CHAPTER IV

'DOMESTICK;
'TIS HOW SHOULD BUSINES ALL'.
The domestic plays of Dekker and Heywood offer us the most direct means to understand a wide variety of common household problems of the middle-class. The domestic problems presented in their plays have a deep rooted basis in the actual life of the times. They were of vital importance to the people, for, the operation of these domestic issues had affected the whole course of their normal life. Of course, attempts to satisfy the popular interest in, and to meet the popular demand for, such plays are undeniable. But in addition to this there is a clear attempt on the part of the dramatists to make the audience think seriously about the immediate private problems and social issues and realise their full implications. The people themselves were seriously interested in their domestic affairs and were anxious to receive useful instruction in these matters.¹ This accounts for the direct moralisation and frequent attempts to promote ethical teaching in these plays. So, the domestic plays of Dekker and Heywood are important not merely for their realistic portrayal of the personal and social problems of the day but also for a full understanding of the root causes, the social conventions and practices relating to these problems.

¹. Louis B. Wright: Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England, p.203. "From the first half of the sixteenth century onward English writers on domestic themes busied themselves in the propagation of their notions about the best methods for maintaining the proper harmony between husband and wife in the government of the home. It is worth noting that most of these treatises were patently written from the middle-class point of view and express the ideals of the rising middle-class".
The emergence of the middle-class, its increasing wealth and social prominence and the new forms of economic organisation brought about a number of changes in the existing human institutions and relationships. The commercial outlook became dominant in every sphere of human activity. Some of the titled families, who lost their riches retained their titles and social 'status'. The nouveaux riches, who amassed wealth were anxious to acquire rank. So much so, inter-class alliances, even forced marriages based on commercial advantages, became frequent. For most of the people marriage proved to be an immediate source of enrichment. Slowly, marriage assumed a form of fortune-hunting. Economic marriages and infant contracts were there in the Middle Ages also. But, the proportion increased in the sixteenth century. The repeated references to the miseries of improper and enforced marriages in the drama indicate the excessive predominance of the commercial motive in the most sacred of human relationships - marriage. The Romantic comedies and love sonnets, perhaps as an escape, may present a utopian picture of marriage. But in real life "marriages had nothing to do with love and no 'nonsense' about marriage was tolerated. All matches were matches of interest, and, worse still, of an interest that was continually changing. When the alliance which had answered would answer no longer, the husband's object was to get rid of the lady as quickly as possible".

2. A full account of these aspects is found in L.C. Knights Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson, Chapter II.
Further, the growth of town life, which offered immense opportunities for the honest and hardworking apprentices, tradesmen and craftsmen to come up in the social hierarchy, provided equally varied pleasures and chances for the 'wild-headed' heirs of the well-to-do country families and the unsteady sons of the 'new rich' to become prodigals. The pleasure-hunting of these fashionable men added its share of disturbance to the domestic lives of the citizens. There was greater scope for adultery in the case of forced contracts. Shady places in towns catered to the needs of illicit lovers. These common problems, about which the preachers and social moralists thought seriously, are taken up by the writers of the Domestic drama as themes. The heroes of many domestic plays like *How a Man may Choose a Good Wife from a Bad*, *The Honest Whore*, *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*, *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, *The London Prodigal* and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* are instances of such fickle minded and pleasure-seeking men. No wonder then that the scrupulous observance of the conjugal

4. Anne remarks about the fashionable pleasure-hunters:
   "These errand-making gallants are good men,
   'hat cannot pass, and see a woman sit,
   Of any sort, alone at any door,
   But they will find a 'scuse to stand and prate.
   Fools that they are to bite at every bait!"

5. cf. "Loue letters past twixt Mosbie and my Wyfe,
   And they haue preemie meetings in the Towne".
bond or a despicable violation of it, paternal care and concern for wayward children, pangs inflicted by prodigal sons on parents, the constant trouble from shrewish wives, the heart-rending torture of unfortunate wives contracted to riotous husbands and the miseries of enforced marriage in general are some of the common themes of the Domestic drama.

Dekker as well as Heywood advocated conjugal faith and the preservation of the holy bond of marriage in almost all their domestic plays. Dekker followed the direct method of plain moralisation, more or less a morality pattern, in his portrayal of Grissil, Jane, Infelice, Susan, Tormiella and Bellafront after her conversion as examples of ideal womanhood. Heywood used the more powerful and effective method of implication in his tragedies like Edward IV, A Woman Killed with Kindness, The English Traveller and The Late Lancashire Witches. As all these heroines are meant to be warning examples against adultery there are occasional instances of direct moralization. In his comedies Heywood is more direct in his insistence on marital constancy.

He combined the prodigal son theme with that of a faithful but ill-treated wife and intensified the dramatic effect of the conflict by introducing a loose wanton in his How a Man may Choose a Good Wife from a Bad. He is the first to discover and explore the full dramatic potentialities of this triangular conflict and the number of plays written in imitation of this
play is 'probably large'. The scene of this play is laid in the contemporary English middle-class society and the incident "seems too obviously a matter of everyday experience to search for at all". Master Arthur, to whom Mrs. Arthur is married on account of his riches, follows him faithfully even in his 'wonted humour' of preferring a loose woman to his faithful wife. Mrs. Arthur is presented as a paragon of all feminine virtues - the qualities recommended by the moralists and desired by the middle-class. Though her marriage is an arranged one she proves herself to be a 'true obedient wife'. Following the evil advice of his mistress, Master Arthur poisons his wife as a final attempt to get rid of her. Anselme, a young gentleman who is in love with her, rescues Mrs. Arthur from death and offers to marry her. Her faith in the sanctity of marriage and constant devotion to her husband changes the mind of the young lover from thoughts of marriage to noble intentions of chivalry and pure friendship. She checks her father who advises her to leave


   Is she not loyall, constant, loving, chast,
   Obedient, apt to please, loth to displease,
   Carefull to liue, chary of her good name,
   And iealous of your reputation?
   Is she not vertuous, wise, religious?
   How should you wrong her to deny all this?
her husband:

Will you divorce whom God hath tied together
Or break that knot the sacred hand of heaven
Made fast between vs? Have you never read
What a great curse was laid upon his head
That breaks the holy band of marriage,
Divorcing husbands from their chosen wiuues?9

A similar situation occurs in The London Prodigal where Luce is forced by her covetous father to marry a rich libertine.
When her husband falls on evil days her father asks her to leave him. But, knowing her vow,10 she prefers to suffer with her husband and finally converts him.

Despite her husband's open preference for his 'lead companion' and his plain attempts to get rid of her, Mrs. Arthur saves him from the gallows. Repentant Arthur enumerates the differences between a good wife and a bad, much in the vein of books offering guidance in domestic relations.11

The second Luce in The Wise Woman of Hogsdon is another


He is my husband, and hie heauen doth know,
With what vnwillingness I went o Church,
But you inforced me, you compelled me too it:
The holy church-man pronounced these words but now:
I must not leave my husband in distresse.
No I must comfort him, not go with you.

constant wife with a difference. She pursues her husband in
disguise and finally exposes him. Like other constant women
she is devoted to her vow of marriage but she is not meek and
submissive in her forgiveness. She is confident of her strength
and position and there is a legitimate severity in her final
words which force her husband to accept his folly. She esta-
blishes her superiority by outwitting him. She is not, like
her counterparts in other plays, taking back a repentant sinner
into her hands: she is instrumental in exposing his riotous
career. She has been responsible for his conversion and she
accepts him with all his faults and limitations.

There is much that could be called an extravagant fancy
in the two parts of The Fair Maid of the West. But, even here,
Heywood did not lose his sure grasp over bourgeoisie life. The
constancy of Bess Bridges is the real motive behind all her
high sea adventures, fights with Spanish pirates and risks in
the court of Mullisheg. When the king wants to make her lover
Spencer his 'chief eunuch' she protests:

Not for ten worlds! Behold, great king, I stand
Betwixt him and all danger - Have I found thee?
Seize what I have; take both my ship and goods;
Leave not that's mine un rifled: spare me him -
And have I found my Spencer? 12

It is her unshakable loyalty to Spencer that transforms the
lusty moor and moves him to a Lylyean apotheosis of English

12. Thomas Heywood: The Fair Maid of the West, Mermaid Edition,
womanhood:

You have wakened in me an heroic spirit:
Lust shall not conquer virtue - Till this hour,
We graced thee for thy beauty, English woman;
But now we wonder at thy constancy. 13

Both in his The Rape of Lucrece and Appius and Virginia
Heywood presents virtuous women prepared to die rather than
live as kings' mistresses. Lucrece, unlike Jane Shore and
Mrs. Frankford, resists all temptations, even brute force, to
the last minute maintaining:

For death I care not, so I keep unstained
The uncrazed honour I have yet maintained 14

Her agonising cry after her rape is one of the instances of
Heywood's poignant utterances proceeding from deep-felt con-
vincions:

O You powerful gods,
That should have angels guardants on your throne,
To protect innocence and chastity! oh, why
Suffer you such inhuman massacre
On harmless virtue? wherefore take you charge
On sinless souls, to see them wounded thus
With rape and violence? ...
* * *
I, only I, should to this shame be born
To be a stain to women, nature's scorn? 15

In The Captives, to keep her 'owne vablemisht truth and loyalty'

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Rupert Brooke in appendix to his John Webster and Elizabethan
attributes Appius and Virginia to Heywood. See also

15. Ibid., V, i, p.403.
Lady Averene informs her husband of Friar John's advances to her. In the beginning she imagines that her own lord is testing her 'unquestioned chastity' knowing the difference of years between them. She suspects her husband's rashness and tries to prevent him from bloodshed. With perfect obedience she tells her husband:

   Ever your lipps
   Have bin to me a lawe - I suspect more
   Than I would apprehend with willingness;
   But though prevention canott helpe what's past,
   Conjugall saythe may expresse it self at last. 16

In the end she does the "offyce of a noble wyfe" by procuring her husband's pardon.

Heywood's attitude to the gay youth is free from his usual moral severity 17 and this "change is not to be regretted". 18 His constant wives radiate a simple piety without becoming 'wooden'. What prevents them from becoming 'types' is their


17. Here, perhaps, Heywood is following his contemporary dramatic practice. In the plays dealing with the prodigal son theme which appeared between 1602-1607 (except the Eastward Ho which burlesques the whole tradition) the sinners are let off very lightly. See M.C. Bradbrook, The Growth and structure of Elizabethan Comedy, p.178.

18. "What is missed is the direct teaching of other plays; this may be sacrificed for the aesthetic gain effected by the final issue undistorted to satisfy a code of poetic justice". Otelia Cromwell Thomas Heywood: A Study in the Elizabethan Drama of Everyday Life, p.87.
full play of intelligence along with their unswerving constancy. Heywood's constant women command their husbands through their patience and obedience. He avoids the conventional flatness of the ending in his *How a Man may Choose a Good Wife from a Bad* by making repentant Arthur extol his wife's virtues in her presence, as she stands before him in disguise. In *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon* 2nd Luce's concealed reprimand, gentle but effective, in forgiving her husband adds the spice of novelty to an otherwise common ending. These changes enabled Heywood to maintain the aesthetic effect of the final scenes of reunion undistorted by the traditional code of poetic justice.

Dekker took up the traditional theme of an ideal wife in his *Patient Grissil* and adopted it to suit the contemporary stage and the citizen taste. His individual talent lies in imparting to it a greater variety. He portrayed Grissil as an exemplary wife as contrasted with the perverse shrew Gwenthyan and the arrogant virgin Julia. All these three strands - that of Grissil, the ideal wife, whose patience is tried, the shrew who bridles her husband and Julia who knows 'the war of marriage' and hates it - are of immediate interest to the middle-class.

Grissil is presented as an embodiment of all feminine virtues.

18. "I thinke my lord shee's a true woman, for shee loues her children, a rare wife, for shee loues you (I beleue you'll hardly finde her match) and I thinke shee's more than a woman, because shee conqueras all wrongs by patience". Thomas Dekker: *The Patient Grissil*, ed. Bowers, Vol. I, IV, i, p. 261, 213-216.
a chaste maiden,19 an obedient daughter,20 a loving sister,21
a devoted wife22 and a tenderhearted mother.23 All her portion
is her honest name alone, and her virtue is rewarded in the
form of all possible temporal benefits - her father and brother
are relieved from poverty, she is taken back by her husband with
a redoubled love and she is accepted by the subjects with an
unanimous admiration. Gwenthyan, of all people, condemns
Julia's arguments against marriage:

Julia ......, you tang and you prable about shidings
in marriages, and you abuse yong mens and damsels,
...... awl that bee sembled heere, know you that
discord's mag good musicke, and when louers fall out
is soone fall in, .... pray you al be married, for

    "Father, me thinkes it doth not fit a maide,
    By sitting thus in view, to draw mens eyes
    To stare vpon her: might it please your age,
    I could be more content to worke within".

20. Ibid., 30-70.


22. Ibid., II, ii, p.236, 40-44.
    "Oh chide me not away,
    Your handmaid Grissill with vnuexed thoughts,
    And with an vnrepining soule, will beare
    The burden of all sorrowes, of all woe,
    Before the smallest griefe should wound you so".

23. Ibid., IV, i, p.257, 94-97.
    "I am their Mother I must not away,
    Looke, looke, good Furio looke they smile on me,
    I know poore hearts they feare to smile on thee,
    I prithee let me haue them".
wedlocke increases peoples and cities..."

The inevitable separation of Jane and Rafe on account of wars in France provided an opportunity for Dekker to illustrate the domestic virtues of conjugal fidelity, chastity and patience in adversity. Dekker's portrayal of faithful wife reaches its apogee in his presentation of Jane. About his delineation of Grissil one cannot help feeling that he is extolling patience in direct morality fashion; she lacks verisimilitude and she is too perfect to be human. Jane has some striking human touches and she is near enough to life, though not a character of real flesh and blood. Dekker returned to the same theme of the constant wife very often but not always with the same success.

Jane keeps a small shop and leads an independent life in her husband's absence. Her conditional promise to Hammon, who succeeds in making her believe that her husband is killed in France, is intended more to get rid of him for the moment than to secure an offer of better marriage

Nay, for Gods loue peace,  
My sorrows by your presence more increase,  
*  
*  
Thus much I say, and saying bid adew  
If euer I wed man it shall be you. 25

Once she recognises her husband, whom she never forgot, she goes


back to him with a spontaneous readiness saying:

Whom should I choose? whom should my thoughts affect,
But him whom heav'ned hath made to be my love?
Thou art my husband and these humble weeds,
Make thee more beautiful than all his wealth,
Therefore I will but put off his attire,
Returning it into owners hand,
And after ever be thy constant wife. 26

Dekker has completely reorganized the tangle of the faithful wife, the prodigal husband and the loose mistress and gave it an individual twist in his *The Honest Whore*. His genius lies in his successful telescoping of the conflicting roles of the seductive harlot and the faithful wife in Bellafront; the devoted lover, the evangelic eye-opener and the arch-tempter in Hippolito; the remorseless spendthrift, and the debased pleasure-seeker finely cornered and converted in Matheo; and finally, the disappointed father, the frustrated cynic and the protecting parent in Orlando Friscobaldo.

The clever way in which Infelice traps Hippolito and exposes his plans to win Bellafront remind us of the intelligence of Heywood's 2nd Luce in *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*:

She herself tells her husband that she proved unfaithful to him and begs him to take vengeance without exposing her shame to the world. In a fit of rage Hippolito accuses her

whole sex:

A Harlot to my slaine? the act is base,
Common, but foule, so shall not thy disgrace: 
Could not I feed your appetite? Oh women 
You were created Angels, pure and faire;
But since the first fell, tempting Deuils you are,
You should be mens blisse, but you prowe their rods; 
Were there no Women, men might liue like gods. 27

After encouraging him to go to the climax of his abuse she cleverly corners him by producing the very 'diamond and letter' he has sent for Bellafront and pays him back in his own words:

.... the act is base,
Common, but foule, so shall not your disgrace: 
Could not I feed your appetite? Oh Men,
You were Created Angels, pure and faire 
But since the first fell, worse then Deuils you are
You should our shields be, but you prowe our rods. 28

With these highly effective stage situations Dekker engages the attention of his audience.

Bellafront herself establishes the importance of her role after coming out successfully in all her trials. 29 As Ward says "it must be allowed that in The Honest Whore the main lesson of the action is brought home not merely with utmost directness of speech, but also with unmistakable integrity of purpose. 30

28. Ibid., p.171, 184-190.
29. See Ibid., V, ii, 468-470.
The transformation in the character of Winnifride is another instance of change from "a loose whore to a repentant wife". She has some illicit contact with Sir Arthur before her marriage. When he tries to renew the old relationship after her marriage, she tells him:

Sir Arthur, do not study
To add to your lascivious lust, the sin
Of Sacrilege: for if you but endeavour
By any unchaste word to tempt my constancy,
You strive as much as in you lies to ruine
A Temple hallowed to the purity
Of holy Marriage.

Susan is another devoted wife whose simple faith is that the meaning of her existence is to make her husband happy. She cannot bear to look at even the slightest shadow of unhappiness in his face and it is in her steady pursuit of her husband's happiness that she unwittingly provokes him.

Tormiella's "unparalleled" constancy to her vow of marriage is the main theme of Match Me In London. She is duped by the bawd Dildoman and the King and is forcibly taken to the court. She withstands all the temptations and threats from the King with a strong determination to be faithful to her husband:

I will not be your whore to weare your Crowne,
Nor call any King my Husband, but mine owne.

32. Ibid., I, i, p.497, 202-209.
33. Ibid., V, v, 85-88.
34. Ibid., IV, iv, p.325, 32-36.
This theme of the faithful wife and the final triumph of her constancy has a special appeal to the middle-class, and hence it figures in a series of domestic plays. "This universal theme exhibits itself in almost every conceivable form in Elizabethan drama in tragedy as well as in comedy, in foreign as well as in English setting, now throwing into contrast the jealous or neglectful husband or exacting lover, and again placing beside the faithful wife the wanton or her less malignant contrast, the shrew". 35

Obviously, Dekker and Heywood are the greatest exponents of this theme and they have explored its full dramatic possibilities by using it in a wide variety of combinations. In all these incidents both of them have advocated the same qualities of marital constancy, chastity, obedience and patience and these virtues are always rewarded in terms of material benefits. As we have seen, Dekker followed the plain method and direct moralisation. His constant women look, more or less, like the personifications of ideal womanhood and there is something artificial about their trials and success. This is not to say that all of them look alike without any distinguishing individual touches. Jane is more life-like than Grissil; Infelice is intelligent enough to corner her husband and Bellafront is certainly different from both. But one cannot help feeling that

35. Felix E. Schelling: English Drama During the Lifetime of Shakespeare, p.175.
his good women "emerge from their trials too often, like some perfect machine, guaranteed mechanically perfect under all conditions". 36

But Heywood's constant women convince us as characters nearer to life. In a gentle way they command their husbands' respect and admiration through their obedience; their constancy is combined with a kind of self-assurance and enterprising intelligence.

Heywood presented the tragic consequences of the violation of the holy vow of marriage in three of his most popular plays Edward IV, A Woman Killed with Kindness and The English Traveller. He made this theme more intensely tragic by fusing it with the betrayal of the sacred bond of friendship. 37 The tragedy of Jane Shore becomes all the more moving when we learn that it is the very King who came as a guest, and in whose defence her husband fought desperately that wrecked their domestic bliss.


Mrs. Frankford is seduced by her husband's bosom friend who owes everything to his noble host and The English Traveller also presents "such scarce unheard-of treachery". 38

In his punishment of the unfaithful wife Heywood deviated from the contemporary social practice. The concept of family honour demanded the murdering of the guilty pair. 39 Even if an adulterous wife is not actually killed and not punishable by death according to law 40 she is invariably treated with unusual harshness 41 and the most common punishment was to make her to do public penance "in a white sheet, with her hair loose, and a wax taper in her hand" 42 as Jane Shore was forced to do. The social moralists advocated a more rigorous punishment for the


".... Othello thought it his duty to murder Desdemona and to have Cassio murdered too".

40. Willard Thorp in The Triumph of Realism in Elizabethan Drama, p.112, remarks that adultery was not considered as a crime although repeated attempts had been made to make it a criminal offense.

41. cf. Mrs. Frankford's words to her husband in A Woman Killed with Kindness, Mermaid Edition, IV, iv, p.56.

42. Edward IV, ed, Barron Field, Shakespeare Society, Part II, IV, iii, p.170, Stage Direction.
adulterous wives "than half-an-hour's hanging or than standing in sheet, though the weather be never so cold".43 The husband usually discarded her and no relatives would take her in on account of the social stigma. The magnanimity of Master Frankford lies in abstaining from this conventional brutal punishment and in giving her a chance to die repentant.44 "Instead of forcing her to do public penance and casting her aside by divorce, which would mean beggary unless kind-hearted relatives took her in, he assures her food and shelter at least, if not the restoration of his affection”.45 Therefore, his kindness lies not only in sparing her life and readily forgiving her after her repentance but in continuously protecting her from an unsympathetic world, especially when she has lost all claims to such a shelter and protection.

Even in this easy kindness and boundless tolerance, Heywood satisfied the rigorous moral code of the middle-class. Adultery is always abhorrent for him and the inevitable wages of this sin is always death. The guilty women, though their sincere repen-
tance makes them worthy of the final forgiveness granted to

   "I'll not martyr thee,  
   Nor mark thee for a strumpet; but with usage  
   Of more humility torment thy soul,  
   And kill thee even with kindness".
45. Willard Thorp: *The Triumph of Realism in Elizabethan Drama*, p.113.
them, are not exempted from the ultimate punishment. Nor are the forgiving husbands moved by any sentimental considerations. This is the reason why the wronged husbands in Heywood's plays appear to be respectable and dignified; and the penitent women are presented as unfortunate victims, not as despicable sinners.

One can never miss the didactic tone in Heywood's plays. He evidently intended these instances of erring women and generous husbands to serve as sources of emulation to the audience. Jane addresses her kind:

Fair dames, behold! let my example prove,
There is no love like to a husband's love.

Mrs. Frankford also appeals to her sex in moving terms:

O women, women, you that yet have kept
Your holy matrimonial vow unstained,
Make me your instance: when you tread awry,
Your sins, like mine, will on your conscience lie.

Here, as Hallett D. Smith shows, Heywood is following the Elizabethan ballad tradition of the complaints of fallen women like Elstred, Rosamund Clifford and Jane Shore, all meant as warnings against adultery. Placing the case of Mrs. Frankford in this tradition, Professor Smith gives 'a more satisfactory explanation' than others to the two major cruxes of the play -

her equally rapid and unconvincing fall and death. "These ladies stressed in their complaints not the seduction itself or the struggles they had gone through before they finally fell, but their reversal of fortune (Churchyard), their guilt and punishment (Higgins, Daniel), or their beauty (Chute). Heywood followed the tradition when he was making the play. He knew that his audience was interested in the type of woman he was presenting. The success of his fellow-poets proved that. And he knew that the audience would not require a psychological analysis of the sinning woman, because she would be immediately recognised as belonging to a familiar type; she was obviously a sister of Jane, Elstred and Rosamund. Therefore he allowed Anne Frankford to fall automatically..."49

Secondly, the death of Mrs. Frankford corresponds to the death of the royal mistress in the complaints. "Viewed in its place in the tradition, the catastrophe of A Woman Killed with Kindness is not sentimental. Anne Frankford is less the victim of fate than any of her predecessors; she is responsible for her sin ..... and she is responsible for her own death."50

Another common domestic problem which converted the home into a living 'hell' is that of the shrewish wife. As


stereotyped as, and perhaps much older than,\textsuperscript{51} that of the patient Grissil, the theme of the taming of a shrew from the beginning served the double purpose of entertainment as well as edification - and "if less edifying, infinitely more interesting".\textsuperscript{52} The interest of the people to learn how "easily a man may tame a shrew"\textsuperscript{53} is reflected in the popular controversy as to the merits of wife-beating. Though the opinion against corporal punishment gained favour, there were some popular authorities on marriage and domestic relations, like William Whately, who recommended occasional use of it.\textsuperscript{54}

Dekker has effectively combined the theme of the waspish wife with that of the patient Grissil. Sir Owen who is confident of taming his wife is bridled by her in turn and all his desires of cudgelling her into senses are thwarted by his thoughts of social decency and respectability. But for Gwenthyan's willing transformation into an obedient wife looking at the example of Grissil, he would have never succeeded in taming her.

Candido's first wife is not inherently a shrew, but she proves herself to be one in her longing to provoke her husband.

\textsuperscript{51} Felix E. Schelling: \textit{Tom Tyler and His Wife}, M.L.N. Vol.XV, 1900, p.258.
\textsuperscript{54} Lowis B. Wright: \textit{Middle-class Culture in Elizabethan England}, p.220.
Her husband's patient exhortation of the ideal relationship that should exist between husband and wife proves ineffective:

Pray weare a peacefull temper, be my wife,
That is, be patient: for a wife and husband
Share but one soule between them: this being knowne,
Why should not one soule then agree in one?55

Candido outwits his wife by patiently enduring every trick she has devised to ruffle him. Tired of her efforts and damped by the failure of all her ingenious stratagems to provoke him, she submits herself to his saint-like patience.

Dekker, perhaps, to make capital out of the interest of his audience in this theme, renewed the troubles of Candido in the second part by a second marriage after the death of his tamed wife. As he has already tasted the bitterness of the troubles from a shewish wife, Candido follows the advice of Lodovico, and turns valiant to tame his wife, 'only for a jest not in earnest'. The entire situation becomes effectively farcical when Candido takes the yard and challenges his wife who takes up the ell to fight with him. This farcical duel ends in perfect reconciliation when the wife falls on her knees submitting herself to her husband's sovereignty.

Even though he has not made a full scale use of this popular theme as his contemporaries did, Heywood has not left it untouched.

In *The Captives* when Asburne volunteers to be a 'patron and defender' of his unidentified daughter and niece, he does not forget about his "curst wyfe at home". As expected, she suspects her husband of waywardness, but the moment she knows that the two girls are her own daughter and niece, she accepts them with a profound love. We exclaim like Ashburne:

Strange alteration!
Skoldinge is turn'd to pitty, spleen and mallyce
To mercy and compassion.

That the misuse of the powers of wardship and parental authority in the case of matrimony was one of the burning issues of the Elizabethan bourgeoisie is evident from the number of references to it in every form of contemporary literature. "The theme of miseries of enforced marriage, utilized in sermon, story, poem, and play, indicates a popular sympathy with this problem, which was debated at great length in the more specialized treatises". Dekker as well as Heywood thought about this problem seriously and they are decidedly against forced marriages like other social thinkers and dramatists. In his


57. Ibid., IV, i, p.106, 138-142.
"I have bin too longe a grizell. Not content
To have thy hawnts abroad....
* * *
But thou would'st make thy private howse a stewes!"

58. Ibid., IV, i, 110, 402-404.

The Curtain Lecture Heywood gives a lucid account of the motives behind the misuse of authority and the consequent miseries. "How often have forced contracts been made to add land to land, not love to love? and to unite houses to houses, not hearts to hearts? which hath been occasion that men have turned monsters and women devils". 60 Dekker in his dramatic as well as non-dramatic works condemned forced marriage as adultery as did some of his contemporaries. And the increasing "number of references in literature to the problem of forced marriages and serious consideration of marital enforcement as a theme in plays of the early seventeenth century would seem, to some degree, to reflect a gradual shift of popular sentiment away from marriage of convenience toward marriage of love". 61

The cycle of The Miseries of Enforced Marriages and A Yorkshire Tragedy which is believed to be the concluding part, 62 dramatised one of the actual incidents of such a forced marriage. Similar loveless marriages are partly responsible for the domestic discord in How A Man may Choose a Good Wife from a Bad

61. Ibid., p.459.
62. The view that A Yorkshire Tragedy is originally the concluding part of The Miseries, started by Fleay, is highly controversial. For a thorough discussion of all the issues connected with it see Baldwin Maxwell, Studies in The Shakespeare Apocrypha, pp.182-196. See also Appendix V in A.M. Clarks: Thomas Heywood.
and The London Prodigal. In the former, Old Lusen tells Old Arthur:

Nay I thinke so, I never looket for better:
This tis to marry children when they are yong,
I said as much at first, that such young brats
Would gree togethner, even like dogs and cats. 63

Forced marriages are not responsible for turning Master Arthur and Flowerdale Junior, as in the case of Scarborow in The Miseries, into prodigals. They are libertines by nature; and in fact, it is their wives, who were married to them by force because of their riches, that save these 'graceless' youngmen like 'good angels'.

The 'Argument' of The Witch of Edmonton sums up the full consequences of the forced marriage and the play as a whole is a strong protest against such marriages:

Forc'd Marriage, Murder; Murder, Blood requires:
Reproach, Revenge; Revenge, Hells help desires" 64

Jacobean drama is fertile in its complications of marriage but Frank's bigamy is unique. He marries Winnifride out of love yet, he does not have enough courage to tell his father about it. He has neither wit to dupe nor intelligence to convince, nor strength to revolt against him. In order to please his

father he quietly, though unwillingly, marries Susan. As
Winnifride anticipates, it leads to a number of troubles
finally ending in the deaths of Frank and Susan.

It calls a thousand sorrows round about,
Some going before, and some on either side;
But infinite behind: all chain'd together.
Your second adulterous Marriage leads;
That's the sad Eclipse, the effects must follow
As, plagues of shame, spight, scorn, and obloquy.

Susan feels quite happy that her death is making her free
from the sin of adultery.

The increasing number of references to the evils of pro-
digality and 'the citizen's sone's riot' in ballad, pamphlet
and play point to another major domestic problem of the
middle-class. Various incidents of the conflict between
parents and children in the domestic plays of Dekker and
Heywood provide us with a full picture of this aspect of
middle-class life. Heywood's Young Geraldine in The English
Traveller is an ideal son, an example of filial obedience as
contrasted with the new type of riotous youth, Young Lionel,
who makes merry in his father's absence. Lionel has scant
respect for his father and never hesitates to dupe him. He

66. Ibid., III, iii, p.530, 40-43.
"I'm glad my fate was so intelligent.
'Twas some good Spirits motion. Die? Oh, 'twas time!
How many yeers might I have slept in sin?
Sin of my most hatred too, Adultery!"
longs for his father's death so that he can enjoy his
lascivious pleasures unperturbed:

-Oh, my sweet Blanda,
Only for thee I wish my father dead,
And never to rouse us from our sweet delight.

These words serve as a strong contrast to Geraldine's filial reverence.

That I hope
My duty and obedience, still unblamed,
Did never merit such austerity,
And from a father never yet displeased.

Very often the severity of the fathers proceeds from their anxiety over their children's future welfare and safety. Old Geraldine readily believes Delaville's words about Young Geraldine's affair with Mrs. Wincott because he is keen on preserving his son's good name. It is his desire to keep his son free from scandal which makes old Geraldine impose severe restrictions on his son:

What father's cares are, you shall never know,
Till you yourself have children. Now my study
Is how to make you such, that you in them
May have a feeling of my love to you.

Old Forrest is another father much worried about his son's future. He politely declines to send his son with undesirable gentleman lest he may get into bad ways.

68. Ibid., III, i, p.199.
69. Ibid.
Dekker excels Heywood in his portrayal of tender hearted parents. Janicola in Patient Grissil is a kindhearted father very much attached to his children. His words of consolation to his dejected son are the superb expression of paternal kindness. The joy with which he welcomes his son is a rare instance of parental indulgence:

Peace foole, welcome my sonne, thogh I am poore
My louse shall not be so; goe daughter Grissill,
Fetch water from the spring to seeth our fish,
Which yesterday I caught: the cheare is meane,
But be content, when I have solde these Baskets,
The monie shall be spent to bid thee welcome: 70

Despite the pangs inflicted by filial ingratitude and the indiscreet actions of their children it is natural for the parents to worry about their well-being. We find such fathers in The Honest Whore and The London Prodigal. In both the plays the father enters the service of his own child, whom he knows to be in danger of evil ways. Orlando Friscobaldo in The Honest Whore puts up with all the shame and mental torture caused by his daughter's scandalous life. He closely watches her in her miseries helping, serving, testing and protecting her. Bellafront's love for her father is equally genuine to merit such service from him. She strongly protests against the joint abuse of her father by Matheo and his new servant - her own father in disguise:

Art not ashamed to strike an absent man thus?
Art not ashamed to let this wild Dog barke,

And bite my father thus? Ile not endure it;
Out of my doores, base slave." 71

The sturdy patience with which he faces all the troubles along
with his daughter and the perseverance with which he plans and
traps his son-in-law and compels him to turn over a new leaf at
the point of death - all out of love for his daughter - is a
unique instance of parental struggle to make a child's life
happy and respectable.

The most common cause of conflict between parents and
children in the plays of Dekker and Heywood is the issue of
marriage. The children are always for love and the fathers
are for riches, material stability and social well-being.
Their portrayal of ideal fathers and their implied plea for
paternal obedience and respect did not blind either Dekker or
Heywood to parental harshness and misuse of power. In all
marriages of mutual love the dramatists approved the actions
of children even if it involved defiance of parental consent.
Rose, Infelice and Tormiella disobey their fathers and marry
the men whom they love, and Dekker seems to be supporting the
women.

It is not fair to call Old Thorney's compulsion of his
son to marry Susan, a misuse of power, as he does not know
about his son's secret marriage with Winnifried. The blatant
misuse of fatherly rights is fully presented in Heywood's

Fortune By Land and Sea. Old Harding punishes his son very severely for marrying the virtuous but poor Susan Forrest. He reduces the newly married couple to the status of menial domestic servants. It is only his unexpected demise that brings an end to all their miseries.

On the whole, the implication in these incidents is that Dekker as well as Heywood advocated kindness and consideration on the part of the parents and reverence and obedience on the part of the children. Yet, in the case of matrimonial choice, though they did not positively encourage love marriages at the risk of parental opposition, they not only disapproved the misuse of parental authority granted by custom and law but also defended the choice of young people based on love and mutual understanding.

The domestic problems, pleasures, troubles, experiences and sorrows presented in the plays of Dekker and Heywood have a deep-rooted basis in the everyday life of the town merchants and country squires. These were the very problems faced by them in their daily life. The plays served a significant social purpose by offering much needed guidance. In their plays the root-causes for all the common domestic problems are analysed and the useful remedies and solutions are driven home with utmost directness and clarity.

The concept of marriage expressed by Dekker and Heywood is
makes for a good marriage.

Beguiling, of Verses, or Birth, or Fortune
same very pretty poetry that
Mass Marry in his New Way to Pay Old Debts! states the
poor cuteness must not cut with courtesies we can't
who mean is my poor olive for his high birth;

The Schemmers' Holiday. Indeed, I, I, 11-12
... "en. also
town the poor, will last but name dates
for Gentencers! I am afraid that this wonder of the Ticon
Gristmill ad, powers' vol. I. I. 11-319. Batilo says:
suggested by Becker also. For example, in The Patent
p. 9, vol. 38, 1799, p. 470. The same concept is often
burgeonment of marriage in English drama (1600-1660)
dsources in the house" (quoted from John H. Baevsky.
For whose theme is bullion of hearts? there must needs be
affectations in the road way to spouse-pleasure, and doctrine:
discouraged and mislaid 'for the nuptialty in Years' fortunes or
their continuation lowe; the effects of which are common;
their remarks in this A Quatrain describe that parents encourage the
72. Speaking about the practice of marriage in his Day He wood

73. Honesty, virtue mutual love and understanding are 'equal';
Money, lands and rank alone do not make for a happy marriage!
From disproportion it wherever the evil effects are obvious.
acceptance of the constitutional attitude does not prevent them
were the major factors conducive to happy marriage. 72

But this
view that party in Years, birth, rank, and parental consent
to death and domestic ruin. Both of them accepted the current
and the sanctity of marriage must be preserved at any cost.
set up. For both the marriage is a lasting institution
and the new progressive ideas necessitated by the current societal
of the middle-classes; the beneficial and justifiable aspects of
a happy coexistence of the healthy traditional social code of

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perhaps, more important. These qualities are often presented as compensating for lack of high birth and riches. Both of them considered that a good 'portion of virtue' is as good as a rich dowry and where there is love all differences vanish. On these grounds they supported inter-class marriages.

Patience, forbearance, kindness and forgiveness are the qualities recommended by both Dekker and Heywood as a cure for all types of domestic discords. In fact, these are the qualities which lead to a happy settlement of all household rifts between husbands and wives and parents and children. The conventional severity toward sinners and fallen women, is softened by Christian compassion and tenderness. Heywood's treatment of the adulterous wife marks a striking deviation from the contemporary social practice. Dekker portrays the helpless social victims like whores and witches in a sympathetic fashion. But, this humanitarian attitude does not proceed from sentimental considerations, 'from easy pity and boundless tolerance' as it were. It stems from their deep rooted Christianity. That the Christian attitude to a fallen woman is a "deep conviction

Riches may waste by fire, by sea, by stealth, But water, fire, nor theft can virtue waste When all else fails us, that alone shall last.

Oh that my Example Might teach the World hereafter what a curse Hangs on their heads, who rather chuse to marry A goodly Portion, than a Dower of Vertues
with Heywood is evidenced not solely because he dealt upon it in two of his known plays, but also because he has written in moments of serious reflection in a similar vein. Dekker too advocated such a view in his dramatic as well as non-dramatic works. "we are most like to God that made us when we show love one to another, and do most look like the Devil that would destroy us when we are one another's tormentors.

Even though both of them exhibit a strikingly individual attitude in their ultimate punishment of sin, they appeased the current rigorous morality of the middle-class. The sinners are protected from the brutal punishment prescribed by the current social practice, but they are not exempted from the consequences of their sins; the witches are executed; Bellafront has to go through an excruciating process of suffering to wash off her blot and to prove her honesty. The final forgiveness granted to Heywood's heroines costs them nothing less than their own lives. Thus, in their social morality they strike an important golden mean; a middle path, not merely theoretically decent and desirable but also practically possible and useful.

The dramatic importance of the domestic plays of Dekker and Heywood does not consist in taking up the common incidents in

74. Ottilia Cromwell: Thomas Heywood; A Study in the Elizabethan Drama of Everyday life, p.75.
middle-class life and familiar domestic problems alone. Their real strength lies in the careful organisation of the material into plays of enduring interest. They served, no doubt, a significant and much needed social purpose by providing useful guidance in domestic and household business. But, the fundamental source of strength for the moral effectiveness of these plays proceeds from the artistic process behind the shaping of the material. What is evident from the presentation of everyday life in these plays is that Dekker and Heywood are endowed with an instinctive perception for the effective dramatic situation in the familiar incidents of life around them. And they also possessed the necessary artistic talent to mould the material into successful, if not perfectly coherent and ordered, plays. Therefore, these plays outlived their immediate theatrical and social purpose, that of providing 'some mirth, some matter, and, perhaps, some wit', as plays of enduring interest representing an important genre.