CHAPTER III

RECURRING THEMES IN THE DOMESTIC PLAYS OF

DEKKER AND HEYWOOD
The most significant contribution to the Domestic drama, in bulk as well as in quality, is made by Dekker and Heywood. Except Porter's *The Two Honest Women of Abington* and Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money* or *A Woman will have Her Will*, and some other early anonymous plays of which many were attributed to Heywood with reliable evidence, all the other plays in this genre are either from the pen of Dekker or Heywood. In the case of other plays produced in collaboration with others one of them seems to have led the team. Though neither have inaugurated the genre they made the style their own and have achieved their highest success in it. It is mainly because of their work in this field that the Domestic drama has attained the status of a distinctive dramatic form.

The first regular domestic tragedy we have is *Arden of Feversham*. The play opens with Franklin's happy news to Arden about the 'letters patent' from the king granting all the lands of the Abbey of Feversham. Arden in turn expresses his inner torture about his wife's flirtations:

Louve-letters pass 'twixt Mosbie and my Wyfe',
And they haue priuie meetings in the Towne

1. See Mowbray Velte: *The Bourgeois Elements in the Dramas of Thomas Heywood*, p.149. Otelia Cromwell in her *Thomas Heywood: A Study in the Elizabethan Drama of Everyday life*, pp.156-328 thoroughly discusses the problems of authorship and mostly approves of Heywood's hand, 'at least a main finger' in many. Heywood himself gives scope for such attributions. In his address to The Reader prefixed to *The English Traveller* he boasts that he 'had either an entire hand, or at the least a main finger' in 'two hundred and twenty' plays. Mermaid Edition, p.154.

Alice, his wife, is portrayed as a detestable adulteress. Her 
uncompromised lust for Mosbie with an equally strong hatred for her
husband, the feigned innocence with which she cheats Arden and 
her unflinching readiness to plot against his life, make it 
impossible to sympathise with her. Neither Mosbie nor anyone
of the hired murderers has her trick and audacity. With a
triumphant gaiety she tells her lover:

My saving husband hoordes vp bagges of goul
To make our children rich ....."3

Nor is Arden lovable. He is a greedy accumulator mercilessly
grabbing the lands of his neighbours.

Attempt after attempt on Arden's life fails as if he is
protected by providence. He is protected by an unseen force
as long as he is pardonable. His merciless annexing of Reede's
land and his heartless answer to the moving appeal of the poor
sailor mark the climax of his inhuman greed. The agonising
curse of the poor helpless sailor is the last straw. His
boundless avarice could be an adequate poetic justification
for his wretched death. All the sinners are punished and the
author particularly draws our attention to the fact that:

But this above the rest is to be noted:
Arden lay murthered in that plot of ground
Which he by force and violence held from Rede; 4

3. Arden of Feversham ed. Tucker Brooke, Shakespeare Apocrypha,
I, p.6, 221-222.
4. Ibid., V, Epilogue, 9-11.
Porter's *The Two Angry Women of Abingdon* deals with the efforts of Master Barnes and Master Goursey to reestablish the 'neighbour amitie' and the broken friendship between their two families. The men are endowed with patience and good sense but their wives are cantankerous women governed by petty jealousies. The old happy relationship is restored by the marriage of Mall, the daughter of Barnes, with Frank Goursey.

Porter, 'the most truly English of all dramatists', took the village of Abingdon near Oxford as the setting of his play. The play is a faithful transcript of English rural life. "The fun of the play has at once a Chaucerian shrewdness and a something of the careless gaffaw of W. Wager. Its realism throws back to Mak and Johan, Tom Tylor and Gammer Gurton. As a comedy of unadulterated native flavour, breathing rural life and manners and the modern spirit, constructed with knowledge of the stage and without affection or constraint, it has no foregoing analogue except perhaps *The Pinner of Wakefield*. No play preceding or contemporary yields an easier conversational prose, not even the *Merry Wives*".5

Haughton's *Englishmen for my Money* is a comedy of London middle-class life very much resembling Porter's play in its style and technique. Pisaro, a city merchant and usurer, wants to wed his three daughters to three rich foreigners, Delian,

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a Frenchman, Aluro, an Italian and Vandalle, a Dutchman. His
daughters, already in love with three Englishmen who mortgaged
their properties to Pisaro, join hands with their lovers in
outwitting their father and the three foreigners, and get married
to their native lovers.

Certainly these plays mark the beginnings of the Domestic
drama. But the presentation of the middle-class life and cus-
toms betray the authors' lack of the complete mastery of the
material. At best these plays may be said to be successful
attempts. All these plays develop by a kind of accretion from
without not by a natural evolution from within. There is an
obvious tendency in Arden to capitalise on the morbid taste
of the audience, and, in its dull cataloguing of incidents and
details it hardly soars above the lurid prose narratives. The
realism of The Two Angry Women of Abingdon and The Englishmen
for my Money is tedious and over-detailed. The elements of
intrigue present in these plays mar their domestic climate.
Porter's scenes in the wood in a midsummer night's-dream-vein,
Haughton's detailed topography of London streets, its lanes and
by lanes, through which the lovers move in a kind of hide and
seek game; the repeated attempts at Arden's life followed by
miraculous escapes, though extremely engaging in themselves,
are not integrated into the plays and they hardly contribute
anything to the understanding of the main domestic issue. The
characterisation is crude and unformed. Arden and Pisaro are
avaricious types built around a single idea like the two
'angry women' of Porter. Alice and the three daughters of Pisaro are unabashed in their talk. Mosbie is a 'base groom' and the three young Englishmen are little more than prodigal vagabonds. When we come to the domestic plays of Dekker and Heywood we find a deeper and more acute understanding of the middle-class life its milieu and ethos. "With Dekker and Heywood on the other hand we reach a new form of drama, infinitely less crude than all the preceding efforts and containing not merely the narration of 'horrid murthers' but genuine attempts at the expression of social problems and the portrayal of real characters".6

Dekker's *The Shoemakers' Holiday*7 has been praised lavishly and justly for its hearty humour, bright dramatic realism and democratic outlook. Dekker's "perfect presentation of the brightness and social interest of the everyday Elizabethan life"8 has been noticed, but, the play has hardly been studied as a domestic drama. It combines three important themes of the middle-class life: the material and social advancement of Eyre, the 'unequal' marriage of Rose and Lacy and the separation and reunion of Jane and Rafe. All the three aspects, based on

6. Nicoll; *British Drama*, p.199.
7. Fredson Bowers in Thomas Dekker, Robert Wilson and *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, M.L.N. LXIV, 1949, pp.517-519, proves that the theory of collaboration with Wilson advanced on the basis of a reported signed copy of Q1 rests on a typical Collier forgery.
Deloney's *The Gentle Craft* are closely connected with the house of Simon Eyre. Throughout the play there is a strong local colour and the language is vividly topical. The lively routine of Eyre's household, the bright work-a-day side of his shop with his apprentices maids and his garrulous wife are attractively presented.

The rise of Eyre from a shoemaker to the Lord Mayor is a dramatic presentation of a dream cherished by many a hardworking and ambitious apprentice, and such cases were quite common. Eyre achieves nothing traditionally impossible for a man of his birth and nature. He owes his position, prosperity and power to his men and craft. With a legitimate pride in his vocation and workers he says: "am I not *Simon Eyre*? are not these my braue men? braue shoomakers, all gentlemen of the gentle craft? Prince am I none, yet am I noblie borne, as beeing the sole somne of a shoomaker..." The occasional reproofs he gives to his men, he never ignores their advice and always readily considers their claims. He knows his mind and moves with uninhibited freedom and talks with his natural spirit of lighthearted gaiety. He is free with his sovereign but he never violates the traditional social hierarchy. He is careful enough not to allow his familiarity

9. Professor A.F. Lange in his introduction to the play in Gayley's *Representative English Comedies*, Vol. III shows that these three situations closely resemble the narrative of Deloney.

to exceed the limits of decency and social etiquette and his freedom does not blind him to his duties of loyalty and obedience: "... every hair I assure thy majesty that sticks in this beard, Sim Pyre values at the king of Babilons ransom, Tamare Chuang beard was a rubbing brush too: yet Ile shave it off, and stuffe tennis balls with it to please my bully king". 11

The inter-class marriage of Rose and Lacy meets with the expected disapproval from all quarters. All the others in both the families try their level best to 'prevent' it. Even the king who pardons the lovers does not do so as an advocate of the best democratic social ideas, but as a champion of the laws of love and the sanctity of marriage:

Shall I divorce them? O be it farre
That any hand on earth should dare untie,
The sacred knot knit by Gods majestie,
I would not for my crowne disicoynd their hands,
That are coniocoed in holy nuptiall bands, 12

The class distinctions, especially in the case of matrimonial alliances, are clearly marked and their existence is taken as a matter of course. Dekker approves the inter-class marriage based on love and understanding for he says, 'where there is much loue, 'all discord ends'. 13

The separation of Jane and Rafe on account of wars in

13. Ibid., p.87, 119.
France gives an opportunity for Dekker to introduce the domestic virtues of conjugal charity, obedience, patience and constancy. The picture of Jane working and managing her shop is an example of an ideal citizen wife for emulation, which recurs in the domestic plays. Jane's reply to the pestering Hammond reminds us of the traditional constancy of citizen heroines like Greene's Beltris and Heywood's Bess.\textsuperscript{14}

All these three strains are closely fused together and the play as a whole gives a true and accurate picture of the everyday life of London middle-class and this happy comedy is also a perfect domestic play, the best of its class.

The constancy of Grissil had been a stock domestic theme from the beginning of the English drama, not to mention its popularity in other forms of literature.\textsuperscript{15} It was constantly recommended as an ideal example for house-wives by many moralists from middle ages down to the Restoration. Chaucer's poem gave a wide currency to the theme and by the time it came into Dekker's hands all its potentialities had been all but exhausted. Chaucer's "deepest note of pathos they (Dekker and his collaborators) have not even attempted to reproduce: but in freshness and straightforwardness, in frankness and simplicity of


treatment, the dramatic version is not generally unworthy to
be compared with the narrative which follows it afar off". 26

Grissil is presented as a paragon of all feminine virtues:
an obedient daughter, a devoted and patient wife and a tender
mother. The episodes of Lady Julia who seeks protection from
the responsibilities of wedded life by dallying with thoughts
of celibacy and that of Gwenthyan a 'fixen widowe' who tries
her husband's patience as much as Gwalter tests Grissil's,
provide a fitting contrast to the main theme.

Patient Grissil 17 is essentially English in its thought,
sentiments and setting and there is nothing alien except the
names of the characters and the places. The close-knit family
of poor Janicola, the basket maker, assisted by his obedient
children and the trusty servant, is a typical replica of an
ideal family of a contemporary 'handicrafts man'. This self-
sufficient family has a peculiar idyllic charm of its own.
They lead a honest and contented life, singing and working,
untainted by the cankerous thoughts of anxiety, jealousy or
ambition. Janicola consoles his frustrated son:

Nay grieve not Sonne, better haue felt worse woe.
Come sit by me: while I worke to get bread.

16. A.C. Swinburne: Nineteenth Century, Vol. XXI, Jan-June, 1887,
p.86.
17. The play is written in collaboration with Chettle and Haughton.
See Henslowe's Diary ed., R.A. Foakes and R.T. Rickert,
p.65, 125, 129. See also E.K. Chambers Eliza. Sta. Vol. III,
Vol. I, p.271 seems to be the main figure.
And Grissil spyn vs yeame to closthe our backe,
Thou shalt receaue doctrine to vs for the soule,
Then what shall we three want, nothing my sonne,
For when we cease from worke even in that while
My son shall charme griefes cares and care begile.18

The peace of the family is disturbed by Gwalter who worries
Grissil incurring the displeasure of his courtiers and subjects.
In order to silence them he puts her to extreme trials of patience
and forbearance. The trials reach the climax when Grissil is
separated from her young babes by force and is asked to make all
the necessary preparations for her husband's second marriage.
Obeying her husband's command she departs from her children,
grief-stricken and tongue-tied. But the mother in her soon
dominates; she enters stealthily and suckles her children. At
her husband's order she decks his bride, puts the embroidered
slippers on her feet and adorns her 'rival's' hand with her
own wedding ring. She endures everything with a saint-like
patience and her husband proudly reclaims her:

Grissil receiue.
Large interestes for thy loue and sufferance
Thou gau'st this faire maide, I in exchange,
Returne thee her and this young Gentleman:
Thy sonne and daughter kisse with patience,
And breath thy vertuous spirit into their soules.19

The episode of Julia is presented as a contrast to Grissil's
endurance of all the trials. Julia's preference for monastic
holiness appears more like a ruse to run away from the realities

19. Ibid., V, ii, p.286, 183-188.
of married life than her wholehearted dedication for divine virginity. She takes an active part in the repartee with her three docile suitors - too fawning for any woman to care for. None of them is as 'desperate an amarato' as Dekker's Ursans in Old Fortunatus to win her. The entire episode looks like a parody of wooing.

Gwenthyan comes of a distinguished company of low comedy shrews starting with Noah's wife and culminating in Katherine in The Taming of the Shrew. Sir Owen's repeated attempts to tame her are doomed to perpetual failure. He is perplexed and unnerved in his helpless state for it would be "a shame eyther to run away from a woman or to strike her". The shrew herself, looking at the example of Grissil, volunteers to be obedient and thus solves the puzzle.

All the three situations have a relevance to the middle-class life and the play was intended for an audience ready to believe Grissil's incredible patience. There is something mechanical about Grissil's patience and obedience, but this is something inherent in the theme itself.

The Honest Whore as a whole can be called a four-fold

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domestic play concentrating on different types of private problems: the reciprocal love of Hippolito and Infelice thwarted by family feud, the varying fortunes of Bellafront in the hands of Hippolito and her gallant husband, the problem of Candido 'a patient man linkt with a waspish shrew' and the silent suffering of Orlando Friscobaldo, watching and protecting his daughter without her knowledge.

For all purposes it would be better to take the two parts of The Honest Whore together. Otherwise, the cycle of problems which each character faces and the experiences it undergoes will not be complete. Hippolito, the idolatrous lover who reclaims Bellafront from her incorrigible ways of sin, turns in the second part, into an unfaithful husband and the arch tempter of the same woman whom he saved. His wife whose problem was to overcome parental opposition strives now to turn her husband's thoughts from adultery. Bellafront who succeeds in relinquishing her evil ways has to withstand the rigours of poverty coupled with the luring temptations of luxurious life from Hippolito, 'a bait enough to choake a Nun'. Candido's domestic troubles are renewed by a second marriage. It is in the second part of the play that the slow conversion of Orlando Friscobaldo, from a frustrated cynic to a loving father, is presented. Therefore, it is hardly possible to separate the two parts without doing much damage to the thematic unity of the play.

The troubles of Bellafront before and after her conversion
form the main part of the play. Her first seducer Matheo brings disappointed Hippolito to Bellafront to relieve his mind from the thoughts of his Infelice. Thus, for the first time, the courtesan her excellency is brought face to face with a man who could scorn her and open her eyes to the horrifying sins and filth of her trade. The real feelings behind the 'offensively crowded speeches' between Hippolito and Bellafront is not mere derision and contempt against prostitution. It is Dekker's humane understanding of the problem, his compassionate realism and kindhearted concern to reform the fallen that gives the real strength for his speeches. Bellafront's moving words:

T'has neuer bin my fortune yet to single
Out that one man, whose loue could fellow mine,
As I haue euer wisht it: O my Stars!
Had I but met with one kind gentleman,
That would haue purchasde sin alone, to himselfe,
For his owne private vse, although scarce proper:
Indifferent handsome: meetly legd and thyed:
And my allowance reasonable - yfaith,
According to my body - by my troth,
I would have bin as true into his pleasure;
Yea, and as loyall to his afternoones,
As euer a poore gentlewoman could be.23

indicate that she has had her moments of introspection, and she is not completely lost. There is some measure of inherent honesty in her. Therefore, her conversion after her encounter

 "All are not Bawds (I see now) that keepe doores
Nor all good wenches are markt for whores."

with Hippolito is quite expected and it need not puzzle us. Dekker himself anticipated the common reaction to such a change and, perhaps, he meant these words as a kind of explanation:

A woman honest first and then turne whore,  
Is (as with me) common to thousands more,  
But from a strumpet to turne chaste: that sound  
Has oft bin heard, that woman hardly found.

One of the reasons for his over-emphasis on the filth and horrors of whoredom may be to provide a strong ground for her conversion.

The episode of Orlando Friscoaldo is another domestic incident of an affectionate father disillusioned by an indiscreet daughter on whom he cherished all his hopes. Being a 'respectable gentleman' he takes it to heart and acquires tinges of misanthropy. Again, it is Hippolito who rekindles the burnt wick of this aged father's hope. All his anger, accumulated shades of cynicism and misanthropy melt into silent tears when he listens to his daughter's spontaneous words of love at the mere mention of his name:

My Father? any tongue that sounds his name,  
Speakes Musicke to me: Welcome good old man.

24. Madeleine Doran in Endeavors of Art, pp.221-222, remarks that such conversions after persuasive oratory are accepted. ".....Dekker subjects Bellafront to a piece of persuasive oratory from Hippolito that turns her, as an audience would expect it to, to repentance and reformation of life. In Part Two ..... Dekker varies the situation by having her match her own eloquence against Hippolito's and turns the tables by not letting her fall".

How does my father? lives he? has he health?
How does my father? I so much doe share him,
So much doe wound him, that I scarce dare name him.

Orlando: I can speake no more.26

He provokes her intentionally, perhaps, more to derive a
secret pleasure from her strong protests than to test her. The
whole scene is an example of Dekker's superb constructive skill
with which he telescopes a number of conflicting emotions and
creates a domestic situation of unparalleled tenderness. It
acquires a homely softness and a new depth of appeal when the
father, moved to the core, asks his daughter's forgiveness:

....so if your Father call you whore, you'll not
call him old knaue: Friscobaldo, she carries thy
mind vp and downe; she's thine owne flesh, blood,
and bone; ... I love your father as myselfe; Ile
ride for him at mid-night, runne for you by Owle-
light; Ile dye for him, drudge for you; .... to doe
you good, if you'll forgive me.

Bellafront: I am not made of marble: I forgive thee.27

He watches her in her poverty and heartrending miseries amidst
constant temptations from Hippolito. After enduring everything
with the resolution of a stoic, he throws off his disguise with
an apparent harshness which gives way to an aside expressing his

    i, p. 155, 64-68.
27. Ibid., p.159, 209-218.
inner torture:

My heart-strings sure would crack, were they strained more.

The episode of Orlando is one of the happiest instances of the triumph of Dekker's art, his gifts of moral imagination and his subtle dramatic execution. Candido is a masculine counterpart of patient Grissil. All the frantic efforts of his wife to satisfy her 'not wanton but wayward' desire and the plans of Matheo and his gallant companions to make him 'as vexed and madde as an English cuckold' crumble before his monumental patience. Finally, in a desperate mood she procures a warrant from the Duke, as the last attempt to provoke her husband to confine him in the Bedlam, only to repent of her folly in the end. He accepts and improves on all her stratagems.

"When, thoroughly remorseful, she comes to procure his release, he coolly throws up his role, telling her that the only lunatic is herself and that he had swallowed all the indignities she heaped on him simply to cure her perverse longing. This novel and strikingly up-to-date method of taming a shrew is much more convincing than the moral abjurations with which Hippolito converts Bellafront". 29

Though the place of action and the characters are nominally


alien, all the characters, the courtiers, gallants, whores, bawds; merchants, citizens their wives and apprentices and their sentiments are essentially native. Milan is exactly Dekker's London and the general atmosphere is that of the everyday city life. Dekker shifts the Bethelham monastery to Milan, with very little change of character, as quietly as Shakespeare created a sea coast for Bohemia. That these authors were ignorant of their anachronisms baffles our imagination.

Dekker in his The Witch of Edmonton\(^\text{30}\) combines domestic ruin with the world of superstition and witchcraft. Frank, who had secretly married Winnifride, yields to the pressure of his father and marries Susan, consoling himself with the thought that some 'wise woman' has prophesied two wives for him. In a sudden diabolic impulse, attributed to the evil influence of witchcraft, he stabs innocent Susan to death. Thus, the domestic misery resulting from bigamy and forced marriage is deftly interwoven with the popular belief in witchcraft. The play ends with a typical didactic passage in which Frank advises the audience to take his tragedy as a warning.

Oh that my Example
Might teach the world hereafter what a curse
Hangs on their heads, who rather chuse to marry
A goodly Portion, then a Dowr of Vertues! \(^\text{31}\)

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30. It is generally agreed as written in collaboration with Ford and Rowley. Dekker's hand is found 'in nearly all the scenes' by Pierce, See E.K. Chambers, Elizabethan Stage, Vol.III, p.299.

The presentation of country life in this play is authentic and varied. The rich country squire Sir Arthur who molests his maid Winnifride and deceives Frank, Old Frank the conventional authoritative father threatening his son to disinherit him if he does not marry as he dictates, Old Carter the hearty Yeoman robust and bounteous, Old Banks the simple countryman. the two daughters of Old Carter and their suitors and the unforgettable simpleton Cuddy Banks, represent the various aspects of country life. The eerie rumour of witchcraft adds a new dimension of verisimilitude to this rich picture of country life. Dekker's compassion for the unfortunate women, the miserable old hags dubbed as witches, is an instance of his 'easy pity and boundless tolerance'. The witches are mostly the creations of popular rumour and credulity. However, his attitude to witchcraft, like that of Shakespeare, Heywood and others, is ambivalent, and like his contemporaries Dekker never hesitated to exploit this common belief as a dramatic motive. What is remarkable about his presentation is his compassion and tolerance. The witches are, no doubt, odious; the effects of their damned traffic are murder, suicide and domestic discord. But, they should be treated as human beings and the people cannot take

"Now an old woman
Ill favour'd grown with yeers, if she be poor,
Must be call'd Bawd or Witch. Such so abus'd
Are the course Witches: t' other are the fine,
Spun for the Devil's own wearing".
law into their hands in punishing them.

... pray vex her not: she is a subject. and you
must not be judges of the law to strike her as you
please.

Mach Me in London presents another domestic problem of
the kind of Jane Shore with a difference - the unlawful lust
of a king for a citizen's wife and her successful resistance
of all temptations. Finally, when the king attempts to marry
her by force the voice of Heaven chides him and the play ends
with the union of the husband and wife.

The atmosphere of the court is predominantly Spanish. But,
once Dekker turns to the merchant family, his irresistible
temptation to portray the city middle-class wells up. The lively
buzz of a tradesman's home, Tormiella sitting in her husband's
shop instructing the apprentices and attending to the customers
in his absence is the familiar picture of a merchant's home.
In the characters of Malevento and his son-in-law Cordolente
Dekker has presented two types of merchants belonging to two
different generations, the new citizen with his sense of honour
and self-respect, one who cannot be silenced with a monopoly and
the old merchant ready to prefer material gain to his family.

IV, i, p. 537, 64-65.
34. The bawd Dildoman tells the king that he can satisfy
Cordolente with a monopoly. cf. "A flatcap, pish; if he
storme, give him a Court-Loafe; stop his month with a
Monopoly". Match Men in London, Vol. III, p.279, I, iv,
139-140, when the king tries to do so Cordolente refuses.
His father-in-law tries to persuade him:
"The king is vext, let me perswade thee Sonne
To winke at small faults".
Ibid., p.317, IV, 1, 39-40.

35. Ibid., dedication, p.265, 7-8. "I haue beene a Priest in
Apollo's Temple, many yeares, my voyce is decaying with my
Age".
Londoner by birth as well as in spirit. His plays, prose pamphlets and the Lord Mayor's pageants reveal an astounding knowledge of the varied phases of London life. His genuine interest in the everyday life of common people and his sympathetic understanding of their common problems, troubles and consolations form the real basis for his enduring portrayal of honest trading, well-earned prosperity, legitimate social advancement and the harmonious private lives of the ordinary people. The main issues of all his domestic plays, the rising of humble prey to dignity and power, the devotion of Grissil, the constancy of Jane, the triumph of chastity, patience and other virtues and the miseries of a forced marriage, are of immediate interest and importance to the middle-class. These are some of the aspects of life of which the middle-class people were seriously thinking and naturally the didacticism in his plays is plainly directed to them.

Dekker is an ardent defender of just authority and traditional social hierarchy. But misuse of authority in any form - of a king over his subjects, parents and guardians over their children, society at large over the poor and senile old wretches called witches - he never tolerates. His presentation of personal life is equally traditional, attractive and life-like. In

36. K.L. Greg: *Thomas Dekker: A Study in Economic and Social Background*, p.70, "So far as we can discover, he was of the middle-class, and so far as we may judge, he had all of its sympathies and limitations".
all the incidents of domestic life he advocates patience, obedience and the faithful preservation of the sacred vow of marriage - the very aspects dearer to the middle-class. In short, no other Elizabethan dramatist painted such an authentic picture of London life, its ways and customs as Dekker has.

When we come to the domestic plays of Heywood we enter into a more detailed and comprehensive world than that of Dekker. Heywood, like Dekker, is essentially "middle-class in his origin and sympathies" and it looks as though he viewed everything from the middle-class point of view. Besides the strong 'bourgeois elements' in everything he has written, the very fact that he exclusively depicts the middle-class life in nearly ten of his undisputed plays shows his interest in everyday life and his dedication to this form of drama. "There can be little doubt", writes Schelling, "that Heywood's strength as a dramatist lies in his powerful realisation of scenes of everyday life and in the portrayal of the deeper and more serious emotions which he wrought out of the relations of domestic life".


38. Nowbray Velte: The Bourgeois Elements in the Dramas of Thomas Heywood, p.52. "There is nothing delicate about Heywood's presentation of classical story, nothing abstract or allegorical; it is instead realistic and indelicate both in matter and in language. Indeed, it is almost a burlesque of the original; the gods and goddesses are after all merely human figures, men and women of London middle-class life, not majestic and divine figures living in a realm of poetry or imagination."

If Four Prentices of London, his 'first practice', and
Henry IV, though not full fledged domestic plays, contain many
of the elements and dramatic incidents which reappear in his
later and more regular plays - the scenes of civic life, the
lively routine of merchants and apprentices in their shops,
their adventures, sense of honour, patriotism and loyalty and
the varied aspects of their domestic and social life. These
plays illustrate the way in which the popular interest in
Chronicles also contributed to the shaping of the Domestic
Drama. The tragedy of Jane Shore, the most appealing aspect
of the play, foreshadows Heywood's innate dramatic gifts. The
prosperity, fall and the death of Jane adumbrates many crucial
issues, merits as well as defects, of his two important plays,
A Woman Killed with Kindness, The English Traveller and The
Late Lancashire Witches. The same triangular household issue
of a virtuous but a weak wife-seduced by a remorseless friend
or an ignoble guest, and a magnanimous husband who forgives the
sinner, forms the real basis for tragedy in all these plays.
Heywood's brilliant variations on the same theme are of immense
interest for an understanding of his dramatic genius and skill.

The prodigal son theme which was very popular from the
time of the Moralities came back into general favour again after
the advent of the middle-class. This theme, combined with the
popular theme of a faithful and devoted wife as opposed to a
wanton mistress, is presented in a wide variety of ways in nearly
and a dozen plays within five years. Heywood is the first to discover the dramatic potentialities of this combination and his How a Man may Choose a Good Wife from a Bad is the prototype of this kind of domestic drama. In all these plays the theological figure of the early Moralities becomes a kind of case study of a real social type.

Mistress Arthur is put to all sorts of troubles by her prodigal husband. Following the wishes of his wanton sweetheart he poisons his wife and thus gets into trouble. His wife who has swallowed only a sleeping potion is rescued by her admirer Anselme. Even though Anselme offers to marry her and her father advises her to leave her wayward husband, she remains faithful and saves her husband from the gallows and establishes herself as an exemplary wife. The play ends with a much desired advice on how to choose a good wife.

Heywood combines the popular theme of the prodigal youth and the patient wife with the popular beliefs in magic, witchcraft,

40. "A group of no less than six dramas of domestic life, lying in point of date between 1602 and 1607, combine with various effects the motive of the faithful wife with that of the young spendthrift". Felix E. Schelling, Elizabethan Drama, Vol. I, p.331.

41. Robert Greene was the first professional dramatist who introduced the theme of the distressed wife in Queene Dorathea in James IV, Angelica in Orlando Furioso Margaret in Friar Bacon. Heywood combined it with a young spendthrift and a loose mistress in How A Man may. It is repeated in The Fair Maid of Bristow, The London Prodigal, Miseries of Enforced Marriage, A Yorkshire Tragedy and Wisewoman of Hogsdon.
calistria, astrology and other branches of the mysterious arts in the *Wise Woman of Hogsdon*. Heywood's love and sympathy for the middle-class does not prevent him from exposing the naive credulosity of the citizens. The 'wise woman' is in fact ignorant, flourishing on the superstitious faith of the people.

'Tis strange the ignorant be thus fooled!
What can this witch, this wizard, or old trot,
Do by enchantment, or by magic spell?
Such as profess that art should be deep scholars.
What reading can this simple woman have?
'Tis palpable gross foolery.42

Young Chartley 'the wildheaded gentleman' leaving his betrothed Luce comes to London and loves Luce, a goldsmith's daughter and in another freak of fancy decides to marry Gratiana. His wife (called 2nd Luce in the play) pursues the errant scapegrace closely, motivates his unmasking in the house of the 'wise woman' and finally exposes him. She is faithful and patient but not in the conventional pattern of Grissil. She is endowed with a sharp intelligence and a nerve which the traditional patient wives lack. She forgives her prodigal husband, not in the usual docile way, but with a sharp and succinct hint of what her strength is, and with a clever suggestion of what she expects him to be: "I dare confidently undertake to help you to a wife who desires to have an honest man or none. Look on me well: simple though I stand here, I am your wife. Blush not at your folly, man. Perhaps I have more in me than you.

Heywood’s say young men are easily forgiven though the
case of poetic justice remains undistorted. Perhaps, the young
representatives among the audience did not like to see their
kind treated very harshly. Or it may be that the author is taking
a tolerant attitude attributing the errors to their age, not to
them. However, the transformation in the character is suffi-
ciently made clear. Young Chartley says: "This woman hath lent
me a glass, in which I see all my imperfections, at which my
conscience doth more blush inwardly than my face outwardly; and
now I dare confidently undertake for myself I am honest". 44

Whether Heywood has written A Warning for Fair Women 45
and A Yorkshire Tragedy 46 or not, he achieved the greatest
success in this branch and his immortality rests on his two
domestic tragedies A Woman Killed with Kindness and The English

43. Thomas Heywood: The Wise Woman of Hogsdon, Mermaid Edition,
V, iv, p.325.

44. Ibid.

45. J.Q. Adams in The Authorship of A Warning for Fair Women
P.M.L.A. Vol. 28, 1913, pp.594-620, makes a strong case
for Heywood’s authorship. He says that "in minute details
of composition - ways of thinking, sentence structure,
and those colourless phrases that go into the make up of
sentences - the close student of Heywood will, I think,
feel the presence of that writer's "hand and head".

46. A.M. Clark in Thomas Heywood attributed the play to Heywood,
a view which did not find much support. For a full dis-
ussion see Baldwin Maxwell: Studies in the Shakespeare
Apocrypha, pp.182-196.
though these two plays are of the same general type as the plays attributed to him, they are far above the murder plays in their acute presentation of the domestic problem and artistic quality. Heywood's plays are not mere journalistic presentations of the household murders popularised through ballad and brochure. He has successfully presented a serious domestic problem, that of a virtuous but a weak wife seduced by a guest. The sincere repentance and the ready forgiveness which Heywood advocates are daring innovations at a time when Hamlet and Othello were still fresh on the stage. *His A Woman Killed with Kindness* is unanimously praised as the greatest and the most perfect example of the domestic tragedy. The play opens with the cheerful atmosphere of wedding bells. Even before the scene is over, we are introduced to the popular Elizabethan sport of falconry. The wager between Sir Francis and Sir Charles ends in a fight in which the latter kills two of his opponent's men. Sir Francis, not satisfied by mere ruining of his enemy by using all his influence, decides to wound his honour by molesting his sister Susan. This contest and its consequences might look like a device, to further the plot but as Ustick has shown, it has a plausible basis in the contemporary life of that age.

47. W.L. Ustick: 'A Note on 'A Woman Killed with Kindness,' M.I.N. Vol. 29, 1924, p.514. "A twentieth-century audience might feel that this match was introduced for the mere purpose of furthering the plot. But if one knows that the quarrels over hawking contests were common in the early seventeenth century, might not Heywood's device seem less legged in by the heels?".
Frankford, with the typical hospitality of an Elizabethan
country gentleman invites Wendoll to be his guest and associ-
ates. Wendoll seduces Mrs. Frankford in her husband's absence.
The common critical opinion is that she yielded to her seducer
with hardly any struggle. Apart from the deep theological impli-
cations involved in the seduction and fall and the contemporary
'psychological theory' approving such a fall before strong
temotions Heywood has depicted the successive stages of her
struggle and degeneration in the scene itself. Her first react-
tion to Wendoll's proposal is one of surprise followed by a
righteous indignation. Wendoll's desperate preparedness moves
her to pity and she yields to him in a state of bewilderment.
Later through fear she becomes a slave to his passion.

Frankford's treatment of his wife is extremely novel and
striking. Instead of taking vengeance in the name of family
honour, he merely opens her eyes to her sin and the shame it
brings to the family reputation and their innocent children.
The abrupt introduction of the children is considered to be a

48. I.C. Knights says that in the Elizabethan age it was very
common for the well-to-do people from the country squire
upwards to have such gentle dependents. cf. Drama and
Society in The Age of Jonson, p.113 ff.

49. Madeleine Doran in her Endeavors of Art maintains that such
sudden transformations in character were quite common in
Elizabethan drama, pp.237-239.

50. Thomas Heywood: A Woman Killed with Kindness, Mermaid Editio:
IV, iii, p.50.
"You have tempted me to mischief, Master Wendoll:
I have done I know not what! Well, you plead custom; /
That which for want of wit I granted erst,
I now must yield through fear".
For a detailed discussion of the scene of seduction see
Chapter VI, pp.178-179 of this thesis.
caliber to device to wring a sympathetic tear from the audience. It doubt to some extent, this is a concession to popular sentiment, a thrilling stage trick to satisfy the jaded Jacobean audience. But this aspect of the scene should not blind us to the significant dramatic purpose served by the introduction of the children. Master Frankford is trying to make his wife realise the various consequences of her sin, and nothing could be more appropriately powerful and touching than to remind her of its terrible consequences on their innocent children. His words:

O Man! O Man!
If neither fear of shame, regard of honour, The blemish of my house; nor my dear love Could have withheld thee from so lewd a fact, Yet for these infants, these young harmless souls On whose white brows thy shame is charactered And grows in greatness as they wax in years,-- Look but on them, and melt away in tears.51

are strong enough to make any tender-hearted mother like Mrs. Frankford to move to self-destructive penitence. It is after this preparation that he reminds her of divine mercy.

Unlike Mrs. Frankford, Susan resists all the temptations of Sir Francis. Her triumph is a fitting contrast to Mrs. Frankford's fall. When all his luring temptations fail to seduce her, Acton determines to win her love by 'fastening such an act of kindness' as will overcome her hatred for him. He

...and debts of his enemy whose utter ruin he avowed and
was his relieved from prison.

This unexpected act of kindness from his enemy proves too
amollification for Sir Charles to accept, and in a desperate
impulse to repay he offers his sister, who is the main inspira-
tion for Acton's kindness, as a barter. Perhaps this device
may appear to be "too grotesque even to horrify us". 52  But,
here Heywood is showing the absurd lengths to which a country
gentleman would go, the extent where the payment itself becomes
a prostitution of the very honour he wants to save. In an act
which may look worse than grotesque to us Sir Francis Acton sees
'honoured thoughts'!

Was ever known, in any former age,
Such honourable wrested courtesy?
Lands, honours, life, and all the world forgo
Rather than stand engaged to such a foe. 53

Both of them are country gentlemen, a class in which normally
respect for social institutions and family honour is greatest.
These words of Acton express the typical reaction of a country
gentleman to Sir Charles's act to save his honour. Moreover,
this is one of the many incidents in Heywood's plays where
hatred is 'killed with kindness'.

Master Frankford does not take the crude vengeance sanctioned

52. T.S. Eliot; Selected Essays, p.177.
V, 1, p.62.

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by the tradition of revenge tragedy and the feudal code of
honour. He savours the guilty pair for exactly the opposite of
the reason for which Hamlet spared his uncle. One is not to
mistake Frankford for a theological prig. Heywood is certainly
presenting a novel attitude, which has a strong basis in the
early Moralities like A Woman Taken in Adultery and one advoca-
ted by Shakespeare in his last plays. It has a scriptural
sanction and support from the classical as well as Renaissance
moralists. If Master Frankford kills his wife, as Othello
does for an imagined betrayal, he will be damning her soul and
damning himself. Sir Francis Bacon's reaction to his 'brother's
treatment of his unfaithful wife expresses the typical contem-
porary attitude.

My brother Frankford showed a mild spirit
In the vengeance of such a loathed crime;
Less than he did, no man of spirit could do:
I am so far from blaming his revenge,
That I commend it. Had it been my case,
Their souls at once had from their breasts been freed.55

In both instances, it looks as though, Heywood anticipated the
troubles and intended Acton as an ideal interpreter inside the
play - a device not very uncommon on the Elizabethan stage.) Thus
in both the plots sin and hatred are 'killed with kindness'.

Heywood has created an impressive background of a Yorkshire

54. This aspect will be discussed in detail in Chapter IV-VI, pp.
192-194 of this thesis.

55. Thomas Heywood: A Woman Killed with Kindness, Mermaid Edi-
tion, V, iv, p.69.
country house with its faithful and brisk servants, the country dances and common sports of hawking and hunting and the after dinner relaxation at a game of cards. His detailed description of the household articles adds to the homely setting, and, sometimes a small instrument is transformed into a potential symbol charged with deep tragic feelings. Mrs. Frankford takes up the lute with the words which illuminate the whole tragedy:

I know thee, Lute; oft have I sung to thee;
We both are out of tune, both out of time. 56

Heywood often repeats certain themes and situations in his domestic plays. Perhaps the tremendous success of the theme of marital disloyalty, sin, repentance and forgiveness in his Edward IV and A Woman Killed with Kindness57 gave him a new inspiration to present an enigmatic variant of it in The English Traveller. The strikingly novel aspect of Mrs. Wincott's plighting herself to marry her young lover Geraldine, who waits on her promise, immediately after the death of her old husband, appealed to the modern taste. "It is indeed a plot especially modern among Elizabethan plots; for the refinement of agony of the virtuous lover who has controlled his passion and then discovers that his lady has deceived both her husband, who is his


57. The popularity of A Woman is attested by the number of allusions in contemporary plays. See A.W. Ward, Vol.II, p.553.
friend and himself, is really more poignant than the torment of the betrayed husband Frankford. The strange situation, a quarte, Master Wincott and his wife, young Geraldine and his faithless companion Delilah — and old Geraldine neatly worked into the pattern as well — is not only well thought of but well thought out".58

The young lovers prove themselves worthy of the old gentleman's implicit trust in them. Their mutual promises proceed from nobler desires and the entire conversation between them moves at a high moral level. Young Geraldine asks her to confer her widowhood on him:

he be called hence,
Fairly, on full maturity of time.
And we two be reserved to after-life,
Will you confer your widowhood on me?

Her reply is equally appropriate:

You ask the thing I was about to beg;
Your tongue hath spake mine own thoughts. 59

and their resolution is most delicately phrased:

You are now my brother
But then, my second husband. 60

This platonic relationship continues unperturbed until the


60. Ibid.
scheming Delavil separates them. After carefully cutting away the only source of hope and strength for Mrs. Wincott, Delavil seduces her. Young Geraldine's faith is outraged when he comes to know of his friend's treachery and his lady's deceit. Unable to believe this double violation of faith, he visits the lady's chamber at midnight only to be an eye witness to her illicit love. On the next occasion, he slights his friend which touches him to the quick. Mrs. Wincott's feint of innocence results in her fatal collapse at Young Geraldine's piercing insult and she dies repentant. Both his greatest plays are thus "domestic tragedies in prosperous middle-class English homes, and both hinge on the same sort of infidelity in a weak, rather than bad woman, with respect to a hero of uncommon character, forbearing in his punishment, but by his own forbearance producing in the woman, vacillating in sin as in virtue, the same result of overwhelming and extinguishing penitence".61

The sub-plot of the play, Young Lionel's riotous revelry stopped by his father's unexpected return, is considered to be a mere 'rollicking neo-classic farce, nothing more than Plautus Anglicus'. Heywood's debt to Plautus is unquestionable and here he has a deeper purpose than imitating Plautus. The introduction of a sub-plot with another youngman as the central figure, where there is "nothing but prodigality and pride, wantoning and wasting, rioting and revelling, spoiling and spending, gluttony

and gormandising."

serves as an apt dramatic contrast to the main theme of the virtuous young Geraldine and his ideal paternal obedience. Besides serving as a foil to the main theme the sub-plot has a definite social relevance and didactic purpose. Young Lionel is a heir to a wealthy citizen who is exploited by gallants and spendthrifts. Such things were very common in the life of the times. The "gulling of young heirs, that never-failing subject of Jacobean comedy, was not merely imitated from Terence or Plautus; it had for setting the same economic factors that have been mentioned - the growing attractions of the town combined with financial difficulties of the entry..."

Therefore, Heywood made what he borrowed from Plautus thoroughly contemporaneous and it admirably suited his dramatic purpose. This is a social problem faced by the well-to-do middle-class parents like Old Lionel and naturally such a theme has an immediate social appeal and important function to serve. Moreover, the context in which Heywood is writing is similar to that in which Plautus wrote. "The unexpected return of the father from abroad after a successful commercial venture, as in the Mostellaria, lends itself easily to transference from Plautus to Heywood, because it is as fitting in England after the destruction of the Armada as in Rome after the battle of Zama".

63. L.C. Knights: Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson, p.124.
64. Allan H. Gilbert: Thomas Heywood's Debt to Plautus, J.E.G.P. Vol. XII, 1913, p.610.
Even if Heywood is not the author of *The Fair Maid of the Exchange* as some authorities believe, the two parts of *The Fair Maid of West* are enough to show that this particular type of the Domestic drama presenting the exemplary lives of popular citizen heroines has also reached its perfection in his hands. The play as a whole is a throbbing picture of the London business world, crowded with a variety of characters, sailors, foreign merchants, city gallants, boastful cowards, the 'afternoon men' visiting taverns, pirates, and drawers. Bess, the barmaid, is the central figure. She possesses a 'virtue seldom found in taverns' and her single minded devotion to her lover Spencer shines throughout the two parts of the play. Few tavern scenes in the "Elizabethan drama, not even those of Dekker, are better painted than those which form the introduction to Act I". All the shining gallants dote upon her and though she may 'sit and be sociable' with everyone, she knows where to draw the line:

She'll laugh, confer, keep company, discourse,  
And something more kiss; but beyond that compass  
She no way can be drawn.


Goodlak's scheme to dupe her into marriage, by telling
that his friend Spencer died, is the crucial test of her con-
stancy. Her spontaneous profession of singlehearted devotion
before her lover's picture surpasses all the preceding expres-
sions of citizen heroines like Greene's Bettrys and Dekker's
Jane:

Thou resemblest him
For whose sweet safety I was every morning
Down on my knees, and with lark's sweet tunes
I did begin my prayers; and when sad sleep
Had charmed all eyes, when none save the bright stars
Were up and waking; I remembered thee;
But all, all to no purpose. 68

The popular beliefs in 'black magic' and 'white magic'
their banal or beneficial influence, on the family affairs of
the people formed the dramatic material for another type of
domestic drama. Greene was the first dramatist to introduce
the element of magic as a potential factor in shaping the love
affairs in his Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay. The Merry Devil
and The Late Lancashire Witches make full dramatic use of these
popular superstitions.

In The Late Lancashire Witches 69 Heywood combines his

68. Thomas Heywood: The Fair Maid of the West, Mermaid Edition,
III, v, p.122.

69. R.G. Martin: The Late Lancashire Witches a Revision, M.P.,
Vol. XIII, p.265, calls the play 'a straight piece of colla-
aboration' of Heywood and Brome, disagreeing with C.R. Andrew's
theory, (The Authorship of late Lancashire Witches M.L.N.
Vol. XXVIII, 1913, p.168, that "it is an old play of Hey-
wood's revised by Brome to make it timely", the same view
expressed by Fleay Bio. Chron. I, 301, However, all
authorities accept that the Master Generous plot is Heywood's.
favourite domestic theme of an erring wife and forgiving husband with the farago of preposterous transformations and incredible nocturnal adventures of the village cronies. The happy domestic life of Master Generous, is wrecked not by an unfaithful guest or a false friend, but by his wife's 'satanicall sisterhood'. Master Generous like his predecessors, views his wife's fault more in sympathy and sorrow than in anger. Heywood surpassed all the previous writers in his sympathetic portrayal of the witch and in his subtle use of witchlore as a fatal force causing domestic ruin. "This application of witchcraft was essentially new in the drama. Middleton's witch and Dekker's are outside the pale of society, - the one a dangerous sorceress, the other a despised though still dreaded outcast. Heywood, the dramatist of intimate family life, gives us the witch who is also wife and mother - a motive far more capable of pathos than either...." 70

The Captives and The Fortune by Land and Sea are the two last domestic plays of Heywood written in the general pattern

and style of Shakespeare's lost plays.\textsuperscript{71} The Captives depicts the domestic troubles of two London merchants combined with sea adventures. Palestræ and Scribonia, 'the captives' or 'the lost recovered', are the daughters of two London merchants, John Ashburne and his brother Thomas Ashburne. The two girls are brought up by the procurer Mildew. They remain chaste in a 'workshop of sin' in spite of various temptations, rewards, promises and finally threats. Raphael, a young merchant, who falls in love with Palestræ pays her ransom and asks Mildew to bring her to a nearby village.

Mildew, following the advice of Sarlat, takes a ship and runs away with the two girls so that he can have the money and can easily sell them at any time in any part of the world. The ship is caught in a storm and after shipwreck the girls and the procurer are washed ashore. Palestræ and Scribonia take shelter in a monastery and when Mildew plans to take them away Raphael intervenes and saves them. John Ashburne offers them protection and shelter, but his shrewish wife mistaking his intentions turns all of them out of doors. On the way they meet a fisherman

\textsuperscript{71} Heywood and Shakespeare are closely associated with each other in the literary as well as the theatrical side of the drama. There are some resemblances between The Golden Age and The Winter's Tale and The Tempest. Earnest Schanzer discussing the question 'who borrowed from whom' suggests that "the general pattern of Shakespeare's echoes throughout the Ages make it, after all, seem to me more likely that Heywood was the borrower'. R.E.S. Feb., 1960, p.21. Dr. M.V. Rama Sarma sees some similarity in the scenes of reunion and recognition between The Captives and Pericles and concludes that "these parallelisms show that Heywood has some idea of Pericles when he is writing The Captives or perhaps some scenes of Pericles may have been written by him". Heywood: A Prose Shakespeare, p.126.
who caught the casket containing the identity of Palestra. The citizen-house would have been thrilled when the identity was established in the form of the following dialogue:

Palestra: Mirable
Ashburne: Right! Myrable
Palestra: Daughter of John Ashburne, merchant.
Ash: Trewe: of John Ashburne, merchant - Oh my soul!
Pales: And borne in Christ-chyrc, London, Anno -
Ash: 153072

Thomas Ashburne who is in search of his brother is drifted to the same shore. He brings the information that John's uncle, a rich alderman, bequeathed all property to him. Finally it is established that Scribonia is none other than Thomas Ashburne's lost daughter. Ashburne in high spirits exclaims

Oh happy storme
That ends in such a calme!73

The sub-plot presents the evil designs of Friar John to seduce his benefactor Averne's wife. Lady Averne to preserve her 'conjugall faythe' informs all this to her husband. Lord Averne kills the Friar in a rash mood and transforms him to the monastery. Friar Richard, who has a grouse against brother John, hits the dead body thinking that he is spying on him. After a

73. Ibid., V, iii, p.144, 39-40.
series of farcical incidents when the innocent Prior is about to be condemned Lord Averne confesses the truth and saves him. Lady Averne gets the pardon for her husband. All this is, as Lady Averne puts it:

Domestick;
'Tis howshould busines$ all. 74

Fortune by Land and Sea deals with the domestic affairs of the families of Old Forrest and Old Harding, friends and classmates. The Hardings who were once the tenants of the Forrests bought all their lands, and the relationship becomes more complicated when Phillip Harding, the eldest son of Old Harding, marries Susan Forrest without his father's consent. The tyrannical father reduces the newly married couple to the state of household servants. The plans of Phillip's brothers to make their father disinherit him and his own miseries come to an end by the sudden death of his father.

Young Forrest who challenges Hainsford to avenge his brother's death kills him in the duel unwittingly. He seeks protection in the hovel of Harding, and Mrs. Harding, a young woman, offers him protection and saves him by sending him to her brother who is a over-sea trader. Young Forrest who comes back from sea with great fortune marries the young widow who saved him once. Thus in the end both the families are reunited.

again on a different and more enduring basis.

Obviously, the domestic plays of Heywood cover a far wider field of the everyday life of the middle-class than those of Dekker. Heywood, as we have seen, is a leading figure in different types of the Domestic drama and his authentic presentation of domestic problems, especially of the country middle-class, shows a deeper understanding and a more comprehensive grasp than that of any of his contemporaries. He is a "Lincolnshire gentleman" and "a respectable householder."75 and the wholesome rural atmosphere of his plays, his realistic portrayal of the sentiments, customs and manners of the country gentry reveal his intimate knowledge of the rural life and its problems.

Dekker and Heywood are keen students of the common life of their times. From the themes of their plays it appears that Dekker's heart is certainly more on the side of city middle-class whereas Heywood's is with the country life. Heywood too knows London life and its ways but his knowledge is mainly that of a sympathetic observer, at best, a domiciled Londoner. He presented London life and complied with the tastes of London, but he can never be called a Londoner in the sense Dekker is one. Similarly, Dekker presents country life with a certain amount of


verisimilitude and variety, but it is not safe to assess his
knowledge of country life from *The Witch of Edmonton* alone on
account of his collaboration with Ford and Rowley.

What is strikingly common in the presentation of everyday
incidents from the ordinary life around them by both Dekker
and Heywood is its singular freedom from any trace of weariness
and cynicism. Certainly Jonson, Middleton, Marston and Massinger
show equally keen interest in common life and their plays reveal
a deeper insight into the economic aspects of the social life.
But we miss the feeling of intimacy and identification, the
hearty participation and involvement so characteristic of
Dekker and Heywood, in their plays. As Oliphant points out
"it is from Dekker and Heywood that we get the truth that is
touched with sympathy; and that is the real truth". 77

77. E.H.C. Oliphant: *Shakespeare and his fellow Dramatists*,