfishes, Gilwattles, Bugles—all unheard of names and nondescript array at the Tidmarsh dinner party—takes a turn at insulting her? <sup>3</sup>

4

Miss Triggs is another who simply freezes ~~at~~ the touch of the founder members of the "Church of Humanity". These new worthies practice their "peculiar doctrine" on "disagreeable people" who have no friends, who do not "deserve" kindness, but who "want" it. In and through "proper meals", "comfort", "rest", and suchlike dreams measured out to the space of a few days, they lay claim to establishing the church "everywhere". "I call that being nowhere". So Miss Triggs drops ~~down~~ her chunk of ice on it. She "knows" what "persons who are compelled to support themselves by teaching" are "accustomed" to. Hence, hugging her grievance to the last she quits the scene to continue with her "experience".

- 
1. S. Grundy, A Fool's Paradise, III, 1887.
  2. F.M. Simpson, "The Dedication," The Yellow Book, Vol. I., April, 1894.
  3. F. Anstey, The Man from Blankley's, 1901.
  4. St. J. Hankin, The Charity that Began at Home, 1906.

Thus does the whirl<sup>1</sup>ig of time reel off a complete picture of the governess who ~~had~~ started off<sup>with</sup> a chameleon-like career "invested with authority", <sup>i</sup> ~~In~~<sup>like</sup> course of which we hear a ward and pupil unequivocally slam<sup>2</sup> Horrid, horrid, horrid<sup>1</sup> upon Miss Prism and her "Political Economy" and "metallic problems"; we see the "big boy" snatching the wriggling cane out of Phoebe's hand and chasing her with it; what is more, we are party to a regular court-martial of Miss Pinniger<sup>3</sup> at the hands of the taught, + "Habits untruthful", "Appearance<sup>4</sup> against her", "Arithmetic rotten", "French futile", "Geography ghastly", "History hopeless", "Dancing dubious", "Music" "measly" and "mouldy".

It is a matter of opinion whether an author has greater contempt for the system of education or for its representative executive. None would disagree on two accepted facts, that "earning one's living is always unpleasant"<sup>4,8</sup> and that governessing-companioning-schooling is almost the only choice for any and every reason. Indeed, had Miss Cecily Pemberton not marched off with Miss Susan's "naval officer", had V.B. not gone to the wars without proposing to Phoebe, had "something" not "burst" and the paltry invested sum not got lost, above all, had the "quartern loaf"<sup>f</sup> not been priced at "one and tenpence", + we<sup>5</sup> would not have been introduced to the Blue and White drawing-room, and to the same<sup>place</sup> turned into the school-room of Quality Street<sup>h</sup>; had Lady Faringford's "maid Dawkins not been" getting rather past her work", had "poor Miss Higgs" not come by a "little money" that she had invested and lost after she had given up her school, we<sup>6</sup> would not have heard about "charity" and "subscriptions" for either (The latter fortunately spared the rich that tax by drowning herself) in The Return of the Prodigal<sup>5</sup> (Hankin); had Miss Pelling's father not been a trifle too prodigal, or Kate's<sup>6</sup> not stolen away her rights, or yet again had Nina's<sup>7</sup> given her some training since he could leave behind neither dime nor doit for her, + these <sup>victims</sup> ~~sufferers~~ and many like them, would have been spared all such suffering.

- 
1. O. Wilde, The Importance of Being Earnest.
  2. J.M. Barrie, Quality Street.
  3. A.A. Milne, Make-Believe, II, ii, 1918.
  4. S. Maugham, The Land of Promise, I, 1914.
  5. A. Sutro, The Fascination of Mr. Vanderveldt, 1906.
  6. S. Grundy, A Fool's Paradise.
  7. A.W. Pinero, His House in Order.



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This bibliography does not aim at completeness. Since the total list of plays referred to in the text and notes would have become unwieldy, some process of elimination has had to be adopted. At any rate, those that contribute to the main thought have been included arranged alphabetically by authors' names. Chapters I, II, III and IV run from one century into another hence in the matter of dates too, the attempt has been to guide the reader. Chapters IV and VI cover limited fields. Assuming that no confusion could arise, dates have been eschewed altogether in these.

### Chapter I.

#### List of Plays dealt with.

Anon.

The London Chanticleers (Dodsley XII), 1636.  
 \* Midas, 17 . . ? (C.O.)  
 \* Pamela, 1742.  
 \* Sir Giddy Whim, 1703  
The Wit of a Woman, 1604.

Mrs. A. Behn, The False Count, 1682.

I. Bickerstaffe, Love in a Village, 1763.

- \* C. Bodens, The Modish Couple, 1732.
- \* J. Breval, The Play is the Plot, 1718.
- R. Brome, A Jovial Crew, 1641.
- do., The Covent-Garden Weeded, 1659.
- \* W. Burnaby, The Ladies Visiting Day, 1701.
- \* do., Love-Betray'd, 1703.
- W. Cartwright, The Siedge, 1651.
- \* M. Cavendish, The Public Wooing, 1662.
- \* W. Cavendish, A Pleasant and Merrye Humor of a Roge, 1655-60).
- Mrs. S. Centlivre, Bold Stroke for a wife, 1718.
- G. Chapman, May-Day, 1611.
- Chapman, Jonson and Marston, Eastward Ho!.
- Chapman and Shirley, The Ball, 1632.
- Chettle, Dekker and Haughton, Patient Grissil, 1600.
- \* C. Cibber, The Double Gallant: or, The Sick Lady's Cure, 1707.
- \* do., The Lady's Last Stake, or, The Wife's Resentment, 1707.
- A Cowley, The Cutter of Coleman Street, 1658.
- J. Davies, A Contention betwixt a Wife, a Widdowe and Maide, 1608.
- \* I. Day, The Tole of Gvls, 1606.
- Dekker and Middleton, Moll Cut Purse, or, The Roaring Girl, 1611.
- \* T. D'Urfey, The Banditti, or, A Ladies Distress, 1636.
- J. Fletcher, The Faithful Shepherdess, 1609.
- do., The Loyal Subject, 1618.
- do., The Pilgrim, 1621.
- H. Glapthorne, Arglus and Parthenia, 1639.
- W. Naughton, Englishmen for my Money, or, A Woman will have her Will, 1616.
- \* R. Hitchcock, The Coquette, or, The Mistakes of the Heart, 1776.
- B. Jonson, The Gipsies Metamorphosed, 1621.
- \* C. Johnson, The Gentleman Cully, 1701.
- \* do., The Wife's Relief, or, The Husband's Cure, 1711.
- P. Massinger, The Parliament of Love, 1624.
- do., The Emperor of the East, 1631.
- do., City Madam, 1632.
- T. Middleton, The Family of Love, 1608.
- T. Nabbes, Microcosmus, 1637.
- T. Otway, The Soldier's Fortune, 1681.
- G. Peele, The Arraignment of Paris, 1584.
- J. Phillip, The Patient Grissel, 1565.
- H. Porter, The Two Angry Women of Abington, 1599.
- S. Rowlands, 'Tis Merrie when Gossips meete, 1602.
- W. Shakespeare, The Taming of the Shrew, 1584.
- do., Much Ado about Nothing, 1594.
- J. Shirley, Love's Tricks, 1625.
- do., Love in a Maze, 1631.
- \* W. Taverner, The Artful Wife, 1717.

Note:- Plays that have been marked with an asterisk have not to my knowledge been listed for "apes in hell" allusions or renditions.

<sup>alluded</sup>  
Plays only referred to.

- T. Baker, Tunbridge Walks.  
 Beaumont and Fletcher, Philaster, or, Love lies a-Bleeding.  
 J. Fletcher, The Scornful Lady.  
     do.           , The Honest Man's Fortune.  
 G. Gascoigne, The Glass of Government.  
 W. Shakespeare, As You Like It.  
     do.           , The Merchant of Venice.  
     do.           , Much Ado about Nothing.  
     do.           , Measure for Measure.

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The Counterfeits. 1679.  
The Family Picture. 1782.  
The Fate of Corisca, or, The Female Rebellion. 1732.  
The Franch Conjuror. 1678.  
The Merry Devil of Edmonton. 1608.  
Mundus et Infans. 1520.  
The 2 Noble Ladys. 1622.  
Pamela. 1742.  
~~What is She?~~ 1782.  
 M.P. Andrews, The Mysteries of the Castle. 1795.  
 J. Bale, A Comedy Concerning Three Laws. 1548.  
 F. Beaumont, The Mad Lover. 1619.  
 A. Behn, The Rover, or The Banish't Cavaliers. 1677.  
     do., The Feign'd Curtizans, or, a Night's Intrigue. 1679.  
     do., The Younger Brother, or, The Amorous Jilt. 1696.  
 T. Betterton, The Amorous Widow, or, The Wanton Wife. 1670.  
 I. Bickerstaffe, 'Tis Well its no worse. 1770.  
 J. Boaden, The Italian Monk. 1797.

- R. Boyle, Guzman, 1693.  
 R. Brome, The Novella, 1753.  
 W. Burnaby, Love Betray'd.  
 J. Carlile, The Fortune-Hunters, or, Two Fools well met, 1689.  
 W. Cartwright, The Sledge, 1651.  
 M. Cavendish, Wit's Cabal, 1662.  
 Mrs. S. Centlivre, The Wonder: A Woman keeps a Secret, 1714.  
     do. , The Gotham Election.  
 Chapman, Jonson and Marston, Eastward Ho!, 1605.  
 C. Cibber, Love Makes a Man, or, The Fop's Fortune, 1700.  
     do. , ~~The Double-Dealer~~. The Non-Juror.  
 W. Congreve, Love for Love.  
     do. , The Double-Dealer.  
     do. , The Way of the World, 1700.  
 Mrs. N. Cowley, Bold Stroke for a Husband.  
     do. , Which is the Man?, 1782.  
 J. Crowne, Juliana, 1671.  
 W. D'Avenant, Love and Honour, 1634.  
     do. , The Platonic Lovers, 1636.  
     do. , The Fair Favourite, 1638.  
     do. , The Distresses, 1639.  
 Mrs. Davya, The Self Rival, 1725.  
 J. Dryden, An Evening's Love, or, The Mock Astrologer, 1668.  
     do. , The Assination, or, Love in a Nunnery, 1672.  
     do. , The Mall, or, The Modish Lovers, 1674.  
 T. D'Urfey, A Jilt in all Humours, 1697.  
     do. , The Famous History of the Rise and Fall of Massaniello, 1697.  
 I. Eliot, The Parlement of Praters, 1593.  
 F. Fane, Love in the Dark, or, The Man of Business, 1675.  
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 H. Fielding, Rape Upon Rape, 1730.  
     do. , The Debauchees, or, The Jesuit Caught, 1732.  
 J. Fletcher, Monsieur Thomas, 1610.  
     do. , The Faithful Shepherdess.  
     do. , The Wild-Goose Chase, 1621.  
 S. Foote, A Trip to Calais, 1778.  
 J. Gay, The Wife of Bath, 1713.

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 R. Greene, Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay, 1594.  
 W. Habington, The Queen of Arragon, 1635.  
 T. Heywood, The Golden Age, 1611.  
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 T. Holcroft, Hear Both Sides, 1803.  
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 B. Jonson, The Alchemist, 1610.  
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 J. Kemble, The Parhel, 1788.  
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 P. Massinger, The Bondman.  
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 do., The Emperor of the East.  
 do., The Maid of Honour.  
 J. Moore Spytke, The Rival Modes, 1727.  
 Mr. Moss, The General Lover, 1749.  
 W. Mountfort, The Successful Strangers, 1719.  
 T. Otway, Friendship in Fashion, 1678.  
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 T. Randolph, Amyntas, 1638.  
 F. Reynolds, The Dramatist, 1793.  
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 T. Shadwell, The Libertine.  
 do., The Amorous Bigotte, 1682.  
 do., The Humorists, 1691.  
 W. Shakespeare, A Midsummer Nights Dream.  
 do., Romeo and Juliet.  
 do., As You Like It.  
 do., All' Well that Ends Well.  
 do., Measure for Measure.  
 do., Hamlet.  
 R. B. Sheridan, The Duenna, 1776.  
 J. Shirley, The Example, 1628.  
 do., The Royal Master, 1632.  
 do., The Sisters, 1642.  
 do., The Court Secret, 1653.  
 T. Southerne, The Disappointment, or, The Mother in Fashion, 1684.  
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 S. Tuke, The Adventures of Five Hours, 1663.  
 J. Webster, The Devils Law-Case, 1620.

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 T. Dekker, Patient Grissil.  
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 J. Dryden, The Spanish Friar.  
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- G. Farquhar, The Constant Couple.  
 J. Fletcher, The Elder Brother.  
 H. A. Jones, The Liars.  
 B. Jonson, The Devil is an Ass.  
                   The London Prodigal.  
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 F. Reynolds, The Rage.  
           do. , The Will.  
 T. Shadwell, The Lancashire Witches.  
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           do. , Much Ado about Nothing.  
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do., The City Heiress, 1681.

T. Betterton, The Amorous Widow, or, The Wanton Wife.

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M. Cavendish, Wit's Cabal.

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G. Chapman, Sir Giles Goosecap, 1601.

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do., News from Plymouth, 1635.

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do., The Man of Mode, or, Sir Fopling Flutter, 1676.

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J. Fletcher, Wit at Several Weapons, 1609.

do., The Honest Man's Fortune, 1613.

do., The Scornful Lady, 1613.

do., Wit without Money, 1614.

G. Gascoigne, Glasse of Government, 1575.

T. Heywood, If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody, 1605.

do., A Maidenhead Well Lost, 1634.

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do., The Magnetick Lady, 1632.

Jonson, Fletcher and Middleton, The Widow, 1615.

T. Killigrew, The Parson's Wedding, 1664.

J. Leonard, The Country Innocence, or, The Chamber-Maid turn'd Quaker, 1677.

Mrs. M. Manley, The Jealous Husband, 1696.

J. Marston, The Dutch Courtezan, 1605.

P. Massinger, A New Way to Pay Old Debts.

do., The Bondman.

Massinger and Middleton, The Old Law.

T. Middleton, A Trick to Catch the Old One.

do., More Dissemblers besides Women.

W. Mountfort, Greenwick Park, 1691.

T. Otway, The Atheist, or, The Second Part of the Souldiers Fortune, 1684.

M. Pix, The Beau Defeated, or, The Lucky Younger Brother, 1699.

do., The different Widows, 1679.

T. Rawlins, Tom Essence, or, The Modish Wife, 1676.

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 C. Sedley, The Mulberry Garden, 1668.  
 T. Shadwell, A True Widow, 1678.  
 do. , The Squire of Alsatia.  
 do. , The Amorous Bigotte.  
 W. Shakespeare, The Taming of the Shrew.  
 do. , The Merchant of Venice.  
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 J. Webster, The Devils Law-Case, 1629.  
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 do. , Love in a Wood, 1670.  
 do. , St. James's Park, 1670.  
 J. Wilson, The Projectors, 1664.

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## Chapter IV

List of Plays (1660-1700)  
dealt with.

Anon.

Feign'd Friendship, or, The Mad Reformer.  
Love à la Mode.The Mistaken Beauty, or, The Lyar.A. Behn, The City Heiress, or, Sir Timothy Treat-all.do., The Rover, or, The Banish't Cavaliers.W. Cartwright, The Sledge.M. Cavandish, Loves Adventures.do., The Publick Wooing.do., The Religious.do., Nature's Three Daughters, Beauty, Love and Wit.C. Cibber, Woman's Wit, or, The Lady in Fashion.do., The Lady's Last Stake, or, The Wife's Resentment.do., The Provok'd Husband.W. Congreve, The Old Batchelour.do., The Way of the world.J. Crowne, The Country Wit.do., Sir Courtly Nice, or, It cannot Be.E. D'Avenant, The Man's the Master.J. Dryden, The Wild Gallant.do., Secret-Love, or, The Maiden Queen.T. Otway, Friendship in Fashion.M. Pix, The Innocent Mistriss.do., The Different Widows, or, Intrigue All-A-Mode.E. Ravenscroft, The Careless Lovers.do., The English Lawyer.Shadwell, The Squire of Alsatia.do., The Scowrers.T. Southerne, The Disappointment: or, The Mother in Fashion.do., The Maid's Last Prayer, or, Any, rather than Fail.do., The Wives Excuse: or, Cuckolds make themselves.J. Vanbrugh, The Provok'd wife.do., The Redbosc: or, Virtue in Danger.do., A Journey to London.W. Wycherley, The Gentleman Dancing-Master.do., The Country-Wife.Plays only alluded to.Anon., The Puritan Widow of Watling Street.Mrs. Davys, The Self-Rival.G. Etherege, Love in a Tub.N. Field, Amends for LadVes.Mrs. Griffith, The Double Mistake.Ben Jonson, Bartholomew Fair.R. Steele, The Tender Husband.J. Webster, The Devil's Law-Case.Books of Criticism and ReferenceW. Archer, The Old Drama and the New.R. H. Barker, Mr. Cibber of Drury Lane.A. Beljama, Men of Letters and the English Public in the Eighteenth Century.E. Bernbaum, The Drama of Sensibility.The Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. VIII.B. Dobrée, Restoration Comedy.J. W. Dodds, T. Southerne.T. H. Fujimura, The Restoration Comedy of Wit.J. C. Ghosh, The Works of Thomas Otway.J. W. Krutch, Comedy and Conscience after the Restoration.

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 A. Nicoll, A History of English Drama.  
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 L. Whistler, Sir John Vanbrugh.

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Chapter V (1700-1890)

(List of Books up <sup>the end of</sup> to "The First Cycle".)  
 (1700-1827)

List of Plays dealt with.

- |                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| M.P. Andress    | <u>Dissipation, 1781.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>The Reparation, 1790.</u>   |
| do.             | <u>The Mysteries of the Castle, 1795.</u>  |
| Anon.,          | <u>The Apparition, or, The Sham Wedding, 1713.</u>   |
| do.             | <u>Bickerstaff's Unburied Dead, 1743.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>The Counterfeits, 1679.</u>   |
| do.             | <u>The Fate of Corsica, or, The Female Politician, 1732.</u>   |
| do.             | <u>The Female Rake: or, Modern Fine Lady, 1736.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>Fortune's Tricks in Forty Six, 1747.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>The Gallant Moriscos: or, Robbers of the Pyrenees, 1795.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>Lethe, 1740.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>Sir Giddy Whim, or, The Lucky Amour, 1703.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>The Way to Win Her, 1814.</u>   |
| P. Bacon,       | <u>Trial of the Time-Killers, 1757.</u>  |
| J. Baillie,     | <u>The Trial, 1798.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>Enthusiasm, 1836.</u>   |
| do.             | <u>The Match, 1836.</u>  |
| T. Baker,       | <u>The Fine Lady's Airs: or, An Equipage of Lovers, 1708.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>Tunbridge Walks: or, The Yeoman of Kent, 1703.</u>  |
| J. Breval,      | <u>The Play is the Plot, 1717.</u>   |
| T. Brown,       | <u>The Stage-Beaux toss'd in a Blanket, or, Hypocrisie Alamoide;</u><br><u>Expos'd in a True Picture of Jerry, 1704.</u> |
| C. Bullock,     | <u>Woman is a Fiddle, 1717.</u>  |
| J. Burgoyne,    | <u>The Heiress, 1786.</u>  |
| W. Burnaby,     | <u>The Reform'd Wife.</u><br><u>The Modish Husband.</u><br><u>Love Betray'd.</u>   |
| G.S. Carey,     | <u>The Inoculator, 1766.</u>   |
| M. Chambers,    | <u>The School for Friends, 1805.</u>   |
| A. Cherry,      | <u>The Soldier's Daughter.</u>   |
| C. Cibber,      | <u>The Lady's Last Stake, or, The Wife's Resentment, 1707.</u>   |
| -do-            | <u>Woman's Wit.</u>  |
| G. Colman,      | <u>The Jealous Wife, 1761.</u>   |
| do.             | <u>The English Merchant.</u>   |
| do.             | <u>Ways and Means, or, A Trip to Dover, 1783.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>The Poor Gentleman, 1801.</u>   |
| Mrs. H. Cowley, | <u>The Runaway, 1776.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>The Belle's Stratagem, 1780.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>Which is the Man?, 1782.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>A Bold Stroke for a Husband, 1783.</u>  |
| do.             | <u>More Ways than One, 1783.</u>   |
| do.             | <u>The Town before You, 1794.</u>  |

354p  
R. Cumberland,

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

J. Dance?

Mrs. Davys,

T.J. Dibdin,

Earl of Glengall,

H. Fielding,

S. Foote,

do.

do.

do.

do.

J. Gray,

O. Goldsmith,

Mrs. Griffith,

do.

do.

N.B. Harrison,

W. Hayley,

R. Hitchcock,

T. Holcroft,

Mrs. Holford,

J.G. Holman,

do.

H. Kelly,

W. Kenrick,

do.

F. Lathom,

H. Lee,

do.

M.G. Lewis,

do.

C. Macklin,

Macnally,

C. Molloy,

E. Moore,

E. Morris,

T. Merton,

do.

do.

do.

A. Murphy,

C. O' Caustic,

F. Pilon,

M. Pix,

do.

A.B. Porter,

H.J. Pye,

Prince Hoare,

A. Ramsay,

F. Reynolds,

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

do.

The West Indian, 1771.

The Fashionable Lover, 1772.

The Walloons, 1782.

The Natural Son, 1784.

The Imposters, 1789.

The Box-Lobby Challenge, 1794.

The Sailor's Daughter, 1804.

Pamela, or, Virtue Triumphant, 1741.

The Self Rival.

The School for Prejudice, 1801.

The Follies of Fashion, 1829.

Love in Several Masques, 1728.

The Knights.

The Commissary, 1765.

A Devil upon two Sticks, 1768.

The Maid of Bath, 1771.

The Cogeners, 1774.

The Wife of Bath, 1713.

The Good Natur'd Man, 1768.

The Double Mistake, 1766.

The School for Rakes, 1769.

The Times, 1779.

The Travellers, 1788.

The Happy Prescription, 1784.

The Coquette; or, The Mistakes of the Heart, 1776.

Knave or Not?, 1798.

Neither's The Man, 1798.

What a Blunder! 1800.

The Gazette Extraordinary, 1811.

The School for Wives, 1773.

The Widow'd Wife, 1767.

Falstaff's Wedding, 1767.

The Dash of the Day, 1799.

The Chapter of Accidents, 1780.

The New Peerage, or, The Knight and the Wood Demon, 1811.

The East Indian, 1799.

One o'Clock!, or, The Knight and the Wood Demon, 1811.

A Man of the World, 1781.

Fashionable Levities, 1785.

The Perplex'd Couple; or, Mistake upon Mistake, 1715.

The Foundlings, 1747/8; Gil Blas, 1751.

The Secret, 1799.

The Way to Get Married, 1796.

Speed the Plough, 1800.

A School for Grown Children, 1827.

The Slave.

The Old Maid, 1761.

The Laughable Lover, 1805.

He Would be a Soldier, 1786.

The Different Widows; or, Intrigue All-A-Mode, 1697.

Adventures in Madrid, 1706.

The Indiscreet Lover, 1768.

A Prior Claim, 1805.

Indiscretion, 1800.

The Gentle Shepherd, 1725.

The Dramatist, or, Stop Him Who Can!, 1789.

Notoriety, 1791.

How to Grow Rich, 1792.

The Rage, 1794.

Speculation, 1795.

Fortune's Fool, 1796.

The Will, 1797.

554  
F. Reynolds,

do

do.

do.

do.

do.

W. Roberts,

T.W. Robertson,

Mrs. F. Sheridan,

R.B. Sheridan,

do.

R. Steele,

do.

do.

do.

F.G. Waldron,

Lady Wallace,

L. Welsted,

W. Whitehead,

The Will, 1797.

Laugh When you Can, 1798.

Delays and Blunders, 1802.

The Blind Bargain; or, Hear Him Out, 1804.

The Delinquent, or, Seeing Company, 1805.

The Exile; or, The Deserts of Siberia, 1808.

The Fugitives, 1791.

Caste, 1867.

The Discovery, 1763.

The School for Scandal, 1777.

A Trip to Scarborough, 1777.

The Funeral; or, Grief A-la-Mode, 1701.

The Tender Husband, or, The Accomplish'd Fools, 1705.

The Conscious Lovers, 1722.

The Gentleman.

Heigh Ho for a Husband, 1794.

The Ton; or, The Follies of Fashion, 1788.

The Dissembled Wanton, or, My Son Get Money, 1726.

The School for Lovers, 1762.

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Gray's Inn Journal, Jan. 19; 1754.

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R. M. L. A., 1922; 1923; 1928.

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The English Folk-Play.

The Burlesque Tradition in the English Theatre after 1660.

Dramatic Career of Arthur Murphy.

Theatrical Criticism in London to 1795.

The Virgin Unmasked or Female Dialogues betwixt an Elderly Lady and her Niece.

A History of English Drama, Vols. I, II & III.

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Social Life at the English Universities.

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F.W. Bateson,

M. Belden,

E. Bernbaum,

F.S. Boas,

F.E. Budd,

B.K. Chambers,

Clinton Baddeley,

H. Dunbar,

C.H. Gray,

B. de Mandeville,

A. Nicoll,

A. Sherbo,

D. Stenton,

R.J.E. Tiddy

A. Wallas,

B. Willey,

C. Wordsworth,

Chapter V.  
(The Second Cycle 1780's-1890's)

List of Plays dealt with.

J. Albery,	<u>Married, 1873.</u>
do.	<u>Wig and Cown, 1874.</u>
do.	<u>The Crisis, 1878.</u>
do.	<u>Duty, 1879.</u>
Anon.,	<u>Cross Partners, 1792.</u>
do.	<u>The Usurer, or, The Departed not Defunct, 1833.</u>
J. Baillie,	<u>The Trial, 1798.</u>
do.	<u>The Second Marriage, 1802.</u>
do.	<u>The Country Inn, 1804.</u>
do.	<u>The Match, 1836.</u>
R. Bell,	<u>Temper, 1847.</u>
D. Boucicault,	<u>Alma Mater; or, A Cure for Coquettes, 1842.</u>
do.	<u>The Life of an Actress, 1855.</u>
J. B. Buckstone,	<u>Popping the Question, 1830.</u>
do.	<u>Rural Fidelity, 1834.</u>
do.	<u>Single Life, 1839.</u>
H. S. Conway,	<u>False Appearances, 1788.</u>
E. Craven,	<u>The Miniature Picture, 1780.</u>
J. Francklin,	<u>The Contract, 1776.</u>
D. Garrick,	<u>Miss in her "Teens, or The Medley of Lovers, 1746. (referred to)</u>
W. S. Gilbert,	<u>Randall's Thumb, 1871.</u>
do.	<u>Foggerty's Fairy, 1881.</u>
do.	<u>Sweethearts, 1881.</u>
do.	<u>Patience, or, Bunthorpe's Bride, 1881.</u>
do.	<u>The Mikado, or, The Town of Titipu, 1885.</u>
do.	<u>Ruddigore, or, The Witch's Curse, 1887.</u>
do.	<u>The Yeomen of the Guard, 1888.</u>
W. Hayley,	<u>The Two Connoisseurs, 1784.</u>
R. Hitchcock,	<u>The Coquette, or, The Mistakes of the Heart, 1776.</u>
B. Hoadly,	<u>The Suspicious Husband, 1746.</u>
T. E. Hook,	<u>Exchange no Robbery, 1820.</u>
Mrs. Inchbald,	<u>Every One has his Fault, 1793.</u>
do.	<u>Wives as They Were and Maids as they are, 1797.</u>
do.	<u>To Marry, or not to Marry, 1805.</u>
J. S. Knowles,	<u>The Maid of Mariendorp, 1838.</u>
do.	<u>Old Maids, 1841.</u>
J. R. B. Knowles,	<u>The Maiden Aunt, 1845.</u>
G. H. Lovell,	<u>Look before you Leap, or, Wooings and Weddings, 1846.</u>
J. W. Marston,	<u>The Wife's Portrait, or, A Household Picture under Two Lights, 1862</u>
do.	<u>Pure Gold, 1863. Life, 1847.</u>
R. B. Peake,	<u>The Climbing Boy, 1832.</u>
J. Richardson,	<u>The Fugitive, 1792.</u>
E. Stirling,	<u>Raby Rattler, or, The Progress of a Scam, 1847.</u>
do.	<u>The Battle of Life, 1847.</u>
T. Taylor,	<u>The Ticket-of-Leave Man, 1863.</u>

Books of Criticism and Reference.

W. Albery,	<u>The Dramatic Works of James Albery.</u>
M. S. Carhart,	<u>The Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. XI.</u>
A. H. Godwin,	<u>The Life and Work of Joanna Baillie. (Yale).</u>
G. Lambton,	<u>Gilbert and Sullivan.</u>
G. Paston,	<u>Gilbertian Characters.</u>
	<u>Social Caricature in the Eighteenth Century.</u>

## Chapter VI.

List of Plays dealt with. (1890-1921)E. Baker, Chains.H. Granville Barker, The Marrying of Ann Leete.do. (and Housman), Prunella.do., , The Voysey Inheritance.do., , Waste.do., , The Madras House.do., , Rococo.do., , Farewell to the Theatre.do., , The Secret Life.J. M. Barrie, The Professor's Love Story.do., , The Wedding Guest.do., , Quality Street.do., , What Every Woman Knows.A. Bennett, Sacred and Profane Love.A. Bennett and Knoblauch, Milestones.G. Bottomley, Lear's Wife.H. Brighouse, Hobson's Choice.do., Zack.G. Calderon, Revolt.G. Calderon and St. J. Hankin, Thompson.Clemence Dane, Mariners.do., , A Bill of Divorcement.G. Dayle, What would a Gentleman do?S. M. Fox, The Waters of Bitterness.S. Grundy, The New Woman.W. E. Henney and R. L. Stevenson, Beau Austin.St. J. Hankin, The Two Mr. Wetherbys.do., , The Return of the Prodigal.do., , The Last of the De Mullins.do., , The Charity that Began at Home.do., , The Cassilis Engagement.do., , The Constant Lover.S. Houghton, Hindle Wakes.do., , The Perfect Cure.L. Housman, The Family Honour.do., , Possession.Jerome K. Jerome, Fanny and the Servant Problem.do., , The Master of Mrs. Chilvers.do., , Miss Hobbs.do., , The Celebrity.H. A. Jones, The Case of Rebellious Susan.do., , The Lie.do., , Judah.J. Masefield, The Tragedy of Man.S. Maugham, Home and Beauty.do., , The Unknown.do., , Mrs. Dot.A. A. Milne, The Lucky One.do., , Mr. Pim Passes By.do., , The Truth about Bladys.E. and A. Phillpotts, Yellow Sands.A. W. Pinero, Lady Bountiful.do., , The Times.do., , Trelawney of the "Wells".do., , His House in Order.

S.L. Robinson, The Whiteheaded Boy.  
 G.B. Shaw, Widowers' Houses.  
 do. Arms and the Man.  
 do. The Philanderer.  
 do. Mrs. Warren's Profession.  
 do. Captain Brassbound's Conversion.  
 do. Man and Superman.  
 do. John Bull's Other Island.  
 do. Getting Married.  
 do. Misalliance.  
 do. Heartbreak House.  
 do. Buoyant Billions.  
 G. Sowerby, Rutherford and Son.  
 A. Sutro Freedom.  
 O. Wilde, A Woman of No Importance.

Books of Criticism and Reference.

E. Bentley, Bernard Shaw.  
 P. Braybrooke and C. Palmer, The Subtlety of George Bernard Shaw.  
 Do. The Genius of Bernard Shaw.  
 D. Brook, Writer's Gallery.  
 A. S. Downer, The British Drama.  
 J. Brinkwater, The Plays of St. John Hankin.  
 A. Dukes, The Youngest Drama.  
 St. J. Ervine, Oscar Wilde.  
 H. Fyfe, Sir Arthur Pinero's Plays and Players.  
 A. Henderson, European Dramatists.  
 B. Howe, A Galaxy of Governesses.  
 Hudson, The Twentieth Century Drama.  
 C. E. M. Joad, Shaw.  
 A. E. Morgan, Tendencies of Modern English Drama.  
 A. H. Nethercot, Men and Supermen.  
 C. P. Purdom, Granville Barker.  
 E. Reynolds, Early Victorian Drama.  
 do. Modern English Drama.  
 G. Rowell, The Victorian Theatre.  
 D. Scott, Men of Letters.  
 J. C. Trewin, The Theatre since 1900.  
 H. M. Walbrook, J. M. Barrie and the Theatre.  
 G. Woodcock, The Paradox of Oscar Wilde.  
 G. B. Shaw, Sixteen Self Sketches.

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The Yellow Book, Vol. III, Oct. 1894.

The Theatre, 1894.

Harper's Magazine, Vol. 194, 1947.

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J. Baillie, The Match.  
 J. M. Barrie, Mary Rose.  
 N. Coward, This Happy Breed.  
 Van Druten, London Wall.  
 St. J. Ervine, Robert's Wife.  
 do. Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary.

S. Foote, The Devil upon two Sticks.  
 W. S. Gilbert, Ruddigore.  
 J. Galsworthy, The Silver Box.  
 J. Heywood, John, Tyb and the Curate.  
 Henrik Ibsen, Hedda Gabler.

Henrik Ibsen, John Gaybiel Borkman.  
 do. Rosmersholm.  
 Mrs. Inchbald, Every One Has His Fault.  
 Jerome K. Jerome, The Passing of the Third Floor Back.  
 J. Marston, The Wife's Portrait.  
 S. Maugham, The Constant Wife.  
 do. The Sacred Flame.  
 do. For Services Rendered.  
 A. A. Milne, Make Believe.  
 A. W. Pinero, The Hobby-Horse.  
 J. B. Priestley, The Linden Tree.  
 do. Music at Night.  
 do. Eden, End.  
 W. Shakespeare, As You Like It.  
 G. B. Shaw, Candida.  
 do. ~~Sketches~~ Self Sketches.  
 E. Stirling, The Rag Picker of Paris.  
 W. Wilde, Lady Windermere's Fan.  
 E. Williams, The Corn is Green.

Contd.



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Anon.  
E. Carrington,

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Cornhill Magazine, Lit., N.S.  
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The Mirror, XVII, 1831.  
do. c. XXV, 1835.  
The Parterre, Vol. III, 1835.  
The Spirit and Manners of the Age, Vol. 3, 1827.

Chapter VI. Appendix A.

List of Plays dealt with.

*Contd.*

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Appendix B

Appendix A

(List of References)

+ Plays dealt with.

- Anon., A Larum for London, 1622.  
do. All's a Delusion, 1847.  
F. Anstey, The Man from Blankley's, 1901.  
J. Bürgoyne, The Maid of the Oaks, 1774.  
do. The Heiress, 1786.  
T. D'Urfe, The Marriage Hater Match'd.  
~~Gray's Inn Journal, 1754.~~  
Henry Holl, Grace Huntley.  
St. J. Hankin, The Last of the De Mullins.  
S. Houghton, The Perfect Cure.  
H. James, Pyramus and Thisbe.  
F. Lathom, The Dash of the Day, 1801.  
E. V. Lucas, The Same Star, 1924.  
C. Molloy, The Coquet, or The English Chevalier, 1718.  
A. Murphy, The School for Guardians, 1767.  
A. W. Pinero, Sweet Lavender, 1888.  
~~E. Power,~~ Medieval English Nunneries.  
Reynolds, The Will, 1797.  
Robertson, Progress, 1869.  
W. Shakespeare, The Merchant of Venice.  
J. Shirley, Hyde Park, 1632.  
R. B. Sheridan, The School for Scandal, 1777.  
~~do.~~ The Spectator, No. 343.  
T. Taylor, An Unequal Match, 1869.

E. Power, Book of Criticism and Reference.  
Medieval English Nunneries.

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Gray's Inn Journal, 1754.  
The Spectator, No. 343.

R. Daborne, The Poor Man's Comfort, 1655.

W. D'Avenant, The Just Italian, 1630.

T. Dekker, The Shoe-Maker's Holiday.

T. D'Urfe, Love for Money; or, The Boarding School, 1690.

- J.Fletcher, The Two Noble Kinsman.
- S.Foote, A Trip to Calais, 1776.
- O.Goldsmith, She Stoops to Conquer.
- S.Grundy, A Fool's Paradise, 1887.
- St.J.Hankin, The Last of the De Mullins.  
The Charity that Began at Home, 1906.
- Hawkins, Apollo Shroving, 1626.
- T.Holeroft, The School for Arrogance, 1791.  
Knave or Not?, 1798.
- E.Howard, The Woman's Conquest.
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- C.Johnson, The Masquerade.
- H.A.Jones, The Manoeuvres of Jane, 1898.  
Mrs.Dan's Defence.  
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- H.Kelly, The School for Wives, 1773.
- T.Marston, The Malcontent, 1604.  
Parisitaster or, The Fawne, 1606.
- S.Maugham, The Land of Promise.
- A.A.Milne, Make-Believe, 1918.
- E.Morris, The Secret.
- J.O'Keefe, The World in a Village.  
Life's Vagaries, 1795.
- J.Phillips, Patient Grissel.
- A.W.Pinero, The Magistrate, 1885.  
The Schoolmistress, 1886.  
The Hobby-horse, 1886.  
The Times, 1891.  
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- E.Ravenscroft, Ignoramus; or, The English Lawyer, 1677.
- F.Reynolds, The Will, 1797.
- T.Shadwell, The Scowrsers, 1690.
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Henry VIII,  
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- F.G.Waldron, The Maid of Kent, 1773.
- O.Wilde, A Woman of No Importance, 1893.  
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- W.Wycherly, St.James' Park; or, Love in a Wood, 1670.  
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